Dear Fellow Broom Makers,

We hope this edition finds you healthy and happy, and we wish you all the very best year. The economy has been slowly improving this year. Let’s hope that it will continue its upward turn. Many broom makers have felt the impact from the downturn in the economy. We wish you well in the future.

We enjoy reading the many notes and letters you send us throughout the year. Please keep them coming. In this issue, you will find: Two Sweep-Ins are scheduled for 2012 (pg. 3), Ron Snyder’s dancing sticks (pg. 6), The Broom Stick Tree tradition (pg. 12), and Raphael Kerem discovered brushes in Beijing (pg. 18). We hope you enjoy this years edition as much as we did putting it together.

If you have any questions you would like to ask, feel free to contact us at the above address for snail mail, or you can email us at broommakersnews@hotmail.com.

The Editors: Joan Fedor & Cheryl Riccardi
Selected Price List for Craft Broom Artisans

Craft quality raw broom corn:
- 10-lb. Introductory package $35.00, plus UPS.
- 50-lb. boxes $95.00 ($1.90 per lb.) plus UPS.
- Full bale $1.80 per lb. (about 225 lb./bale)

Processed broom corn:
- 12” - 14” - 16” - 18” - 20” - 22” Hurl in bales… $2.35 per lb.
  (Average bale weights from 80 – 145 lbs., increasing with length of the hurl)
- 16” - 18” - 20” Insides in bales… $1.95 per lb.
  (Average bale weights 100-135 lbs., increasing with length of the insides)
- Broom corn stalks in bales… $0.85 per lb.

Note: Prices are for bales shipped by truck. *Add $.10 per lb. for bales which have to be broken down for UPS box shipments.

Broad Broom Knives $10.00 ea. *String Knives $8.50 ea. *Cuffs $15.00 ea. * Double Point Needles $16.00 ea * Single Point Needles $10.00 ea
*Wire $2.50 per lb. (coils average 15 lbs.) * Nails $2.50 per lb. *Cotton twine $5.00 ea.
* Dyed hemp twine (various colors) $5.00 * 100 lb. test hemp twine $5.00 ea. * Waxed Linen Cord $30.00

Wood handles, all clear lacquered (sold in bundles of 50):
- 15/16 x 42 hardwood $1.26 ea. * 7/8 x 30 pine $0.88 ea. * 1 x 42 hardwood $1.28 ea. *
- 3/4 x 24 pine $0.62 ea. * 15/16 x 42 hardwood sanded only - no lacquer $1.13 ea.

Note: All prices on above merchandise are “FOB Greensboro, NC.” Check web site for on-line purchasing and other items for sale.

We accept VISA and Master Card.

“Prices are subject to change without notice.”

Attention All Subscribers

We wish to thank you for your continued support throughout the year for the BMN and the broom making trade. When the BMN was first published, it was unknown. Because of your support, we are again able to publish the Broom Makers News at $5.00 an issue, the same cost as the first issue in 1995. Thank you for your prompt response of the subscription cost as this helps our bookkeeping and our upfront costs. All broom makers on our mailing list will be sent a reminder card in the fall. Please remember to send it back with your five dollar check (made payable to Broom Makers News), so that we can continue to send you your BMN. We now accept PayPal.

We thank you for the understanding in this matter. The BMN is the only printed forum for broom makers of the cottage industry. It is important for broom makers, both new and experienced, to have this newsletter available to keep abreast of the happenings in the industry.

If you would like to receive the next edition of the Broom Makers News please fill out the form below and send it along with $5.00 (to incur the cost of publishing) to Broom Makers News, 2306 Route 207, Campbell Hall, NY 10916. Thank you for your support. Some broom makers have requested a copy of our mailing list. PLEASE let us know if you would NOT like your address shared with other broom makers.

Name ____________________                               Email ________________________
Address  _________________________________________________________
Can we share your address with others? _____ Yes        _______    No
(If no box is checked we will assume you want your name shared)
(The mailing list will only be shared with other broom makers not outside companies)
Would you like to place an ad with the Broom Makers News?
- Full page ad is $50.00                       Quarter page ad is $15.00
- Half page ad is $25.00                       Small three line ad is $5.00
Please make checks payable to Broom Makers News or you may pay through PayPal.
Star Power
Find six words from the list that fit into the star. Arrows indicate the direction of each word. (There are 2 parts that have two words in one.)

