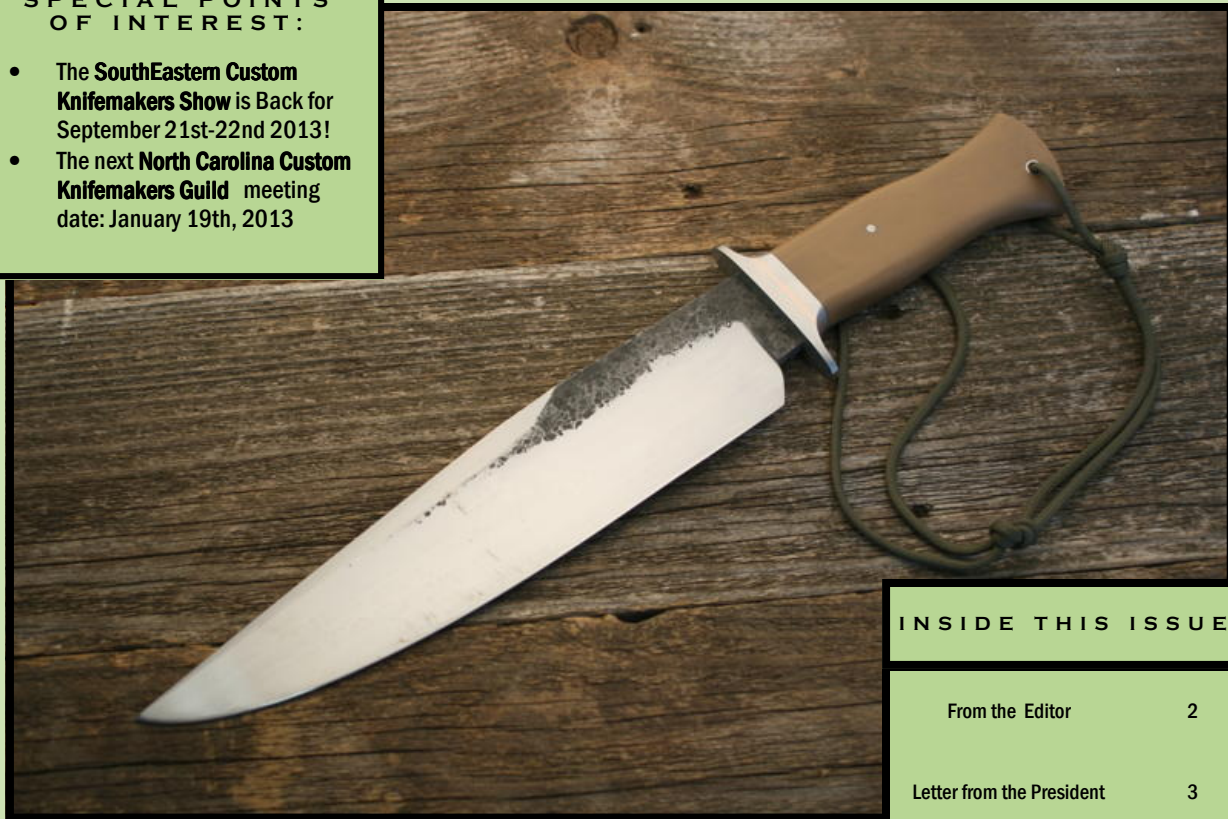


Billets & Blades

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF
THE NORTH CAROLINA CUSTOM KNIFEMAKERS GUILD

**SPECIAL POINTS
OF INTEREST:**

- The **SouthEastern Custom Knifemakers Show** is Back for September 21st-22nd 2013!
- The next **North Carolina Custom Knifemakers Guild** meeting date: January 19th, 2013



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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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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 either the president or the editor at one of the addresses shown to the right.

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.

nckkg@triad.rr.com
www.nckknifeguild.org

STEP UP. BE SEEN.

Featured Knifemakers are needed.

Don't be a wallflower!

Please let us get to know you and your work.

Contact Michael at nckkg@triad.rr.com

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Another year has come and gone and I hope it was a busy and profitable one for all, with lots of knife sales and plenty of orders to fill. Yours truly is finally employed again after over 3 years!! (thank goodness) Now it's time to make plans for the coming year.

