

RawHide Gazette

"Without question, the *RawHide Gazette* is by far the best and most informative and comprehensive Guild publications of all of them! You are to be commended for your very fine and professional efforts. Keep up the good work. With admiration"

/signed/

Al & Ann Stohlman, December 1997

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Puget Sound Leather Artisans Co-Op

Nov – Dec 2011

Hide Highlights

Page

1-4 Razor-Sharp for Cheap!

5 Tips

5 Editorial

6-9 Peter Main Class

9 Workshop Report

10 & 11 PSLAC Schedules

Razor-Sharp for Cheap!



The demonstrations for the October and November meetings were on sharpening techniques using very effective and inexpensive materials. Norm Lynds, our resident toolmaker, led the classes.

Norm is well known for his sharpening skills and he uses a variety of techniques. The major differences in the techniques are in the skill required to achieve a super sharp edge without damaging the tool. The faster the material is taken off the tool, the greater the skill required to keep the tool steel from overheating and ruining the tool! The technique he demonstrated is very effective in creating an extremely sharp edge by using commonly available, cheap materials and a bit of elbow grease.

I'd also suggest every leatherworker should have or get a particular

Next Meeting on Sunday January 8th at 1:00 PM

General meeting starts at 1:00 followed by the first of three classes on the Flower Press (see schedule on page 10 for details)

Meet at The Issaquah Valley Senior Center Address 75 NE Creekway, Issaquah WA 98027

(See last page for map)

book containing a wealth of information about tools, Leathercraft Tools by Al Stohlman - Tandy number 61960-00 is the best \$20 USD you'll ever spend. It's also available for \$12.99 USD as an e-book at: <http://www.leathercraftlibrary.com/p-1141-leathercraft-tools-by-al-stohlman.aspx>

First we will be using wet/dry sandpaper of several different grits or abrasive grades. The wet/dry designation is important since regular woodworking sandpaper is made with materials, which will disintegrate when water is used as below. The grit is based on the size of holes in a screen used to sift the abrasive material, the smaller the grit number, the larger the size of the abrasive. For example 100 Grit is much coarser than 600 Grit and 1500 Grit is even finer. These sandpapers or sanding films are available at hardware, woodworking, automotive part or automotive paint stores. To find the finer grades like 2500 Grit or finer you may need to go to automotive paint or fine woodworking stores.

You will need the following items to start with:

- 600 Grit wet/dry sandpaper
- 1500 Grit wet/dry sandpaper
- 2500 Grit wet/dry sandpaper
- Tooling marble or glass plate
- Spray bottle filled with plain old water
- Some paper towels or absorbent rags
- A paint stirring stick (the one I found at my home center/hardware store was 1.5" by 20" and about a quarter inch thick) or a piece of board about 2"- 4" wide by 12" long
- A piece of Vegetable tanned leather with a smooth grain side to cover one side of the above stick
- Jewelers Rouge (white or red – available from Tandy or a woodworking store)
- Some contact cement



Since we are sharpening not modifying the tool, we will start with 600 Grit. The coarser Grits like 220 or 100 would only be useful to remove a lot of metal if you were reshaping or modifying the tool before using the techniques below to remove the scratches from the coarse grits and finish the sharpening.

Before we start let me say something about safety. Be very cautious as you sharpen since even a "partially sharp" edge can make you bleed and that's no fun! Be fully aware of the fact that we, as leather workers, need extremely sharp tools and these same tools can cause serious injury. If you are demonstrating these techniques be sure to always make safety a priority.

Take your sheet of 600 Grit and fold into quarters (if you bought full 9" x 11" sheets), cutting from the back with a utility knife. Do NOT use one of your good clicking knives or scissors since you will almost undoubtedly dull them! This will give you a piece to work with about 4.5" x 5.5". Some of the automotive



**Norm demonstrating stropping a knife
Barb, Len, Guo, Phil and Dave watching**

stores sell packs of 3.75" x 9" which can simply be cut in half. After you have a workable size piece of 600 Grit sandpaper spray some water on the tooling



Placing the sanding film on the flat surface and wetting it

marble or plate glass surface (the smoother/flatter the better), place the sandpaper grit side up on the wetted surface, spray a bit of water onto the grit to help float away the metal particles you will be creating next. One edge of the sandpaper should be against the edge of the tooling surface or glass plate. You really can't get anything too wet here and things will tend to get a bit messy, hence the paper towels or rags.