WINDERS
HAMMERS
TILLERS
SQUIRES
HANDLES
THE ABS
TAM NUT
AWL EAT
KICKERS
SORTING
SHAKERS
DUSTPAN

Double Your Chances

There will be two Sweep-Ins this year. Shawn Hoefer is holding his third annual Sweep-In in Mountain View Arkansas at the Ozark Folk Center. I (Debbie Lutz) am hosting one in the Northeast, in Troy Pa.

Shawn’s Sweep-In will be April 13-15, 2012 at the Ozark Folk Center in Mountain View AR. In the past, Shawn has had classes and discussions on style and methods of broom making. There was a people’s choice artistic broom contest. The last day, there was an equipment and supply swap. This was a good way to find hard to find equipment. Contact Shawn Hoefer for more information on this year’s event.

My Sweep-In will be April 28-29 at Alpron Park, Troy PA. This show will be held in conjunction with the Maple Festival (www.maplefestivalpa.com) and opening weekend of the Bradford County Heritage Association’s Historic Village and Farm Museum (www.troyfarmmuseum.org). I enjoyed attending Shawn’s event but found the travel a little much and have decided that there are enough broomers in the northeast to warrant a Northeast Sweep-In. Since it takes spring longer to get north this event will be the last weekend in April.

The Northeast event will be held inside a large building so weather will not be a big factor, although the building is not heated. I plan on offerings classes, discussions and an artistic broom contest. Sunday morning, we will hold an equipment swap. If you have any suggestions as to what else would be of interested to you, please let me know. I have some very old equipment that I will have on display along with my broom shop on wheels. I encourage you to bring your unique pieces of equipment for all to see. This would be a good time to produce some “how to” videos.
Northeast Sweep-In
April 28+29, 2012
Alparon Park, Troy Pa

Your invited to a gathering of Broom makers and other traditional crafters. The goal is to give broom makers a chance to teach, learn and compare different styles and techniques from other broom makers. This is also a chance to show off to the public our wonderful craft. This event is held in conjunction with the Maple festival so there will be other activities going on. It is also opening weekend for the Bradford County Heritage Association and Historic Village and Farm Museum. Follow the link below to see all that is going on this weekend.

http://www.maplefestivalpa.com/
http://www.troyfarmmuseum.org/index.asp

Contact Person:
Debbie Lutz                     dtwlutz@frontiernet.net                www.thePAbroomcloset.com
55 Tennessee Gas Road, Troy, PA 16947 570-673-8976

Updates to be posted to websites and yahoo broom group.
GAR Medal

The Grand Army of the Republic was founded in 1866 by Benjamin F. Stephenson. This association was open to Veterans of the Union Army who served in the Civil War. The organization ran until 1949 when the last 6 remaining veterans closed the doors. During this time, they would hold encampments every year. The medal below was worn by the Delegate from Binghamton, NY in the June 1909 encampment, the GAR’s 43rd encampment. A broom was on the medal to signify Broome County where Binghamton is the county seat. This medal was on display in a museum we visited this summer.

The BMN Website

The Broom Makers News has been officially online for a year. Check out the Broom Makers News website at www.broommakersnews.org. Click on our logo to enter and check us out.

There is a place for you to leave comments, view videos and even read past articles of the Broom Makers News. You will need to register if you would like to post comments online. There is a page on there for links to suppliers and other broom makers. If you would like to have your website listed please drop us a line.

The website is still in the production stage so check back frequently. We really need to have as much of our broom makers’ input as this website is for all fellow broom makers. Please let us know what you would like to see on it. If you would like anything to be uploaded please email it to us and we will put it on. Our email address is broommakersnews@hotmail.com. We truly want this to be a home for broom makers to comment, give and get tips, and learn more about the art of broom making.
Dance Sticks

I’ve been producing primitive American brooms on a resisting wheel for over 30 years, and experimenting with new ways to use the basic materials of the craft, which are broomcorn straw, string, and a handle. In addition, I am part of a northwest Native American carving family, and we hand carve dugout canoes which can be over forty feet in length. It takes up to three years to carve a large canoe, and when the canoes are completed, they are pot latched away (gifted) to various northwest coastal tribes that no longer own canoes. Dancing, drumming, and singing are an integral part of the potlatch ceremonies, and most nations and tribes have a dance group to carry their dance heritage forward. The leader of the group often carries a dance stick as the dancers enter the dance floor.

