



GENESEE VALLEY WOODCARVERS

Newsletter – February, 2014

Meetings are held from 7 to 9 PM on the 2nd Monday of the month (except July and August) at:
The 40 & 8 Club (across the street from Gleason Works)
933 University Avenue, Rochester, New York
Web site: <http://gywoodcarvers.com/>

RECAP: GVW 2013/2014 MEETING & ACTIVITY SCHEDULE

FEBRUARY (10, 24) – MARCH (10, 24), 2014:

Continuation: Carving classes: Each teacher will present one carving subject. They will hold two classes per month (Feb, Mar) for a total of 4 sessions.

APRIL 12 2014:

GVW SHOW/COMPETITION Start working on your entries now.

MAY 12, 2014

James Hotaling will demonstrate how he uses a small lathe and how it can be used to make bases.

JUNE 9 2014: (Our end of year DEBELLAS SOCIAL & Election of officers, end of the year summery and conversation with fellow carvers).

Welcome to the Newest Members of our Carving Club:

2013: Annita Breitweiser; Lucina Brogan (a previous member); Bob Carafice & Tom Stephenson

2014: Rick Bush; Kevin McOmer; William Smith; Richard & Ruth Kron; Andy Fox; Dacia Hirsh; and John Buell

As the say there is unity in numbers so is there is an abundance of carving knowledge to be had - we all wish you many years of enjoyment in this exciting world of Wood Carving!

Recap West Irondequoit Comm Education Winter Carving Class (from Robin/Jackie Salsbury)

THE WEST IRONDEQUOIT COMMUNITY EDUCATION Brochure is out, so registration for **ROBIN SALSBUARY'S** Winter class is open.

Details: Bird Carving - Subject: Black Throated Blue Warbler - Tuesday evenings, 8 Sessions (January 21, Feb 4, 11, 25 Mar. 3, 11, 18, 25)

Meets at the Irondequoit High School in Room 1000. Call 336-3014 for information or visit www.westirondequoit.org/community-education.htm

The Sad Passing of 2 Fellow Carvers:

- ❖ **Alfred (Al) Gabriel** passed away on January 18, 2014. A former member of the Genesee Valley Woodcarvers, he will be sadly missed. Our hearts goes out to his family!

Listed below is Al's address for anyone who wishes to contact the family.

Alfred (Al) Gabriel, 118 Yorktown Drive, Rochester, NY 14616

- ❖ **John Habberset**, a former club member, has recently passed from colon cancer. His wife has a couple of things that John used in his carving workshop, for sale and would prefer these things go to another carver. The two items she would like to sell are listed below. She went on the internet to look for these items to get idea of value and some of the descriptive material.

Task (or drafting) chair:

Adjustable chair (although I can't figure out how to get it to go up & down!). Right now, the seat is about 24" from the floor. Also, the seat back and the foot ring are adjustable & the seat is approximately 18 x 19 and is cushioned (cushion depth is close to 2"); the back is padded as well. The cushion and back are black; the foot ring is chrome; It is on casters and has 5 legs (the star configuration).

It's said that it is quite comfortable for task work and the condition is "very good" & was seen on eBay that is very similar for \$125 (Don't know what it cost new; nor just how many years old it is). It would be nice to get at least \$35 for it

Dazor magnifying lamp; model 8MC-100

This is a desk lamp with a weighted base (it is quite heavy, so it is not about to go anywhere - - i.e., slide off a table or workbench!!). The base has ridges for holding pencils (or small carving knives!). The adjustable arm swivels as well as hinges into various positions (approx. a 28" reach). The light is a 22 watt florescent circuline with a 3 diopter precision ground crown optical glass lens (there is also an add-on lens to increase magnification to 3.75X (new, this add-on would coast \$58). It would make a good desk lamp as well! On internet sites, new ones are going for over \$300 plus the extra lens; one that looks similar on eBay is \$150 without the add-on lens - the color is turquoise & the condition is "very good". It would be great if she could get \$125

“Mrs. Habbersett can be contacted through her e-mail address: shabber2@rochester.rr.com”

Items For Sale from Bob Longyear's Carving Tools:

1. Craftsman 12" Floor Model Bandsaw
2. In-Lap dust Collector (quiet motor & portable)

To make an offer on any of these items, please contact Paul Yarrows @ 585-924-7921