I was recently contacted by Steve Kilebrew of the National Knife Museum in Sevierville Tennessee who wants to make a display of knives featuring the NCKG in the museum. I don't have all of the details yet, but it would involve members donating a knife for the display and one for sale in the gift shop. Some of the knife makers already in the museum are Bill Moran, WW Cronk, Jimmy Lile, Harvey Draper etc. That's pretty good company!!! This is a great way to get your knives viewed by a very large audience. If you are interested shoot me an e-mail and we will get the ball rolling.

Keep in mind that April is election time again for the Guild. Positions of president (me) and board of director (Barry Jones) will need to be filled. Think about who you want to nominate. Also DUES ARE PAST DUE! If you didn't pay in October or November they are now late and are \$60.00. Please send them to Tommy Johnson ASAP.

Well that's it for now, as usual send your ideas for demos to Steve Randall and your articles for the news letter to Michael Wilson. I unfortunately will not see you in January as I have a show booked the same weekend, but I'll leave things in the capable hands of Steve.

And In a follow up to the last newsletters article on California's new material ban:

As reported in the last issue with the article from Knife World things are rotten in California. I just read another article in Vintage Guitar Magazine about Brazilian rose wood used in the construction of guitars which is on the "endangered species" list as of 1992 according to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species or CITES for short. These are the same folks that put the ban in ivory in 1975.

Well the good people of the European Union (EU) have banned vintage guitars pre-1992 that are made with Brazilian rose wood. There is a grandfather clause for instruments legally in the EU and for guitars acquired before 1947. Not even instruments made from legally harvested pre-1992 wood from the stumps, taproots, etc may be imported. What about commercial use such as selling, displaying at a trade show, or playing on stage. A big fat NO.

Snake wood has recently been elevated to the "rarest wood in the world". How much longer will we as knife makers and others that use this particular wood be able to obtain it before CITIES considers it "endangered"? And what's next, amboyna, afzelia, ironwood, giraffe bone... Buy it now and keep your receipt.

-Tim Scholl-

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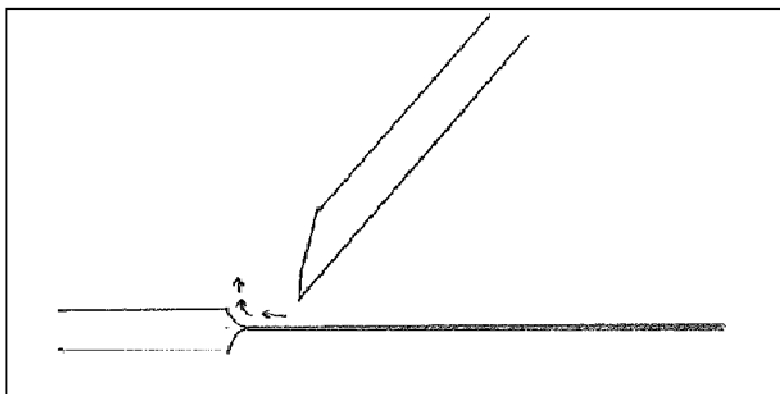
Hand sanding my way

By Barry Clodfelter

When it comes to custom made knives a good satin finish on a blade is the way to go for me. There are many ways to achieve a uniform scratch pattern and what follows is how I do it. Do you spend hours hand sanding a blade? You have better things to do right? Like make another knife! It used to take me quite a few hours to get a nice scratch pattern on a blade and after a bunch of trial and error I found a method that works for me.

Hand sanding starts on the grinder. If your flats are not flat it quickly becomes evident within fifteen to twenty strokes of hand sanding. Another thing that needs to be finished on the grinder is to take out any high or low spots. Again these also become evident within those first fifteen to twenty strokes of hand sanding. Unless you really like hand sanding and have the hours available to get them out, go back to the grinder and get the flats flat and all the deep scratches out. I will normally take a blade up to 220 on the grinder before I start hand sanding. Sometimes if there are a lot of deep 220 scratches I will go up to a 400 grit belt especially if my finished thickness is where I want it and can't afford to remove any more steel on the flats. Then go back to hand sanding on the flats. Fifteen or twenty strokes will be enough to determine if you are satisfied with where you're at or need to go back to the grinder again. Repeat this process until there are no high or low spots and all the deep scratches are gone. Do this on both sides of the blade. Let's talk a little about what you are actually doing when you are hand sanding a blade. It is usually called sanding out the scratches but you are not really sanding the scratches out. What you are actually doing is sanding the rest of the blade down to match the bottom of the deepest scratch. The most effective way to do this is on the grinder and this is why I say hand sanding starts on the grinder. Don't be afraid to keep going back to the grinder until you get your blade in a condition where you have minimized the amount of sanding you have to do. Now we are almost ready to begin the hand sanding process. The next thing I do here is to sharpen and test the edge. So far, I have about 10 minutes invested in finishing, testing now will save you time later if you finish the hand sanding and find in testing that the edge doesn't meet the requirements for the knife you are making.

