

# *Billetts & Blades*



The Official Publication of  
The North Carolina Custom  
Knifemakers' Guild

March 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.

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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 NCCKG.

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**President's Letter**

First off, I would like to thank everyone that attended the January meeting. It was encouraging to see such a good turnout. We had some new members and a few potential members in attendance also, which was good to see.

Alan Folts brought the tee shirts and sells were brisk. We will reorder the 3x in the near future. For those that did not make the meeting, the tees sell for \$15.00 to members and \$18.00 to non-members. This way the Guild can make a little money and if a member wants to sell some at a show they will make a few dollars. The tees will be for sell at each meeting.

Alan will have the final print on the brochure ready before long and as soon as it is approved it will go to print. I'm in hopes that we will have them ready by the July or October meeting.

We still need members to help with demonstrations. The April meeting will be our first meeting that **"Bring A Jig"** will start. This is where everyone will bring a jig that they use in their shop to share with everyone.

The April meeting will be at my shop. This is the second meeting in the piedmont area. The next two will be in the eastern part of the state. July's meeting will be at Wayne Whitley's shop and will be a two day affair. The October meeting will be at Alan's new shop. I know it is a long distance for our western members to travel and the same is true for our eastern members when the meetings are in the west. But we need the unity in the Guild at this time. Car pooling and sharing a room would cut costs. Contact each other and make plans to attend. It is your Guild. Keep it growing!

Hope to see you there.

Bill Bisher, President.

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"Take every birthday with a grain of salt. This works much better if the salt accompanies a Margarita."

**NCCKG Meeting  
April 14, 2007  
Black Turtle Forge  
Denton, NC**

The April meeting of the NCCKG will be held in Denton, NC at the shop of Bill Bisher, Black Turtle Forge, 1015 Beck Rd, Denton, NC. The telephone number is 336-859-5486.

- 09:00 a.m. Director's Meeting
- 10:00 a.m. Introductions
- 10:30 a.m. Building a Ribbon Burner for a Gas Forge— Bill Bisher
- 12:00 noon Lunch on site  
Catered by Troutmans Barbecue  
Sell Iron in the Hat Tickets
- 01:00 p.m. General Meeting  
Tee Shirt Sell
- 02:00 p.m. The Art of Making Mokume  
Phillip Jones
- 03:30 p.m. Iron in the Hat
- 04:30 p.m. Meeting Ends

NOTE: We will make time to view and discuss the jigs that are brought in, seeing that most demos end before their time is up.

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**Directions to Black Turtle Forge:**

From Asheboro take Highway 64 West to Highway 49 South—Charlotte exit. Take Hwy 49 South 1/2 mile to Old Highway 49—Farmer Road. Bear right. Take Farmer Road to the caution light (about 7 miles). Take a right on Denton / Farmer Road. Go 4.3 miles and turn right onto Canaan Church Road (NC 1307). Go 1.3 miles past the church and turn right on a gravel road. Go .2 miles and turn right on North Nance Road. Go 1/2 mile and turn left onto Beck Road. Go .2 miles and look for 1015 Beck road and the Guild signs. You can park on the road or on the power line right-of-way.

For directions from Troy, Charlotte, Greensboro, and Winston-Salem check Map Quest. They are correct.

**Hotels**

Holiday Inn Express  
 1113 E. Dixie Dr.  
 Ashboro, NC  
 1-877-508-1762

Hampton Inn,  
 1137 E. Dixie Dr  
 Ashboro, NC  
 1-336-625-9000

Asheboro Inn  
 825 W. Dixie Dr.  
 Ashboro, NC  
 1-336-626-4414

**How To Draw File**

Terry Primos

*(Terry is a bladesmith from Shreveport, La. He is a member of the American Bladesmith Society and the Arkansas Knife-makers' Association. He is posts regularly on the Knifenetwork and on Blades Forum. His involvement in the forums is testament to his willingness to help other makers develop their craft.)*

I do plenty of draw filing on larger knives. The blade is clamped down in front of me with the tip pointing toward me, and I pull (draw) the file toward myself from the ricasso shoulders to the tip.

The file is directional. For the pull cuts such as I do the tang of the file goes in the left hand. For a push cut tip to ricasso the tang of the file would go in your right hand.

