

# Billets & Blades

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF  
THE NORTH CAROLINA CUSTOM KNIFEMAKERS GUILD

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- The next **North Carolina Custom Knifemakers Guild** meeting date: April 18th, 2015
- Guild elections will be held at the next meeting for the Vice-President and Board of Director position



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## Montgomery Community College 2015 Knifemaking Classes

### **Basic Knifemaking**

Travis Daniel

Wednesday, September 9th through Saturday, September 12th

\$375

Learn knife making by designing and making a knife under the guidance of the instructor. Each student will grind, heat and finish a knife using the stock removal method. This class is for beginners and intermediates who want to perfect their knifemaking talents. Cost of class includes materials for each student to make one knife

### **Knife Sharpening**

Barry and Philip Jones

Saturday, September 26th

\$125

Learn to hand sharpen knife blades the old fashioned way using stones. Students will learn multiple techniques for sharpening both plain edge and serrated edges. Students are expected to bring their own knife/knives to the class.

### **Forged Tomahawks**

Tim Scholl

Thursday, October 15th through Saturday, October 17th

\$375

Learn to make adorned tomahawks using traditional forging, heat-treating, and handle finishing methods. Students will complete a tomahawk by the end of the course.

### **Basic Knifemaking**

Travis Daniel

Wednesday, October 21st through Saturday, October 24th

\$375

Learn knife-making by designing and making a knife under the guidance of the instructor. Each student will grind, heat and finish a knife using the stock removal method. This class is for beginners and intermediates who want to perfect their knifemaking talents. Each student will complete a knife.

### **Linerlock Folders**

Barry and Philip Jones

Wednesday, November 4th through Saturday, November 7th

\$375

This class will be a hands-on course in the designing and building of a linerlock folding knife. Each student will build a complete folder with a locking liner. Skills taught will include drilling, tapping, heat treating, and proper lock geometry.

### **Introduction to Tactical Knife Making**

Barry and Philip Jones

Wednesday, November 11th through Saturday, November 14th

\$375

Learn fixed-blade design using the basic principles and methods of knife construction, including how to grind and heat-treat knife blades, as well as fitting and finishing handles.

## Montgomery Community College 2015 Knifemaking Classes

### **Knife Sharpening**

Barry and Philip Jones  
Saturday, November 21st  
\$125

Learn to hand sharpen knife blades the old fashioned way using stones. Students will learn multiple techniques for sharpening both plain edge and serrated edges.

### **Making Leather Sheaths**

Travis Daniel  
Wednesday, December 2nd through Saturday, December 5th  
\$375

Every knife needs a good carry system. Design, cut out, and fit a leather sheath to an existing knife. Students should bring a finished knife for which the custom sheath will be designed.

### **The Forged Knife Blade**

Bill Wiggins  
Wednesday, January 14, 2016 through Saturday, January 17, 2016  
\$375

Hands-on course in the proper forging, heat treating, and finishing of a knife blade. Topics covered will be steel selection, forges and forging tools, heat treating, and finishing of the forged blade.

## **ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION AND OUR GUILD**

*Billets and Blades* is the official publication of the North Carolina Custom Knifemakers Guild. It is compiled and published in four annual issues, with two additional special publication dates possible each year.

The North Carolina Custom Knifemakers Guild was formed to meet the needs of the growing body of custom knife makers in the southeastern United States. The purpose of this newsletter is to serve as a medium of exchange for the members of the NCCCKG.

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Knife making and related endeavors are inherently dangerous crafts or occupations. The material contained in this newsletter is for information only and is not intended for private instruction. Therefore, the North Carolina Custom Knifemakers Guild and its Officers and Editor specifically disclaim any and all responsibility for damage or injury that may occur as a result of the use of any information that is contained in this newsletter.

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Well Spring is about here and that means Damascus season is almost over for me in my shop. I am in full swing grinding knives to get ready for Blade show in June, I still have quite a few left but hope to get them done next week so I can get them to my heat treater in time to get them back for Blade. If any of you Guild members have not made the Journey to Blade show in Atlanta in June, it is worth the time to go visit it even if its only for the day. I tell many its worthwhile just to buy knifemaking materials like G10, Exotic wood, steel, abrasives and tools.

