



This month's cover knife is by Andy Sharpe,
our featured knifemaker.

See page 6 for more information on Andy and to see more of his work.

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*******NEWS, ARTICLES, CLASSIFIEDS*******

This is **YOUR** newsletter. To make it the best it can be, we need your help. If you have shared information at a workshop, or if you have certain **tips you can offer** on any aspect of the making of knives, please send these in for inclusion. If you have an **idea for an article**, or would like to read info on something, please let us know so that we can try to work it out. We are also interested in offering a **classified section** so that you can buy, sell, or trade knife-making tools and materials. Send all info the editor via email.

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 issues annually 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. This purpose of this newsletter is to serve as a medium of exchange for the members of the NCKKG.

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Advertising Policy:

The NCKKG accepts no paid advertising as a matter of policy. From time to time, advertisements may appear that are deemed by the officers to be in the best interest of the Guild. Space for advertisements is offered free to Guild members who wish to promote a service or offer specific items for sale. The officers and editor reserve the right to edit advertisements for brevity.

Members, please submit ads to the either the president or the editor at the addresses shown at right.

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A NOTE FROM BILL BISHER

First off , I need to get one thing said: **your dues need to be paid!** Although we normally collect dues at the October meeting, the meeting has been cancelled, but dues are still due; please send them in the mail to Tony Kelley (see address on page 2). The last membership list was missing some key members' names because their dues were not up to date. All I have to go by is what the Treasurer gives me. So if you want your name on the list, dues have to be received by the Treasurer no later than December 31, but it's helpful if you don't wait until the last minute. The 2010 membership list will be printed up by the January meeting if we have the class schedule for

the year.

We plan to have a new website soon. It would have been discussed in depth at the October meeting; however, it should be ready by the first of the year. At the July meeting the website was brought up by some of the members, and a motion was made and voted on and passed by those present. That motion was to get an updated website and one that was in line with the newsletter. We approached Rebecca Dresser to see if she would be interested in doing the new site. She agreed to give it a try.

The January and April meetings will be held at Montgomery Community College. The dates are set and approved by the college for January 16 and April 17. Mark your

calendars and plan to attend!

I hope to have a questionnaire made up in the near future and sent out to the knife makers in the Eastern U.S. inquiring about a time frame and what would spark their interest in attending a Guild Knife Show. I will inform the membership when the results are in.

One important note for everyone: the newsletter we have now is one of the best we have had in a long time. To keep it that way we need input! If you are at a meeting, take notes, take pictures, write down your thoughts on what you like or dislike, and share them with the membership through the newsletter. If we don't have something to print, the newsletter dies. Let's keep it alive!!!

UPCOMING GUILD MEETING

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24

at the shop of Travis Daniel
1655 Carrow Rd., Chocowinity, NC 27817
252.940.0807



DIRECTIONS

From I-95N,

Exit right at 107 exit (Highway 301). Continue North through Kenly and Lucama. Turn right onto Highway 264 toward Greenville, appx 38 miles. Exit at 73B onto the bypass around Greenville. Continue until you reach Highway 33 toward Chocowinity. (Hastings Ford will be on

your right.) Turn left onto Highway 33 and continue through Grimesland to Carrow Road. (You'll see a big brick church... Wayside Presbyterian.) Turn right and go 1.9 miles to 1655 on your left.

From the Raleigh area,

Take Highway 264 to Exit 73B and follow direction above from that point.

Available Lodging

Comfort Inn, Highway 17N in Washington
Ask for Tammie... \$60/night if you mention the Guild.

Hampton Inn, Highway 264, entering Washington
Ask for Kristen, \$80/night
Indoor pool, continental breakfast, free wireless Internet

Holiday Inn Express, Highway 17N, \$80/night

THE DAY'S ACTIVITIES WILL INCLUDE...

