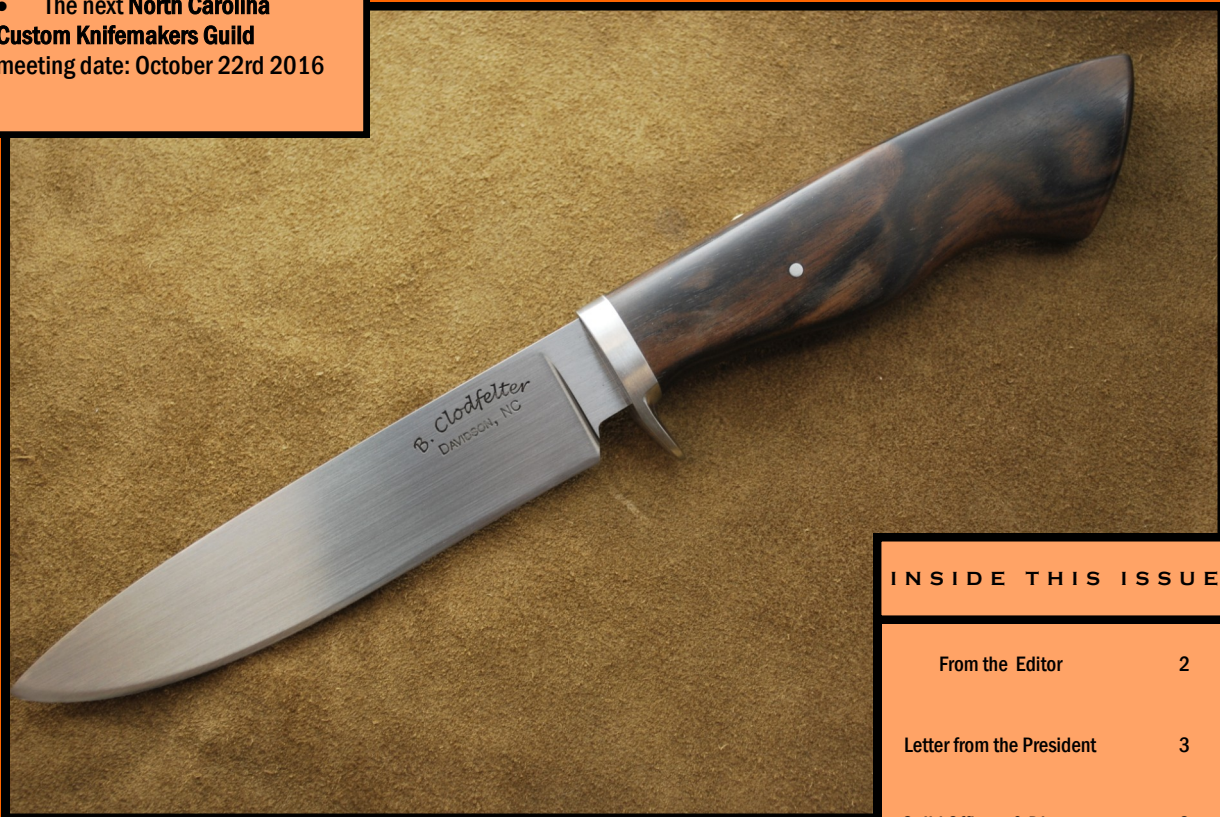


Billets & Blades

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF
THE NORTH CAROLINA CUSTOM KNIFEMAKERS GUILD

**SPECIAL POINTS
OF INTEREST:**

- The next **North Carolina Custom Knifemakers Guild** meeting date: October 22rd 2016



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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 NCCKG.

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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.

Advertising Policy:

The NCCKG 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 one of the board of directors listed on the following page.

FROM THE EDITOR

If you are a new member, please make sure that we have your correct email and physical mailing addresses. You may send this information to us via email.

If you are currently receiving *Billets and Blades* but are no longer interested in receiving it please let us know.

If you know of someone who may be interested in becoming a member, please let a board member 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. We are always in need of pictures, articles and ideas on how to make the website and newsletter better. Please contact a board member with any suggestions.