At this point your sandpaper should be "stuck down" to a very flat surface that you will use to start sharpening. Take your tool and holding it at the correct angle (see the Stohlman book) pull or push the blade across the sandpaper perpendicular to the edge. There are many schools of thought on pulling versus pushing the blade

against the abrasive surface. I've achieved a very sharp edge both ways, the major difference I've found is something called the "wire edge" that is created

by pulling the edge over the abrasive surface. This wire edge is a very fine wire created on the edge and is usually removed by a stroke or two on the opposite side of the edge or by stropping.

Norm recommends pushing

the edge toward the abrasive surface only when using a stone. Think of it like as if you were whittling only with the angle of the edge parallel to the abrasive surface, not cutting into it. Pulling the blade over the sandpaper keeps from cutting the sanding films. You can place a finger on the sandpaper to help hold it in place behind the blade!

Make smooth consistent strokes on one side of the blade, paying attention to the angle you have chosen. Count the number of strokes you make, after 10 or so

flip the blade over and take the same number of strokes on the other side. Move your hold down finger if you are doing that! No cutting fingers! Continue this sharpening each side until the blade has a consistent look all along the sharpened edge. You will most likely need to rewet the paper, which will also help to wash away the metal you have been removing – yup it's black! Use your paper towels or rags. At this point the blade should be fairly sharp but we are not done – not by a long way!

Move to a finer grit sandpaper (1000–1500 Grit) and repeat all of the above steps. As you work your way through the grits you will see the edge become more polished. Once the scratches from the 600 Grit disappear change to the 2000-2500 Grit to remove the scratches from the 1000-1500 Grit. If



Norm sharpening a knife blade

you wish you can get even finer sanding films in the 10,000 to 12,000 Grit range to get a mir-

ror finish. However, the same result can be achieved with proper stropping.

Stropping is a term most of us have heard of (we know the old straight razors of yesteryear needed stropping with a belt of leather...) but many do not know what that actually did. Stropping is no more than polishing the edge to make the blade glide through whatever is being cut. Although in the hands of an expert the use of an old style leather strop could achieve our goal few (if any) of us could strop our tools consistently on a belt. If you ever see one in actual use you will realize



one end is affixed to something solid & the leather strap is stretched to keep it flat while stropping. Easier way to do that; Take a small board or paint stir stick and using contact cement attach a piece of Veg-Tan leather (grain side up – flesh side cemented) to make a leather strop that doesn't flex! Now take some Jewelers Rouge and rub it on the strop. If your rouge is hard take your time and some will build up on the leather, you really don't need a lot. When rubbing on the rouge do not press hard enough to damage the smooth surface of the leather.

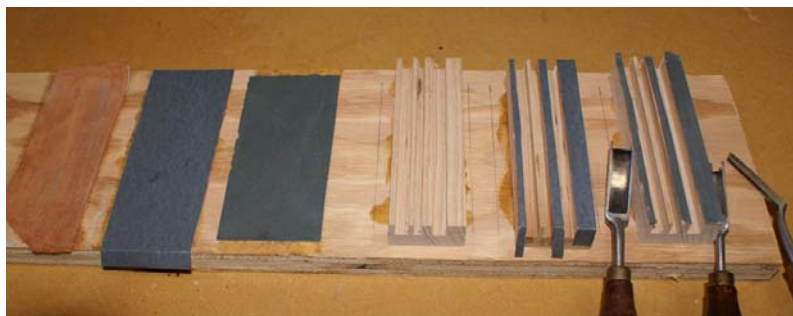
**A different approach to the strop
(a piece of leather glued to a board)**

Stropping should just take a few strokes on each side to achieve a mirror finish. Make sure to maintain your sharpening angle and strop away from the edge using a pulling action if the edge is facing away from you. If you feel your blade loosing its' edge just a quick strop will bring it right back to that super sharp state. I know leather craftsmen that strop utility knife blades and even scalpel blades for the very sharpest edge around.

