

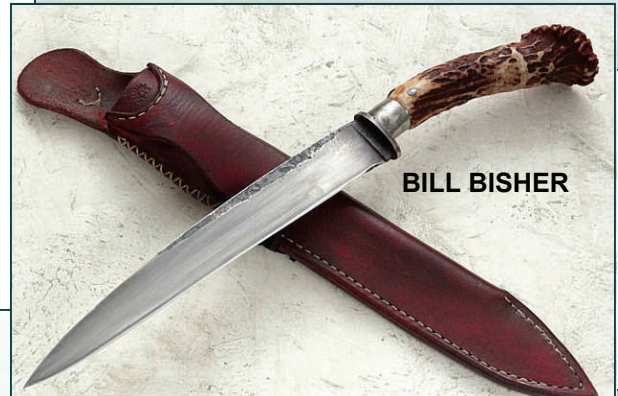
JAMIN BRACKET



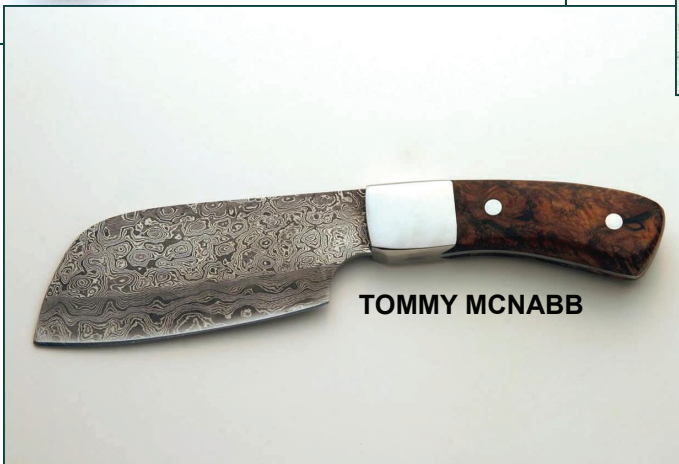
JOHN HEGE



RUSS SUTTON



BILL BISHER



TOMMY MCNABB



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## FROM THE EDITOR

On behalf of the Knife Guild, I offer our condolences to **Andy Sharpe** on the death of his son last fall and to **Robert Knight** on the death of his wife in December. You are both in our thoughts and prayers, and we hope that the new year will bring you comfort and peace.

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 the contact info at right.

If you are currently receiving *Billets and Blades* but are **no longer interested in being a member** of the NC Knife Guild, please let us know. You may contact Rebecca Dresser (see contact list to the right) to have your name removed from the mailing list. Thank you. Also, if you know of someone who may be interested in **becoming a member**, please let Tim or Rebecca know and we'll be happy to mail a copy of the current newsletter to that person.

## 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 NCKG.

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### Advertising Policy:

The NCKG 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 OUR PRESIDENT

*By Tim Scholl*

Well, another year has come and gone. I hope it was a good and profitable one. Now it's time to start scheduling the 2012 shows and the Guild seminars for the upcoming year. The knife-making classes for the school are already lined up, and we should have a list ready at the January meeting.

Also elections are in April this year. All positions except president are up for re-election, so keep in mind who you would like to see as new officers.

The Jones brothers were at my shop a month or so ago, and I pulled out the first, third and fifth knives I made way back in 1990. Needless to say I've come a long, long way from those rough looking pieces, but that spawned an idea. If you still have it, bring the first knife or two you made to our January meeting. I think it would be a great way to see how much we have all improved.

If you would like to have your knives juried so that you can be a full-fledged voting member, please bring three knives to the January meeting for the jury process. If you haven't been juried in, you cannot vote in elections or any other matters.

Also at the meeting, we will do another special Iron in the Hat drawing for the tomahawk I forged at the last meeting. I will be finishing it with a handle and some decorations. The tickets will be \$5.00 and proceeds will go to the Guild.

One final note and reminder: If you have not paid your 2012 dues, they are past due and are now \$60.00. These must be paid for your name to be included in this year's membership list and to continue receiving the newsletter.

That's about it from me this time. Send Andy your ideas for demos and I'll see you in January.

# UPCOMING GUILD MEETING

## SATURDAY, JANUARY 28

Montgomery Community College in Troy, NC

### SATURDAY EVENTS WILL INCLUDE

Board of Directors Meeting at 8:00 with General Guild Meeting at 9:00

Jurying of Knives

Iron in the Hat

Demos:

1. *Making Kydex Sheaths* by Chris Williams
2. *Attaching Beveled Bolsters and Handles* by Art Summers
3. *How to Do Gunstock Checkering* by special guest, Ryan Flynn

Here's a little info about Ryan...

