A Message from Guild President, Rex Pedersen 3
The Awards At Reno by Andrew Biggs 4
My Trip To Reno by Jerry Spaulding 8
Flare Cut Scroll by Roger Biele 10
33 Years Later by Roger Henrichs 14
Rust & Blue Remover by David Clevinger 16
Random Thoughts by Lee Griffths 17
Timeless Embellishment; English Fine Scroll by Marcus Hunt 18
Paparazzi At Reno 21
Around The Traps 22
3 Vises 24
Obituaries 24
FEGA News 24

Front Cover: A beautifully sculptured and gold inlaid shotgun and winner of 3 FEGA awards at Reno. Engraving and stock work by Joe Rundell

For more award photos see page 5

Back Cover: A page from a brochure showing the late R.J. Kornbrath's samples of engraving. A man that inspired a generation of gun engravers.

Kindly supplied by Sam Welch

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A MESSAGE FROM GUILD PRESIDENT
REX PEDERSEN

OW...
What a year this has been! Gas prices went up to over $4.50 and then down to $1.50. Major banks crashing, the auto industry on the brink and the state of the economy pretty much in the toilet. With all of this I was VERY concerned what would happen to FEGA. I was worried the show would be very light and membership would suffer.

Well, I'm here to tell you that the state of FEGA is in VERY GOOD condition! Last year, we were able to break the 500 member mark, I was hoping to be able to maintain that and I am happy to report the membership has now exceeded 600!

Sales were up this year as well. We had a 33% increase in sales over last year. Our displaying members are up this year also. A rough count of FEGA members at the Thursday social was 60 or so and the seminars were full to see three fantastic seminars by Lee Griffiths, Mike Dubber and Bob Strosin.

We had a large crowd at the annual meeting as well. Perhaps part of this was because everyone wanted to win the door prize of a real cool miniature vise donated by Mike Dubber. What was really impressive was the amount of first time members attending. It was great to see all the new faces!

In an effort to keep these numbers up and to attract new members to display, The Board of Directors has come up with a couple of ideas. Beginning next year we will be offering a voucher for anyone that exhibits at the show.

This is to promote members to exhibit at the show. After all, if we don’t have exhibitors we don’t have a show. We will offer $50 vouchers for Masters and $25 vouchers for regular members.

These vouchers can be used for the following year’s dues. The reason for the difference in dollar amounts is so it makes either member’s dues $25.00. Now, if you are thinking about displaying for the first time, we have another bonus for you! We will also pay for your banquet ticket. As with all offers, there is a slight catch. To qualify, you must be booked in the Nugget Hotel under our show group code.

All of this is great news for FEGA but it doesn’t come easy. It requires me and a lot of our board members to keep busy during the year. Keeping up on membership renewals, keeping the web site up to date and publishing the Engraver magazine requires a lot of time. I’m happy to do it and thank the other BOD members for all their hard work.

Speaking of board members, I would like to thank a couple. Bill Gamradt was unable to attend this year and has stepped down from his position. Bill has devoted countless hours to FEGA by a complete makeover of the FEGA web site and maintaining it for many years. He is responsible for making online ordering possible as well as the great overall look of the site. Because of Bill, we are not only getting memberships and orders from the US but also from around the world.

He also took over as editor of the Engraver magazine for a year and brought it up to a new level of quality. The list goes on and on but Bill has been a great asset to FEGA for many years. Thank you Bill and look forward to seeing you next year! The board of directors has filled Bill’s position with Andrew Biggs for the time being. We welcome Andrew aboard.

Another familiar face missing from this year’s get together was our Treasurer and long time member Manny Gonzales. Manny has done a great job over the years taking care of the FEGA accounts all while dealing with some serious health issues with his daughter. Somewhere he seemed to squeeze in the time to take on this big task. Now, Manny has some major health issues himself. I can sure understand that he did not want to seek re-election for his position. Manny, we all wish you well and hope for a speedy recovery! Also, thank you for a great job you have done for us in the past.

At the annual meeting, the members have elected Tira Mitchell to fill Manny’s position. Many of you know Tira as a familiar face on iGraver, articles in the Engraver and as talented engraver and artist. We welcome Tira and I know she will do a fantastic job for FEGA.

I’m happy that we are moving forward but I’m not going to rest. There are probably about 50 things on my “to do” list but the world wasn’t made in a day. I and the rest of the board will continue to work on issues and improvements as time will allow. In a perfect world we all could devote all of our time to FEGA but we need to make a living as well.

As we just completed our 25th anniversary show with ACGG, I am still in awe on how far things have come with FEGA but I am not forgetting our roots. I don’t think anyone would have imagined that this would grow from 30 people to what it is today. To promote the art of engraving in America we must make sure it will continue. With things like our DVDs, seminars, web sites and forums we are insuring that generations to come will continue the traditions started in 1981.