My dance sticks are woven with broomcorn straw from end to end over a twisty stick. A leather handle that is brass hobnailed and a copper ring that represents wealth break up the weaving. The entire dance broom is then studded with polished stones, and there is the tuft of a broom at the top. To date, two northwest dance groups, and an Oregon elder now have Sweet Road Dance Sticks, and two more that adorn our cabin represent my wife and me. They are in very limited production as they have a very specialized audience, and they take quite a bit of time and energy to produce.

I guess it just goes to show that an ancient craft such as broom making is only limited by the inventiveness of the craftsman.

Ron Snyder
The Circle of Trees Studio and Homestead
Blaine, Washington

Broom Makers Around The Country

We thought it would be nice to dedicate a section of the Broom Makers News to check out what other broom makers are doing throughout the country. If you would like to be in future columns drop us a line and let us know what’s happening with you.

Hilda M. Blatt, wife of Ken W. Blatt, from Jonestown, PA has an amusing story: “In May I went for a colonoscopy and the surgeon found out we make brooms. After much conversation she bought 13 brooms. She gives them as gifts.” Guess you never know when you are going to make a broom sale.

Jokes submitted by Melinda Napier

1) Why does a witch like to take rabbits for a ride? Its a hare-raising experience

2) Why did the witch buy all the brooms in the store? she liked to make sweeping decisions
Brushes In Beijing
By Raphael Kerem

In April of 2009, I spent a couple of days in Beijing, China. The highlight of my stay was an unexpected visit to Livlichang Street, a unique district in the center of the city, not far from Tiananmen Square. The long street, and a few adjoining streets, are lined with a variety of shops catering to the four pursuits of the classic Chinese scholar: brush painting, calligraphy, pottery and tea. The most conspicuous shops are the ones selling brushes, paper, paint and ink wells.

The accompanying photographs illustrate the vast range of brushes for sale and the materials used to make them. I was particularly impressed with the workmanship of the handles; carved wood and ivory, beaded jade and coral and enameled cloisonné. The ink wells ranged from simple stones with a shallow depression, to large three dimensional landscape sculptures with waterfalls and lakes to rest a brush in.

The painting and calligraphy is most commonly executed on long narrow sheets of paper, which are mounted on a silk brocade background and displayed as hanging scrolls. Specialized tradesmen are set up with large table presses for doing this work; the Chinese equivalent to picture framing shops in the west. It is very difficult to get any factual information as no one speaks English or other Western languages. Yet the visitor and would be buyer need not be concerned—just point and the salespeople will be most eager to help.

Pictures on page 21
MARKET INFORMATION AND OUTLOOK FOR 2012

In 2011, we were able to get very good quality broom corn throughout the entire year. Most of the fibers were long, with long stalks for weaving. We still have an ample supply of the second 2011 crop, but the fiber is a bit shorter, which is not unusual for late broom corn each year. The bad news for 2011 is that both crops were rather small, due to drought and competition from other crops. Thus, we do not have much of a carryover crop into 2012. At some point in late spring or early summer, there could be some temporary shortage of inventory. Also, it appears that pricing is on the rise and probably will stay firm until new crop in July. The good news is that the higher prices may encourage a larger planting in the Torreon area (the largest growing district) and that should increase our chances of a larger crop in 2012.

At our web site, you can purchase supplies any time day or night. Please visit us at www.recaddy.com.

We thank all of you for your business, and to the best of our abilities we will have all the supplies you need, when you need them.

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sales@recaddy.com

Dr. Sam Moyer (check payable)  Geneticist and the Jersey Jerry Broomsquire
( 856) 222-0713                 911 Larkspur Pl. S., Mt. Laurel NJ 08054
New email: moyersam@yahoo.com

Learning materials for broom making: ask for current info.

Make Amish design dustpans: Applewood blocks + handles $5 or make your own, or local woodworker Pans, two sizes, made by Tom Fleckenstein 215-632-1534 $3.50 (?) ask him for current prices or local sheetmetal worker FREE directions

Seed for multicolored, dwarf broomcorn: ask for prices and planting info.

FREE New directions for making broomcorn reaper to use with machine harvestable broomcorn.
Harvesting and Seed Saving by Sam Moyer

Some years, broomcorn plants begin dying before they are fully mature and brush colors don't develop due to insufficient rain. This year, there has been a record rainfall while plants were maturing. A fungus might be involved in color development. Plants might die slowly while colors change in less than a week. My dwarfs have some genetic resistance and die later than a variety Dr. Hadley had a few years ago.

