



KNIFEMAKER ~ STEVE RANDALL, JS ABS TEST KNIVES IMAGE ~ SHARPBYPYCOOP.COM

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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 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.

STEP UP. BE SEEN.

Featured Knifemakers are needed.

Don't be a wallflower!

Please let us get to know you and your work.

Contact Rebecca at rdresser@embarqmail.com

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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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 OUR PRESIDENT

By Tim Scholl

Thanks for everyone's concern over my surgery. I won't go into the details here except I was in a lot of pain but I'm fully recovered and 100% now. Elections were held at the April meeting. The following is a list of the Board of Directors: Tim Scholl, President; Steve Randall, Vice-President; Tommy Johnson, Secretary/Treasurer; Barry Jones, Director; and Tony Kelly, Director. We thank those who served in the past for a job well done and look forward to working with the new directors.

The Blade Show has come and gone, and all the Guild members I talked with who'd had a table had a good show. John Hege didn't have a table and just rode down with Tommy McNabb, bringing along a fokos, a small spike tomahawk on a walking stick handle that he had made. He hadn't even made it in the door of the show when a Korean gentleman approached him and just had to have it! Needless to say, John happily obliged. Big congratulations go out to Steve Randall for receiving his Journeyman Smith stamp in the American Bladesmith Society. Steve does fantastic work and should be getting double what he

charges. I, on the other hand, was not able to get my knives finished in time to test for my Mastersmith rating. I Will Have It Next Year!

We will be having a cutting competition at the October meeting which has been moved up one weekend (10/13/12), so anyone wanting to attend the Fall Hammer-in at Haywood Community College doesn't have to choose between the two. If you've never done a cutting competition before, they are a blast. Several things from rope, water-filled bottles, golf balls, to 2x4's will be cut or hacked through. Here are the criteria for the knife: blade 12" max length from front of guard or handle, blade can be no wider than 2", handle MUST HAVE a lanyard for safety's sake, knife may be forged or stock-removal from any steel with any type handle. This is a great way to test your knives and test your cutting ability. Make a knife and join the fun!

Well that's all from me this time. Send all your ideas for demos to Steve and all your articles to Rebecca. See you in July.

UPCOMING GUILD MEETING

SATURDAY, JULY 21

Montgomery Community College in Troy, NC

EVENTS INCLUDE

Board Meeting Begins at 8:30, followed by our General Business Meeting

Iron in the Hat

Demos

Art Summers: Hollow Ground

John Hege: Frame Handles

Mark Hall: Knife Collecting

Lunch will be around Noon. You're on your own.

As always, friends and family are welcome.

SPECIAL NOTE ON OCTOBER MEETING

The meeting has been moved to Saturday, Oct. 13.

We are planning a chopping competition. If you'd like to take part, please bring a knife, which should have a 10" blade and be approximately 15" in overall length.

The demonstrations lined up for October include

John Hege: fluted handle; Barry Clodfelter: leather sheaths; and The Chopping Competition.

Business Meeting Minutes from April

Submitted by Tommy Johnson, Secretary

1. The knives of Art Summers were juried by the Board, and he was accepted as a full member.
2. Steve Randall was nominated and elected by the Guild as Vice-President.
3. Tony Kelly and Bill Bisher were nominated for the Director position; Tony Kelly was elected by the Guild.
4. Tommy Johnson was nominated and elected by the Guild as Secretary/Treasurer.
5. Knifemaker profile questionnaires were handed out in an effort to encourage members to participate. We need material for the newsletter.
6. Art Summers was introduced as a full juried member.
7. The meeting was adjourned.

PHOTOS FROM THE APRIL MEETING

Photos by Tommy McNabb



Phillip Jones at work on his demo on Scandinavian sheath-making, before his bloody mishap!



Art and Steve enjoy a joke and a smile.





The group gathers to learn about the ABS Performance Test.



Steve discussing requirements for the Performance Test.



First, there's cutting.



Then there's chopping.



McNeill knives all in a row.