Scroll design by Sam Alfano
as you all can gather by now the 2009 FEGA show at Reno was quite an experience. As the editor of the FEGA Engraver Magazine it was also my great pleasure at the General Meeting to give out the “Editors Choice” awards/certificates for articles submitted for publication in 2008.

It’s not easy deciding who gets these sorts of things as all the articles were first rate and it would be nice to give everyone a certificate for their wonderful contributions to the magazine. In the end four articles were chosen for their depth and insight. So congratulations go to……………

Tira Mitchell……….Issue #77 Pilgrimage to Emporia.
Tim Adlam………..Issue#78 Rejuvenating the Spirit.
Weldon Lister....... Issue# 78 & 79 Sculptured Scroll, Part 1 & 2
Ron Smith Issue…..Issue#78 Layout and Design
Martin Strolz………..Issue#79 Tradition and Technology

I know from personal experience that it’s not an easy thing write an article and supply photos as it requires a considerable amount of time, effort and thought. The FEGA members and complimentary subscribers certainly appreciate reading the articles and learn a lot from them. The articles and photos also further the art of engraving as a whole. Tools, techniques, art, design, business, philosophy, lifestyle and ideas all add to the mix that we call engraving.

To everyone that has contributed articles and photos I would like to extend my own personal thanks for the time and effort that you put into writing them. It is you that make the magazine what it is.

Please keep those articles and photos rolling in for 2009……they are all fantastic, thank you Ω

Presidents Award in recognition of outstanding service on behalf of FEGA
Manny Gonzalas; for his excellent services as FEGA treasurer these last few years.
David Clevinger; for all his hard work with the auction at Reno.

And a very big thank you to……..

Jan Billeb and the show committee. Your hard work and efforts are outstanding and very much appreciated by all the members.
Mike Dubber for his donation of a small vise and engraving the Meeks award plus the great seminar and bracelet.
Kevin Monahan for his seminar work & Joe Rundell for the awards.
Sam Welch for taking the photos of all the award winning guns for the magazine.
Bob Strosin and Lee Griffiths for their most informative and excellent seminars.
GRS for their vise donation for the raffle and helping with the technical side of the seminars and award sponsorship.
All of the Award sponsors for their generous contributions.
And to all the helpers at the show that lent a hand in so many ways and manned the FEGA table. The wives and partners that sat at the tables, smiled, answered questions no matter how tired you were and still managed to have some fun. Your contribution is invaluable and you help make the show the success that it is. Ω
FEGA Engravers Choice Award: Joe Rundell
FEGA Metal On Metal Inlay Award: Joe Rundell

Best Engraved Shotgun:
(Sponsored by: Connecticut Shotgun Co.)
Joe Rundell

The winners from left: Lee Griffiths, Joe Rundell, Mike Dubber, Barry Lee Hands, Bob Evans.
THE AWARDS AT RENO 2009
CONTINUED

FEGA Best Engraved Rifle:
(Sponsored by Williams Gun Sight Company)
Barry Lee Hands

FEGA Engravers Choice Award Of Merit:
Barry Lee Hands

FEGA Best Engraved Handgun:
(Sponsored by Smith & Wesson)
Mike Dubber
FEGA Artistic Uniqueness Award:  
(Sponsored by GRS)  
Bob Evans

FEGA Engravers Choice Award Of Merit:  
Lee Griffiths

Congratulations to all the award winners!!
firearms have held a lifelong fascination for me. Growing up in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan we learned how to hunt and respect guns at an early age. I remember the first time dad took me out shooting. The sometimes stern words and hard looks were all it took for a lifetime of hunting safety and responsibility. That type of feeling happens again to some extent when you get your drivers license, first car, graduation, and so on but being entrusted with a gun was, for many of us country folks, our first step to adulthood and that feeling was unique. So what does going to the annual meeting for the first time and meeting the most talented stock makers, gun builders and firearm engravers on earth do to a person? My trip to Reno reminded me of those first time feelings and excitement. Frankly, I felt like a kid going to the superheroes convention.

A few years ago I became interested in engraving. I can't say what tripped that trigger but soon after I joined FEGA. I took a few classes with Ray Cover, cruised the various engraving sites and ogled The Engraver. The urge to go to the convention was overpowering. I was thinking of titling this My Pilgrimage to Reno but to me pilgrimage has a religious connotation. I put these people on a pretty high pedestal but they are well short of sainthood. I am happy to say, after meeting them, they are still on that pedestal but now the talent we all see is joined by the good character and kindness demonstrated throughout the weekend. Here is my trip to Reno.

