



Balcones Forge Dispatch

President's Corner

December 2016



Greetings forge fans!

Yep! Fall is here. Just think in a few more weeks we go the whole day without the A/C (I hope).

Thanks to all that helped out at the Comal Blacksmith shop auction including our hosts and owners, Melissa and Donald Zipp.

The Zipp family wanted this equipment to stay in the blacksmithing community and to continue to be used by blacksmiths. Looks like a lot of our members walked away with some pretty cool antique equipment. The auction was a great success. Thanks again to everybody who made it possible.

I didn't make the November meeting at the Blanco Buggy Barn but it sounded like another great event. Thanks to Aaron Tilton for being there for the school kids on Friday, to Dennis Moore for hosting, and to all who brought their open forge equipment.

December takes us to Devine, TX for the 4th Annual Memorial Rys-tik Forge demo and dinner hosted by Marsha and Jerry Whitley. This will be an all girl demo with a big auction to boot. The Whitleys have lots of space for campers and tents for those who feel the need to stay over and sleep it off. This is another of our money making events that keep Balcones Forge alive and able to do what we do. So, it's time to clean out the shop and garage and bring all that stuff that you are not using anymore (or never used anyway), and help make this another memorable event. The Whitleys have lots of space for campers and tents for those who feel the need to stay over and sleep it off. This is another earlier than usual meeting. The date is Saturday, December 10th. Be sure to mark your calendars now because this one will be here before you know it.

Hope to see ya'll at the Devine meeting.

Jerry Achterberg, President, Balcones Forge

Meeting Date is Dec 10



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SECRETARY'S REPORT(S)

October Meeting.

The Comal Blacksmith and Mechanical Shop located in the settlement of Comal was opened in the mid 1850's by Ignatz Wenzel. The original blacksmith shop was then purchased by Bruno Schwab in 1915 who added the mechanical shop and continued with the blacksmithing operation. The shop was closed about 1970 and every hammer, chisel, piece of iron, wheelwright tool and various automotive, tractor and well digging equipment remained in place and in reverent respect by grandson Donald Zipp and his wife Melissa. Balcones Forge member Emilio Fernandez accidentally discovered this rare piece of history while doing a photo shoot in the area. After discussing with Jerry Achterberg what tools and blacksmithing equipment (artifacts to others) might be available efforts were successful in contacting the current owners. However, the family was not willing to part with a single item. Nevertheless, the deterioration enhanced by mother nature was inevitable despite attempts to maintain it. Eventually, and I'm sure after considering all options, the family again contacted Jerry and the agreement to hold an auction for the contents was agreed upon and was held October 29, 2016.

Coincidentally, my wife Shawn & I had also accidentally discovered the Historical Marker several years earlier as well. Of course we tried to look in the windows, but everything was boarded up and the gate locked. I mentioned the find to Jerry, who of course said he already knew about it and had been inside. This did more to my desire to also

get inside and eventually as the saying goes - be careful what you wish for. Jerry contacted me to head up a crew to organize the contents and prepare for an auction. We had exactly 4 weeks to prepare and after first stepping into the blacksmith shop with Donald Zipp, I thought I would need 4 months. Nevertheless, after consulting with Jerry, the following individuals worked very, very hard in order to make the auction a success: Jerry Whitley, Peter Garza, Sam Richardson, Emilio Fernandez, John Meyer, Ben Rath, Aaron Tilton, Sue & Randy Howerter and Sue's dad - Don, Laura Armstrong, and a young man working as my apprentice named Clayton Dupuy, not to mention the Zipp family members. I have never seen such determination from individuals covered in sweat and dirt since I was filling sandbags before the Tet offensive in Khe Sahn in 1968. The comradery that my fellow blacksmiths exhibited toward each other was equally as strong as it was with that regiment of Marines years ago. My sincere thanks to everyone involved in making it a success.