Update On: A Heart Warming Story "Just In Time For The Holidays" (from Chris Nilsen)

At the Clubs January meeting, Chris announced an unexpected benefit from the Comfort Birds that were donated to the Childrens Care Center at URM Strong Memorial Hospital. Not only were they thrilled to receive the Comfort Birds but the sick children that received them were beginning to talk about their illnesses while holding the birds. This is a really big deal because talking about their illnesses is a big step toward recovery and the mental wellbeing of these children. I personally applaud all who helped in this project and challenge all club members, with these children in mind, to knock out a bird or two in your spare time for this ongoing and worthwhile project.



ANNOUNCEMENTS, EVENTS & ITEMS OF INTEREST (2014)

Recap: Raffle Prize Donations: (from Alison Currie, Dave Hockenberry, and Harry Patrick)

Just a friendly reminder that the April 12, 2013 show will be here before we know it. The annual raffle goes a long way to support our show. We have learned over time that while carving-related things are good, carvings themselves are the most popular of prizes!

Please consider cleaning the closet, donating those pieces you're tired of or feel you could have done better on. We have learned that folks are most appreciative and grateful to have a hand-carved piece. It doesn't have to be world show quality to be loved.

Congratulations are in Order to Two of Our Own:

Congratulations to Alison & John Currie for taking ribbons at the Canadian Woodcarving Championship in Hamilton, Ontario.

1. **John** for his antique style pintail decoy (1st place)
2. **Alison** for her Sharp shinned hawk (1st place) – mini barred owl (3rd place) – oriole, mini bald eagle and raccoon (each with honorable mentions). According to Alison it was a great show!



Continuation of Winter Carving Classes: (Teacher - Subject) - As of January 13 the classes are underway - Remaining classes are JANUARY (27) - FEBRUARY (10, 24) - MARCH (10, 24), 2014:

Buss - Tern decoy – pair / Butlin - Shelf ledge Wizard / Connel - Flat Plain carving the Oskar figure
Haynes – Cottonwood Bark Carving / Jordan - SawWhet Owl smoothie / Kaper - Miniature stylized Swan
Nilsen - Comfort Birds / Salsbury Black Necked Stilt smoothie

Upcoming Show:

Niagara Woodcarvers Association 35th Annual Show & competition 2014 will be held at Heartland Forest Pavilion, 8215 Kalar Road, Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada. Saturday, March 29, 2014 – 10AM to 5PM – and Sunday March 30, 2014 – 11AM to 5PM. Admission is \$3.00 at the door (children 12 & under free).

Sharpening Your Tools “Knife Rescue” - Taken from “The Complete Book of WoodCarving (Everything You Need to Know to Master the Craft) by Everett Ellenwood & (published through WoodCarving Illustrated magazine! 2008)

(My thanks to WoodCarving Illustrated for permission to reprint articles for encouraging & advancement of carvers”)

In last month’s newsletter I presented information on Hand Sharpening Your Tools. This month’s presentation will discuss how to reclaim a dull or nicked knife or as the author call it “Knife Rescue”. I personally have tried this technique to reshape one of my carving knives with amazing results. I am now using this method, exclusively, to rework all my knives (I won’t tell you the sharpening procedure listed in the next seven pages does not take a lot of practice to master but you will see results quickly if you follow the procedures & steps presented by the author (Everette Ellenwood).

Sharpening Techniques: The author is convinced that more people stop carving because of dull tools than for any other reason. Once you carve with a sharp tool, you will never be satisfied with anything else. A sharp tool allows you to concentrate on the cut you want to make. Use a dull tool and you will find yourself concentrating on how much force is required to drive the tool through the wood.

There are two very important fundamentals to getting your tools sharp: **1)** know what a tool looks like when it’s properly sharpened so you know what to achieve, and **2)** make sure each sharpening step is specific and repeatable. Focus on the fundamentals and then practice until they become second nature. Master the fundamentals and you master sharpening. The key is practice, practice, practice.

Tip: When to Sharpen

When your tools are properly shaped and sharpened, it will take you very little time to keep them sharp.