Thursday:
My first goal of the trip was to attend the Members Social. From the looks of Rex’s room its good to be President. He needed it, over the course of the next three hours other first timers and I got to meet most of the folks that made FEGA what it is today. Another one of the first timers, Jim Brandvik and I were in an engraving class together so we had some catching up to do. The room was filled, people were dry and the fridge was stocked. I got to hear Andrew Biggs’ version of the English language. Andrew announced that he had a birthday card to be signed for Lynda Schreck. Someone said, Its not Schreek its Schreck, like the green guy in the movie. Maybe it was Reeks Pedersen. No one was immune from getting teased about something. Things wrapped up reasonably early in preparation for Friday

Friday:
My second goal was to help out as much as possible. Friday morning is the set up time and it is open to the public at noon. I walked around and asked if anyone needed a hand but they seemed to have things pretty much under control so I headed off to my third goal, Safari Club International. It was pricey to get in but where else can you get pictures of a leopard in the branches with its kill and a hyena at the bottom of the tree or a bear running with only one foot down and spit streaming back from the corner of its mouth. I must have walked ten miles and took pictures every fifty yards. By the end of the day I had enjoyed all I could stand.

Saturday:
The business meeting is at 0800 sharp. I’m sure the details of the meeting will be covered in another article but three things impressed me. Several awards were given in recognition of The Engraver articles that stood out and my friend Tim Adlam received an award for his article about how he rejuvenates from engraving by hunting in northern Wisconsin. Congratulations Tim.

The second was the reaction of Ron Smith on receiving the Meek's Award. I’ve never seen someone so stunned, humbled, speechless - pick an adjective - there was no way Mr. Smith was talking at that moment. Congratulations Ron.

The third was how many first timers were there. I did not do a head count but when we all stood up it looked like a quarter to a third were new to Reno.

MY TRIP TO RENO
ARTICLE & PHOTOS BY JERRY SPAULDING

Jim Brandvik, Mike Fennel, Jim Slaughter, Jerry, Spaulding
Liz Smith, Lynda Schreck and Norma Evans
After the business meeting it was off to the Show Room and open to the public. Jim Brandvik and I finally got a chance to help out when Joe Rundell asked us for assistance in the judging. With the help of Jim’s Stetson we collected the votes and along with a third Master Engraver who had no gun in that particular contest, we counted the votes and gave the tally to Mr. Rundell. This kept us busy for awhile but soon we were out of work again. A third goal of mine was to get advice regarding how to finish a Winchester 94 I had started engraving. There were many copies of a picture of it in my camera bag just waiting for arrows, scrolls and of course signatures. I had posted it asking how it should be finished and received a good bit of advice from JJ Roberts. I was in a place where I could get all the opinions I wanted but everyone was very busy so another first timer and I spent the time checking things out. His name is Jim Slaughter and he’s a retired cardiologist. I’m from Waldo. We had a good idea what the other had to listen to. We were fortunate enough to leave the hall and meet Ron Smith holding his award. Mr. Smith was kind enough to sign my Scroll Book (fourth goal), advise me on my engraving and sign it, talk about his feelings when he received the Meeks award, inspect and comment on Jim’s work and talk about life and philosophy. Ron used the word grace many times to describe his fellow engravers. The time he spent with Dr. Slaughter and I demonstrated what a fine gentleman he is. Thanks Ron. I managed to get a few more opinions without bothering anyone and the show closed.

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Sunday:

Things were busy but a little less crowded so I had the opportunity to take pictures of the fine engravings, firearms and the people who put them together. It was also a good time to ask questions, get opinions and meet some more of the first timers. I was happy to help out when it was time to pack things up at the FEGA table. Another first timer, Mike Fennel was helping Joe Rundell pack up so I went over to give them a hand. For some reason display cases don’t seem to go back in the shipping boxes the way they came out, but we managed. The first timers mentioned previously and I went out for supper that night and had a great time comparing notes and swapping stories.

Full of food and tired I was off to my room when true to form the sundown shuffles struck. I bet their playing again I said to myself and sure enough they were. This time Tim Wells and Barry Lee Hands were in the mix. Fred Bowen started a comedy song that had us all laughing. At the end of the song Tim Halloran told me what I missed when Tim Wells started to play. Ron Smith took the prosthetic thumb he used to play a guitar, handed it to Tim and said “do you need a pick”. Another fine day.

Monday:

Let the training begin. All three presenters were at the top of their game. They were prepared. The seminars were presented at a good note taking pace with fine examples passed around and the actual cutting demonstrated. I filled up half a notebook and learned plenty. After the presentations, Mike Dubber was nice enough to give me advice on my engraving. All the others had pointed out this flaw but Mike had the best line for it. There was a space in the middle of the border between some leaves, he looked at it and told me I had to fill it in because the only thing that looks good with a gap is the actress Lauren Hutton. Thanks Mike and thanks to all involved in the 2009 Reno Show. I hope to meet you again somewhere down the trail. Ω

(Editors note: It was Lynda Schreck’s 21st birthday again!! And I don’t have an accent, it’s all you Americans that speak funny!!)
I will begin with some background about “flare cut” scroll. In early June 2008, at Scott Pilkington’s Engrave-In, I showed some pieces that I engraved over the course of several years. They were cut in what I used to refer to as “double bevel” style. One of the engravers indicated that, while at a GRS class, he heard it called “transition style scroll.” This work seemed to draw quite a bit of interest from the other engravers because it has a sculptural look without the need for background treatment or shading. Also, once mastered, this style of engraving provides a client with a unique looking result with minimal engraving time.