Business Meeting
Iron in the Hat

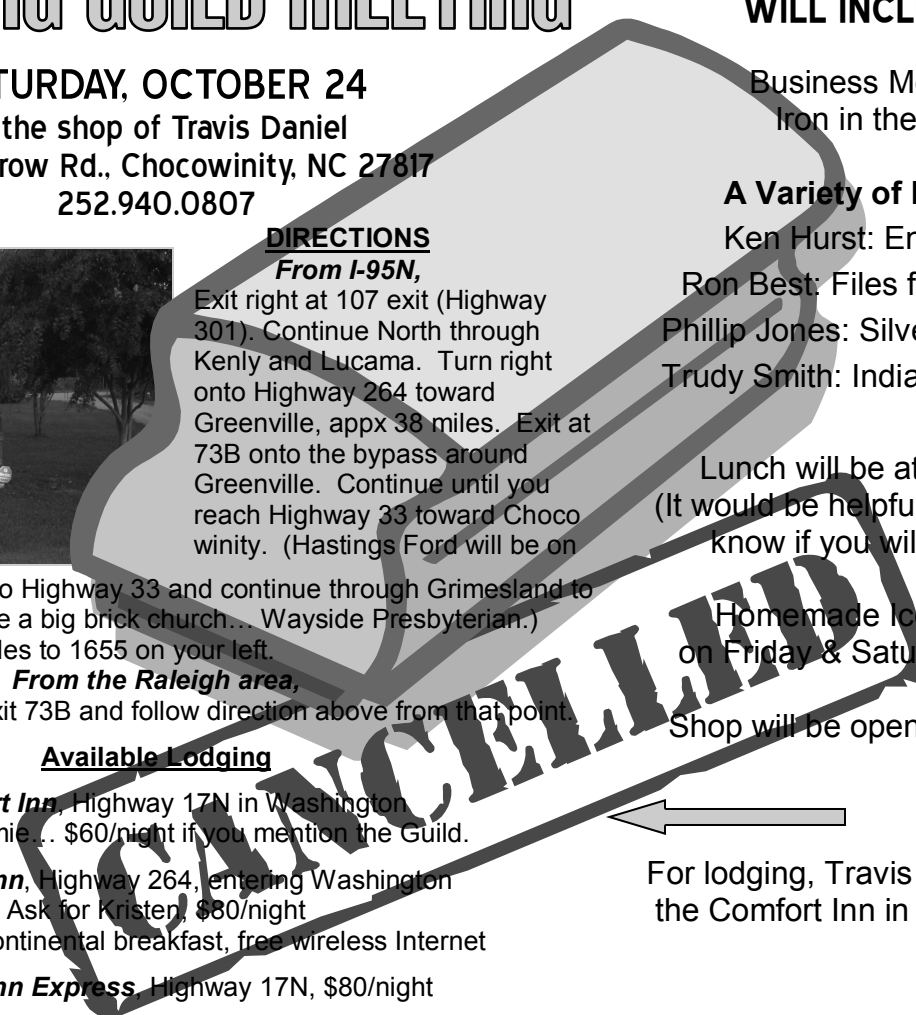
A Variety of Demos:

Ken Hurst: Engraving
Ron Best: Files for Handles
Phillip Jones: Silver Wire Inlay
Trudy Smith: Indian Beadwork

Lunch will be at the shop
(It would be helpful to let Travis know if you will attend.)

Homemade Ice Cream
on Friday & Saturday nights

Shop will be open on Sunday

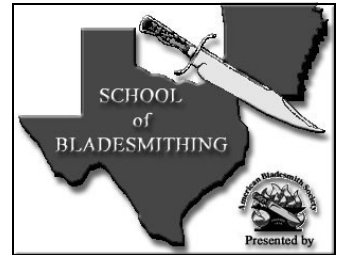


For lodging, Travis recommends the Comfort Inn in Washington!