On the day of the auction, Jerry called a meeting to order by applauding the Balcones Forge blacksmiths that attended the Serbin event and we've been invited back again next year. A particular highlight was about the forge that Jim Schmidt donated to Balcones as well as the money it will bring when sold. Next meeting will be the Blanco Buggy Barn Nov. 4 & 5 for demo, show & tell. Daniel Harrington submitted his resignation as treasurer and Peter Garza's request for consideration was accepted and approved. During the meeting, Jerry nominated the late Bruno Schwabb as well as Donald & Melissa Zipp as honorary members of Balcones Forge. Also, a touching moment occurred when I presented my 14 year old apprentice with a gift of Bruno Schwabb's personal hammers, tongs, chisels and punches that Donald Zip wanted the young man to have. A grand gesture, for sure.

Needless to say, Vince Herod commenced the

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auction that kept everyone very busy. Daniel Harrington completed the auction and Mr. Zip indicated to me that he was pleased with the outcome. It's probably worth mentioning that the rarity of an original, family owned blacksmith shop so undisturbed and intact will eventually become non existent. The only one I have heard of in my few short years with Balcones, is the Aaron Tilton's family blacksmith shop in Kansas that was in operation for 3 generations which also ended with an auction. So if you know or discover some unique piece of blacksmithing history, go ahead and say it - 'wish I could go in there' and hopefully you'll get your wish, for your benefit as well as others and this will keep the art, and heart of the blacksmith alive.

November Meeting.

This 2 day event has always been a great event for Balcones Forge blacksmiths to demo, show & tell, and mostly visiting with good downhome people and LOTS of kids. School is out for the children in Blanco and teachers take their classroom on a field trip full of cowboys-n-indians, trick horses, buggies, whips, lariats western music, and of course blacksmiths. After one of the many shows put on by trick shooters and the like, the kids are brought by the blacksmith area which is bellowing smoke, fire, sparks and blacksmiths with big hammers pounding red hot iron. Aaron Tilton was the main attraction Friday for Balcones Forge, and on Saturday a few more of us were available, so we met for breakfast at The Bowling Alley which is a 9 pin game right next to the square where the newly remodeled courthouse stands proudly in this rural community. The Buggy Barn has over 100 different buggies and offer rides, as well. Some of the buggies are leased out for movie props as in Gone With The Wind, being one of my favorites.

Both days were a success for us although there was not a big of crowd as last year. Jerry Achterberg was not present but asked me to call a meeting to order. One topic that Jerry had planned on discussing with proper use of tongs. A big safety concern is about how to position the tongs on top of the piece one is forging so that a portion is cradled below the scissor portion of the tongs. This will prevent the hot iron from flipping up into ones face and just as important, not flip out into the crowd - embarrassing as well as dangerous. Speaking of embarrassing, I remember 'my moment' when I was showing a young couple at the Buggy Barn how to put the black patina on forged items. This particular piece (a horseshoe knife) was quite hot when I tried to straighten it in my tongs after quenching. Of course, my glove caught on fire and while attempting to remove the flaming glove, the second glove burst into flames. Only thing left to do was shove both hands into my water bucket and after I finally straightened up they were walking away rather briskly. The lady did look over her shoulder only to see Jerry A. coming at me with a hammer - said he was gonna pound out the flames. Name tags were passed out by John & Carolyn Crouchet and we discussed upcoming event which will be held December 10 at Jerry Whitley's forge in Devine. This will be conducted and demonstrated by the ladies of Balcones Forge. The event has always been great in regards to items to be auctioned off, and we were all anticipating the great BBQ that Jerry & Marsha put on.

As far as blacksmiths demonstrating Saturday, myself, Tom Leining, John Meyer, Peter Garza, and Ric Dawdy pounded away the day. It was lots of fun and everyone looks forward to next year.

Tim Tellander
Balcones Forge Secretary



5th Annual Rustyk Forge - Demo & Memorial

Saturday, December 10, 2016

General Membership Meeting &

Memorial and “Ringling of the Anvil” – 10:45

Dinner – 11:00

Barbeque and all the fixings!

We will have iced tea and bottled water to drink. If you prefer an adult beverage feel free to bring it.