I intend to take names at next Guild meeting on who would be interested in a Build it yourself Propane forge from a Freon bottle. I will have an example at the meeting in April to gauge interest and start to take names to prepare for the build at the following meeting. I look forward to seeing you all in a few weeks and I want you all to start to think about some tools we could purchase as a guild to benefit our guild classroom.

Chris Williams

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# *Randall's Ramblings*

I'm Steve Randall the current Vice President of the North Carolina Custom Knife maker's Guild. I thought I'd start a VP corner to share interesting nuggets of information. Mostly knife related, but not required.

## THE YEAR OF CHANGE!

Lately it seems many we know have been experiencing change. New drivers, new cars, new jobs, new homes, new classes, new teachers. In fact we Randalls have been experiencing so much change that we've dubbed 2015 "THE YEAR OF CHANGE".

It has been 3 years since I accepted the position of Vice President for the NCKMG. New opportunities at work and family responsibilities have deemed it necessary for me to pass the duties on to another willing member. What a pleasure it is working with the guild, meeting new people, making new friends, and learning new things.

With so many talented knife makers who so generously share their skills and knowledge to those of us interested in knives, our guild is a great asset. I thank each and every member who participates by attending the meetings, presenting demonstrations, and serving as officers and board members.

CHANGE IS GOOD! Only through change do we get new possibilities.

See you at the Guild!  
Steve

## How to Sharpen an Axe By Liam Hoffman

So you want to sharpen an axe? Well, there are several different sharpening grinds as I'm sure many of you who grind knives know; it's all very similar. The same rules apply to axes... Convex grinds are generally (but not always) used on large felling axes or mauls. Axes which take the most impact need a stronger edge such as the convex, additionally convex won't "stick" in your target as easily. Concave or "hollow" grinds are rarely seen on axes, although it is done on some of the old traditional axes. There is little information regarding the purpose of the hollow grind on an axe. My guess is a hollow ground axe was specific to the type of tree it's felling, and these were most likely used in the pacific northwest where soft firs and the like are being logged. Lastly the flat grind, this is a very popular and universal grind. It is sharper than a convex grind but more stable than a hollow grind. Flat grinds are most common on hatchets, broad axes, and felling axes. In this demonstration I'll be flat grinding a hatchet. For the sake of confusion and or clarity, a hatchet is an axe, an axe isn't a hatchet, and a tomahawk is a tomahawk.

Since I'm sharpening axes which I forged myself the beginning edge is thick, around 1/4th of an inch. I grind with grits 36, 80, 120, 65 micron trizact CF, 45 micron trizact CF, and 30 micron trizact CF in that order. These are the belt combinations I use, this doesn't mean it's the only way. You can start with a 60 grit or 120 grit if you like, as long as you start with a lower grit and end in a high grit. Before I begin grinding, I take a quick pass on the edge of the axe to shine it up, and then apply layout dye for ease of