In late June 2008, another engraver posted a picture of a revolver he had engraved on the Engraver’s Café web forum www.igraver.com. He also referred to it as “transition cut.” This thread started a discussion with examples posted by Ron Smith and myself. It was a popular topic and I created a tutorial for the Café based on my version of the style. We also discussed the terminology and Ron indicated that it was never meant to be called transition but rather he considered it a transition between western bright cut and traditional gun scroll. Ron calls it “flare cut” which seems a better name than transition or double bevel so I will use the term flare cut here for standardization.

Now let’s get to the tools. I had always cut this with a 90-degree square graver, sharpened with a 65-degree face and 15-degree short heel. The face was finished with a 1200 grit GRS Power Hone wheel, as is the heel. I do not polish the graver on a ceramic lap. You can try a more polished face. It probably couldn’t hurt but I don’t have a ceramic lap. I believe others primarily use a flat graver to cut this style. I use a square graver because it is easier for me to control. Since creating the Café tutorial I have switched to using a 116 or 123-degree square graver with a 45 or 50-degree face and a Lindsay parallel heel. The parallel heel allows me the advantages of the tool control of a square graver while allowing me to lean the graver over on its side without going past the heel. In other words, it is like having a square and flat graver at the same time.

As to the cutting method, I believe that any power operated engraving system will work well. For years I flare cut with a Gravermeister and now use a Lindsay Palm Control. I have also tried it using a Gravermax and all worked just fine. Push engraving works well as long as it is done in soft metal such as fine silver or pewter. I doubt that hammer & chisel will work as well because that method is bound to leave progress marks in the cuts.

This style is not complex as there is no background removal or matting required nor is there any shading, however it requires the engraver to have very good tool control. You must be able to roll the graver in and out and gradually change angles smoothly and each cut is best made continuously without stopping and restarting. You need to take this into consideration in the design process if you are working on an object with hand obstructions like a single action revolver.

The way I do it is to draw the spirals for the scrollwork on the work surface. Normally, I don’t draw anything else. I position and cut all of the inner and outer leaves by “eyeballing” them. An experienced
An engraver instinctively knows where to put the leaves. You can draw in the leaves if that helps but don’t actually draw a leaf. Just draw a curved line where the leaf goes. I have included a picture of how I start in Fig. 1. My example is a simulated sideplate that has been brush finished and the surface colored with a blue Sharpie to provide some extra contrast for this example.

Fig. 2 shows the first cut. I start on the inside and cut toward the base of the pencil drawn spiral. When starting the cut I position the graver almost perpendicular to the work surface then apply power as I lower my hand with the face tilted to the right (in this case) or outside of the cut. Then I gradually taper the cut to a point where it joins the pencil line. I will note here that many engravers start a cut at the shallow end then cut toward the deepest end and pop the chip out. I never knew this until recently and always did it the other way around. I’m sure this technique can be done either way however because I have had to go thin to thick due to hand obstructions on some work pieces.

Fig. 3 shows the second cut of the leaf. I start back at the same point I began the first cut but this time I lean the graver to the left and follow the back edge of the first cut. This creates the bevel in the center of the two cuts that creates a relief look. These two cuts are the entire essence of the technique.

Fig. 4 and 5 show the second leaf formed by the same two cuts. You will note that I do not actually cut the spiral that I drew. For large and medium sized scrolls there is no backbone cut. The leaves gradually meeting the drawn spiral form the backbone optically. In the case of small scrolls, I do execute the flare cuts along the backbone spiral because there may be few, if any leaves inside. This is shown in Fig. 6.

Figure 7 shows how I have added the additional leaves around the inside of the spiral and that I have cut the final spiral on the inside. This time I actually cut on the line of the spiral that I drew. You can leave it at this if you wish or cut the double bevel on the inside finial as shown in Figure 8.
In Fig. 9 you will see that I have cut the origination spiral in the same way as the inside finial.

Fig. 10 illustrates how I have doubled up on some of the leaves to give them more body or weight. Again this is optional but I added it as an example of variation on the theme.

Fig. 11 shows the primary design with all of the inside leaves engraved.

Fig. 12 shows that I have begun my outside leaves in the same way as the inside leaves. Again, I have just “eyeballed” the location of each leaf instead of drawing them. I start the cut at the outermost tip, cutting toward the main spiral with a gradually decreasing taper. In this picture you can also see that I have added a simple border incorporating some flare cut leaves.