When you start out the going is slow and you may think that it's not going to work. But just keep going with nice even strokes. Once the uneven flats start to work down you will progress quickly.

**Things To Remember:**

1. Don't be tempted to scrub back and forth. You will ruin the file and it won't help your work at all.
2. Keep the teeth of the file clean. Little chips of the steel can get embedded in the teeth and will gall the piece. Galling means that it will score a deep scratch in your nice smooth piece. You can use a file card or a small stiff wire brush to clean out the teeth. I usually just whack the file on the workbench every couple of strokes. Of course I also check to see that it's clean before making another stroke.
3. Don't work just one area. If you have a scratch in a low spot you can't just work that area to get the scratch out. All you'll do is create a divot. The entire surface from ricasso shoulders to tip has to be brought down. When you are dealing with a low spot, an easy way to check your progress is to paint over the low spot with a Magic Marker. As the rest of the blade is brought down you will begin to "erase" the area that you've colored in.
4. Be patient. Draw filing is not as bad as some folks think, but it's certainly not like using a

**BATSON BLADESMITHING SYMPOSIUM**

**AGENDA**

March 29—April 01, 2007  
 Tannehill Iron Works & State Park  
 McCalla, AL

Thursday, Mar 29, 2007

1 to 9 pm.....Check-in  
 5 to 7 pm.....Demonstrators Dinner

Friday, April 30, 2007

7-8 am.....Check-in  
 8-12 noon.....Demonstrations

Lunch

1-5 pm.....Hands-on Seminars  
 7-9 pm.....Cutting Competition

Saturday, Mar 31, 2007

7-8 am.....Check-in  
 8-12 noon.....Demonstrations

Lunch

1-2 pm.....Demonstrations  
 Sunday, April 1, 2007

8-12 noon.....Demonstrations  
 Departure

For reservations and information, call the park at 205-477-5711.

grinder with a 60 grit belt. It takes time and patience. The results are rewarding when you've done the job properly.

This Bowie was primarily done by draw filing. After forging and annealing I did use the grinder to knock off the "bark" from the blade bevels and define the ricasso shoulders a little better.



Then I went from a 60 grit belt to draw filing with a standard bastard file. Once everything was flat I went to a finer mill bastard. The final finish was done after heat treating by hand rubbing, starting with 120 grit paper wrapped around a file, progressing through the grits to 1000 grit.

**My sanding and draw filing fixture**  
The blade must have support. Because of the distal taper of the blade, the tip will be suspended in air. So will part of the center of the blade. So you have the problem of the middle of the blade bowing and the tip bending as you draw the file across the blade.

The bow will cause you to dish out the center, and the tip will bend causing you to round it off.

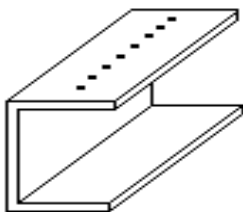
Here's how I address that problem. I use the same fixture for my draw filing that I use for hand sanding. This helps resolve these



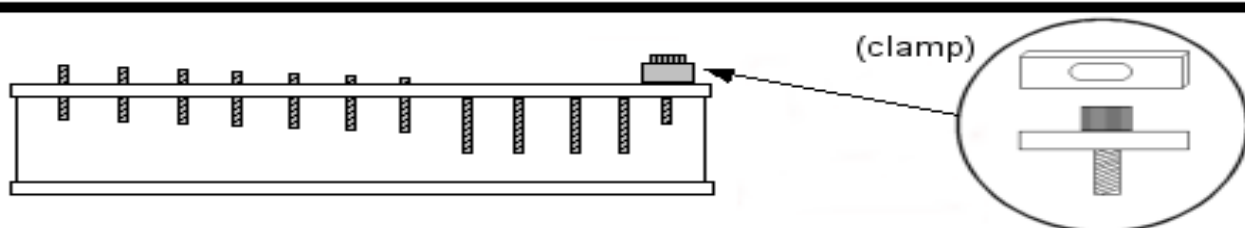
problems of the center bowing, and the tip bending. I don't have a good shot of the fixture, so this will have to suffice for now.