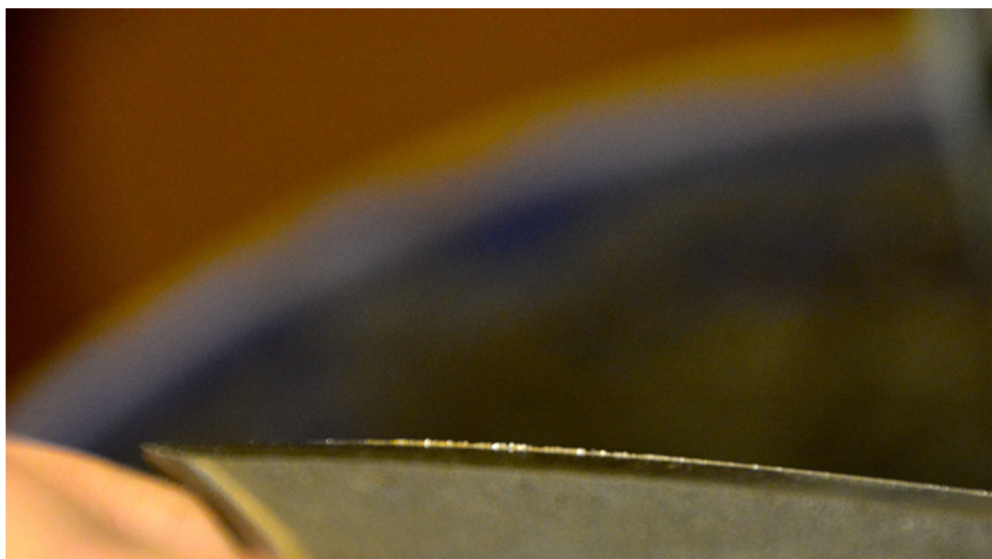
## Sighting the thickness of your edge.



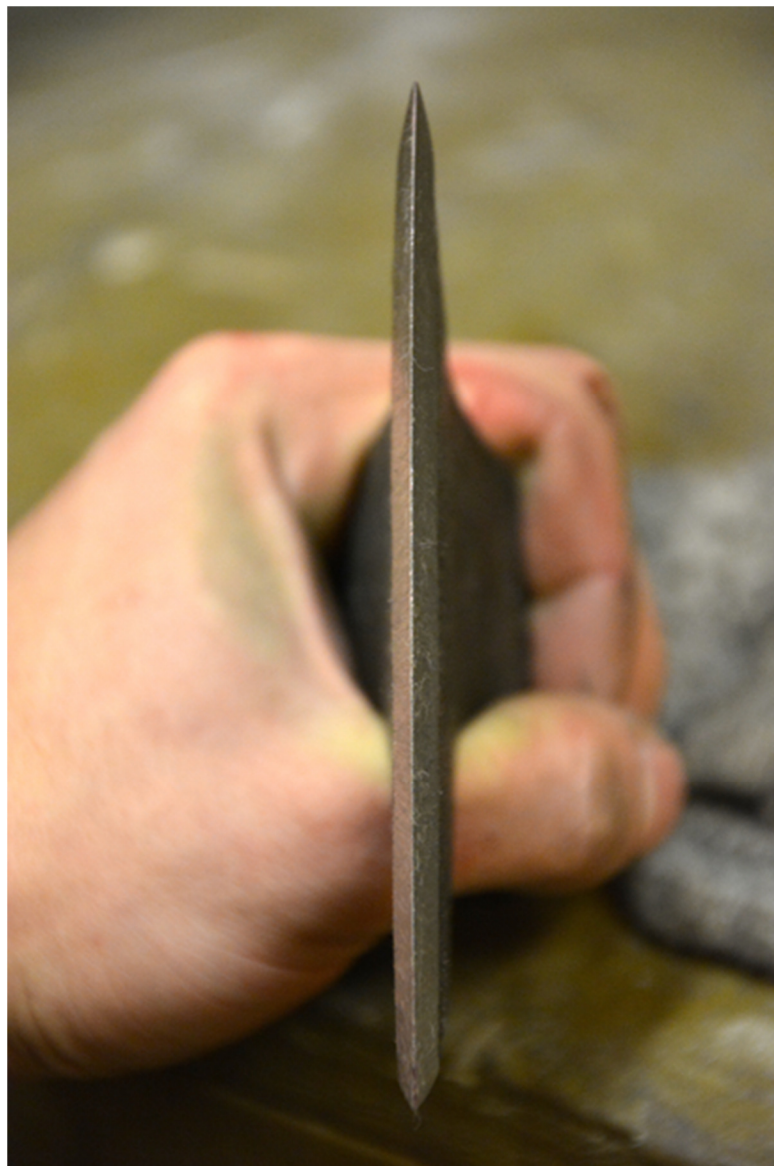
In the photos above I'm shown using a 36 grit ceramic belt (with a respirator!) to grind the initial bevel in the axe, I always sharpen edge down so I can sight my work piece better. The way you position your hands is important. There's no "correct" way to do it, as long as you have decent support on the axe to apply even pressure and make a smooth grind. As you can see I like to stabilize the top by holding my right hand on the poll, this hand also holds the axe up and prevents gravity from taking over... This hand also helps move the axe from side to side. My left hand stabilizes the bottom edge. I can feel vibrations which tell me where I'm touching, and I can feel heat which tells me when to plop 'er in the water. Notice how my head is directly over the poll of the axe. I determine the angle at which the axe is sharpened by looking at the distance between the belt and the poll. If you are sharpening an axe with a straight edge, then you will simply need to move the edge of the axe from side to side (unless your axe edge is < 2 inches wide). Like most axes, the edge will be curved. In this case you will need to move the edge in a semi circular motion while maintaining the grinding angle. While doing this pay close attention to the top and bottom tips of the axe edge, and also checking the thickness of the entire piece. The goal is to work the edge thickness down evenly.