Look, Ma... no breaks after bending and stressing!

JS Experience in Atlanta

By Steve Randall

The Blade Show in Atlanta, GA is the largest knife show in the world. I have been a seller there for two years and one year as a patron. My experience gets better each year. Having a table doesn't allow me to get out and participate as much as I'd like; however, I did get to see and visit with some of my fellow guild members which was a highlight.

This year I was testing for my Journeyman Smith (JS) through the ABS, so that added a little extra stress to my Friday. At the Guild meeting in April, I presented a demonstration on the performance knife test, which is the first stage towards the JS rating. I did my performance test with Burt Foster, MS signing my successful completion in August of 2011. The next step was to present five knives for seven judges to review. I had seven knives, so the night before I chose the best five. On Friday morning nine fellow JS applicants and I met in a room at the Cobb Galleria to lay our knives out on a table for judging. At 8:00, the doors closed and we waited anxiously. Two hours passed. It was a little nerve-racking, but visiting with the other knife makers helped temper the nerves. They called each knife maker in one at a time and gave them the result of the judging. For me, it was "you passed!" Wheeww! And yea!

For anyone interested in working toward a JS, the best advice I can give is get your test knives done early. Get as many critically-eyed knife makers as possible to look at them and give their critiques. There is no need to get too fancy. Keep the knives simple and clean. Tim Scholl suggested to me that I make knives very similar to what the Master Smith's are making because they will judge more favorably for a style they enjoy themselves. You may notice, from the photo on the cover this month, that the majority of my knives submitted for the JS are all in a very similar genre. I enjoyed the process and know in the end it made me a better knife maker.

Hindsight is always 20/20! I wish I had taken a few minutes to admire the other testers' knives. I signed up to have my knives photographed immediately and left them there, but I would now suggest getting on the list and keeping the knives until the photographer is ready for them.

The 2012 Blade Show turned out to be a great experience for me, and I even sold some knives!

Blade Show Weekend

by Chris Williams

What wonderful time, but I will not make the mistake next year that I did this year and that is only get a few hours sleep a night starting a week before the show. I was dead tired the whole show... live and learn, I guess.

I was fortunate enough to have Mykel Hawke drop by my booth; he had heard I retired from the U.S. Army, so he stopped by for a few minutes. What a nice guy with so much on the horizon yet to come from him, from what he was telling me.



I dropped by Steve Randall's table, and his knives were absolutely gorgeous. I met his wonderful wife and we talked about what we could do to make the guild a better place. Next I dropped by the Jones brothers to see their folders as well as get a few cookies, and yes they were delicious and the cookies were good too. Next I headed over to Art Summers table and his incredible knives. I was fortunate enough to spend some time with him and then meet his son who was at the show with him.

While at the show I ran into John Hege, Tommy McNabb, Mark Hall and his brother, and lastly I made it over to the Spartan knives booth. Man, they have some nice knives. I then picked up a commissioned folder created by David Broadwell... what a nice guy and a beautiful folder. I will bring it to the next meeting for others to see.

I was at the show to represent a knifemaking grinder called a Wilmont grinder.

While there, Allen Elishewitz, Chris Reeves, Jeremy Horton, Tom Mayo, Sal Manaro, and more big names I can't remember dropped by to talk grinding. I learned more about grinding at this show than any other weekend in the past 10 years. I got exposed to more techniques than I could have ever imagined. I am continually surprised at how knifemakers share their techniques so freely; it is just unheard of in any other industry. The blade show was such a wonderful time and I can't wait till next year.



My First Blade Show

by Michael Wilson

I am a new member of the North Carolina Custom Knifemakers Guild. I joined in late 2011, and the 2012 Blade Show was my first knife show experience. Walking into the Cobb Galleria for the first time was definitely overwhelming as you try to take in the whole of Blade at one time.