STEP UP. BE SEEN.

Featured Knifemakers are needed.

Don't be a wallflower!

Please let us get to know you and your work.

Contact Chris @ ncknifeguild@gmail.com

<p>LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT</p>

Well the weather is finally starting to cool, my favorite time of the year. Damascus season, I enjoy making Damascus every winter until its too warm to make it anymore, Sadly I am a fair weather forger. So no longer fire my forges after early spring. I plan to make more Damascus this year than all previous years combined. Should be fun. Our first meeting in 2016 will be January 26th do to a knifemaking class the previous Sat. Don't forget we now pay for writing a article for the newsletter, so don't be afraid to share with the other members of the guild and get your camera and go do a project you can write up for the rest of us to see. Everyone here has something they can teach the others, which is why we all come together to learn from others strengths. We plan to do a king of the guild contest sometime next year, Where participants will have three or four hours to complete a finished knife from a piece of steel provided by the guild board members. It should be a real joy to watch and will allow us to see several different members techniques in crafting a knife from beginning to end.

- Chris Williams

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Making a Kydex Sheath

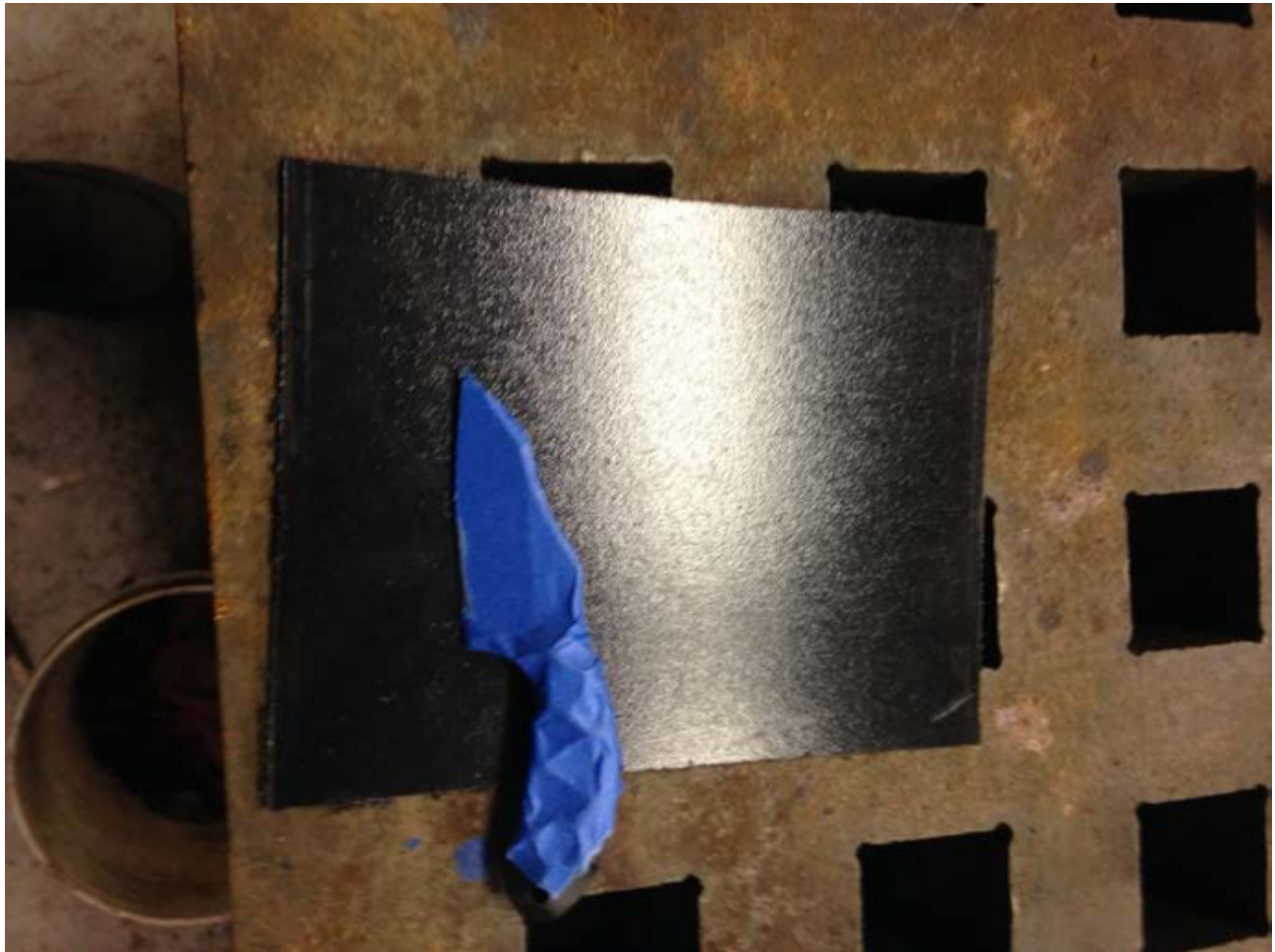
w/Chris Williams

Making a Kydex sheath is very easy to do, far easier IMO than



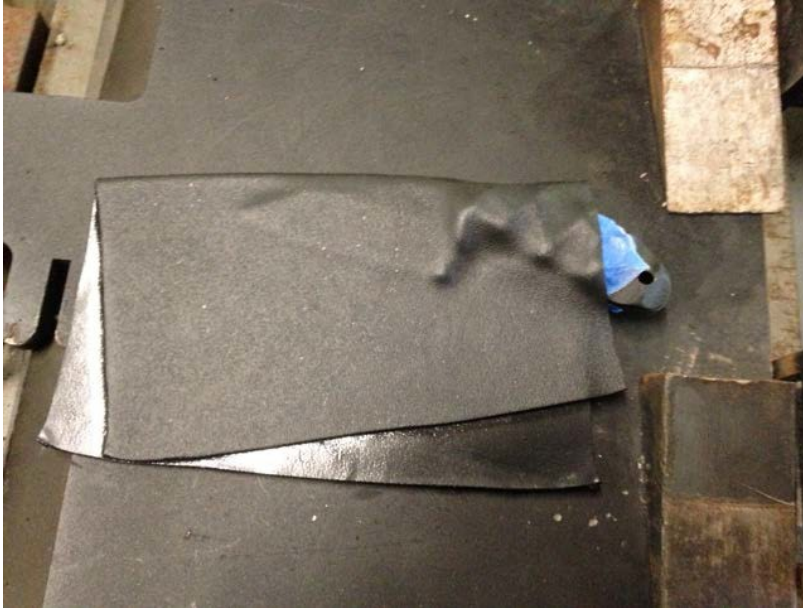
making a leather sheath. I much prefer making kydex sheaths over the latter mostly because I can generally make one in 1/3 the time it would take