Remember your sharpening skills will improve with practice just like any other skill and if you do it right you'll enjoy your leatherworking more. –rog-



Norm sharpening a French Edger



Everything you need for sharpening a French Edger



**French Edger on the
appropriate sized strip
for sharpening**

**Different widths
and different grits**



Tips from our Members

A quick tip for those whose grip isn't quite what it used to be:

I use a sanding block and a block of resin for a violin bow to get a better grip. I run the sandpaper across the resin block and the dust that is acquired when applied to my finger tips gives me all the grip needed for swivel knife work and controlling stamping tools. -John Wickstrom

From the Dusty Work Bench; This is a handle to use for spray paint or finish:

I bought this one at a hardware store but could be available at a paint or automotive store as well. I use the handle with Leather Sheen and I get a nice even coat. I hope this comes in as handy for you as me.

-Dusty Wert



Editorial and other stuff

November and December just zipped on by and it's way past time to get another **RawHide Gazette** edition out for you. This edition is a good one though with Norm, Peter and Paula demonstrating their skills for us. The class write up for the Peter Main class in Rathdrum, Idaho is especially great with pictures by Bob Stelmack and the text by Paula Marquis. Thanks to both of you! I just wish I could have been there!!!

We have a new advertiser Sea Leather Wear—check them out, their fish leather is absolutely fantastic! I have several of the Carp and Perch skins in different finishes and colors. They are beautiful exotic skins and I highly recommend them. Check out the sample packs as a great way to see what is available.

<http://www.sealeatherwear.com/samplers-c-27.html> By the way, they really are odorless!

As always deadlines are my worst enemy and this one is slammed right up there—hard left uppercut! We do have a number of great articles in the works. General and Frederica are both working on pyrography (I've seen some great looking samples), some product comparisons, pattern making, a couple of construction articles—well you get the idea—keep checking back.

By the way the winter weather in the Pacific Northwest is rainy and gray. Just like always except when it snows! ;~)

As always, any articles, tips, hints, photos or other information you have for the **RawHide Gazette** can be sent to webmaster@pslac.org

-rog-

Roger Kaiser – Editor

Peter Main Class In Rathdrum Idaho

The workshop was in Spokane, way back September 10th & 11th, but, with the Puyallup Fair and all the work to do before Christmas, there just wasn't time to do the write-up.

As are all of Peter's workshops, it was just great. The class was ready to go with 10 pupils and on the Friday night Ken Bush had a call from a lady named Sue in Oregon who wanted to know if there was still room in the class. Ken told her, sure come on over. We really didn't expect to see her, but, Saturday morning there she was in the parking lot waiting. She'd



