

**American Knife & Tool Institute**  
**Executive Committee Meeting (BOR & Advisory)**  
Sunday, January 18, 2009...1 p.m.  
Room W303A - Orlando Convention Center, Orlando, FL

The Executive Committee meeting of the American Knife & Tool Institute on Sunday, January 18, 2009 was called to order at 1:10 p.m. by AKTI President Goldie Russell (A.G. Russell Knives). Regents present: CJ Buck (Buck Knives), Les de Asis (Benchmade), A.G. Russell (A.G. Russell Knives), Lowell Bray (Knifemakers Guild), AKTI Vice President Jeff Goddard (Kershaw Knives) and Bill Raczkowski (Gerber). Advisory members present: Spencer Fraser (SOG), Nick Trbovich and Bob Bretton (Ontario/Queen), Rod Bremer (CRKT), Morgan Taylor (Taylor Cutlery), Mike Manrose (Meyerco). Guests present included: Dan Weidner (Boker), Jennifer Gish (Marketing Manager, Buck Knives), Shanda Roberts (Product Manager, Remington), Troney and Joann Toler, Knives Plus, Amarillo, TX.

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

AKTI President Goldie Russell welcomed everyone, gave an overview of the topics to be covered and all present were introduced.

**Legislative – David Kowalski, Communications Coordinator**

**TX** - David Kowalski reviewed the facts included in the latest AKTI News & Update Volume 10 Issue 4 regarding Texas' importance to the knife industry and the proposed AKTI modifications to Texas law Title 10 Chapter 46 Sections 46.01 and 46.02. He reported that lobbyist Mark Seale is working to include the sponsoring Texas senator in a meeting with the Department of Public Safety. Discussion followed on the importance of any presentation including demonstrations of the differences between switchblades, one-hand openers and assisted opening knives. It was agreed Seale would be contacted and members of the Executive Committee and/or Troney Toler be available for presentations to ensure that understanding the differences between these knives (and the implications of centrifugal force language) was clear to the lobbyist and legislators from the initial contact.

Judge Lowell Bray reviewed the *Thomas v. State* 2007 WL 4403585 case in Blade Magazine that alerted AKTI to the potential issue. He noted this case was an unpublished advisory. This case did not mention Kershaw, or any other brand as the knife in question. Bray explained that this case could not be used as precedent, but such advisories become very persuasive. Texas is unique in that it does not technically apply to the entire state, only the 4<sup>th</sup> Appellate District. Bray reviews appellate cases on a regular basis to find cases related to knives. Sources to do this (for a fee) include [www.westlaw.com](http://www.westlaw.com) and [www.lexisnexis.com](http://www.lexisnexis.com).

David Kowalski and Jeff Goddard provided information regarding a class action suit being filed in the 4<sup>th</sup> Texas Appellate District against Kershaw, Gander Mountain, Cabela's, Wal-Mart, Academy Sports and others. The suit claims the defendants knowingly are selling illegal merchandise. The suit has not been served yet but represents a threat to any knife that can be construed as opening using "centrifugal force." The successful passage of an AKTI bill to be introduced in the 2009 Texas legislature would address the issues raised in the suit and make it moot.

**MO** – David Kowalski will research Senate bill 83 where there appears to be an overbroad definition of a switchblade. A preliminary review indicates the language was in existence in an early 2008 bill.

**IN** – Brad Foster of Midwest Gun Exchange has re-introduced his effort to get switchblades legalized. Foster has told David Kowalski it passed the Senate last year but personality clashes in a House committee caused it to fail there. AKTI will monitor progress here. Kowalski has also provided Foster with various materials that might help him make his case in committee hearings.

**StateNet** – The legislative reporting service was briefly discussed. Jan Billeb noted that those receiving the report can tag individual bills into AKTI's private files for continued tracking.

**Communications** – David Kowalski emphasized that all members need to be careful and thoughtful in sharing AKTI communications with non-members or others. He will make more effort to note if communication should remain confidential or can be shared. Due to the difficulty of so many schedules to coordinate for conference calls, David Kowalski announced that if any committee members miss a conference call to please call him for an update as soon as possible. He plans to do more communication by telephone to assure everyone is kept informed on Texas.

**Membership** – David Kowalski, Communications Coordinator

David Kowalski reported on the following memberships (Board of Regents-\$10,000/yr; Advisory -\$5,000/yr; Premier - \$2,000/yr): Frost Cutlery had agreed to join at Premier level; Moteng changed from Advisory to Premier; Columbia River Knife & Tool had stepped up to Advisory level, Taylor Brands moved up from Premier to Advisory, W.R. Case remains at Premier; Browning had joined at Premier. Others are pending.

Moteng, Brownells and A.G. Russell had offered access to their mailing lists for important AKTI Texas updates.

Dan Weidner of Boker USA discussed strategies to involve dealers and distributors and asked if some general information could be forwarded to his list of contacts about what is happening in Texas. David Kowalski agreed to get him a suitable release for public disclosure by January 23.

**Publicity** – David Kowalski, Communications Coordinator

Shanda Roberts of Remington suggested we could increase AKTI's image and exposure at the consumer level by including the logo and website on individual packaging and in all member company publications.

David Kowalski reported that Jared West of Mantis Knives had posted a one-of-a-kind Mantis knife on ebay to raise funds for AKTI and would be matching whatever it raised in the auction that expired during the S.H.O.T. Show. Kowalski will be working on getting and promoting a second knife for a drawing (for all new and renewals individual members) to have in time for the Blade Show.

The fact that NSSF will probably no longer provide AKTI with a complimentary booth space for 2010 due to space issues was discussed. It was agreed that David Kowalski and Jan Billeb would be located in a different company's booth for a portion of the days of the show and this schedule would be published prior to the show.

David Kowalski is working with Ed Fowler, who is preparing a potential article for Blade Magazine entitled "The Ideal Knife Law."

David Kowalski announced that new sections were recently added to the website to appeal for additional expert witnesses and defense attorneys. We are now including stories of knives saving individual's lives. Companies are encouraged to forward stories to Kowalski (photocopies or jpegs) for possible inclusion on the website.

**Administrative** – Jan Billeb, Executive Director

Les de Asis moved, Jeff Goddard seconded to approve the minutes of the May 29, 2008 meeting, October 14, 2008 Teleconference meeting, and Email vote to approve AKTI's Investment Policy. Motion carried unanimously.

Jan Billeb announced the next scheduled meeting for Thursday, May 28<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. at the Renaissance Waverly in Atlanta, Georgia.

CJ Buck moved, Bill Raczkowski seconded to approve the 2009 financial reports provided via email (Attachment 1). Motion carried unanimously.

AKTI President Goldie Russell called for any old business and any new business. No additional items were presented.

CJ Buck moved, Jeff Goddard seconded to adjourn the meeting at 2:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Billeb  
AKTI Executive Director