In Fig. 13 I have added background treatment using a hand pushed liner in a Florentine pattern. I am showing this as an alternative to heighten the contrast between foreground and background. If you begin with a brushed, bead blasted or blued finish no background treatment will be necessary. I would, however, not recommend a highly polished finish to the work surface, as the bright flare cuts will lack contrast with the background.

Fig. 14 shows the completed sideplate with Florentine background. You will notice that it has the appearance of a sculpted relief engraving yet it took me longer to take the pictures than it did to execute the engraving.

Figures 15-17 illustrates both simple and complex flare cut decoration on a shotgun, knife bolster and a revolver.

There are lots of things I like about this style but I must warn that it is somewhat unforgiving since any slips will be very obvious and due to the depth and width of the cuts you can’t do much correction. If you sharpen your graver correctly this method leaves very little burr, if any, so it is ideal for cutting where you can’t polish over it. It also looks good blued or plated or nearly any other finish. I believe that the flare cut style achieves its elegant look by smoothly graduated, tapered cuts with graceful transitions from one scroll to the next. Any abrupt transitions will affect the overall grace of this style.

The flare cut style may not be ideal for every job but an occupational engraver needs lots of “tricks” in his or her bag to be successful. The flare cut is just one more way to give your patrons something they might like at a price they can afford.
C. Roger Bleile is a founding Charter Member of FEGA and is well known as the author of American Engravers and Firearms Engraving Facts. He lives in Northern Kentucky and can be contacted at rbleile@insightbb.com.
33 YEARS LATER
ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY ROGER HENRICHS

I am a totally self-taught engraver. Back in the 1960’s when I started engraving there wasn’t all the help and advice that is available now on the internet. Back then we didn’t know what a computer was much less know about the internet as it never even existed. There were no engraving schools to go to like there are now and what’s more, I didn’t have the time or money to go to an engraving school. With the help of Mr. Meek’s book; The Art Of Engraving and Prudhomme’s; Gun Engraving Review, this writer persevered and learned the art of engraving. I engraved my first gun in 1972. I did commission gun engraving work from 1972 to 1978 on a part time basis and had a full time day job at an architectural firm. During this period I engraved an unknown number of guns and knives. I say unknown because I didn’t keep any records of my work. Although I had purchased a Gravermeister in 1972 99% of my engraving was done with a hammer and chisel.

In 1978 I started my own consulting firm dealing with structural engineering and architectural technical services. (Started our 32nd year Jan 2, 2009) Needless to say getting a new business up and running took all my time and I quit engraving. As time went on my interests drifted away from engraving to woodworking and to renovating our then new house to the way I wanted it. My projects included creating a very unique basement with materials salvaged out of old buildings and some new material, building custom kitchen cabinets and bathroom vanities and other millwork and casework from oak board stock. I also designed and built several pieces of furniture that we have in our home today. Each piece of furniture and casework that I built does have a brass plate in it somewhere with the builders name and the date the piece was completed hand engraved in script.

In 2005 I had ran out of things to build for the house and did not want to build bird houses so I decided to go back to engraving. A complete millwork shop now sits idle in my garage. I guess I can build my own presentation cases for some Colt’s I have bought for engraving. I still can, and do, occasionally engrave with a chase hammer and chisel, however most of my work is now done with Steve Lindsay’s Classic or Artisan AirGravers. I still have my Gravermeister that I’ve had since 1972 however about all the Gravermeister gets used for now is setting inlay material. At 400 spm it works great. I have graduated to using a Meiji microscope for magnification. My engraving bench is designed so that I can engrave standing if I want to, or a sit down on a stool as I generally do.

The Colt Story - IT ONLY TOOK ME 33 YEARS TO FINISH IT!

The Colt is a 2nd generation Colt SAA .357 mag. manufactured in 1969. I don’t remember exactly what year I engraved the scroll work on the gun but it was sometime around 1975. The entire scroll engraving pattern was drawn directly on the gun and cut with a chase hammer and onglette graver. My tools were not very sophisticated when the Colt was engraved. My engravers ball sat on a pipe bolted to the floor and I did my engraving work standing. For magnification of my work I had a cheap head magnifier that I gotten from Brownell’s for $12.00. A florescent light hung from the ceiling over the engravers ball to provide...
lighting.

For one reason or another, the gold inlay work did not get completed when the scroll engraving was done on the gun and the owner of the gun had taken the gun back unfinished. After a time lapse of more than 30 years since I’d engraved the gun, last year I had a table at a big local gun show and the owner of the gun happened by and I asked him if he ever got the Colt that I’d engraved finished. He responded, “No” so I told him that if he would like to get the gun finished I could do it for him. A week or so after the show the owner of the Colt brought the gun back to have the gold inlay completed and have the gun blued.