Ed. Note: some of the pictures do not have captions or names—my apologies



Parts

**Ken Bush
paying close
attention to
Peter's
instructions**



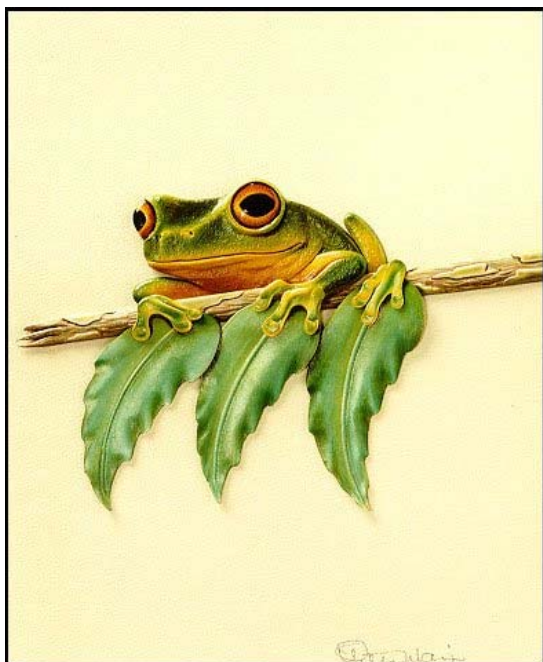
**Peter
Skiving**

**He makes it
look so easy**



**Peter
Demonstrating**

**Attentive
students**





**Gluing the
outside of
the plug**



**Gluing the
inside of
the cover
leather**

**The plug
placed in
the cover**



**Defining
the outline**



**Adding
more
definition**



**Tooling
the leaf**



**Cutting
out the
leaf**



**Position-
ing the leaf
on the
trunk**



**Preparing
to color**



**Coloring
the leaves**





**Julia
McCormack**



Ken Bush



**Paula
Marquis**

Sue



**Peter
Main**

driven all night from Bend, Oregon and she was raring to go!

There were some familiar faces for me and also a lot of people I did not know, and therefore am unable to put names to. Ken would know them. Woody and Jackie were there, Jackie did the class and Woody kept us all in line. Bob Stelmack came over from the tri-cities. It was really great catching up with old friends. And, of course Peter was there. Good to catch up with him again tool.

Continued on next page

When we arrived on the Friday evening, Ken invited Peter, George and myself to his home for dinner and he BBQ'd some Salmon. Boy, oh boy, that would have to be the best salmon I have EVER had. Wonderful job Ken and Cindy.

The embossed frog with plugs we did might not have been my most favorite creature to do, but, the techniques we learned which can be applied to all sorts of other projects and has given me many ideas to mull over was well worth the effort to do.

The Saturday was spent learning to sculpt the plug and cut, shape and tool all the other parts of the frog as well as the log that it was to end up sitting on. For the plug, Peter used about 10/12 oz. firm, heavy leather and all the other parts were from about 4/5 oz. leather. The top leather being so thin made it very easy to mold, push and shape over the plug. Thinner plugs were used for the feet and leg of the frog.

Doing the leaves that came down from the branch gave us a lot of practice in fine edge skiving. We all happily watched Peter demonstrating how easy it was to skive evenly and thinly around the edges of the leaves. Then we all went and did likewise - HA! - that proved not to be quite to easy! So, we grabbed some scraps and practiced some before tackling our project.

Sunday was spent putting finishing touches to our tooling,

then on to coloring. Peter uses only spirit dyes. Jackie and I wanted to paint ours with acrylics so at that point our projects were done and had to wait until we got home to finish. We spent the rest of the day watching and learning.

I don't know if Jackie has finished her project yet, but, I haven't had time as I have decided I want a tooled background before I mount my frog on the backing sheet that Peter provided. I also still have to paint my frog then put it all together. Christmas orders and the Puyallup Fair got in the way.

It was a great workshop and I'm ready to go to Spokane again next September. Most of the class wanted to do a wolf and we have asked Peter to come back and do a wolf. He has agreed, now all we have to do is remind him, so he doesn't forget. At the present we don't know if it will be a full wolf or a portrait. Either way it will be a very interesting workshop and I am looking forward to absorbing new ideas and techniques.

The finished frog mounted should look very good in a shallow shadow box.

Thanks for a great workshop, Peter and also many thanks to Ken Bush and Jackie Holliday and Woody Collins for all the work they did to put this project together.

Paula Marquis

WORKSHOP REPORT

First I'd like to wish everybody a **HAPPY, HEALTHY and PROSPEROUS 2012.**

For our January meeting we are going to tool a decorative piece of leather that will adorn the flower presses that Norm is making for us.

The piece of leather that we need to bring is 6" x 8" (final size to fit the flower press). It would be advisable to bring the leather a bit larger than the final size. Two reasons for this are that it will be possible to cut the piece to the exact size after tooling and also to give some space around the edges to test out any tools.

Paula said she would bring a rose pattern that anybody can have and she will help anybody with the tooling of the rose that needs assistance. The rose is a good pattern for learning reverse beveling techniques and to give more roundness to the look of the rose. Those who do not want to put a rose on their flower press, can bring anything that they desire.

We'll have to bring the usual array of tools and equipment for the afternoon's activity, such as stone, sponge, dish, mallet, tools, stylus for tracing, etc.