I couldn't use the reaper this year. Plants sprouted at different times due to insufficient rain. The first plants I harvested had wide spacing. The season included a record number of days with temperatures over 90 degrees along with frequent rains. Many plants grew brush longer than 24" (Not a problem for broom making: can wire excess butt ends up the handle).

Hurricane Irene might have identified more plants with "weak genes". Some plants had long "crooks" even though they had some support from the top leaf. Most plants crooked over at the knuckle. "When you get lemons, make lemonade" - chop the straight part off and make nice hurl out of it for wings.

Plants/seed heads saved for seed were not crooks. Less than 4" of top leaf covered the brush. The corn had a "handle" (peduncle) longer than 10", was not a part of a clump of tillers, and colors were maximized. Not all these traits are entirely genetic. The center stem was bred out many years ago.

Seeds will be available in April after "dehulling"/(debearding), "cleaning"/winnowing with electric fan, and screening thru 9/32" holes (measured by a drill bit). They can be planted with a radish planting plate with 5/32" holes, half taped shut. Ordering seeds now would be good.

Later harvesting produced shorter brush, including useful tillers. Another benefit for me included good exercise - walking 1.5 acres more than once to harvest.

I had about the same low % of stink bugs as last year (first time) http://ento.psu.edu/extension/factsheets/brown-marmorated-stink-bug. Often several were on a seed head (family?). They might feed on the early stage of seed formation, no damage, only smelly on my hand if I touch one.

Tim Monahan http://www.manta.com/c/mmch4h0/the-thomas-monahan-company sent pictures of broomcorn planted from my seed. It looked good: growing space was a bit close, could have used a reaper. Dried seed brush for decorations were sold $2.25/head at the Arcola Broomcorn Festival http://www.arcolaillinois.org/


Please tell how dwarf broomcorn has performed for you.

This is a treadle broom winder, that you can make yourself. I will sell plans for $20.00 including shipping. This one is made of #2 lumber. I've used one of these for the past 6 years and they work very well. I will also fabricate any parts you might need call for more info. If purchasing the winder it would need to be picked up. For more information call: Mike Mardorff at 717-460-2975

New Brooms Internet Newsgroup

Due to technical difficulties to Dana Harlen, we needed to create a new Yahoo broom group. Thanks to Shawn Hoefer, we have the Yahoo broom makers news group. Shawn and Little John are co-moderators. This way, if one has a problem the other one can help fix it and still allow members to join. You are still able to read past posts to the original group and if a member, can post there. Founded January 4, 2001, our Brooms newgroup on Yahoo has been growing steadily. The group has formed as a forum for broom makers and anyone interested in the craft. Any information on the history, culture, and craft of broom making is welcome and encouraged. Individuals seeking or selling tools, materials and equipment can post notices on the newsgroup. Individual emails can be received by every member either at the site or in their own inbox. Photos can be posted in a special archive.

For those not yet signed up, go to http://www.groups.yahoo.com/, see “join a group” and type “broommakers” (no space) in the search block and click search. Fill out the sign in form and submit. You can customize settings to receive an email when anyone post to your group. You can post messages either from the newsgroup site or simply by posting to the address: Broommakers@yahoogroups.com
We Now Accept PayPal

Many people have asked us if we accept PayPal for subscriptions. You have asked and we have answered. We have set up a PayPal account. If you wish to update your subscription to the Broom Makers News, you may do so with PayPal.

Go to www.paypal.com and log in. Our PayPal account is: broommakersnews@hotmail.com

Please put your name and address in the memo/notes section so we may update your records.

Fort Delaware Museum of Colonial History

In August, Cheryl and Jay visited Fort Delaware Museum of Colonial History located in Narrowsburg, NY. The museum is a replica of the fort that was once in the wilderness of upstate New York. In 1754, a group of farmers of English descent from Connecticut moved there when their town was too crowded for farming. The farmers purchased the land from the Lenape Indians, who called it Cushmank. They soon built the fort up to contain thirty cabins. A stockade was built around the fort to protect the families from Indian attacks. The museum has a blacksmith, candle demonstrations, weaving and a blockhouse which stores the ammunition.

On our tour, we were pleasantly surprised to see one of the pot scrubbers that we had made many years ago. You never know where your work will show up. In one of the cabins, with each cabin depicting a different year in the fort’s history, was this small shave broom (shown below). It looks too big to be a pot scrubber and too small to be a floor sweeper. We came to the conclusion that it might be one they used to dust off the shelves in the cabin. If anyone has an idea what it was used for, please let us know.

