

American Knife & Tool Institute

Executive Committee Meeting

June 3, 2004

Renaissance Waverly Hotel, Atlanta, Georgia

The Executive Committee meeting of the American Knife and Tool Institute on Thursday, June 3, 2004 was called to order at 1:00 p.m. EDT by AKTI president Jim Furgal (Camillus). Regents present: A. G. Russell and Goldie Russell (A. G. Russell Knives), Les de Asis (Benchmade), CJ Buck (Buck Knives), Al Pendray (Knifemakers Guild), AKTI Vice President/Secretary Mike Jones (for Chad Vincent – Gerber), Doug Flagg and Jack Igarashi (Kershaw) and Thomas Arrowsmith, (W.R. Case). Advisory members present: R. C. Crisp (United), Spencer Fraser (SOG) arrived 1:30 p.m., Kirk Aronson (Swiss Army Brands). Others present: Jan Billeb, Executive Director; David Kowalski, Communications Coordinator, Dan Lawson, Attorney, Gene Shadley, Knifemakers Guild.

These minutes are formatted on a per-subject basis, not the chronological discussion.

Administrative

Minutes: CJ Buck moved, Les de Asis seconded to approve the minutes of the February 16, 2004 Executive Committee meeting. Passed unanimously.

Future Meetings: The next physical meeting is scheduled for the last day of the SHOT Show on Monday, January 31, 2005 at 1 p.m. in Las Vegas. Conference call meetings will be announced as needed.

StateNet Contract: Jan Billeb reported that the current StateNet contract will expire in December. She researched other options for legislative tracking services including Capitol Advantage which also provides integrated online voter registration, posting alerts, and zip code lookup of legislators. Cost would be \$17,000 the first year. It was agreed that Billeb should negotiate a renewal of the StateNet contract.

CT Corporation: Jan Billeb noted that AKTI has used CT Corporation as a registered agent in West Virginia since incorporation in 1998. Cost currently is \$215 per year. The contract will expire in November and she recommended that AKTI switch to Corporation Service Corporation at a cost of \$122 per year.

Website: Billeb announced that the AKTI volunteer working on the website is seriously ill. She will return to doing the website herself. Les de Asis volunteered the technical assistance of Benchmade's webmaster.

Executive Committee: Copies of updated contact information for the Executive Committee was distributed.

Annual Meeting: AKTI's annual membership meeting is scheduled for 5 p.m. The agenda was reviewed and committee reports will be presented by Les de Asis for Education, CJ Buck for Legislation and David Kowalski for Publicity and Membership.

Financial

Accountant's Review: Mike Jones distributed copies of the 2003 accountant's review of financials completed by McGladrey & Pullen of Burlington, Iowa.

2003 Taxes: Jan Billeb reported that the West Virginia taxes of \$25 were paid and the Federal Form 990 was filed.

2004 Current Financials: Jones explained that a money market account had been opened. Jan Billeb will transfer funds as needed from it to the checking account. Already more interest had been earned than the checking account had for the entire year last year. Jones noted that income differences from 2003 were due largely to timing of dues payments and the change of Kershaw and Case to the Board of Regent membership level.

Membership

Corporate Memberships: David Kowalski reported on the ongoing contacts he has made for premier memberships including William Henry Knives, Browning and Meyerco. He distributed the listing of all corporate level members and the current status of membership. Jim Furgal agreed to contact Wally Gardiner regarding the inventory of AKTI premier plaques that Imperial Schrade has on hand.

Dealer Recruitment Plan: Kowalski will follow up with Les Edelstein who is working on the retailer mailing plan of AKTI \$. He plans to time it with an AKTI newsletter.

Expired Individual Members: Jan Billeb explained she was sending 762 renewal notices to past Ambassadors. This will be the final appeal to that group. She reported that any new Ambassador memberships now mainly come from the website or the Blade Show. AKTI's position was reiterated that we will continue active focus on premier and above memberships. We will accept ambassador members as a result of passive efforts and free ad placements in the knife magazines.

Issues

AKTI's Knife Measuring Protocol: Kowalski reviewed the history of the development of AKTI's knife measurement protocol and the importance of AKTI being proactive for the industry. He mailed a letter and copies of the protocol to all of the state attorneys general. Jan Billeb received a request for a supply from a Montana judge to distribute at a court training session of state judges. Dan Lawson explained that the protocol gives AKTI credibility, positions AKTI as the authority for the industry and, as more questions develop, AKTI will be called upon for information.

The manufacturers were reminded that the protocol is an advisory to be implemented January 1st, 2005. Everyone is encouraged to reference the AKTI blade length measuring protocol when listing knife measurements in catalogs and ads.

New York City: David Kowalski briefly reviewed the history of raids by New York City police on knife stores as detailed in the most recent AKTI newsletter. The situation seems to have gone away practically speaking. No additional arrests have been made since February. Iceberg plead to a minor violation, and the D.A. did not want to prosecute since the police had not provided an inventory of knives confiscated. Kowalski's conversation with the police lieutenant emphasized that AKTI has used a different definition of gravity knives than the officer did. The District Attorney was not interested in a meeting with AKTI representatives. Kowalski believes that AKTI responded to the NY situation where a definition was misapplied similar to what we did in Florida and Boston. Seven to eight major knife companies call New York home and he was very cautious in his approach. This situation emphasized again the need for some standardized definitions to be recognized by the court system and law enforcement.

Definitions: Discussion followed on the need and advisability of AKTI developing knife term definitions. Dan Lawson distributed a preliminary draft as an example of how definitions should be written. The general consensus was that if AKTI doesn't define knife terms someone else will do it for the industry, and possibly not in a favorable manner. It was also noted that AKTI needs to be aware that once it makes clear definitions someone can make it illegal. A list of possible terms to start with included: switchblade, ballistic, gravity knife, dirk, dagger, bowie, balisong, butterfly, stiletto. A. G. Russell moved, C. J. Buck seconded that AKTI begin the process of formulating definitions of knife type terms. Motion carried. Dan Lawson agreed to begin work on the list of terms.

Other terms discussed further included one-hand opener, assisted opener, centrifugal, inertia. It was agreed additional discussion was needed on whether those were terms AKTI wanted to try to define.

Switchblades: David Kowalski presented New Jersey attorney Evan Nappen's general view on the approach he felt AKTI should take regarding challenging the federal switchblade act. Discussion followed.

Research of State Knife Laws: Doug Flagg informed the Executive Committee that summer interns from the law firm that Kershaw uses will be working on a history of knife laws on the state level. He indicated this information will be available if AKTI would like to publish it in some manner. It was suggested that if AKTI used the end results that there needed to be a strong disclaimer, a note that court decisions may modify laws, and that the content would be quickly outdated. Publishing it electronically was discussed. A decision will be made after the project is done.

St. Louis Arches: Doug Flagg reported that security personnel at the St. Louis Arches (a national park) continue to issue tickets under Missouri switchblade law and confiscate Kershaw knives. They refuse to set court dates to contest the process. Discussion followed on possible ways to handle the situation including the suggestion of contacting the head ranger's supervisor.

A. G. Russell moved, Les de Asis seconded to adjourn at 3:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Billeb
AKTI Executive Director