When I got the Colt back to do the inlay work it appeared that the gun had been stored in a gun case for the last 30 plus years and had not been taken care of. The surface of the gun had developed a good case of rust bloom all over it. The rust pitting wasn’t too deep but the case color on the frame was ruined and needed to be refinished. I had to do a restoration job on my own engraving work to get the rust off and re-polish the gun before I could begin to do any gold inlay work. Fortunately the engraving is extremely deep and the rust was removed and the gun repolished without damaging the engraving. The rust in the background was removed by restippling. After I got the scroll work cleaned up I inlaid 48” of 25ga gold wire in the gun.

The channels for the gold wire had been started with a chase hammer and chisel. Under the microscope I could see how crooked the lines were. Fortunately the channels were narrow and could be widened slightly and straightened. The channels for the gold inlay were cut with both of my Airgravers and the gold was set in the channels with the Gravermeister and a brass punch. I added 7 small panels of scroll-leaf on the grip frame/trigger assembly to finish engraving job.

The gun was sent to Ahlmans in Morristown, Minnesota, for polishing, case coloring the frame and bluing of the other parts. I got the gun back just before Christmas 2008 and the gun was displayed at the 2009 gun show here in Fargo and is now back in the hands of a proud owner.Ω
Over the last year, I’ve had several guns come in for work that had some rust and or pitting in the engraving. My challenge was to find a way to remove the rust without damaging the engraving which consisted of scrollwork, lettering and gold inlays. Throughout my career, I’ve used many methods to remove rust and bluing. Abrasive blasting, toilet bowl cleaner, naval jelly and few of the commercial rust removers all work very well but they all etch the metal to some extent. This etching can wreak havoc with fine detail and in some instances can also damage inlays. After rust removal, the piece will need to be polished which can also affect the look and detail of the engraving. Any relieved areas will have to either remain etched or be re-cut to brighten them back up. None of this was acceptable to me so I chose to use an Air Eraser loaded with baking soda. While this method worked well and didn’t damage the inlays, it was extremely time consuming and left me covered with the white powder.

I decided to give David Bennetts at Brownell’s a call to ask him about some of their newer chemical metal strippers. After I explained what I was looking for, he suggested that I try “Rust Release”, part #082-000-013. I placed an order for one gallon right then and there. Rust Release is a low toxicity, biodegradable chemical and has a very mild odor, especially compared to many of the other available strippers. It is designed to be used full strength and one gallon will clean approximately 325 pounds of rusty metal. The best part is that it will not etch steel, even after soaking for 24 hours. Try that with naval jelly or toilet bowl cleaner!

To use Rust Release, simply disassemble the piece, give it a light cleaning and drop it into the solution. The chemical will penetrate dirt and grime so a thorough cleaning isn’t necessary. Because it doesn’t attack the steel, barrels don’t need to be plugged to prevent damage to the bore. Give the parts a gentle scrubbing with a stiff nylon brush every 20-30 minutes until they are completely stripped. I’ve also had good luck using a stainless steel carding brush (the kind used in rust bluing). Another big advantage to using Rust Release is that whatever the level of polish that is under the bluing is what you’ll have left after the parts are stripped.

I recently stripped a pistol that had a very nice 400 grit polish and after the bluing was removed, it only took a few swipes of micron graded 400 paper to brighten it up to the level that I wanted. Any other method would have required many hours of polishing. That reduction in polishing time will pay for a few gallons with the first job.

Even if you only need to remove rust or bluing once in a blue moon, I would wholeheartedly recommend investing in a gallon or two. Rust Release can be purchased directly from Brownell’s at www.brownells.com or 1-800-741-0015.
The dust is settling and the lights are now turned off. Time to sort out the happenings and conversations of the SHOT, SCI and FEGA exhibitions, or shall we phrase it the good news - bad news.

Let’s get the bad news out of the way quickly. At SCI and SHOT attendance was down with regards to both exhibitors and attendees, surely a reflection of the economy and general mood of the business world. My informal survey conducted through exhaustive 5 second interviews suggests that while attendance was down significantly actual business was off slightly overall and varied quite a bit within each sector. It is unlikely that engravers will be considered for part of the national bailout. I tried. My Utah and Idaho connections are politically incorrect and not very influential.

Now on to the good news or at least my positive spin. Tell your clients to take their money out of the stock market and invest in high quality investment grade firearms. They seem to be holding their value better than most other investments. The traffic is slowing but the values are not imitating guns. They seem to be the sort of work on the table and hold value in a way that is not replicating the sharp drop in many other areas.

With the state of the global economy it seems prudent to become even more diligent at what we already should be doing, marketing and quality. Quality we understand and enjoy striving towards. It may mean taking a class, spending time with another engraver, doing more research so the scroll or scene is more authentic, or picking up a pencil or pot of clay while watching TV. Slow down and work on our art skills. Most engravers cut clean enough. An evenly cut, clean line that does not go in the right direction or curve consistently is still a visual disaster. Better a ragged line that forms a nice consistent scroll than a flawlessly clean scroll with minor fl ats and elbows.

