

Master Horner PROFILES

This is the tenth in a series of articles on those members of the Honourable Company of Horners who have achieved the status of Master Horner. Currently there are ten members who have attained this status and each one has an integral role in the Guild, whether it is in their demonstrated artisan skills, leadership abilities, or being instrumental in the growth and development of our organization. Profiles of all the Masters are featured on the Guild's Website at www.hornguild.org.

<i>John Proud</i>	<i>Erv Tschanz</i>
<i>Lee Larkin</i>	<i>John Kiselica</i>
<i>Willy Frankfort</i>	<i>Joe Becker</i>
<i>Roland Cadle</i>	<i>Carl Dumke</i>
<i>Art DeCamp</i>	<i>John DeWald</i>

In accordance with the Guild's Standing Rules, for anyone to become a Master Horner, an individual must "demonstrate a superlative level of ability in carving, heating and pressing, turning, engraving, and integrating woods and metals with cow horn by presenting three horn objects that demonstrate his or her ability to the Awards Committee for evaluation," plus give "an original written and oral presentation to the HCH at an annual meeting or to another accredited organization on some aspect of horn working or its history." Needless to say, this is a high standard that has been met by only a few members and each has a vital role in making the HCH what it is today. ■

John DeWald, Jr. *Master Horner*

A Ruminat

It is indeed an honor to interview each of the Masters as it provides an insight into their thoughts, dedication and essentially, the spirit of these accomplished individuals. In an organization of approximately 400 members nationwide, only ten (2.5%) have achieved the status of Master Horner. Not only has each one met the required standards as noted in the preceding segment, but each Master has stood out in another area not addressed in the Guild's Standing Rules.

Each has assumed the mantel of leadership, each has become a vital asset, and each one is primarily responsible for the acknowledgement, status, accomplishment and professionalism of the Honourable Company of Horners. When you add these factors to the artistry level, oral presentation and written skill requirements, that organization's stature will indeed be noteworthy and sound. It takes a special individual to step forward, advance to this level and accept this important responsibility and role.

Photo Credit:
Ava Francesca



Introducing Master Horner John DeWald, Jr.

John DeWald is originally from Muncy, Pennsylvania and currently lives in Pennsdale. Following graduation from Muncy High School in 1986, he immediately joined the U.S. Army, participated in Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm and after completing his commitment, entered into the Correctional Services field. He has been a correctional officer at the state level, joined the staff of the Federal Bureau of Prisons as a Correctional Officer and Special Investigative agent, and is now an Information Technology Specialist.

John credits his father for his interest in muzzleloading, and ultimately horn work. He introduced John to black powder shooting and "rendezvous" events about 40 years ago. John stated that at age 12, "my father gave me a small cow horn and carbide tipped metal awl and prodded me into engraving the horn. This began my interest in engraving, which continued into horn making. I held an interest in old horns and Pre-1840 re-enacting until I left for military service, during which I continued to study and learn about original horns and horn accouterments and their purpose throughout history. In 2004, I started F&I re-enacting and found a need to have a horn of my own to carry at events, which I pursued with renewed interest and more maturity and patience. In 2009, I made a horn for a dear friend to hang with her father's guns. In the process of making her horn, I stumbled onto the Honourable Company of Horners' Website and was thoroughly astounded at what I found there. All the makers that I had looked up to while growing up, were members of this incredible Guild. An organization dedicated to the education and preservation of one of the oldest crafts that I knew. I had to join... I had to find my place amongst the Masters." In 2010, John joined the HCH, advanced to Journeyman three years later, became Chairman of the Membership Committee and in the period of just six years, attained the title of Master Horner.



John's three Master's horn objects)

When queried on the type of horn work he is most interested in, he responded: "I like all kinds of horn work, but find I am most at peace and in my element when crafting a powder horn. Any item I complete truly fascinates me, as it is the crafting of beauty from the simplest of mediums. Along the way I have also found that one is not just a horner. A horner must also have an understanding of woodworking, metalworking, engraving, and chemical compounds as well as a working knowledge of the history that comes with horn working and engraving."

When asked about his workshop, he said it "is in the basement of my 1860's home. I would call it a tinkerer's nook more than a workshop. Creating what I do amongst the mountain stone foundations and beneath hand-hewn floor beams seems appropriate to me. At times I can feel the presence of the craftsmen of old watching over my shoulder as I work."



John's tinkerer's nook

It comes as no surprise that he is "absolutely fascinated with works from around 1740 thru 1780. Both French and Indian and Revolutionary War era horns and accouterments hold an extreme beauty in their lines and engraving and I draw heavily on their example for their influence in my work." Thus, access

to various collections is imperative for the serious student of our craft. John related that: "The horns in the possession of Tom Grinslade are of particular interest to me and to see them in person was a special honor. Historic Deerfield and their collection of original horns are a constant inspiration, as is the incredible collection at Ft. Ticonderoga. I have had the pleasure of viewing several items belonging to my friend Tom Ames. They are always significant, as the stories that come with them help one to understand their true purpose."

John has worked on three projects that have special meaning to him. The first, which was alluded to earlier, was a powder horn that started his journey anew. It was an F&I family/memorial horn for the daughter of a great friend and mentor, William Kennedy. He considered it a great honor that she



heart and soul of the maker and the craftsmen of old. Awards and events may come and go, but they will never match the warmth and satisfaction gained from the friends I have made through this craft and

the Guild. Years from now, when I am gone and my ashes have returned to Mother Earth, it is my hope someone will pick up an item I have made, show it to their son, daughter, or friend, and say, 'Hey that's a DeWald piece.' It is the preservation of a dying art, kept alive through caring hands. What a great legacy this will be to leave behind for my daughter."

John has received numerous ribbons from the HCH for his horn work and is the recipient of numerous Judges' Choice ribbons at the Gunmakers Fair at Dixon's. His work has been featured in several local newspapers, namely the Sun Gazette, and the East Lycoming Shopper, the HCH's publication The Horn Book, the CLA's journal American Traditions, as well as American Frontiersman and Muzzleloader magazines. In 2014 his NMLRA 1 of 1000 Horn was

highlighted in an article in *Muzzle Blasts* magazine. In addition to being a member of the Honourable Company of Horners, John is also a member of the Contemporary Longrifle Association and the National Muzzleloading Rifle Association.

From all that has been learned about our newest Master Horner, it leaves no doubt that he is a welcomed addition to the ranks of the Masters, for he embraces the artistry, verbal and written skills, as well as the leadership responsibilities required of this august group of individuals. He is a credit to the Honourable Company of Horners, who has indeed found his "place amongst the Masters." ■

*Congratulations to
Master Horner
John DeWald, Jr.*



John's NMLRA 1 of 1000 Powder Horn)

requested that he make that horn to hang next to her father's guns in her home.

The second project was an engraved horn for his mentor and past Art Teacher, Nella Storm. "Through her tutelage and patience I learned a true love for art. It was a very poignant moment when the teacher asks the student to create a piece of art as a gift for her husband."

In 2014, John was selected by the Guild to make the NMLRA 1/1000 horn for 2014. The crafting of this historical piece is something he had wanted to attempt for some time. He felt that "this honor to make the horn for the NMLRA gave me the avenue to indulge in the creation of a truly historical horn."

These special projects, as well as any of the multitude of items John produces, have special meaning to him. He feels that when he makes these items, "I keep in mind they are more than just items of purpose. They will become heirlooms and more, outlasting us all. They will be a testament to the