All woods contain some natural abrasive materials, and as you carve, these abrasive materials will take off the ultrasharp edge to where you will need to go back to a stone from time to time. When your tools don’t flow through the wood and don’t leave a smooth, shiny surface where you cut, you need to put that razor-sharp edge back on the tool. Stropping will normally put it back on; but if it doesn’t, go to your fine stone to reshape the blade and then to your strop, and you’ll be back carving in very little time with a sharp tool.

Tip: Test for Sharpness before Carving

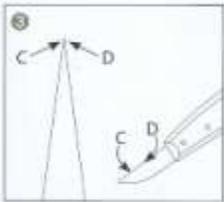
Before I begin a carving session, I select all the tools I will be using for that session and test each of them on a piece of wood similar to the type I’ll be carving. Any tool that is not ultrasharp is sharpened. By doing this, I know that when I pick up any of the tools, they will cut the way I want them to. After all the tools are sharp, I wash my hands to get off any dirt or grime so I won’t get my carving dirty—and I’m ready for a relaxing carving session.

Sharpening Straight-Edged Carving Knives

You need to sharpen your knife when you first purchase it or if you nick or otherwise damage the blade. Under normal conditions, you won’t have to go through the entire sharpening process every time your knife gets dull. If your knife has a good edge but seems dull, use your strop to hone the blade.

✔ Evaluating the Blade

Before you begin sharpening your knife, determine what needs to be done. You can easily check the condition of the blade by doing a quick visual and physical check. If the answer to any of the following questions is no, your knife needs to be sharpened.



Check your knife visually.

- 1 **Does it have straight sides from the cutting edge and up the blade about ¼ inch?** A lighted magnifying glass is very helpful for this step.
- 2 **Is the blade polished so it looks like a mirror?** You should actually be able to read in it.
- 3 **Does it have a small secondary angle (called a microbevel), about the thickness of a fine hair, along the total cutting edge of the blade?** To see the microbevel, tilt the blade back and forth in bright light, and look for a small reflection of light, about the thickness of a fine hair, on each side of the cutting edge of the blade.
- 4 **Is the cutting edge of the blade free from nicks or flat spots?** A nick looks like a small sparkling diamond on the cutting edge. A flat spot looks like a shiny line. When your knife is sharp, you can't see the cutting edge.

Check your knife physically by cutting across the grain of a piece of soft wood, like basswood.

- 5 **Does it cut through the wood easily?**
- 6 **Does it leave a smooth, shiny surface where you cut?**
- 7 **Is the cut free of small lines?** If you see any lines, the blade has a nick in it.

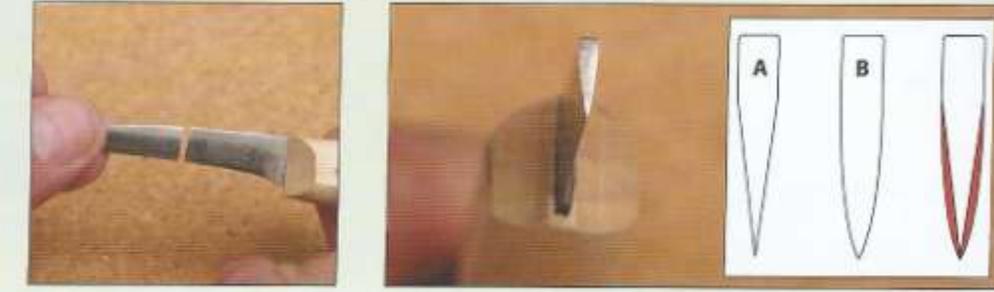
Sharpening Your Tools:

✔ Visualizing the Final Form

- Your knife should have straight sides from the cutting edge and up the blade about ¼ inch.
- The blade should be polished so it looks like a mirror.
- There should be a small secondary angle (called a microbevel), about the thickness of a fine hair, along both sides of the cutting edge.
- The two surfaces should meet at a single point.
- The knife should be so sharp you can't see the cutting edge.
- The blade should be properly contoured to minimize the metal mass going through wood.
- The blade should be polished to cut down the resistance of the blade going through wood.
- The blade should have a razor-sharp cutting edge to cleanly slice the wood fibers, leaving a smooth, shiny surface where you cut.

Knife Rescue: Cutting a carving knife in half is not a practical way to determine whether your knife needs to be sharpened, but it is a good aid in visualizing the proper shape of a knife blade.