After walking the aisles and talking with so many of the open and welcoming knifemakers, I was sad that I couldn't have experienced this show in its heyday. It appeared to me that the custom knifemakers and bladesmiths were almost an afterthought to all of the big knife manufacturers that were all well represented with giant, over-the-top booths and lots of signage. I guess I mistakenly thought that the Blade Show was a custom knife show, but apparently it caters to the manufacturers just like the Blade publication seems to do nowadays as well. I was also privy to a new (to me) phenomenon: manufacturers hold lotteries where the winner gets to buy one of their knives. They were 8—9 deep around these booths, vying for a chance to buy an overpriced manufacturer's knife. It was ridiculous, and I felt bad for the custom makers that had to deal with this over and over throughout the show because the manufacturers' booths weren't in just a specific area but they were interspersed throughout the show, right next to custom makers and bladesmiths. One maker said that he felt a certain part of the show had an almost flea market feel to it, and in retrospect I have to agree.

In a way this show helped to rectify something for me. In the end I am in this to make knives because I like knives, not because I think this will be a good new income stream for me. If this was purely a business venture for me, then I would feel the need to re-evaluate my ideas. After a full day Friday and Saturday, I was ready to hit the road on Sunday, but was very glad that I got the chance to attend this year and will put this on my calendar for the years to come. Will I ever try to have a table at Blade? Probably not, but I want to go back to help support the craft. There is probably no better opportunity to meet and talk with so many excellent makers with such a diverse range of styles, and purely for that fact I would recommend the show to new and old makers alike.



Performance Test for Journeyman Smith with the American Bladesmith Society

by Steve Randall

At the April 2012 NCKMG meeting I did a demonstration on the ABS (American Bladesmith Society) performance requirements to pass the Journeyman Smith rating to receive my JS stamp. I spoke on various aspects of quality control and knife construction needed to pass this performance test. These aspects are quality control, heat treating, testing of knife, and knife design.

Quality control is an important aspect to knife making. Keeping good logs for each knife, knowing what kind of steel I have, and knowing the reliability of the company from which I order steel make all the difference. This gives me the ability, if the knife doesn't perform as expected, to look back and investigate the problems.

Heat treating is another procedure where good log keeping can help. Areas such as the temperature setting, time at that temperature, what my quenching oil temperature is, etc. Also, knowing what the results of my heat treating procedures are, through rockwell testing, allows me to fine tune the results to meet my specific needs.

Consistent, standardized tests are essential for quality control. Using the same procedures such as chopping or whittling with the knife, or cutting rope or cardboard with each knife produced are excellent ways to tell if my procedures work.

Knife design is often a personal issue. However, very few knives are uni-taskers, so there will always be compromise in design and function. I suggest a focus on the main purpose of use. Is it going to be a hunter? A chopper? Design to best fit that main purpose. Example: For a chopper, I want a forward balance with flat grind and convex edge.

Now is when I'll find if the above aspects of quality control have been met. **The ABS requirements for this knife:** The blade must be a forged 10" blade, 15" OAL; it can be no more than 2" wide.



It must cut a 1" hanging rope no more than 6" from the end.



It should chop through a 2x4 twice, and still be able to shave hair off the arm.



The final test is to place the blade, tip down, in a vise.



It should bend 90 degrees without breaking or cracking more than 1/3 up the blade.



Making a Scandinavian Sheath

Submitted by Bill Bisher, from a demo by Barry Jones

To make this sheath, you will need the following materials:

- 5-6 wt. tooling leather (a one-foot sq. piece will do)
- Vaseline to coat the blade and part of the handle that goes into sheath
- Plastic wrap (kitchen type) to wrap the blade and protect it from moisture
- Sheet of heavy wt. paper to make pattern

To start, make a pattern by folding the paper in half. Take a strip of leather about 1/8" wide and 6" long (made from your sheath material) and measure around the knife every 1/2", from tip to blade to a little over mid-way up the handle with it. You can make the measurements closer if you want. As you take each measurement, half the total and add 1/16" to that amount, and this is what you mark on the pattern paper. For example: Say you measure 3" around a position on the blade. You half that and get 1 1/2". And then you add 1/16" for a total of 1 9/16" to be marked on your pattern.