Knifemaker John Hege receives grant from Regional NC Arts Council

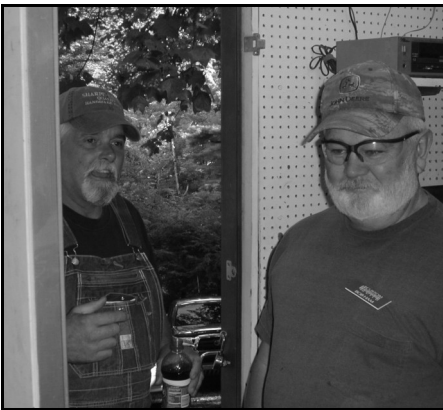
John Hege, a member of the NCKKG, applied for and received a Regional Artists Project grant from the North Carolina Arts Council. Hundreds of artists applied from Davidson, Davie, Forsyth, Stokes, Surry, and Yadkin counties, and John learned in late September that his application had been approved. He will receive funds to help him attend the American Bladesmith Society's School for a two-week workshop as part of the process to become a Journeyman Bladesmith. John has one year to meet his goal and spend the money as denoted on his application. He will then be held accountable for presenting his work on the project.

We urge other members to keep eyes and ears open for similar opportunities, not only to improve their own skills, but to increase awareness of knifemaking among the arts community. Filling out all the forms can be a pain, but you can't win the lottery unless you buy a ticket.

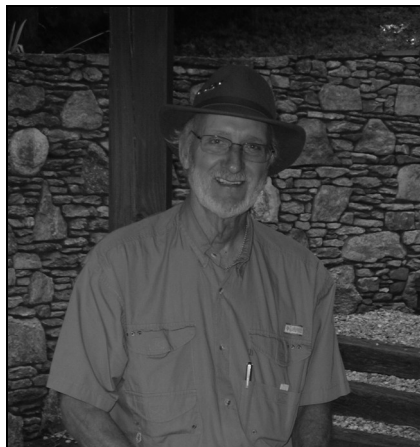


John's "Captain Jack" knife

PHOTOS FROM JULY MEETING



Andy and Bob



Guest artist, Pete Driscoll



The gang's all here



Tim and John... always near the front for food



Pop and others enjoying the day



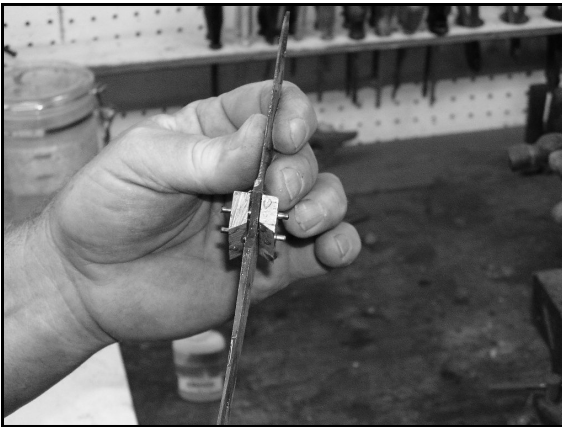
Bob grinding blade blank



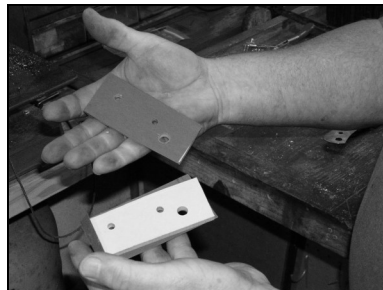
Cutting bolsters



Sanding bolsters



Pinning bolsters



Preparing handle and spacers



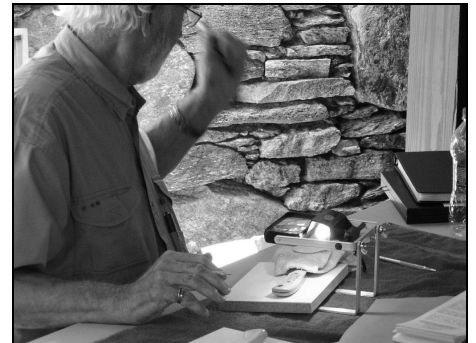
Handle glued up in vise



Shaping handle



Finishing handle



Adding scrimshaw



Knifemakers... Bob Ham, Arthur McNeill, Andy Sharpe, Pete Driscoll



The finished knife

MEET ANDY SHARPE OF BAD SQUIRREL FORGE

Sometimes naming your forge, shop or studio is not an easy task. You want something original, something that folks will remember, something that is uniquely yours. Andy Sharpe found just the thing, and here's that story, told in Andy's words.