The first thing I do is sand the ricasso using 220 paper with a stiff micarta stick. I prefer Rynowet Redline paper in all grits for hand sanding. But you can use whatever paper you have or prefer. It doesn't really matter as long as you are happy with what you are using and are getting good results. I use water with a little dish soap in it for lubrication. I have used almost everything you can think of from motor oil to Windex and found that a little dish soap in a spray bottle of water works the best for me. Your mileage may vary on the lube you use so use what you prefer or have handy. Now, with the ricasso sanded flat with a good 220 scratch on its time to work on the plunge area. In picture 1 below you will see a tool I made out of micarta and sharpened one end to a chisel point. To start, I will use the sharp end to sand the flat part of the blade up to the beginning of the curve of the plunge line rotating the paper often. For paper here, I like to use Mirka Gold PSA rolls in 220 and 400. These are self adhesive and stick nicely to the tool. Cut off a piece as wide as the stick and work it from about 1/8 to 1/4 inch away from the plunge on the flat back and forth up to the plunge line rotating the paper as you feel it quit cutting. This doesn't take long because you are only using the edge of the sanding stick. All of the vertical belt scratches at the plunge should be removed before continuing. Now, we start working the curve of the plunge. This motion is hard to describe so if you missed my demo I will try to describe it as best I can. Starting on the area you just sanded, push the tip of the tool toward the plunge line and continue up the plunge being careful not to roll over the nice crisp edge of the ricasso. Working from blade up the plunge and not the opposite way, so that the edge of the stick always finishes in the air above the blade. I will rest my left hand on the blade giving the tool a steady point of reference for this motion. Picture 2 shows the motion maybe a little better than I can describe it here. As soon as I get the scratches out of the plunge with the 220 paper, I will switch to the 400 and do it again. When I am happy with the way the plunge line looks, I will start working on the blade flat with 220 paper and the micarta stick spraying a little water on the blade. I like to work the stick back and forth from the tip to plunge until I feel the paper stop cutting, usually after fifteen or twenty strokes. Stop rubbing and wipe off the slurry and rotate the paper. When the paper stops cutting it will start polishing and at this point that isn't a good thing. What you are looking for is a nice even 220 scratch pattern before you change grits. Repeat this step until you can look at the blade and see no vertical scratches from the belt. At this point, I will flip the blade over and do the other side starting with the ricasso, then the plunge line and finally the flat. With this done you have a good base on both sides of your blade to get a good satin finish.



The next thing will be to step up to 400 grit paper and sand the ricasso and flats. Remember we have already done the plunges. When you can see no more 220 scratches, move up to 600 then when there are no 400 grit scratches move up to 800. Always use a clean paper towel for every grit. You would hate to have a blade nicely sanded up to 600 grit and grab a paper towel you used to wipe up the 220 slurry and introduce a nasty 220 scratch now!

One thing I should mention is that when I start on the first 400 grit I will switch to the block with Pouno board attached to it and sand using the Pouno board side. This will help roll off the sharp edge of the back of the blade and blend in the sharpening line. Yes, all of my blades have been sharpened and tested before I begin this process. I hate seeing a beautifully hand sanded blade with a visible sharpening line. It adds a stark contrast on the blade and draws your eye there first. The little details of blending this line in with the rest of the blade will make a difference in overall appearance of your finished knives.

I prefer a 600 grit satin finish so why go up to 800? What this does is gets rid of all the prior 600 scratches and provide an excellent base for the 600 grit scratch pattern. To get this, I will use fresh paper on the corner of the Pouno board block and make one pass and rotate the paper and make another pass. You shouldn't need but a few passes to get a really good 600 grit satin finish. This step is done with dry paper. Here is a picture of my most used hand sanding tools:



The only one I didn't mention is the piece of Pouno board (seen at the top right). This one I will use to further blend in the sharpening line when needed and also for some of the low spots that you can't feel but can see. I will wrap paper around it and work only in the area of the spot. Another thing you can use for low spots is Popsicle sticks.

