

President's Update

I would like to provide an update to our membership and all prospective members on the progress made toward establishing the American Knife and Tool Institute (AKTI) as the pre-eminent organization representing both knife users and makers.

Our first newsletter will introduce you to AKTI, its board, its membership, and its terrific website: www.akti.org. Please visit our website often to be updated on our progress and stay informed on important legislative alerts.

In a little over two years of volunteer effort we have held public forum meetings, established the mission, selected a board of regents, registered our name, organized the association into a legal entity and begun a very successful effort to recruit members both at the consumer and trade levels. We have recruited over 1,100 members that include forward thinking consumers, companies, retailers, distributors, publishing houses, clubs, trade associations and unions.

AKTI has done this largely through volunteer efforts and donations of its current members. They have worked at hosting AKTI membership tables at knife shows across the nation. Only by the continued active recruitment by our members of all interested consumers, trade members and organizations will AKTI fulfill its mission of representing the entire knife and tool industry. We need to communicate the utmost importance of what joining and becoming an AKTI member will do to build the credibility and effectiveness of this important association.

I urge you to join AKTI if you haven't already. Your voice is needed, we are not just one voice, we represent all Americans who use a knife as a tool daily in the pursuit of living our lives as human beings, the highest order of tool users on this planet. If a knife is not a tool, what is it? Some unrealistic people would negatively categorize it as something other than what it is, Man's oldest tool. Your membership provides AKTI with the opportunity to step closer to representing all Americans who view knives and tools as basic and very necessary to life. Can you really imagine life without a knife?

All we have to do is look around us, to see other industries under attack for failing to proactively, properly and completely present themselves in the most positive manner possible. It is always easy to procrastinate, to find reasons for not joining a protective effort before the need arises; however, it is unforgivable to not join when there is clearly ample reasons for concern. Our great country was formed by people willing to fight, sacrifice, and endure for their freedoms. Be part of that great American tradition and join us.

As the knife and tool industry progresses into the next century, what further restrictions, limitations, and outright erosion of our current rights will continue? As Americans, it is our duty and responsibility to communicate our views to our legislators who have taken an oath to represent, serve, and speak for us. Unfortunately, if AKTI doesn't exist, who will represent our voice?

How else will our legislators know about our views unless we have a specific organization for contacting them and serving as a dynamic resource for responsible and reasonable knife laws.

I invite you to become actively involved in our efforts today to maintain our rights and represent our voice to the nation, and influence the world. Please join the American Knife and Tool Institute today. We urgently need you to stand shoulder to shoulder with us to preserve our freedom as Americans.



Les de Asis, AKTI President

First Annual Meeting

The first annual membership meeting of the American Knife and Tool Institute, Inc. was held Saturday, June 26, 1999 in Chicago, Illinois. Les de Asis was re-elected President and Jim Wehrs Vice President/Secretary.

Committee Reports were presented. Sal Glessner, Chairman, announced the Publicity Committee was pleased with the exposure AKTI has received from publications, free ads, and at various shows. The committee is working on potential articles, will be working with various writers, and developing plans about publicity to present knives in positive, responsible ways.

Membership Committee Chairman Walter Gardiner presented D'Holder with the Knifemakers' Guild's membership plaque. He reported the committee feels the two million knife box flyers were an excellent way to announce AKTI to the knife buying public.

D'Holder, Education Chair, explained two main projects the committee is working on: a safety pamphlet and outlines for use by individuals giving presentations at various civic groups. The web site contains some information about efforts by different individuals and more will be added as available.

Legislative Chairman CJ Buck reported that AKTI is using the resource services of StateNet to provide access to information about pending legislation in all 50 states and at the federal level. He explained the committee will use the web site for legislative alerts. The committee is also working on a pamphlet as a preventative and helpful resource for anyone dealing with possible knife law problems.

Jan Billeb was confirmed as Executive Director for the coming year. On behalf of the board, Les de Asis acknowledged their appreciation for all of Jan's efforts and thanked her for her work.

De Asis thanked the Regents for supporting AKTI, its mission and goals. He gave a special thanks for their commitment and generous volunteering of time and resources.

AKTI Activity

The past year has been busy with four board organizational meetings, the annual meeting and efforts to recruit members at shows. Executive Director Jan Billeb attended both the Blade Show in Atlanta (photo) and the Knifemakers' Guild show in New Orleans. We also had a table at the New York Knife Show and at regional shows manned by members.



At the Blade Show a drawing was held for new members. The following knives were donated by AKTI Regents: D' Holder custom hunting knife, Sword of Zena by Pro-Cut Distributors, Sport Utility Kit by Gerber, 6" Master Series Hunter and Folding Knife by Buck, Skinning Knife by Schrade, Model 720 Mel Pardue by Benchmade, Starmate and Military Knife by Spyderco.

A lot of work has been put into developing the AKTI web site. Of course, that is an on-going job. We would appreciate your comments about what

you would like available on the site. Soon a Members' Only section will be available. It will feature downloadable member logos, forms for committee volunteering and ordering AKTI materials, as well as the newsletter and other publications.

Bladeforums.com generously set up an AKTI forum on their web site. If you're on the internet, check out the discussions going on.

If you're not on the internet, contact Jan for information about projects or to request AKTI printed materials.

AKTI Has Many Supporters in the Knife World

We have been able to spread the word about AKTI thanks to the generous support of *Blade Magazine*, Krause Publications, *Tactical Knives*, Harris Publications, and *Knives Illustrated* which have given free ad space. Editors Steve Shackelford, Steve Dick and Bud Lang have been very supportive of the purpose and goals of the organization with articles and suggestions. Other publications have included membership information or articles about AKTI's activities.