"I graduated from MCC in 2004 and went on to apprentice under Tim Carrick of Carrick's Custom Guns. From there I worked as a machinist for Ingersoll Rand. After two years I left and then managed all operations for the custom shop at Ionbond as the head gunsmith where I got to work with a lot of the top gunsmiths and gun companies in the country finishing firearms for them. I left them in 2009 to concentrate more on my own business. I have operated my business, Aquilla Custom Gun Works, for the past 6 years. My specialties are machining, stockmaking, checkering, building custom rifles and 1911's, along with refinishing and restoration, all the while still trying to test my own skills and improve upon them. My work is my hobby and passion, and I am lucky enough to have a job I love."

As always, there will be a little free time and a break for lunch after the first two demos, followed by the afternoon demo. Family and friends are welcome.

Please note that we always need members to lead demos. No matter how simple you think something is, it may be new or different to someone else. If you have a demo you would like to do or see done, please contact Andy Sharpe.



**Business Meeting Minutes from October** Submitted by Tommy Johnson, Secretary

1. Elections will be held at the April meeting. All offices except president will be up for election.
2. We are looking at the possibility of bringing in outside makers to give paid demonstrations.
3. Info must be received by Dec 8, 2011 to be included in Knives 2013 edition.
4. Copies of the KnifeWorld issue with an article about the N.C.C.K.G. were available at the meeting.
5. Dues are due by the end of October.
6. Several name tags were ready and issued. If you need a name tag, see Jim Decoster.
7. Several visitors introduced themselves.
8. Russel Gardner had 3 stitching horses for sale \$300.00 each.
9. A question was asked about applying for a scholarship. Submit your request and fill out the form (found on website).

**PHOTOS FROM THE JULY MEETING** (photos by Tommy McNabb)



It's a fascinating read, guys!



Our Guild members like their camouflage.



Hey Guys! Come check out this demo by Travis!





Tim forges a hawk.



Shirts send a message.



Good eats, good friends, good music, good times.



## North Carolina Custom Knifemakers Guild

By Jamin Brackett *(Originally written for and published in KnifeWorld Magazine, Summer 2011)*

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In August of 2009, while reading a post on a knife I had made on blade forums, a then-unknown-to-me maker, Andy Sharpe, invited me to attend an upcoming North Carolina Custom Knifemakers Guild meeting. I attended my first meeting in January 2010 in Troy NC, at Montgomery Community College.

Not knowing what to expect, I quietly entered the door and was greeted by a large group with approximately forty people present. They began the day with their business meeting, followed by demonstrations. Andy Sharpe gave a demonstration on a blade he had forged and showed how he obtained his distinct Hammond lines. At lunch time James Poplin of Pop's Knife Supply unloaded a van in the parking lot, and after setting up tables, he began selling knife-making supplies. After lunch there were several more demonstrations.

As a rookie maker, I was amazed at their openness and willingness to share. Several of those in attendance made the comment, "there are no secrets in the Guild." Everyone shared their knowledge and experience. This was my first opportunity to see and handle many handmade knives by other makers gathered in one place. I saw folders by Bob Ham, beautiful Damascus daggers by Tim Scholl, intricately carved ivory handles by Tommy McNabb, and a large Bowie knife the Jones Brothers from Virginia had brought.

The Guild meets quarterly, usually at Montgomery Community College. They, however, do meet occasionally at individual makers' shops across the state. Later at another meeting, I went to Bob Ham's shop in Hendersonville, NC. At this meeting, Bob, then the Vice President, took the time to walk me through the shop, explaining his equipment. Bob said, "Everyone does things differently; everyone brings something to the table." Bob took the time to offer suggestions and told me I could call him any time I needed assistance. At this meeting, demonstrations on file-working, engraving titanium and mirror polishing were given.

The more meetings I attended, the more I came to know the members of the Guild. Tony Kelly, a long-time maker, sat down with me and explained what the NC Guild meant to him. He explained after he lost nearly everything in a flood, members of the Guild came and helped him to rebuild. He went on to explain how the Guild helped to obtain the vast array of machinery in the shop at Montgomery Community College and that it is second to none. He said, "The Guild is something for North Carolina to be proud of." Tony told me when he was juried into the Guild, one of the judges was none other than George Herron. It was obvious to me that meeting was of profound importance to him in his knife-making journey.

The North Carolina Custom Knifemakers Guild was formed in 1992. Several of the original members are still very active. Tim Scholl, current president, Tommy McNabb, Travis Daniels, and Tim Britton are among current members. Spartan Knives, The Jones Brothers, and Art Summers are often in attendance.