I was having trouble finding a name for my forge. Such names as Yadkin Valley Forge, Swearing Creek Forge and others came up, but none seemed to fit. I had a pet squirrel named Zippy. Zippy was a good squirrel. He would climb up your leg, go across your back and up to your shoulder where he would sit and eat nuts. But then Zippy got older and realized he was a man. Then Zippy got mean! He would attack anything that entered his cage.

One day my wife was out feeding Zippy. He flew across the cage, latched on her arm with all four feet, and bit right through her finger. By the time I got to the back porch, in response to the screaming, my wife was slinging her arm back and forth, cussing at this enraged ball of fur stuck to her hand. Between the cuss words, I heard the phrase "Bad Squirrel, Bad Squirrel!" and then it then hit me... the name for my forge!

"That's the name, Bad Squirrel Forge!" I said. I laughed as I told my wife I'd found the perfect name! But she was still cussing and trying to sling the Attack Squirrel From Hell off her arm. Unfortunately I couldn't help because I was laughing so hard. She was finally able to sling Zippy free, and he hit the ground hard and ran off. Since my wife couldn't get to the squirrel, guess who was the next target of opportunity? Yep, the poor guy who was laughing at her. Anyway, I got a name for my forge!

Andy is a member of the NCKG and the ABS. He learned about the guild from Mark Hazen, a former member, and when Andy began making knives, his major influences were Mark Hazen and other members of the guild. Andy's style of knives has been most influenced by the knives of Mr. Raymond Richard and Shawn Ellis, who have both helped and guided his progress and are his favorite makers along with Bruce Bump.

Andy says he has no real preference as to how his knives are made. The design of the blade and the desired end result are the determining factors of whether he will forge a blade or use stock removal. His favorite part of making a knife is finishing the handle and guard, "hunting those little scratches and doing the final finish."

Andy feels that his area of expertise is Clay Quenching a blade. He says, "I love to create hamons. I strive to make a better hamon on every knife I do. Most of my knives are clay quenched."

His favorite steels are 1095 and W2, and his favorite styles of knife are "those long thin fighters" and the drop point hunter. His favorite handle and fixture materials are Sambar Stag and Wrought Iron.

All aspects of Andy's knives are done in his shop, including making his own sheaths, which as you can see in the photos, are beautiful. (Blades made of ATS-34 are sent to Peters Heat Treat for HT and cryo treatment.)



Andy at work in his shop



Sharpe's Drop Point Hunter and leather-worked sheath



The cat... on the lookout for the bad squirrel?

What You Should Know about Toxic Woods

by John B. Hege

It was about five years ago that I made my first knife. Under the watchful eye of Tommy McNabb, I first cut, then drilled and ground a simple blade. It was a full tang knife, and after hardening and polishing, I was ready to install the handle scales. Tommy went digging through his stock and produced book-matched scales of a reddish wood with beautiful figuring, introducing it as Cocobolo. He added at that time that it was toxic to some people but he'd never experienced a problem with it himself. I've not had much experience with reactions to natural toxins myself, so I went about finishing my knife unconcerned.

That first knife led to another, and then to more and within a couple of years I was making and selling knives to order. I used a variety of other woods, but Cocobolo was one of my personal favorites. I liked its color and its figuring and among the tropical woods, it was fairly inexpensive. I had set up a rudimentary shop at my home and was looking forward to getting into the knife-making business.

On a night in January I was doing something I'd done many times before. I was violating just about every safety rule that was applicable, shaping the Cocobolo handle on a trout knife that a friend had ordered. The shop was closed up because it was cold. I had not yet installed any type of dust removal system, so all the dust that I generated hung in the air all around me. I wasn't wearing any kind of mask or eye protection and had no clue about what I was soon to go through.