When you have all of your measurements on the pattern sheet, connect the dots and cut out your sheath pattern, trace onto leather, and cut out the sheath. Do a test wrap around the knife to make sure the 1/16" you added will be enough for sewing. See Diagram #1.

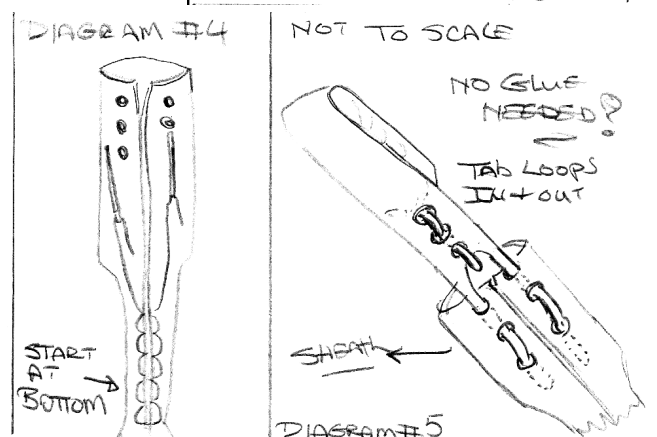
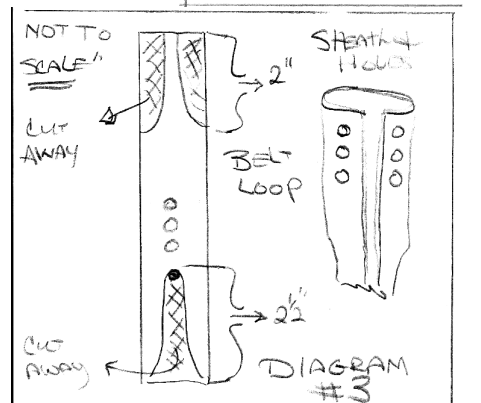
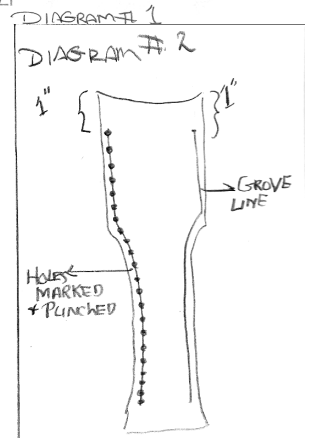
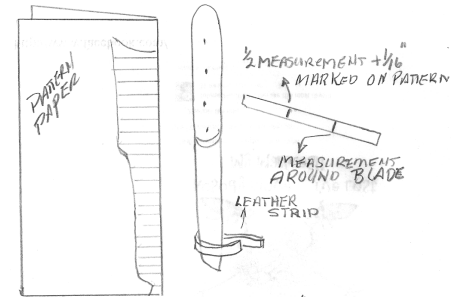
If you are satisfied with the sheath, it is time to mark your stitching holes. Start 1" down from the top edge and mark a stitching line down each side of the sheath, 1/16" in from the edge, with a stitching glove. Now you will mark your holes with a #5 stitching wheel down the groove. It is important that you make sure your holes start at the same point. If not, your sheath will be twisted. Take an awl and punch your holes. See Diagram #2. DO NOT SEW YET.

The next step is to make your belt loop. This is done by cutting a strip of your leather one inch wide and 10—12 inches long. Two and one half inches from one end, punch a 1/8" hole in the center of the strip and cut two tabs to attach to the sheath. At the other end, cut out a center tab two inches long. See Diagram #3.

Now you will punch six 1/4" holes in the top of the sheath, three on each side of the seam. They should be evenly spaced at 1/2" apart. On the belt loop, double over the single tab and mark where the loop will fit your belt width. From that spot, do down 1/4" and punch three 1/4" holes down the center at 3/8" apart.