I have a strip of leather with a hole in one end. The clamp bolt pictured above goes through that hole. The strip of leather is to protect the blade. The reason of the oblong milled hole in the clamp is so I can move the clamp left or right as needed.

The tang goes under the clamp and is secured. Then the pieces of all thread are brought up to support the blade all the way to the tip. So you don't have the bowing and bending, and you won't hear that \*thunk\* or \*boing\* as you come straight off the tip. Works like a charm. I can do anything from a 2 1/2" blade to a 12" blade with no problem



Channel iron with top face drilled and tapped for 1/4" bolts. I use 1/4" all thread. Screw the pieces in from the under side of the face. One hole receives the clamp which secures the tang to the fixture.



The fixture is secured to the workbench or the edge of a table. Mine is clamped to a table with "C" clamps. The blade is protected by a strip of leather on the face of the fixture. Clamp the tang down then adjust the all thread pieces to support the blade all the way to the tip.



*In Memory of  
George Herron  
September 05, 1932—February 20, 2007*



Mr. George Herron was a past president of the Knifemaker's Guild, a member of the SC Association of Knifemakers', the North Carolina Custom Knifemakers' Guild, and a proud member of the NRA. He died after a long illness. Mr. George was one of the most colorful characters I have ever met. I always enjoyed the times we got to visit at the NCKKG meetings. His stories were one of a kind—just like Mr. Herron. George you are going to be greatly missed, not just as a knifemaker but as a friend.

"I think that "Mr. George" was my most unforgettable character. I was a little intimidated by him at first until I got to know him a little. I know that he gave me some great advise and encouragement when I first started making



knives. I always looked forward to the guild meeting so I could show him my latest creations and get his review. He was most definitely someone that marched to his own drum. The knife community and the world has lost a fine gentleman. I can also see him and John sitting in heaven talking knives, and both of them peeping over their glass at us...!" *Thomas Clegg*



Mr. Herron is joining the greats of John Poythress, Bill Moran, the Kovals, Robert Horrigan, Jerry Snell, and David Turner. The "swords of heaven" are getting better and sharper.



“George Herron had been a great friend to me for over 20 years and helped me as a knifemaker and to start the NC Knifemakers Guild. George had been a member of the SC Guild and well as the national Knifemakers Guild for years and they had experienced some of the problems we had to deal with. He was a big help in keeping us on the right track. He was always ready to go out of his way to help our Guild with classes at MCC or do a demo at one of our meetings. I am sure everyone will miss George and I count myself lucky to have known him and spent many happy hours with him.”

*Tommy McNabb*

George Herron, how I remember the man. I first met George in the 1980's at the Uwharrie Motel in Troy. This is the “famous” motel the guild members began using when taking knifemaking classes at the college. Everyone would meet in one of the guys’



room and would talk into the night after eating a meal next door at the restaurant. George always had his trusty pipe with him. During many of these meetings, I had the opportunity to talk with George and other members of the guild. Once he talked about his time in Korea, not to any great extent, but by his tone he had seen some pretty rough times. George, as always outspoken and whenever he was in a discussion with anyone, his command presence came alive. Any and all questions directed at him were responded to in terms that could be understood by the novice knifemaker as well as the expert. I had been a member of the guild for many months before I got up the courage to present my

knives to the board of directors to be juried in as a voting member of the NCKKG. It was at one of these meetings at the motel that I decided to be juried in. Entering the room I found the board members and George Herron, a world renown knifemaker. After the knives had been passed around for inspection, he asked to see them. He picked out a small fixed blade with a stag handle asked to buy it. I now know that the knife was not that great, but in his own way he was building my confidence in saying that he wanted that particular blade. I admit I was very proud that he wanted this blade, but I declined to sell. As a result of his encouragement, I have taken classes from the greats like Don Fogg, Ron Newton, Ed Halligan, Darryl Ralph, Wayne Whitley, Jim Batson , Bill Moran, **and** George Herron. George's techniques have inspired many knifemakers. He would answer anyone's questions concerning any aspect of knifemaking. George always had time for the novice or accomplished maker. I have a 11 x 14 photograph on my wall containing four individuals.....myself, Jim Batson, George Herron, and Bill Moran. As a "knifemaker", I don't even come close to the workmanship of these three legends, but I will keep this picture always so that I can say "I walked in the footsteps of Giants". Bill and George, YOU WILL BOTH BE MISSED!! *Tony Kelly*