The next morning I woke up and my eyes wouldn't open. My entire face was so swollen that I could only look out through squinted eyelids. Nothing I had ever experienced before had prepared me for this, but it didn't take me long to put the pieces together and understand what had happened. This was the toxicity that I had been warned about. I went through the household supplies of antihistamines, but nothing had any kind of noticeable effect. It was uncomfortable, but I didn't seem to be experiencing anything beyond that, so I decided to wait it out for the weekend until I could get in to see the doctor.

Uncomfortable as I was, I was thankful that my reaction didn't get any worse over the weekend and on Monday, the doctor confirmed what I had suspected, though he had never heard of Cocobolo. But he added that it was only by the grace of God that I had experienced only a skin reaction. Depending on individual makeup, it could just as easily have been a respiratory reaction in which case I would have likely died in my sleep: sobering news indeed.

So I did a little research and learned that Cocobolo is not the only tropical wood that can cause a severe reaction; many tropical woods and some domestic woods can also cause skin or respiratory problems and some have been linked to cancer of the nose and throat. Several instrument makers guilds and woodworkers groups have published lists of different types of wood and the dangers of exposure to them. They aren't all the same, though some of the worst offenders appear in them all. Unfortunately, I found that most of my favorite woods are listed among the most dangerous ones.

What follows is a compilation of some of the lists that I found illustrating the likely problems that may be encountered with different types of woods. In the reaction column will be listed "irritant, sensitizer, or cancer." Irritants are just that, they will irritate the skin, eyes or nose as long as they are present, but the effects will diminish as soon as the source is removed. A sensitizer is more serious. It can be compared to poison ivy in that a reaction appears in one who is sensitive. Repeated exposures for someone who is not sensitive can result in sensitivity at any time. Once the sensitivity is there, it is there to stay and a substance that was not toxic to an individual is now toxic and should always be considered as such. That is what happened to me with the Cocobolo.

Cancer, of course, does not occur right away, but can be the result of repeated exposure over time. Those woods that are linked to cancer may not produce any other noticeable reaction but should be very well respected and used with great care.