Do NOT sew the sheath yet. First, you need to scarf the edges to be sewn. This is done by trimming off a thin strip of the inner sheath edges, which makes for a better-looking seam. NOW you can sew up the sheath, by starting at the bottom and working to the top. With this done, you can attach the belt loop to the sheath and finish the loop. See Diagrams #4 and 5.

If everything looks okay, it is time to fit the blade. Put Vaseline on the blade and wrap it and the handle with plastic wrap. VERY CAREFULLY push the wrapped knife into the fully wetted sheath. Work it in a little at a time. When fully inserted, set it aside to dry.





The Guild offers its condolences to the family and friends of **George Guthrie** who passed away on June 1st. I George was a guild member in the early days; however, due to health reasons, he had not been active in recent years.

Over the years George showed many in the Cleveland/Gaston County area how to make knives. Jamin Brackett says, "He was instrumental in my joining the guild and spent countless hours teaching me the craft."

George will be missed by many and fondly remembered as well.

KNIFEMAKERS...

Everyone needs a little bit of promotion, and if it's free, what more can you ask?

The Guild is always on the lookout for featured knifemakers for the newsletter. You can showcase one of your beautiful, handcrafted knives on the cover for everyone to see, including your mail deliverer! And if you share your story of your knifemaking lessons, habits, and skills, we will learn more about you and perhaps even get a few tips from what you have learned. You can also pay tribute to those who have taught you or enabled you on your way.

The Guild has a website which was created for you. It's a vehicle to share information about the craft of knifemaking, but it's also a way to share the knives you have made on the Gallery page. You don't have to pay to be featured there; you only have to submit good photographs of your knives. It's worth taking some extra time and effort to have some clear photographs made so you can showcase your work. You may even get a sale from it... and again, it's free!!

At each Guild meeting, there are demos lined up. This is perhaps why many of us are part of the guild... to learn from others, to share tips and skills, to support one another in our craft. Sometimes we have the same folks leading the demos, sharing what they know so that others can benefit. Can you find a way to step up and lead a demo? We don't expect perfection by any means, just an honest attempt to demonstrate a particular skill or tip you have learned or discovered through making knives. And it feels good knowing that you may be helping some young knifemaker along the way.

Now, I am not a knifemaker, just your editor, writer, and webmaster, but I know a good thing when I see it, and these opportunities for free promotion can't be beat. So the question is... why are so few taking advantage of these things?

Reminder: Dues will be due by the end of October!

2010 KNIFEMAKING CLASSES

Classes in knifemaking are held each year on the campus of Montgomery Community College in Troy, North Carolina. To sign up for a course, go directly to the school's website here... <http://www.montgomery.cc.nc.us/cenra.htm>

Introduction to Tactical Knifemaking - Barry & Phillip Jones

July 26 - 29, 2012

Cost \$375

Learn fixed blade design using the basic principles and methods of knife construction, including how to grind and heat treat knife blades, as well as fitting and finishing handles.

Basic Knifemaking - Travis Daniel (Filled)

August 23 - 26, 2012

Cost \$375

Learn knifemaking 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 and intermediates who want to perfect their knifemaking talents.

Custom Folding Knives - Ed VanHoy

September 6 - 9, 2012

Cost \$375

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

Advanced Knifemaking Techniques - Travis Daniel

September 20 - 23, 2012

Cost \$375

An intensive class centering on complex construction methods and fit and finish techniques. For experienced knifemakers who want to improve their skills.

Coffin Frame Handle Bowie Knives - James Batson

October 25 - 28, 2012

Cost \$375

Each student will forge an early American or Sheffield Style Bowie blade of high carbon steel to shape. The rough ground blade will be finished with power belts and hands. The students will learn to heat treat various carbon steels and the blade. The guard and frame handle will be fashioned and fitted to the blade. Walnut, stag, or bone scales will be used for the handle scales. A plain stag crown may be hafted to the blade of this knife.

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NEWS TO NOTE

MARK YOUR CALENDARS...

**Next Guild Meeting on Saturday, July 21
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**APRIL MINUTES AND PHOTOS
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