### Ain't it the Truth!!!

(These were all sent to me on e-mail. I thought ya'll might enjoy them. )

A woman goes to the doctor for her yearly physical. The nurse starts with certain basic items. "How much do you weigh?" she asks. "115," she says. The nurse puts her on the scale. It turns out her weight is 140. The nurse asks, "Your height?" "5 foot 8," she says. The nurse checks and sees that she only measures 5' 5". She then takes her blood pressure and tells the woman it is very high. "Of course it's high!" she screams, "When I came in here I was tall and slender! Now I'm short and fat!"

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Potato chips aren't rubbery and blubbery like fat. They are crisp and crunchy like lettuce. This proves they are diet food.

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The handle of your recliner does not qualify as an exercise machine.

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My doctor told me to start my exercise slowly. So today I drove by a store that sells sweat pants.

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I woke up early this morning to go jogging. But, my toes voted against me 10 to 1.

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If you put a crouton on your sundae instead of a cherry, it counts as a salad.

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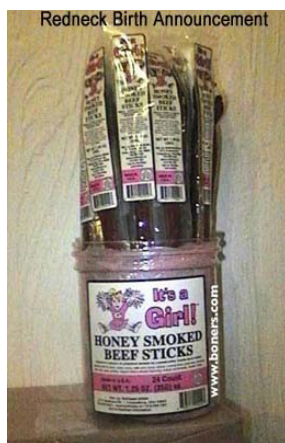
### Have You Seen A Good Movie Lately?

All of the movies listed below are available to be "borrowed" from the lending library of the NCCCKG. A form for borrowing the movies is on the next page.

Remember, these movies are just loaned to you. They are not part of your permanent collection. When you check a movie out for viewing, you need to fill out the form, mail or give to Barry Jones, and remember to return the movie by the agreed up date. Also, you are responsible for return postage and insurance to cover movie replacement when you ship it back.

- Forging Damascus part 1
- Gurkha Steel - The Making of a Khukuri
- GRS Engraving Methods & Techniques parts 1 & 2
- Blade Cutlery - Hollow Grinding
- Blade Cutlery - Carbon Steel Heat Treating
- Gene Osborne Knifemaking
- Swordmaking - The History Channel
- The Gaijin's Guide to Sword Finishing parts 1 - 7
- Sharpening is a Cooking Skill with Harrelson Stanley
- *Intermediate & Advanced Engraving with Lynton McKenzie*
- *Focused Listening Skills*
- *The Woodmaster Vol. 9—Primitive Knifemaking*
- *Take Your Time and Enjoy Forging by Dr. James Batson*
- *An Introduction to Knifemaking*

The videos / DVDs listed above in italics were borrowed at a previous meeting. If you have these, please turn these back in so others can enjoy them. The lending library only works if everyone follows the guidelines. You can mail them to Barry or bring them to a meeting and turn them in.





VIDEO LENDING LIBRARY  
A Service of the  
North Carolina Custom Knifemakers' Guild

Please read and complete all items before submitting form for borrowing a video.

Borrower's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Date video borrowed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date video to be returned: \_\_\_\_\_

The video (s) listed below have been loaned to me by the North Carolina Custom Knifemakers' Guild. I agree to return the video (s) on the date above. I also agree to mail the video (s) insured and with a signature required for tracking purposes with the courier I choose to handle the return shipping. There will be a penalty of \$50.00 per item incurred for loss or damages sustained during the checkout period. I agree to be responsible for said loss or damages.

If I do not return the video (s) by the above return date, I understand the Guild will bill me for the replacement cost of the video and I will pay this amount.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Borrower

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Video (s) to be borrowed:

Title of Video (s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Return to:**  
  
Barry Jones  
221 North Avenue  
Danville, VA 24540  
  
Please affix enough postage  
for delivery and insure for  
enough to replace video if  
lost in shipping.

### “Sights and Sounds”

From the January meeting of the NCKG at Montgomery Community College.



It was good to see a big crowd turn out for the meeting. It has been a long time since I have been able to attend and it was so good to see so many old friends and begin to make new ones.