Some Potentially Toxic Woods Used in Knife-Making

Bald Cypress, <i>Taxodium Distichum</i>	Sensitizer	Respiratory	Dust	Rare
Balsam Fir, <i>Abies Balsamea</i>	Sensitizer	Skin, Eyes	Leaves, Bark	Common
Beech, <i>Fagus</i>	Sensitizer, Cancer	Skin, Eyes, Respiratory	Dust, Bark, Leaves	Common
Birch, <i>Betula</i>	Sensitizer	Respiratory	Wood, Dust	Common
Black Locust, <i>Robinia Pseudoacacia</i>	Irritant, Nausea	Skin, Eyes	Leaves, Bark	Common
Blackwood, <i>Dalbergia Melanoxylon</i>	Sensitizer	Skin, Eyes	Wood, Dust	Common
Boxwood, <i>Buxus</i>	Sensitizer	Skin, Eyes	Wood, Dust	Common
Cashew, <i>Anacardium Occidentale</i>	Sensitizer	Skin, Eyes	Wood, Dust	Common
Cocobolo, <i>Dalbergia Retusa</i>	Sensitizer, Irritant	Skin, Eyes, Respiratory	Wood, Dust	Common
Ebony, <i>Diospyros Ebenum</i>	Sensitizer, Irritant	Skin, Eyes	Wood, Dust	Common
Elm, <i>Ulmus</i>	Irritant	Skin, Eyes	Dust	Rare
Greenheart, <i>Lignum Vitae</i>	Sensitizer	Skin, Eyes	Wood, Dust	Common
Hemlock, <i>Tsuga</i>	Cancer	Respiratory	Dust	Unknown
Iroko (African Teak), <i>Milicia</i>	Sensitizer, Irritant, Pneumonia	Skin, Eyes, Respiratory	Wood, Dust	Common
Mahogany, <i>Swietenia</i>	Sensitizer, Pneumonia	Skin, Respiratory	Dust	Unknown
Maple, <i>Acer</i>	Sensitizer, Pneumonia	Respiratory	Dust	Common
Mimosa, <i>Albizia</i>	Nausea		Leaves, Bark	Unknown
Myrtle, <i>Myrtus</i>	Sensitizer	Respiratory	Dust, Leaves, Bark	Common
Oak, <i>Quercus</i>	Sensitizer, Cancer	Skin, Eyes	Dust, Leaves, Bark	Rare
Obeche, <i>Triplochiton Scleroxylon</i>	Sensitizer, Irritant	Skin, Eyes, Respiratory	Wood, Dust	Common
Oleander, <i>Nerium Oleander</i>	Direct Toxin, Nausea	Cardiac	Wood, Dust Leaves, Bark	Common
Olivewood, <i>Olea Europaea</i>	Sensitizer, Irritant	Skin, Eyes	Wood, Dust	Common
Padauk, <i>Pterocarpus</i>	Sensitizer	Skin, Eyes	Wood, Dust	Rare
Peroba Rosa, <i>Aspidosperma Polyneuron</i>	Irritant, Nausea	Respiratory	Wood, Dust	Unknown
Purpleheart, <i>Peltogune</i>	Nausea		Wood, Dust	Common
Quebracho, <i>Schinopsis Lorentzii</i>	Irritant, Nausea Cancer	Respiratory	Dust, Leaves Bark	Common
Redwood, <i>Cupressaceae</i>	Sensitizer, Cancer Pneumonia	Skin, Eyes, Respiratory	Dust	Rare Unknown
Rosewoods, <i>Dalbergia Nigra & Latifolia</i>	Sensitizer, Irritant	Skin, Eyes, Respiratory	Wood, Dust	Common
Satinwood, <i>Chloroxylon Swetenia</i>	Irritant	Skin, Eyes, Respiratory	Wood, Dust	Common
Sequoia, <i>Sequoia Sempervrens</i>	Irritant	Respiratory	Dust	Rare
Snakewood, <i>Acacia Xiphophylla</i>	Irritant	Respiratory	Wood, Dust	Rare
Spruce, <i>Picea</i>	Sensitizer	Skin, Eyes	Wood, Dust	Rare
Teak, <i>Tectona</i>	Sensitizer, Pneumonia	Skin, Eyes Respiratory	Dust	Common
Walnut, <i>Juglins Nigra</i>	Sensitizer	Skin, Eyes	Dust	Common

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

In each issue, we hope to feature one knife-maker, but in order to do this, we need information from you. The questionnaire gives basic information and more to help us get to know you.

If you have not yet filled out the questionnaire, please do so legibly and mail it as soon as possible to Bill Bisher, President or Rebecca Dresser, Editor 1015 Beck Road, Denton, NC 27239 P.O. Box 316, Danbury, NC 27016

GUILD QUESTIONNAIRE

(Please don't be chintzy with your answers; we want to get to know you! Use extra paper if you need more space.)

Name: _____ Address: _____

Phone and Email: _____ Age/Birthday: _____

How did you find out about our Guild AND when did you join? _____

Who or what was your major influence when you began knife-making or collecting AND why? _____

Favorite Knife, Knifemaker(s), etc AND why? _____

Preference? Forging or Stock Removal? _____ Style/Pattern? _____

Favorite Steel or Steels? _____ Area of Expertise? _____

Favorite Step or Part in knife making? _____

Is everything done in your shop? Sheaths/Heat Treating, etc? _____

Affiliations? _____ Website? _____

When did you start making knives? _____

How much time do you spend in your shop in a given week? Describe your shop set up, please. _____

Please tell about making your first knife. _____

What knives sell best for you? _____

REMAINING 2009 KNIFEMAKING CLASSES

AT MONTGOMERY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

www.montgomery.cc.nc.us

The Art of Mokume Gane with Phillip Jones

October 1—4, \$315

Learn the ancient Japanese technique of combining various copper-based metals for decoration in knife-making or jewelry-making.

Basic Damascus Steel Making with Tommy McNabb

October 16—18, \$240

This will be an intense class covering Damascus steel, basic and advanced pattern development and finishing. The class will address many aspects of making Damascus steel, such as billet preparation, steel combination, & tooling.