We will color our tooled piece at the March meeting. This will give our piece time to get thoroughly dry and also the February meeting will be at

Western Washington (Seattle/Tacoma/Everett)
PSLAC CURRENT SCHEDULE FOR 2012

General Member's meetings are on the 2nd Sunday of each Month unless specified below. 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM approx.

- Meetings held at Issaquah Valley Senior Center, 75 NE Creek Way, Issaquah, WA 98027 General meeting start at 1:00 PM followed by the mini-demos

Breakfast informal get-together locations:

North Breakfast >>> Last Friday of the month at 10:00 AM. Lake Forest Park Town Centre. 17917 Bothell Everett Hwy, Bothell, WA 98012 Bothell Way N, bordered by 170th N. & Ballinger Way N. Meet in the Third Place Books eating area

South Breakfast >>> 3rd Saturday of the month at 8:30 AM. Oscar's Restaurant, 8726 S. Hosmer St. Tacoma, WA

All Day Workshops:

Brad Martin 3 Day Workshop Southwest Leather Pot (We are still working with Brad to schedule this class—more details forthcoming)

Dates: TBD (watch this space)

Time: TBD (watch this space)

Location: TBD (watch this space)

Eastern Washington (Tri –Cities) Desert LeatherCraft Group (DLG)
PSLAC CURRENT SCHEDULE FOR 2012

Tri-Cities Desert LeatherCraft Group Member's meetings are on the 3rd Saturday of each month unless specified below:

- Informal meetings held at 2532 Banyon St. Richland, WA 99352 (Call Bob at 509-392-2589 for directions). Google map reference +46 16' 19.20", -119 18' 32.40"

Eastern Washington (Spokane) PSLAC East
PSLAC CURRENT SCHEDULE FOR 2012

PSLAC East Member's meetings are on the 2nd Saturday of each Month unless specified below. 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM approx.

- Informal meetings held at Spokane Tandy Leather Factory Store, 28 West Boone Ave. Spokane WA 99201 Contact Ken Bush for time, date (normally the 2nd Saturday) & details.

Ken Bush

White Rose Leather

11923 E. Fairview Ave.

Spokane Valley, WA 99206

whiterosex@aol.com 509.926.2087

Mini-Workshop Schedule for 2012: Start about 1:30 after the general meeting at 1:00

January 8 Flower/Leaf Press - Session #1 We will carve and tool a piece of leather to decorate the top of the press. The press will be ~8" x 10" so the finished leather will be ~6" x 8". Bring tooling leather, pattern, tools and a carving/stamping stone. Finish carving/tooling before the March 11 meeting.

March 11 Flower/Leaf Press—Session #2 We will color the stamped pattern using your favorite media/techniques. These could include stains, acrylic paints, dyes, airbrush, dry brush—your choice. Bring whatever you will need to finish.

April 1 Flower/Leaf Press—Session #3 We will finish the Flower/Leaf Press by attaching the carved, tooled and finished leather to the plywood presses Norm will bring. Contact cement will most likely be the preferred method but again it is your choice if you have another technique. The cost for the presses is still TBD but should be minimal. We will publish plans for the press in the March or April *Rawhide Gazette* for those members that are unable to attend the General Meetings. Dusty will also be demonstrating a scissor case project

Yearly General Meeting Schedule for 2012: Issaquah Valley Senior Center

January 8 1:00—4:00 PM Craft Room General meeting followed by the Mini-Workshop

February 12 1:00—4:00 PM MacPherson Leather Co. (still to be confirmed)

March 11 1:00—4:00 PM Craft Room General meeting followed by the Mini-Workshop

April 1 1:00—4:00 PM Craft Room General meeting followed by the Mini-Workshop
Meeting date moved due to Easter Sunday

May 6 1:00—4:00 PM Craft Room General meeting followed by the Mini-Workshop
Meeting date moved due to Mother's Day

June 10 12:00—4:00 PM Craft Room—Annual Picnic and Garage Sale—Club provides drinks, meat and condiments—Bring side dishes and deserts

July No Meeting Summer Break

August No Meeting Summer Break

September 9 1:00—4:00 PM Craft Room General meeting followed by the Mini-Workshop

October 14 1:00—4:00 PM Craft Room General meeting followed by the Mini-Workshop

November 11 1:00—4:00 PM Craft Room General meeting followed by the Mini-Workshop

December 9 1:00—4:00 PM Craft Room General meeting followed by the Mini-Workshop

Continued from page 9

MacPhersons and there will be no hands-on workshop. We will, however, have plenty of opportunity to spend money and get loaded up with supplies, with a good discount, for the year.