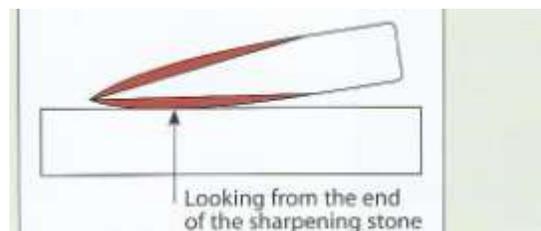
If you look into a cross section of the blade it should look like picture **A**. If your knife looks like **B**, you need to remove all the metal shown in red so it looks like **A**. Unfortunately, if your knife looks like **B**, no matter how sharp you get the cutting edge, the knife will not go through the wood easily.



Think of your knife as nothing more than a sharp little wedge, and as the wedge goes through wood, it's displacing the wood. The more mass the blade has, the more wood must be displaced and the harder it is to drive the tool through wood. When a blade looks like **B** – even if it's sharp – it tends to tear the wood fibers before it cuts them.

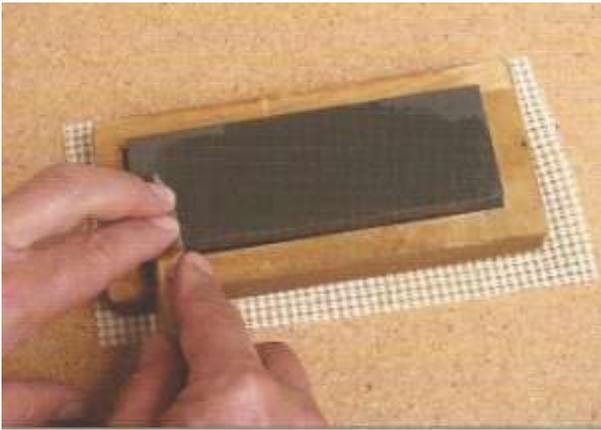
If you don't want to get rid of your knife, follow the knife sharpening techniques in this section with the following adaptations:

Lay the knife on the sharpening stone, as shown, with the apex of the high spot on the stone. You need to remove all the metal in red to attain a flat surface on the blade. When your knife is sharpened properly, it will be straight on both sides of the blade.

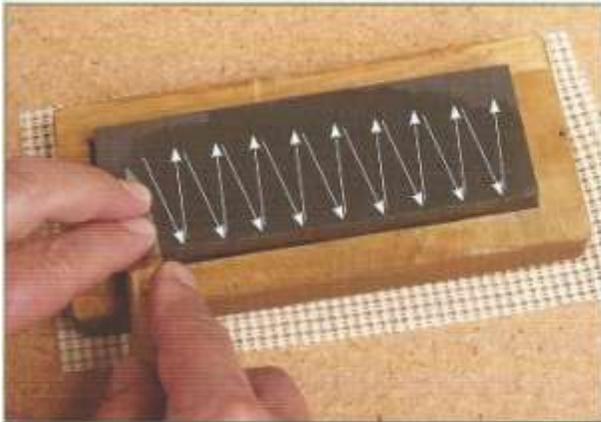


Let's Sharpen: Before you begin, decide what grit of sharpening stone to use based on your evaluation of the blade. In this demo the author starts with a coarse stone and take you through the full sequence from shaping the knife to sharpening to stropping. You can start with any type of stone. An oil stone is used here. ****Use a coarse-grit stone to reshape a tool. (*Don't* use this unless the tool needs major work.) **Use a medium-grit stone for normal sharpening. **Use a fine-grit stone for slight tune-ups. **Use an extrafine-grit stone to prepare the blade for stropping.**

1: Place a sharpening stone on a piece of nonskid material, and treat the surface of the stone accordingly in preparation to sharpen. If you use sandpaper, use it dry.



2 Lay your knife on the left end of the coarse sharpening stone, with the blade's cutting edge facing to the left (away from the direction you are going). Never run the cutting edge into the abrasive.