TOXIC WOODS (continued from page 8)

Wenge, <i>Mellettia Laurentii</i>	Sensitizer	Skin, Eyes, Respiratory	Wood, Dust	Common
Western Red Cedar, <i>Juniperus</i>	Sensitizer	Respiratory	Dust, Leaves, Bark	Common
Willow, <i>Salix</i>	Sensitizer, Nausea	Respiratory	Wood, Dust Leaves, Bark	Unknown

Since my experience with Cocobolo, I've noticed that I also have a sensitivity to Blackwood. After using it I start to itch and experience a rash on my neck and inside my elbows. I haven't experienced as severe a reaction, but that may simply be because I take precautions now that I had neglected before, not the least of which is to shower immediately after working with the wood. Now I try to plan my workday such that shaping and finishing handles made of toxic materials is the last thing that I do; then I head straight to the shower.

While looking up the various Latin Names of the woods, I noticed that Cocobolo and Blackwood are both of the genus *Dalbergia*, (*Dalbergia Retusa* and *Dalbergia Melanoxylon* respectively). Looking down the list you can see that the Rosewood species are also of the *Dalbergia* genus, (*Dalbergia Nigra* and *Dalbergia Latifolia*). I have not worked with Rosewood since my Cocobolo experience, but it's safe to assume that it would provoke a similar reaction as the Blackwood and the Cocobolo.

Spalted wood can be a threat as well. Spalted wood is partially decayed by fungi eating through the grain, sometimes leaving attractive colored patterns. It's popular among Knife-Makers who may choose a highly figured piece of spalted wood from an old woodpile. Even when thoroughly dried, the fungi that produce the patterns leave microscopic spores that are not necessarily dead but are dormant. Once inhaled, these spores find themselves in a very attractive growth environment inside the lungs and throat and can cause severe respiratory infections. Using breathing equipment while grinding or sanding spalted wood is very important!

Of course it's impossible to list everything that may pose a hazard, and it's also impractical to avoid exposure to all of the materials on the list. So as with any endeavor, the important thing is to know your adversary. Always take practical precautions. Wear breathing protection, and use a dust removal system of some kind even if it only consists of moving your grinder outdoors and turning on a strong fan to blow the dust away. Everyone will agree that respirators and other breathing equipment are an uncomfortable nuisance, but in my case, six weeks of Prednasone and the mess that it made of my body were a relatively small price to pay for a very important lesson.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Membership/Renewal Fee: \$50 per year

Collector Fee: \$25 per year

Student Fee: \$10 per year

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Website: _____

New Member: _____ Renewal: _____

Member Category: Maker _____ Collector _____ Student _____

Mail form and check to:
NC Custom Knifemakers Guild
Attn Tony Kelly
348 Bell Road
Kinston, NC 28504

NCCKG SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM APPLICATION FORM

All applications are due by December 31 of each year. A drawing will be held by the Board of Directors during the January meeting . If your name is drawn, you will be notified, and it is your responsibility to pay Montgomery Community College for the knife-making class you choose. You must complete the course, send a copy of your certificate to the NCCKG Treasurer, demonstrate your new skill at a Guild meeting or write an article for the Guild newsletter. At that time, the course fee will be refunded to you. Please note that the scholarship covers only the course fee; all other expenses are the responsibility of the student.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Course Name and Date: _____

Mail form to:
NC Custom Knifemakers Scholarship Program
Attn Tony Kelly
348 Bell Road
Kinston, NC 28504

NORTH
CAROLINA
**CUSTOM
KNIFEMAKERS**
G U I L D

**P.O. BOX 316
DANBURY, NC 27016**

NEWS TO NOTE

**The October meeting
has been CANCELLED!!**

**A new website is coming soon.
Please be on the lookout
for details and information
and how you can be a part of it.**

Look Inside for...

Photos from Recent Guild Meeting

Article on Toxic Woods

Feature Photos of the July Knife

Important Info from the President

Featured Knifemaker: Andy Sharpe