The four fundamental purposes of the Guild are to:

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

(Continued on page 7)



**THE GUILD** (cont. from pg 6)

The North Carolina Custom Knifemakers Guild serves as a training resource and is prepared to present any aspect of the craft. It is the intent of the Guild to raise the public's awareness of custom-made knives. Membership is open to anyone interested in the craft. In order to become a voting member, one must first join for a period of one year at which time they are required to present their work to be juried in. New members will find that members of the Guild will readily assist them in every aspect of the process.

Both Tony Kelly and Tommy McNabb stated the importance of the Guild and how Montgomery College has allowed them to bring in world-class knifemakers over the years to lead scheduled classes. Several of the notable instructors were the late George Herron and Bill Moran. Don Fogg, Ron Newton, Darrel Ralph, Jim Batson, Ed Vanhoy, Ed Halligan, Wayne Whitley, and Eric Galahad are among others. With the renowned instructors and equipment on hand, the courses taught through the NC Guild at Montgomery Community College are second to none.

In October 2010, I attended another meeting at the college. This time I couldn't work out a babysitter and took my nine year old daughter, Faith, with me. I worried if I would be able to keep her interested throughout the day. At this

meeting, as in others, they had the "Iron in the Hat" table where each member places items to be raffled off. Barry and Phillip Jones brought handmade mokume gane earrings which, they informed, the ladies present would be able to draw for. As soon as Faith's name was called, she was hooked on the Guild meetings! Throughout the meeting my daughter was made to feel welcome, and it became clear to me that the meetings are truly a family affair. As they called the "Iron in the Hat" ticket numbers, I watched as many of the members were passing their tickets to my daughter. On the way home it was no surprise when Faith asked when she would be able to return with me.

In the end it's not all about the knives. It's the friendships we make and the crafting of something special with our hands. For those that strive for perfection, the quest may never end. But the challenge and the rewards in doing something the right way makes for a special journey.

For those interested in crafting handmade knives by forging, or stock removal, check out the North Carolina Custom KnifeMakers Guild website at [www.ncknifeguild.org](http://www.ncknifeguild.org). There are links to the members' sites, upcoming events, photos, and course schedules for the classes at Montgomery Community College. Many of the members travel great distances and often stay at the Days Inn in Biscoe, NC. I look forward to seeing you there.

**THE KNIFEMAKER'S GUILD...  
In the Beginning**

By Tim Britton

In the beginning... a gathering of knife enthusiasts and a few makers was held at the Glenwood Manor Motel in Kansas City, Missouri. We couldn't afford our own show, so we blocked a few tables at the Kansas Gun Collectors show. We didn't do much business but had one heck of a good time and the seeds had been sown for the national organization which would be simply called The Knifemaker's Guild.

In 1973 we had our own show at the stately Muehlbach Hotel in Kansas City, and we had a home, until we moved to the Crown Centre Hotel in Kansas City. These shows were quite a SHOW! G.W. Stone would get a table next to an iron pillar or beam and hack on it for show. Bob Loveless sat behind his table and growled at people while Frank Centofante did his best to help everyone feel welcome and comfortable.

We used to have our meetings at 8pm until we realized some of our loudmouths would ratchet their jaws well into the wee hours. Guild President Jimmy Lile was a masterful peacemaker, but there wasn't much he could do with some of these self-styled orators. Hundreds of hours were spent trying to define "handmade" and dealing with suggestions for alternate locations. Everyone seemed to want the guild show in their own backyard. One of the functions of the president of the guild was to arbitrate disagreements. The policy was quite simple. If I, as a maker, had a customer mad at me, I had 30 days to resolve the issue, or I was expelled from the guild. This didn't make the president's job very enjoyable.

(Continued on page 9)

## Fire Extinguisher Selection for your Shop and Home

Information Provided by Tim Scholl

Having spent the better part of 15 years in the fire suppression industry I am still amazed at the number of people who do not know the first thing about a fire extinguisher, much less have one in their home or, in our case, shop. I have taught extinguisher selection, use, and maintenance on a regular basis to different businesses as one of my duties.

The first thing you need to know is what causes a fire. Fire is caused by what is known as Fire Triangle: oxygen, fuel, and a source of ignition. Take one of these away and the fire goes out. The type of extinguisher is determined by the class of fire.

CLASS A FIRE: anything that burns that leaves ashes, such as wood, paper, etc.

CLASS B FIRE: gas, oil, paint, grease, etc.

CLASS C FIRE: this type of fire is electrically charged and will contain class A + B material

CLASS D FIRE: metals such as titanium, magnesium, aluminum, and sodium



The extinguishers I will cover here are all dry chemical based. The best extinguisher for our purpose is one that is rated ABC. This will handle most any fire in a home or shop with the exception of CLASS D fires (more on class D fires later). The ABC extinguisher will have a label with the following pictographs: A) picture of a burning trash can; B) picture of a burning fuel can; and C) picture of a burning electrical plug. Remember a BC rated extinguisher will not work on a class A fire. Also, SIZE MATTERS!!! I recommend a 10 pound extinguisher minimum. Be sure to also spend the extra money and get one with a metal head with the gauge that is threaded into the head. The plastic headed ones are notorious for leaking down pressure because the gauge is held in with a clip and the siphon tube regularly breaks off in the canister during maintenance.