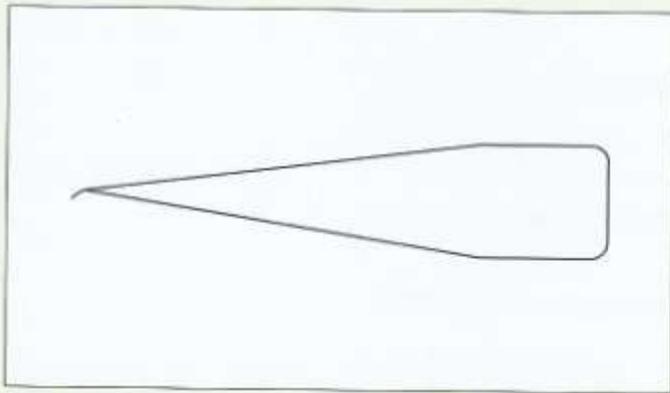


3 Hold the handle in your right hand, and place the first one or two fingers of your left hand on the blade. Pull and push the blade back and forth, using long sawing strokes, from the left to the right end of the stone.

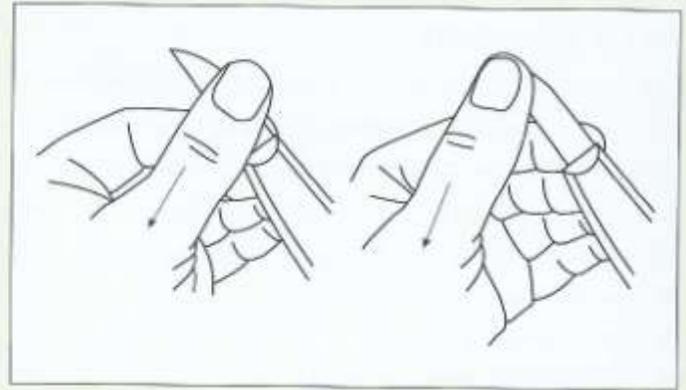
Each sawing stroke should be about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch apart. Keep enough pressure with your left-hand fingers to have control of the knife. The sawing motion keeps the blade in contact with the stone and removes metal with each stroke.



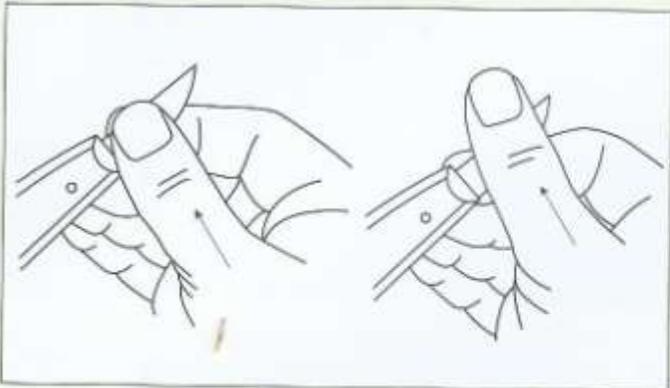
4 When you reach the right end of the stone, flip the blade over so the blade's cutting edge is facing to the right.



5 Repeat the same sawing motion from the right to the left end of the stone. Continue this sawing motion until the waste metal has been removed from both sides of the blade and the abrasions on the blade are uniform along the entire surface. A small burr should form along the entire cutting edge on one side of the blade. If you had a nick in the blade, the burr must go past the nick.