me to make a leather sheath. I also prefer it for situations where the knife and sheath might get wet. Kydex is a thermally formed plastic, Boltoran is another name for it as is Concealex. All three are very similar just made by different companies which use their own proprietary name. So lets get on with the lesson, Lets make a kydex sheath. Start with cutting out a piece of kydex slightly larger than you need in order to make the sheath. You can cut your kydex with either a wood cutting bandsaw, metal cutting bandsaw or a good pair of sheet metal cutters which is my preference. Next you need to make or purchase a kydex press. I have both made and purchased kydex presses. My first was just some plywood, door hinges and camping/sleeping bag foam. But lately I use kydex presses I purchased from knifekits.com.



First step is to tape up your knife with painters tape, I prefer the blue painters tape and I usually use two pieces per side when taping up my knife. The tape is added to the knife to make it slightly larger than it actually is so that the kydex will not be holding onto the knife quite too tightly. Next lets heat up that kydex, I prefer to use .080 kydex when making sheaths, so my times and temperatures will be for that thickness. I like to heat my kydex 350deg but if I am using Boltoran I use 390 degrees. Be careful if its in the oven too long it will start to destroy the plastic. I generally have to leave the kydex in the oven for 1min 30 seconds before taking out and wrapping around the knife I am molding. I like the wraparound

style kydex sheath as it makes the smallest sheath unlike when you have rivets all the way around a sheath. To each his own and make whichever style you prefer.