Looking ahead, Dusty will do the hands-on workshop for the April meeting. We will make one of Dusty's very useful scissor cases. A simple and useful project that we should be able to take home completed in the one afternoon. Dusty suggested we use 6/7 oz. tooling leather (7/8 oz. is also acceptable).

See you all at the first meeting for 2012.

Len Madison

Workshop Coordinator.

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RawHide Gazette

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Len Madison, Roger Kaiser & Paula Marquis

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All submissions are subject to editing for clarity and length.
All articles submitted must be accompanied by name, address and permission of writer

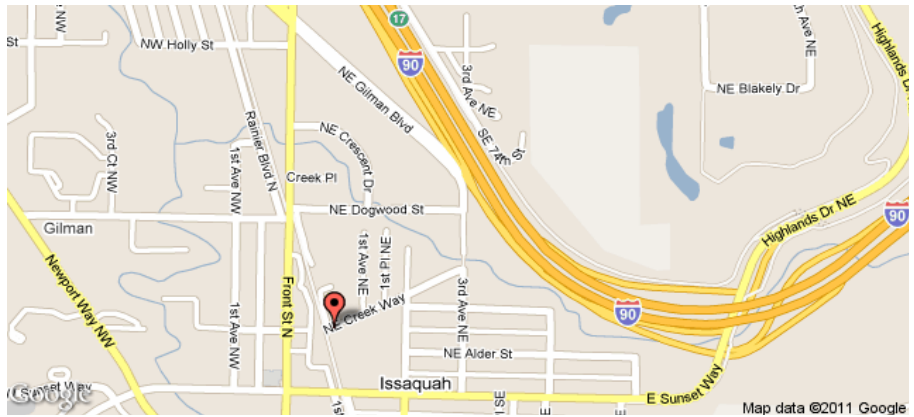
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1/4 Page or Business Card.....	\$60 USD
1/2 Page.....	\$110 USD
1 Full Page.....	\$200 USD

These rates cover a six month time period. PSLAC members are entitled to a 25% discount. Leather companies supporting PSLAC are given free Business Card size advertisement, additional space at regular rates.

The Puget Sound Leather Artisans Co-Op can be found at:
<http://www.pslac.org>



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From Auburn: North on Hwy 167 or I-5, then I-405 North, then onto I-90 Eastbound:

From Everett: South on I-5 to I-405 South, or to I-90 Eastbound:

From I-90 Eastbound: get off on exit 17/ Front St., turn right onto Front Street. At the third stoplight, turn left onto E. Sunset Way and see below:

Taking Hwy 18 from Auburn, Covington, Maple Valley to Issaquah:

Get on Hwy 18 Eastbound, about 2 1/2 miles after Maple Valley exit take the Issaquah-Hobart exit. Follow signs (left) to take Issaquah-Hobart Road to Issaquah (about 8 1/2 miles). Issaquah-Hobart Road

becomes Front Street. In Downtown Issaquah turn right onto E. Sunset Way and see below:

After Turning onto E. Sunset Way:

Go two blocks (past Police and Fire station), turn left onto 2nd Ave SE, go past the old Senior Center building and a baseball field on your left. Turn left onto NE Creekway, go about 1 block. The Issaquah Valley Senior Center is a brick building on your left, parking in front of it. There is also parking behind from E. Sunset turn left into the parking lot just before the Police station (look for a large parking sign on your left) and follow it until you see a kids playground. **Address 75 NE Creekway, Issaquah WA 98027**

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