Marketing. Yup, I have to go here. I had people stop by my table at the guild show that have never before bothered or spent more time this year than in previous years. Now I could understand this if I had Joe Rundell’s gun on my table. I didn’t, try as I might. Joe was not convinced that I intend to persist in engraving. (My mother thinks I have been there for a few years and people are becoming comfortable or convinced that I intend to persist in engraving. (My mother thinks I have a future). Doing something is usually better than doing nothing. Some of you are at a level that you should show there if you wish. Some engravers forge a relationship with gunmakers at the table next to them and get work by that means. If they trust in your work and your personalities mesh they are a very good source of work. If you’ve never done a show you may want to begin with a regional show. Look at gun clubs or any place with gun interest and/or money. You don’t get discovered hiding in a cave.

If the engraving demand weakens it becomes even more important to market effectively and provide engraving that is consistently increasing in quality.

The above is opinion only that I gladly blame on all of my five second survey respondents taking no responsibility myself for its accuracy and content. But wait there’s more, for only $19.95……. oops wrong article. Ω
or well over a century and a quarter English Fine Scroll has embellished some of the world’s finest firearms and knives. It is often thought of only as a form of pleasant decoration that happens to cover the action of a shotgun. But this, often misunderstood, form of scrollwork is a wonderful demonstration of the engraver’s art. Luckily, there is still a market of those who truly appreciate this delicate style and, as you can see by the photographs of a new ‘Charles Lancaster’ over/under, the demand for English scroll is still there, especially when it is executed well.

English Fine Scroll often goes by several different names. It can be shortened to ‘small scroll’, described as ‘bouquet and scroll’/’rose and scroll’ (which points to the clusters of flowers which combine with the scrollwork), or just plain ‘English Fine’, but whatever name it is known by it is English through and through. It’s simple, classical and conservative lines define the English style when compared to the large, bold, foliate patterns of continental Europe. But do not be fooled into thinking that ‘simple’ means easy to engrave and/or execute well. Balance and proportion are of paramount importance within the actual scrolls as is the use of negative space in the overall design.

People who say that they do not like English Fine scrollwork have often only been exposed to poor examples or, more likely, poor designs where the scroll completely covers the plate with no negative space (e.g. some E. J. Churchill shotguns were often engraved like this). Also, some examples of continental copies of English scroll often ‘grow’ incorrectly with scrolls placed in a haphazard fashion just to fill space. The strange thing is that even a person untrained in scrollwork can often pick out a good example compared with a poor one. They may not know why they choose one design over another but there appears to be something instinctive about the human relationship to scrolls. Therefore, the unskilled observer who is confronted with a poorly/incorrectly designed piece of English Fine scrollwork may subconsciously know that something is not right about the piece, even though they cannot give a reason. This is then in turn interpreted as a ‘dislike’ of this form of scroll. In actual fact, when correctly engraved there is nothing to dislike about English Fine scroll, which is why it is still used to embellish fine sporting guns to this day.

The wonderful thing about this style is its’ ability to enhance whatever it is decorating without taking over. By this I mean that a fine English sporting gun is enhanced by the application of English bouquet and scroll. The gun is still primarily a gun, which is a working tool. The engraving compliments the lines of the weapon and wood of the stock; it isn’t just a canvas for an engraved artwork. Likewise, if applied to a handmade knife the skills of the knife maker are still the primary focus (i.e. the shape and finish) and the Fine scroll is a supporting element.

Fine English scroll historically developed from the engraving of pocket watches in the Victorian era. With the advent of the breech-loading shotgun, demand for such firearms went through the roof and there were not enough gun engravers to fulfil the orders. The gun trade turned to the ‘general engravers’ of the time...
who would cut things such as silver salvers, trophies, jewelry, watches, sets of cutlery, etc., etc., to engrave their guns. Unsurprisingly, the engravers would use designs they already knew so scroll that was used to decorate a pocket watch was applied to this new medium. Originally, the small scrolls had a cut away background. Cutting away background was easy to do on gold or silver but was very time consuming and tedious on steel so a new technique was developed where the actual cuts within the scrolls substituted for this cutting away. In this way English small scroll became a commercial way of decorating a shotgun. It was designed to look good, be understated, and be relatively fast to cut, as there is no cutting away of background.

The great thing about this style of scrollwork is that it is so versatile. It can be used to decorate a myriad of things from jewelry and watches, to shotguns, rifles and knives. It also has a broad appeal to both men and women as it could almost be considered as feminine (especially when bouquets of flowers accompany the scroll). Imagine a lady who is able to carry a small penknife in her purse, and how it changes from a tool to almost an item of jewelry when engraved with rose and scroll.