Seems it was a day for us “old” ones to return. Meet Mr. Bruce Turner. He is responsible for the partnership between the NCKG and MCC for furthering the craft of knifemaking in North Carolina and around the country.

And it was a day for memories. Tim Scholl did a demo on constructing a Bowie Box Handle. John saw Tim demonstrate this many years ago at a summer meeting at Norm and Marge’s home in Virginia. This is the demo that gave John the information he needed to come home and perfect his technique in making this type handle.



As always lunch is one “demo” no one wants to miss. And this was no different as many of us met for an Italian feast.



Bob Ham brought along a very special guest to the meeting. It is always good to see family at the meetings. There are so few things that families are included in. Even with the obvious risks of knifemaking and the

business of knifemaking, it is good to see it is also a good way for family to be together.

John instilled a love for knives in our first grandson, Avery. Now, instead of John coming with me I have my new traveling



buddy who loves the “road trips” to the meetings. Oh, and Avery actually took most of the pictures at the meeting and all but 2 of these were taken by him



Phillip Gaddy gave step-by-step instructions on how to do a wire inlay. He not only included information on the tools he uses, but being the conservative spender he is, there were good tips on how to make the tools inexpensively.

As you can see, Phillip had everyone’s attention to see just how he accomplishes this task.



**2007 Class Schedule  
Montgomery Community College  
Troy, North Carolina**

**Metal Engraving Scroll and Scroll Design**

**Jesse Houser, Instructor**

August 6 - 17, 2007 (No Weekend)

Cost \$60 plus \$50 supply fee

This two week course will focus on drawing and cutting various types of scroll design. Beginning and advanced students will be able to pace themselves based on their own abilities. During the second week, students will be drawing and cutting scroll designs onto live projects.

**\*Custom Folding Knives**

**Ed VanHoy, Instructor**

May 3 - 6, 2007

Cost \$315

Design and craft a custom liner-lock folding knife. The class will show the basic principles and methods of construction required to make a folding knife. It will cover design, machine work, drilling, tapping, grinding the blade and finishing. Each student will complete a knife using both machine shop and common hand tools.

**\*Grinding Knife Blades**

**Ed Halligan, Instructor**

June 22 - 24, 2007

Cost \$240

Learn fixed blade design using the basic principles and methods of knife construction, including how to hollow-grind and heat treat knife blades, how to make guards, and how to finish a handle.

**\*Introduction to Bladesmithing**

**James Batson, Instructor**

August 3 - 5, 2007

Cost \$240

Learn the basics of forging a knife blade by hammer and hand. Each student will prepare blades they have forged for heat treating by hand with files or by grinding. They will learn how to heat treat, finish, and sharpen these blades. All levels of skill accepted; adequate eye-hand coordination is necessary.

**\*Basic Knife Making**

**Tommy McNabb, Instructor**

August 23-26, 2007

Cost \$315

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 to intermediates who want to perfect their knife making talents.

**\*Automatic Folding Knives**

**Ed VanHoy, Instructor**

September 13 -16, 2007

Cost \$315

Design and craft a spring loaded folding knife. The course will include the basic principles and methods of construction required to make a spring loaded automatic folder. Techniques will include drilling, tapping, grinding and finishing.

**\*Forged Tomahawks**

**Wayne Whitley, Instructor**

October 5 -7, 2007

Cost \$240

Forge and finish an early American tomahawk, including forging, grinding, heat-treating, and finishing the blade and handle. A hands-on course. Instructor will furnish all the supplies for the students to purchase.

**\*Courses marked with an asterisk (\*) are self-supporting and non-refundable except in the case of cancellation by the college. Montgomery Community College reserves the right to cancel any course due to low enrollment.**

For more information contact Montgomery Community College, Continuing Education Department, Troy, NC 910-576-6222.

As long as there are tests, there will be prayer in public school.

life is like a roll of toilet paper The closer it gets to the end, the faster it goes



## Calendar of Events

### April 2007

**NCKKG Meeting:** April 14, at the shop of Bill Bisher, Denton, NC

### May 2007

**Custom Folding Knives:** May 3-6, Ed VanHoy, instructor, Montgomery Community College, Troy NC

**Davi's Knife Show:** May 4-6, Raleigh NC

### 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](http://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>