(Information from http://co.sullivan.ny.us/?TabId=3192)
George is looking for a kicker broom machine

Broom Stick tree by Joanna Schanz

For Sale

1 Power Winder —- $1800.00
400-600 Handles— $1.00 ea.
(various sizes & lengths)

Contact: Jack Payne,
PO Box 57
Acadia, KS 66711
Phone: 620-638-4428
E-mail: jmpayne@ckt.net

For Sale

Original Kick winder, broom vise (1878) and cutter.
Kick winder ready to go, vise and cutter need additional bracing, oil, and sharpening.
Contact Mac Hackworth
870-892-4201

Philipsburg Manor

On July 18, 2011, Cheryl, Jay and Lucy visited Philipsburg Manor in Sleepy Hollow, NY. Sleepy Hollow is the town made famous by the Legend of Sleepy Hollow by Washington Irving. Philipsburg Manor is a colonial-era milling and trading complex that was owned by Anglo-Dutch merchants. In 1750, it included 52,000 acres of land in Westchester County; tenant farmers; and 23 enslaved men, women and children of African descent. This was one of the largest slave owning families in the northern colonies. The agricultural products produced on the manor supplied both NYC and plantations in the West Indies with food(1).

As we walked through the manor house, we noticed that the brooms were Indian style shaved brooms. Our guide told us that the Indians taught the white man how to make these brooms. There was also a small version hanging by the fireplace that we think was a pot scrubber.

The manor has a large barn used for storing and threshing grain. In addition to the other grains, we noticed broomcorn. The broomcorn had lots of seeds and the tops seemed to be shorter than what we usually use for broom making. Our guide told us that it was used as food for the slaves. Broomcorn originated in Africa and was something they were used to eating. It was grown on the manor just for them. He also mentioned that Benjamin Franklin brought broomcorn seeds to the US from France in 1757 to be used to make brooms. It was unclear if the manor had the plants before 1757, but if so, they probably did not use it to make brooms.

1. Info from the Philipsburg Manor brochure
The Broom Stick Tree
Submitted by Joanna E. Schanz

How the Amana Colony Residents made a Christmas tree from a broom stick:

Amana Colony people came from Germany to upper state NY (now Buf-
falo) then in 1854 to Iowa. Holes would be drilled in a broom stick and gath-
ered pine branches would be stuck in the holes creating a tree. The tree would
be put in a special room with the doors locked. On the 24th of December after
supper, the doors to the magic Christmas room would be open. There would be
no lights other than the lit candles on the tree.

The tree was placed on a table covered with a white linen cloth. A Christ-
mas angel adorned the very tree top. Ornaments were mostly homemade: knit-
ted, wooden & nuts wrapped with colored foil saved all year, popcorn strings
and sometimes cranberry strings. Under the tree would be a nativity set.

No gifts were wrapped, but spread on or around the table. There would
always be a book, something to wear, hand-made toys, oranges and apples, nuts,
hard candy and special treats from Germany. Christmas morning after church
there was a continuous round of visiting to see what everyone got. On the
second day of Christmas you were alone with your treasures.

A picture of the broom stick tree is on page 14.

Help Save Our History

We Need Your Help so that we can save the history of the North American
Broom Industry. We have selected The National Museum of Canada and
The Smithsonian Museum as depositories for the safe keeping of our
history. The National Agricultural Center and Hall of Fame, located in
Boner Springs, Kansas, now has copies of our Broomcorn Publications and
Broom Supplier Catalogs. A special thanks to Dr. Moyer.

Over the last few years, we have compiled a data base from the following
categories: Broomcorn publications and Agricultural reports, Articles and
books on the Shaker broom making industry, Patents on equipment and
brooms, Catalogs from broom factories and equipment suppliers, Industry
publications, Books with information on broom making, Articles from
Magazines and Periodicals, Broom Lore, Census Data, and A listing of
broom factories and industry suppliers, along with pictures, drawings, ad-
vertisements, documents and publications of all kinds.

We need your help to acquire as much documentation as possible before it
is lost. Please contact us before sending anything and we ask you not to
send originals as we can not guarantee their safe return, good copies are all
that we need. We will reimburse postage and copying costs if you contact
us prior to shipping. Thank you for your help.

USA please contact: Bill Soetaert, phone # 816-659-6342 after 10am,
Email: broomsbesoms@comcast.net

Canada please contact: Vaughn Russell: phone # 905-201-1810
Email: v.russell@rogers.com