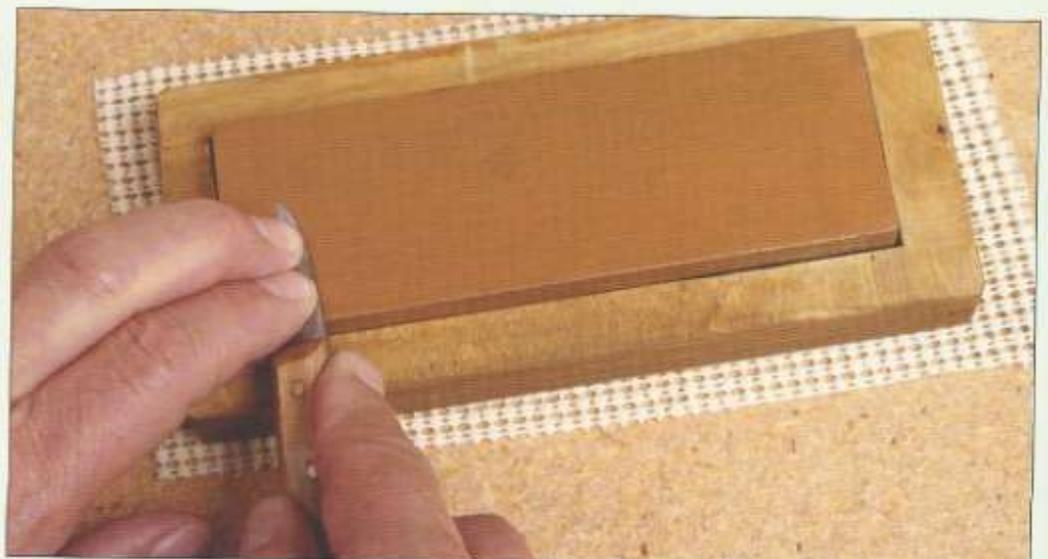


6 To test for a burr on the left side of the blade, hold the knife handle in your right hand, and turn the knife so the cutting edge of the blade is facing toward the palm of your left hand. Slide your left-hand thumb pad from the top of the blade down across the cutting edge, as shown. If a burr has formed, you will feel a drag on your thumb pad. **Caution:** Never run your thumb or fingers into the cutting edge.



7 To test for a burr on the right side of the blade, hold the knife handle in your right hand, and turn the knife so the cutting edge of the blade is facing away from the palm of your left hand. Slide your left-hand thumb pad in the direction shown. Again, if a burr has formed, you will feel a drag on your thumb pad.

8 When the blade is properly contoured, with straight sides, and a burr is formed along the total cutting edge, wipe the honing oil from the coarse stone and go to the next finer stone. Lay the blade flat on the surface of the finer stone. Using the sawing motion, work the blade across the stone until you have removed the coarse abrasions on both sides of the blade and left finer stone abrasions. Watch for the burr to roll from one side of the blade to the other in just a couple of strokes.



Troubleshooting

- If you can't feel a burr on either side of the blade, continue the left-to-right, right-to-left sawing motion until you feel a burr.
- If the burr is formed in one area on the blade and not another, you need to move your left-hand fingers over the area that does not have the burr and continue the left-to-right, right-to-left sawing motion until you have a burr along the total cutting edge.

9) Wipe the surface of the finer stone with a soft cloth or paper towel to remove the fine metal particles that were abraded from the knife blade and go the next finer-grit medium.

10) With the finer-grit stone, start with the burr side down on the stone. If you are using an oil stone, you will need to switch to a diamond stone, a water stone, an Arkansas stone or sandpaper for the fine stone. When you've removed the abrasions left by the fine-grit stone and the burr flips from one side to the other with just a couple of sawing strokes, go to an extrafine stone and do the same procedure as with the other side.

When both sides look polished, you're ready to strop. **Note:** It is important that the burr roll from one side of the blade to the other with just a couple of sawing strokes. This way, any remnants of a burr on the blade should fall off during stropping.

11) Rub honing compound on your strop. The most common honing compound used is the Yellow Rough compound.

12) Lay your knife blade flat at the top end of the strop (with the blade's cutting edge facing the top). Never run the cutting edge of the blade into the leather. With your finger putting controlled pressure on the blade, pull your knife through the honing compound about eight to ten times. Keep the blade flat on the strop at all times during the stropping stroke. **Note:** Each time you reach the end of the pull, raise the blade straight up and move it back to the top end of the strop. Never roll the blade when you come to the end of the strop (or stroke past the end of the strop). If you roll the blade, you will round the blade. You want the blade to remain flat from the cutting edge to the top of the bevel.



13) After stropping the blade on that side, lay the other side of the knife blade at the bottom end of the strop (with the blade's cutting edge facing the bottom), and pull it through the honing compound about eight to ten times. Be sure to keep the blade flat on the strop through the entire stropping stroke.



14) Test your knife by cutting across the grain of a soft wood, like basswood. Your knife should flow through the wood easily and leave a smooth, shiny surface where you cut and you should be able to cut a shaving thin enough to read through.

15) ****Troubleshooting:** If after sharpening, your knife doesn't flow through wood easily, tears the wood fibers, or leaves little lines in the wood, check to make sure you've removed the entire burr while stropping.

**If after stropping, it still doesn't cut properly, the microbevel is too wide, creating too much metal mass on the cutting edge of the blade. If the microbevel is wider than a fine hair, go back to your fine stone and sharpen the blade until the microbevel disappears. (you don't need to form a burr again.) Then, strop the blade again.