If you noticed, I didn't change directions or sand across the blade between grits. There are many that do this and it works for them but I find it unnecessary if you get out all the previous grit's scratches before going to the next grit. You will have to experiment with all the different techniques until you find a combination that works for you and takes your blades to the next level. Thanks for taking time to read this and I will be happy to help you with your hand sanding in any way I can.

Stay sharp!

UPCOMING GUILD MEETING

Saturday January 19th, 2012

Location: Montgomery Community College

Events Include:

Board Meeting begins at 8:30am, to be followed by our General Business Meeting & Iron in the Hat

Demos:

-Photographing your work by **Tommy McNabb**

-We are taking 2 demo sessions and doing a "hands-on hollow grinding" for people struggling with hollow grinding. This will be an excellent, FREE, instruction. **Andy Sharp** and **Barry Jones** will be the instructors.

Lunch will be around Noon. You're on your own.
As always, friends and family are welcome.

South Eastern Custom Knife Show



**September
21 & 22
2013**

**Saturday:
9 am - 5 pm
Sunday:
10 am - 3 pm**

**Present this coupon
for \$2 off
regular admission**

**NORTH CAROLINA
CUSTOM
KNIFEMAKERS
GUILD**

Fall 2012 Knife Cutting Competition

Participants:

1. Steve Randall
2. Chris Williams
3. Art Summers
4. Tim Scholl
5. Barry Clodfelter
6. Philip Jones

Knife:

1. Copperhead
2. Winner (Name, not the outcome)
3. Zombie Slayer
4. Barleyville Butcher
5. Prybar
6. Big Bite

1st Event: Paper cut

Winner: **Tim , Barry and Philip** tie with 10 points each

2nd Event: 2x4 Chop

Winner: **Tim Scholl** with 15.42 seconds

3rd Event: Soda Straw Cut

Winner: **Philip Jones**

4th Event: Tennis Ball Stab

Winner: **Tim Scholl**

5th Event: Golf Ball Chop

Winner: **Philip Jones**

6th Event: Soda Can Cut

Winner: **Tim Scholl**

7th Event: Water Bottle Cut

Winner: **Barry Clodfelter**

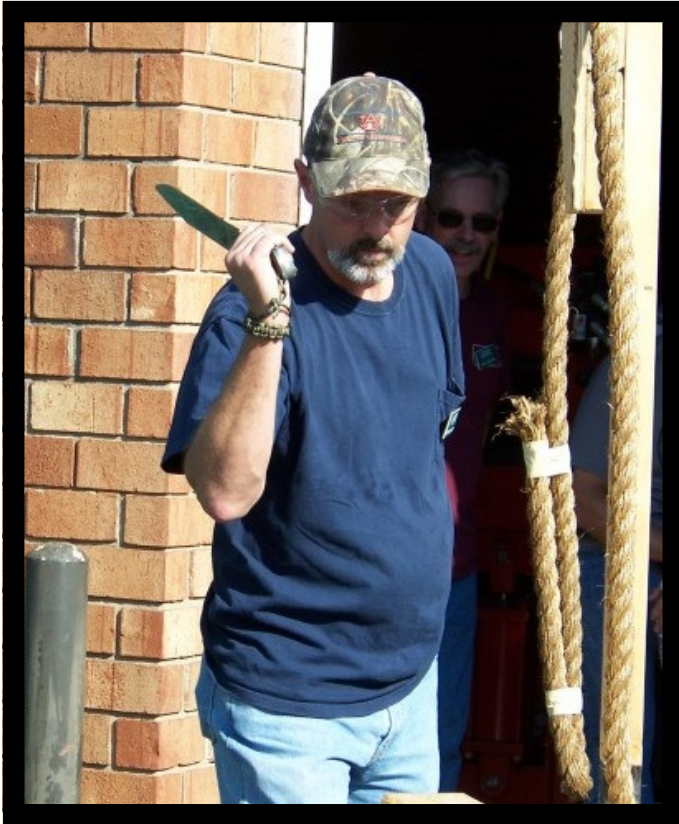
8th Event: Rope Cut

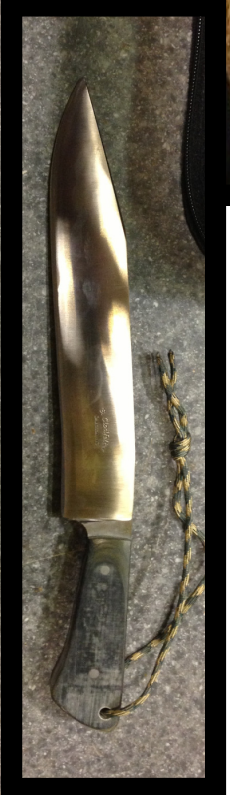
Winner: **Nobody**

9th Event: Balloon Stab

Winner: **Steve and Art** tie with 10 points each

1st Place: **Steve Randall** (39 Points), **2nd Place:** **Barry Clodfelter** (37 Points), **3rd Place:** **Philip Jones** (36 Points), **4th Place:** **Tim Scholl** (29 Points), **5th Place:** **Art Summers** (25 Points), **6th Place:** **Chris Williams** (He paid me not to give out his points total)