You will have to find a good pair of gloves in order to handle hot kydex, I use a pair of cut resistant dyneema gloves I used to use for grinding knives. They are not too thick but insulate me from the heat just long enough to get the job done as long as I am quick. Once you have the knife taped, kydex heated

to the appropriate times its time to work, Its important you have a plan. Most I teach how to do kydex just don't work fast enough and then wonder why they don't have the detail in their sheaths that mine posses. You need to have the kydex out of the oven folded over the knife and in the mold in less than 15 seconds in my opinion. If you fumble too much just place it back in the oven, it can be reheated many times.

Hopefully you can see the photo of my knife after it has come out of the kydex press. Its not pretty, and does not have to be at this point.



Its very important to have the kydex a good bit larger than needed so you don't come up

short when the kydex does not fold over like you would like it to. Next lets mark places to drill holes for the rivets. You can use 3/16" or 1/4" rivets. 3/16" rivets are for knives like neck knives where you don't want to place hardware through the holes and or add a clip. If a clip is what you desire get the 1/4" rivets. Next you need to acquire rivet flaring dies. I purchased mine from usaknifemaker.com. I modified a 1 ton arbor press in order to



flare the rivets. First though decide where you want the clip to mount on the knife and mark with a transfer punch or pencil the drill hole marks. Once the knife has been molded to the kydex and the holes have been drilled, lets trim the kydex to about 1/4" outside of the holes. Trimming means less sanding to finish the

sheath. I like to sand to about 3/16" to the outside of the holes I drilled. I use a 80 grit sanding belt then finish with a scotchbrite belt. When finished remove the knife and blow out the kydex with a air compressor. Getting all the kydex and sanding belt grit out of your sheath before riveting it together is very important or you will scratch up your knife later with debris trapped inside your sheath. Next lets rivet that sheath together. I mostly use 1/4" rivets so I can add a clip easily if wanted, ensure when purchasing your rivets you get them the right length for your application. Let knifekits or usaknifemaker help you decide the length of your rivets using their website, but I personally use size #8-8. I always decide which side is the outside of the kydex and place the factory flare on the outside of the sheath, Its not necessary but gives a better presentation IMO. Next place the taped knife back in the finished and cleaned sheath, and place in the

rivets needed to be flared and flare them using your modified arbor press.

Once the rivets are flared all that is left to do is remove knife and then remove painters tape and test the fit, its too tight sometimes sanding a little more off where the retention is helps. Other times a taking a heath gun to the area that is holding on too much helps as well. You want good retention but not something overly tight.



Guild

Noun

1. *An organization of persons with related interests, goals, etc., especially one formed for mutual aid or protection.*
2. *Any of various medieval associations, as of merchants or artisans, organized to maintain standards and to protect the interests of its members, and that sometimes constituted a local governing body.*
3. *Botany. A group of plants, as parasites, having a similar habit of growth and nutrition.*

I read the definition of Guild and think that it is not a club. A guild has to be a sharing of knowledge, not a social convention where members get together every few months just to shoot the breeze. I look at our Guild and think it is going the way of the latter, and if we aren't careful it will end. We are constantly under the threat of losing our meeting location, and the relationship we have with the school has suffered as well. Nothing is a given.

The officers try hard to get demos that will engage and teach new members and old. Unfortunately all demos aren't of particular interest to all of the members, but instead of using this time to talk with each other there needs to be a level of respect for the presenters and we should all be dialed in to what is being shown. There is no one person or group of officers that can make this Guild succeed and hopefully thrive. It will take the whole Guild membership. My personal philosophy is to "Do what you can, when you can". I would ask that you as it's members try to do what you can for the Guild when you can. Even if that is showing respect to it's members and giving your undivided attention to the Guild meetings.

I have produced the Guild newsletter for about 3 years now and this part of my journey is at an end. I can no longer struggle through the production of it every three months without the input of the members or articles for it. It is sad for me to have to beg for material every few months and think it is best for me to step away from it. I hope this Guild survives, I hope its members do what is necessary for it to be successful.

Good luck to you all,
Michael Wilson

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.