**If you nick the blade, you'll need to use the coarse stone to remove enough metal from the blade to where the nick has disappeared; then go through the entire sharpening sequence.

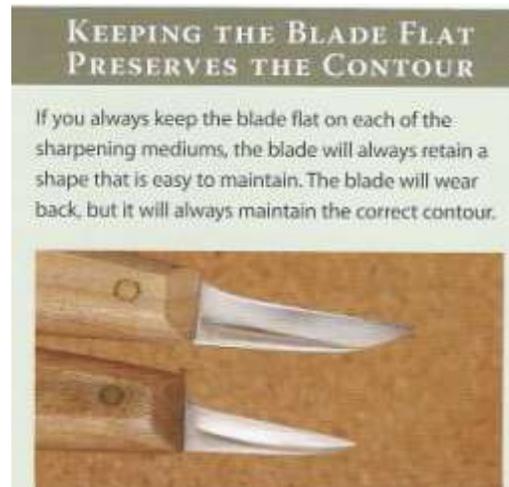
**Over time, the abrasive properties in the wood take off the ultrasharp edge. If your knife doesn't leave a smooth, shiny surface where you cut, strop it again and the razor edge should be put back on.

Quick Ref- Sharpening Starters:

**The blade has nicks or needs to be reshaped (Start with a coarse stone)

**The knife tears the wood fibers or does not cut smoothly (Start with a fine stone)

**The Blade needs to keep an ultrasharp cutting edge (Strop!)



Reminder, I Am Always On The Lookout For: Carving Photo's of the Month; Carving traditions; Tips & Tidbits that you are willing to share with fellow carvers:

Most of you have been around the wood carving scene for many years and I am sure have acquired tricks, techniques & tidbits that make your wood carving hobby more enjoyable and easier. Please join me in sharing some of that acquired knowledge or special learned techniques with fellow carvers. (just send them to me through my email listed below)

Alison Currie shared the following link to a Blog written by Carver Gerry Holzman, titled “**Mistakes Were Made**” that you might be interested in viewing. The Blog can be found at (www.soundsofcarving.com). I checked it out myself and found the blog part of his site to be very interesting and amusing.

Category Changes to the this April's Carving Show :

Don Buss will attempt to address following changes at the February 10th carving class session. These changes will be published and used in this year's contest unless there are lots of objections!

1. It was suggested to delete the rule requiring class carved or teacher assisted to be entered in the Bench Category!
2. This also deletes the Bench category in the contest.
3. It was also suggested to delete the rule about entrees being carved in the past two years.
4. The Show Buttons, made by Alison, should contain the Club Logo and year. They will be given to all club members to wear during the show so people will know who our members are.

There will be sign up sheets for Volunteers at this years show at the Monday carving sessions & monthly meeting. I will present this years Show & Competition Rules in the March Newsletter.

Product Evaluation from the Editor:

Flexcut Folding Whittling Knife: Since I work and camp a lot with Scouts and teach the Wood Carving Merit Badge, I got tired of lugging my good carving knives and gouges with me when trying to carve in the field. I have a good Case whittling knife I use but needed some gouges also while in the field. So, after weighing my options I purchased the Flexcut Pocket Jack, a 4-Blade Pocket knife for Carving, pictured below, that has one good carving blade and three gouges. This is a great tool for an on the go carver that meets most requirements for a good whittling pocket knife with gouges as added features . This knife is very sharp right out of the package and holds an edge exceptionally well. Another nice feature is the fact that the blade and all the gouges lock for safety which means there will be no accidental closing of the blades on my fingers or those of one of my Scouts. Anyone interested in checking it out, I carry it with me at all times, along with my Case knife, & I will be more than happy to let you check it out for yourself.



“Flexcut Pocket Jack”

Next Months Newsletter: I hope to continue this series, if everyone is interested, with **Sharpening Gouges and Veiners** followed by **Sharpening Curved-Blade Carving Knives** followed by **Sharpening Flat Chisels** – all from the same book & author. If there is not that much of an interest in these techniques, let me know and I will stop here.

Until We Get Together Again, Happy Carving!

Floyd Lombardi, Editor (Floyd_GVWC@yahoo.com)