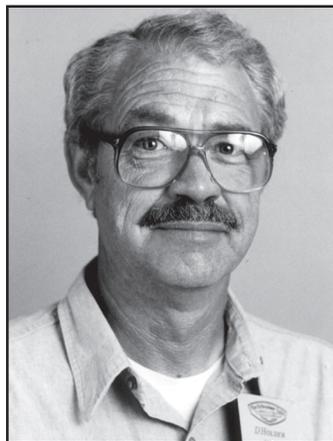
Blade Magazine and the Knifemakers' Guild gave AKTI free show booth space and prime locations at their shows. Many individuals and other groups have donated time at shows or space to display AKTI recruiting materials.

THANK YOU! Your continued support is important to unifying the knife community.

Knifemakers Guild Supports AKTI

The Knifemakers' Guild early on recognized the importance of the AKTI's efforts. The two groups are working together to share information and develop projects. The Guild has joined AKTI on behalf of its membership. Each Knifemakers' Guild member is an Ambassador member of AKTI. D' Holder, past president of the Guild, serves on the AKTI board and is a representative for the Guild. The Guild is working with AKTI to ensure the future of the cutlery industry.

Associations have made great advances in the American society in the last century. By working together organizations can tremendously multiply their ability to influence legislation and society. If you belong to a knife club, or other group with any related interest to the cutlery business, knife hobbies or daily activities that relate to knives, encourage them to request information about collaborative efforts with AKTI.



D'Alton Holder, AKTI Education Chair

Important AKTI Goal to Educate Youth and the Public

The most often asked question I hear as an AKTI Regent is, "What are you doing to help the knife industry?" Sometimes it is difficult to answer in a positive way. With any new organization, it takes a lot of time to get organized and determine what we can accomplish with the resources we have. We've done that. As chairman of the

Education Committee, we have developed teaching outlines to use in presentations to civic organizations, scout groups and clubs. Outlines are available on our web site or by contacting Executive Director Jan Billeb. We welcome any additional information you can offer, any stories about your experiences or other materials you will share with AKTI members.

Currently we are researching a video project that could be used in conjunction with those presentations and a PBS-type production that could be shown on TV sports or outdoor networks. The greatest hurdle is working out funding for a \$20-30,000 project. Hopefully, we can begin this project in the near future. The videos would deal with sharpening, safety and public perception issues.

Every effort made to share our knife collections or knowledge with civic groups, help at school heritage days or historical reenactments, or show a child how to properly open a knife, will foster positive knife experiences. We want to educate our youth and the public about the importance of knives and their proper use and care.

Legislative Comments

The Legislative Committee is working to develop information and resources to help members know about knife laws, be informed about potential problems and be prepared to respond when grassroots action is necessary to stop ill-conceived or restrictive legislation or to support reasonable and responsible laws. We decided the best vehicle to provide this information is to effectively use our web site. However, for anyone without internet access, you can call Jan Billeb at AKTI's office and she will print information from the site and mail or fax it to you.

The Legislation Section of the web site lists resources to search for knife laws, basic information about the legislative process, and tips for communicating with legislators. There are three separate color-coded sections with maps to find Pending Legislation, Current Legislation, and to connect to your own state's legislative web site. The task of adding all the current laws is very time consuming. We have decided to not post all of the text of the laws so we are working on a standardized summary

format. This will give you the basic intent of a bill and then the ability to search for the full text. We will list other internet sites that discuss certain bills or issues within specific states.

The 2000 state legislative sessions and Congress will be very active beginning right away in January. We have a monitoring system in place that provides information about every introduced bill in all fifty states and Congress. In addition to having all revisions and status information, we have access to an enormous amount of information about the members of Congress and committee assignments and actions. The Publicity Committee has developed a letter introducing AKTI to members of Congress. This is our first step in proactively being involved on the ground floor of legislation.

AKTI will need you to check the web site regularly for possible Legislative Alerts. These will include instructions of how to be involved.

We now have available a "Guide to Understanding the Laws of America Regarding Knives" written by an AKTI



CJ Buck, Legislative Chair

member with a legal background. We plan to also develop some basic guidelines of what to do if you have a legal problem regarding a knife.

Please contact us if you have suggestions or concerns.

Questions about AKTI? - Check out FAQs - www.akti.org/faq.html



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Forum: go to www.akti.org and click on AKTI Forum or go to www.bladeforum.com

(Make a copy to mail, fax or share with a friend!)

Name _____

Company _____ Title _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

This is a gift membership from _____
Send an occasion card for _____

- Annual Ambassador Member (Individual) - \$35/yr
- Bronze Associate - \$100/yr
- Silver Associate - \$200/yr
- Gold Associate - \$500/yr
- Platinum Associate - \$1,000/yr
- Premier Member - \$2,000/yr (Voting Membership)

I support AKTI with an additional contribution of \$ _____

Check # _____ Enclosed for \$ _____

Visa/Mastercard Charge: _____ Exp: _____

Signed _____ Date: _____

Request:	Quantity
Counter top sign with tear-off membership application:	_____
Small AKTI Ambassador flyers	_____
Material for knife show display	_____

Note: Since the American Knife and Tool Institute, Inc. has filed as a 501(c)(6) not for profit tax status, dues may be deductible as a business expense, but not as a charitable contribution.