The only extinguisher that will work on a CLASS D fire is a CLASS D extinguisher. These will have a pictograph of a star on the label. Titanium, magnesium, aluminum, sodium, et cetera create their own oxygen and will burn under water. Ask the Jones brothers about the horror stories of grinding titanium. These extinguishers are very expensive and only come in 40 pound models. I suggest going to any extinguisher dealer and buying 10-20 pounds of class D powder and keep it in a dry air tight container.

Maintenance is pretty simple. Check your extinguisher four times a year. The needle in the gauge should always be in the green area. Put your ear on the canister and invert it; if you do not hear the powder flow from one end to the other, tap the canister on the sides and bottom with a rubber mallet until you hear the powder flow. Check the hose and nozzle to make sure nothing is in there. (Dirt daubers love to build nests there.) If you use it, make sure to get it recharged. Even if you just give it a short blast and the needle is still in the green area of the gauge, IT WILL LEAK DOWN!! Look in the phone book or the net to find a dealer near you.

As I said SIZE MATTERS, but so does QUANTITY! I live four miles either way from town. Each town has a volunteer fire department. I figure it will take 20 minutes for them to rally together and get to my house. I have six extinguishers in my shop and five in the house. A good extinguisher will cost between \$65.00-\$95.00... that's cheap insurance. And speaking of insurance, some companies give a discount for having extinguishers around.

I hope this sheds a little light on type and selection. If you have any further questions, give me a call or shoot me an e-mail.



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**IN THE BEGINNING**, continued from page 7

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Back in those days, there was one knife show, and the guild show was the only game in town. This was the only place where we could communicate with our fellow maker/friends and share information.

Most of us were using homemade grinders until somebody discovered Square Wheel, Bader and Burr King. Many of us did our polishing with mandrels hooked up to old washing machine motors. Lea and Brownell's offered decent polishing compounds and with a 6x48" grinder to flatten our handle material, we were in business! I paid \$50 for my first drill press at a school surplus auction. Everybody I knew used Paul Bos for heat treating.

We rocked along as a guild for about ten years, and then it was as if lightning struck. Makers like NC's own Paul Fox, W.W. Cronk, Jim Schmidt, Ron Lake, Jess Horn and Buster Warenski exploded on the scene with their characteristically unbelievable work. There seemed to be no limits to their creative imagination. The bar had been raised for us all. Suppliers popped up all over the USA. The Guild had its own magazine, called, at that time, *The American Blade*, dreamed up by master knifemaker Blackie Collins.

Those of us who make more than an occasional knife have inhaled fumes of various sorts that would kill an elephant. None of our shops would come close to meeting ANY viable safety standards. The only safe way to grind or mill G10 or carbon fiber is under water! Ever wonder what the folks in Africa or Siberia use to stabilize wood and bone? Yet we all still keep attending shows, and most makers I know have small knife collections and we continue to seek new ways to make even better knives. It's in our blood.

Making lists of names is always dangerous. Many should be mentioned, but many have fallen victim to my aged memory cells. I'll end my ramblings with a few wonderful quotes that always have meant a lot to me, and thank everyone who reads this for attending shows and buying knives and making your own knives. Many thanks to visionaries who have been willing to work to establish associations and schools... folks like Jim Batson and Tommy McNabb. May God be with us all and guide our hands as we strive for ever better form and function.

"Best way to make a million dollars in knifemaking is to start with two million." *Blackie Collins*

"Way you make a knife is to take two slabs of wood, wrap them around a bar of good steel, and grind off anything that doesn't look like a knife." *George Herron*

"Don't work to sell your knives.....make friends and your friends will want to buy your knives." *Steve Jernigan*

"Occasionally, work without a plan, fixture or design. Let the shape of the knife flow from the interaction between you and your grinder." *Mel Pardue*

"When you reach that point where you're saying to yourself, *I'll grind one more blade*, it's time to stop, then!" *Jimmy Lile*

**PLEASE NOTE!**

The schedule for the 2012 Knifemaking Classes  
at Montgomery Community College will be posted soon.

You may check for updates at their website at [www.montgomery.edu](http://www.montgomery.edu)  
or our website at [www.ncknifeguild.org](http://www.ncknifeguild.org) .

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# NEWS TO NOTE

## **MARK YOUR CALENDARS...**

**Next Guild Meeting on Saturday, January 28  
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## **FEATURED ARTICLES:**

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