Unfortunately, in recent years English Fine has suffered from a lack of understanding and quality of input from the engraver, which in turn, has lead to it becoming debased. Scrolls often grow the wrong way and the outside work (which finishes and shapes the panels of scroll) has sometimes become little more than a basic teardrop cut. Sometimes this is because the engraver may be self taught and hasn’t been shown
the correct procedures, or he/she may be facing commercial pressure to get a piece of work finished quickly, or it may be that they simply do not know how it should form so they guess. If copying a design it is really important for the engraver to really see what is there and not replicate what they think is there. When an engraver is apprenticed this is drummed into them but due to lack of apprenticeships nowadays it is doubly important that the self-taught engraver follows this guideline.

There is no doubt in my mind that the best way to learn English scroll is from someone who is totally fluent in it. This way any mistakes can be corrected at the beginning or even avoided entirely. For the engraver going the self-taught route it takes time and dedication both in execution and researching good examples to copy and study. And this can be really difficult if you don’t know what is a good or bad example. All I can suggest here is to get as many examples as you can and study them all. Your instincts should then be able to help you sort the wheat from the chaff.

As a pointer, good examples of small scroll will show the scrolls growing alternately; each scroll growing in the opposite direction to the one it grows from and smaller scrolls growing from larger ones. They will be shaded at the point of origin and at the head of every scroll. The leaves/tendrils will be shaded too but some will be left blank. In this way the design becomes organic and interesting. If everything is shaded in a repetitive manner the design can become dull and boring. Likewise, negative space (areas without scroll coverage) is important to the overall design. By forming panels of scroll, again, it is interesting and pleasing to the eye. Full coverage can become bland and dull. Any odd shaped areas between scrolls must also be filled either with a leaf or cut away for black. There should be no white spaces left.

This style is meant to be seen with the naked eye and the odd imperfection can be lost in the overall design. So if you happen to cut the occasional wonky scroll, don’t panic. Unless it’s a real blooper chances are it will not be picked up in the overall design. Ω

Marcus will be cutting a plate with English fine scroll that will be available as a casting to purchase on the FEGA web site www.fega.com
AROUND THE TRAPS
FE GA MEMBERS WORK

Art Gaudette

Katherine Plumer

Viljo Marrandi (Estonia)

Sam Welch

Jim Brandvik
If you wish to have photos of your work on these pages e-mail them to the editor biggschristchurch@xtra.co.nz.
2009 FEGA/ACGG AUCTION
BY DAVID CLEVINGER, AUCTION CO-CHAIR

As I write this my head is still spinning from the sights at the 2009 Exhibition. The level of artistry and craftsmanship from both the engravers and gunmakers somehow is more impressive every year.

The auction/raffle were more successful than any of us anticipated. Despite the failing economy overall attendance and moneys raised were only slightly down from 2008, our best year to date. This is due to the generous donors AND bidders that attend the show and banquet. Without both groups, we would not be able to have the event at all. The funds raised will be used to improve the quality of the show for exhibitors and visitors alike along with making efforts to attract more attention to our wonderful group.

I would also like to thank the folks that helped make my job easier. Bruce and Cindie Farman, Jan Billeb, John and Ann Maxson, Sara and Juston Wead, Brian and Betty Powley, Roger Sampson, Mike Fennell, Dennis Myer, Mary Dyk, Jim Brandvik and Don Davies. Thank you all so very much. If I have forgotten anyone or misspelled any names, please forgive me. As I said, my head is still spinning.

OBITUARY

Michael Puleo: Sadly Mike passed away on Sunday January 18th while we were heading to Reno. He was 41 years old. His untimely death came as a great shock to us all. Many will remember him at Reno 2008. He was a pleasure to be around and a talented up and coming engraver with a real passion for English Scroll. FEGA wishes to extend our very sincere condolences to his partner Carrie, family and friends.

A TALE OF 3 VISES..........,

Paul Lindke (left) wins a LeTourneau vise in the FEGA raffle at Reno. In 2007 Paul wins another vise and gives it to Sam Welch (centre) This year Sam wins the raffle which is a GRS donated vise and gives it to Kevin Monahan (right).

And that is exactly what FEGA is about!!!
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*Phil Coggan*

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*Carl Biele*

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*Mike Dubber*
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The new 2009 class schedule is out and a lot of new things are happening

- Motorcycle Engraving classes taught by CJ Allan. Both basic and advanced classes now offered.
- English Scroll Engraving class taught by Simon Lyton. This is an intermediate level class.
- Western Engraving class taught by Brian Hochstrat. This will be a basic level class.
- Ray Cover is also teaching basic and intermediate engraving classes.
- All advanced engraving instruction will be offered as one on one private lessons.

www.rcoverengraving.com

The Basic Engraving class scheduled for July 27-31 is now rescheduled for July 20-24
Now, twice a week, you can see and enjoy new hand artistry and the story behind it. It’s called **Featured Photos**, and all you do is visit www.grstools.com and click on the Featured Photos icon. No log-in or e-mail address required. You’ll see outstanding engraving, creative stone setting, artful carving, top jewelry making, scrimshaw, repoussé, and more. This online resource is updated every Tuesday and Friday, so you already know when you can see something new.

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