Gene Smith's take on the Coffin Frame Handle Bowie class as taught by Dr. James Batson

The 2012 Coffin Frame Handle Bowie Knife Class was a four day class taught at Montgomery Community College in Troy, N.C. by Dr James Batson. Dr. Batson is a world renown Master Bladesmith and I count myself very fortunate to have taken this class under his guidance. He is the author of James Bowie and The Sandbar Fight, Build your own Hydraulic Forging Press, and Coffin Handle Bowie Knife just to mention a few. He lives in Alabama and travels all around teaching classes on forging and giving seminars on metals and how to heat treat them. He is currently the President of The American Bladesmith Society and here is a little info from his bio page.

Specialties: Antique Bowie knife and James Bowie historian, author, teacher, engraver, metallurgist, silver smith, ABS Master Smith and Blacksmith. Early American knives and forged Damascus blades & fittings in collectable period pieces are his primary specialties.

Patterns: Early American & Sheffield Bowie knives & sheathes, Early American Frontier forged to shape knives with Forge Fire Finish, Scagel straight knives & folders, daggers, axes, tomahawks, push knives, lock back & slip joint folders and miniatures.

Technical: My knives are hand-made, embellished, and hand finished by me, Sole Authorship, with the minimum of power tools- drill press, Bader grinder, & band saw. High quality natural materials are used for the handles. The mounts are made of German silver, iron, 416 Stainless, bronze, sterling silver or Damascus steel. I forge W-2, L-6, O-1 tool steels & 1084, Crucible 1086V mod, 1095, 5160, 52100 and make my own high carbon shining wave patterned & mosaic Damascus steel. The blades are heat treated to exacting controlled conditions and tested for their intended use by the maker.

A little about Dr. Batsons background:

- 1953 — made first knife, a Bo Randall hunter, from plans in Popular Mechanics magazine.
- Late 1960's — bought Solingen Blades and fitted guards, pommels and handles from raw materials.
- 1974 — began forging muzzleloader gun parts and knives.



Dr. Batson instructing the un-instructable

Our class started on a Thursday with a history lesson on coffin handle Sheffield bowies. About how they were a preeminent handle style in the mid 1830s thru 1849, the first thought to have been made in Arkansas around 1833 and then produced by Cutlers; Hiram Marks and John Rees of Ohio from 1834 to 1838. The manufacturing of the coffin handle migrated to the east coast in New York and Washington City till about 1847. Sheffield Cutlers from England were imported to America until about 1838. Then from around 1836 until the 1850s they were made in Sheffield, England by William and Samuel Butcher. George Woodhead also made the coffin handle bowies in Sheffield into the early 1850s. With all of this said we were given the chance to take a look at a few of Dr. Batson's personal knives as well as some of the other class mates knives.



Gene forging out his tang

After polling to see who had and had not forged before we were given specific measurements we needed to go by to make a replica of a Sheffield coffin frame handle bowie. We lit the forges and went to work hammering away, shaping the point, drawing the clip, tapering the blade, drawing out the tang and then tapering the tang as well. There was a pattern we had drawn on a flat piece of metal so we could keep checking our progress as we went along. After numerous pounds of the hammer and many questions asked and answered, eventually a period knife was formed. We were taught how to normalize the blade, how to heat treat the blade and then how to temper it, all in detail with descriptions of the shadows, austenization process and then quenching.

We then built the coffin frame handles to fit our own knives. We cut, shaped, and fitted our guards, then we fitted our handles against the guards. Each one of us proud of what we had accomplished in such a short period of time with a lot of hard work not only with our hands but with our minds as well. Dr. Batson kept telling us we had to think ahead to where we wanted the finished product to be. To sum it all up, a great class to take and a knife anyone would be proud to own, not to mention to have made.

I would like to take this time to thank Dr. James Batson and all the people that helped with this class and the students, for their time and their love of the art is what makes this all come together.

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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