I finish grinding with the 36 grit belt when the edge of the axe reaches approximately 10 thousandths of an inch as pictured above. Now I move onto my 80 grit belt and remove all the 36 grit marks.







With the 80 grit belt I grind the edge down to a burr. Once you can clearly see the burr on both edges I progress to the 120 grit belt. From here it's rather simple... Once you change grits you need to remove the previous grit marks, and create a burr. After the burr is made go up a grit until you reach your highest grit.

I end with a 30 micron trizact CF gator belt, and head straight to the buffer. I use an 8 inch spiral sewn buffing wheel loaded with a medium grit compound. Make passes on the buffer until you see no burr. After my sharpening process is complete my axes are sharper than most knives. I hope this was informative to anyone that's reading!



#### FROM THE EDITOR

If you are a new member, please make sure that I have your correct email and physical mailing addresses. You may send this information to me via email or the address listed on the right.

If you are currently receiving Billets and Blades but are no longer interested in receiving it please let us know. You may contact Michael Wilson (see contact list on page 3) to have your name removed from the mailing list. Thank you.

If you know of someone who may be interested in becoming a member, please let Tim or Michael know and we'll be happy to mail a copy of the current newsletter to that person.

Existing members, please check the website to verify that we have your correct information. Especially your correct email address so you may be contacted should the need arise. I am also always in need of pictures, articles and ideas on how to make the website and newsletter better. Please contact me with any suggestions.

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### Election Time!

There are two positions to be voted on at the April 18th, 2015 North Carolina Custom Knifemakers Guild meeting. They are the Vice-President and Board of Director. I have included from the By-Laws the description for the positions.

Vice-President - Term: 3 years.

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.

Director - Term: 3 years.

The Director 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 director may affix the corporate seal to all necessary documents and attest the signature of any officer of the North Carolina Custom Knifemakers Guild.

## FOR SALE:

Russell Gardner has 3 of his Sticking Ponies for sale, and he says that these will be the last ones he makes. So don't miss out on of these if you have been eyeing them as they are soon to be gone for good

Cost is \$300

2 made from maple with two-drawer boxes under the seat

1 from cherry

Contact Russell at 910-582-3431



The **North Carolina Custom Knifemakers Guild** was founded in June of 1992. Our goals are to:

- Promote the craft of custom knife making
- Seek to constantly improve the craftsmanship of its members
- Provide an educational resource to anyone interested in the craft
- To encourage new makers and provide a forum for their training

Through public knife making and forging demonstrations by a group or individual members, we try to display the craft and to educate the public. It is our intent to raise the general awareness of custom made knives and the people who create them. That is why there is no cost to attend one of our meetings, and we welcome anyone with an interest in knife making.

Our quarterly meetings are organized around speakers and various demonstrations of activities important to our craft. These speakers and demonstrations are from our members or experts in the field who come as our guests. As a training resource, our Guild is prepared to present any aspect of our craft to organizations that feel it would be beneficial and informative.

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