Auction

Please bring your donated items as well as your nickels to support the auction.

Demonstrations 12:00 -5:00

Competition Trade Item – Christmas Ornament

There will be a prize for the best one.

Followed by “Open Forge” for Balcones Forge Members

Feel free to come early and stay late. Plenty of room for self-contained RVs, Campers and Tents

Featured Artists:

Sue Howarter

Mary Jo Emrick

Laura Armstrong



Bring your lawn chair and don't wear your good shoes. You will be out on the farm and you never know what you might step in.

SAD NEWS

It has been some time since we have seen this member at our meetings, but he was always a guy you would not forget. Sara called today to let us know that Chuck Hamsa, aka Squeezebox Charlie and other characters, including Santa Claus, passed away November 28.

Chuck had a stroke at the beginning of the year and was slowly regaining his abilities when a rare lung cancer was discovered in October. It was fast moving and he was only in hospice for a week. Sara is surrounded by family and friends and says she is doing OK.

He and Sara called a few months ago and wanted to pass on his blacksmithing tools. We had an auction for many of his items during the meeting at Mary Jo's. Chuck was a volunteer on the Cedar Park railroad for many years.

Memorial service is Saturday, Dec 3, 2016.

Please keep the Hamsa family in your thoughts and prayers.

Rudy Billings



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WEB PAGE UPDATE

Hello Balcones Forge members. The website now has many new aspects to it. As some of you know you can now fill out membership applications online under the membership page. Also the member gallery needs an update so please send some pictures of your work along with a short biography as to how you became a blacksmith. Please email this to Shane Tilton at:

flex201214@gmail.com

On another note many of our members offer teaching or other blacksmithing related services. If you are one of these individuals please email Shane the title of your service, prices or a price range and method of contact for the service. I look forward to your submissions and emails.

Thank you,
Shane Tilton



Beveled Scrolls by

James Bequette
 Cadet, Missouri
 j.d.bequette@gmail.com
 Friend of PAABA Member, Chuck Hughes

‘This is a fun element that adds a bit of flare to a project. The ABANA National Curriculum Grille requires two C-scrolls that utilize this element as well as four beveled leaf scrolls which are very similar in style and creation. It is a little difficult to explain in two dimensional drawings, so try a couple of test pieces. Practice makes perfect.

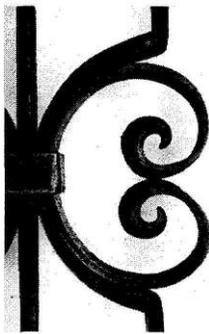
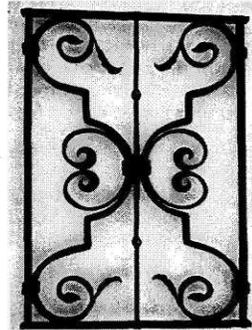


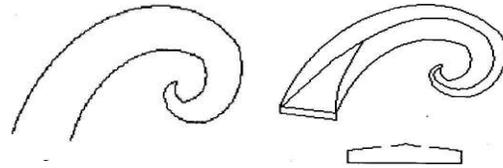
Figure 1



Finished piece

Start by forging a long, thin taper. Be sure to thin the tip down to a point as it will make it a little easier to scroll and require less work to bevel. I also like to chamfer the edges to get rid of the sharp edges, but you can make that call based on your needs. (Figure 1.)

Begin scrolling on the horn until you reach the desired shape. This part of the process will ultimately dictate the final shape of the scroll. Before you begin to bevel you must decide whether this will be a right or left facing scroll and make sure the scroll is facing in the appropriate direction (Right for right, left for left).



With cross section

Figure 2

Figure 3

Now you are ready to bevel the scroll. Establish a centerline through the scroll and begin to bevel each side a couple of inches back from the tip. As a general rule of thumb, I bevel to the top of the scroll and then gradually reduce the bevels to the outside of the bar, but you may need more or less depending on the desired shape. You will notice that when you bevel the outside of the scroll it will tighten up and when you do the inside it will open. (Figure 3.)

Top View

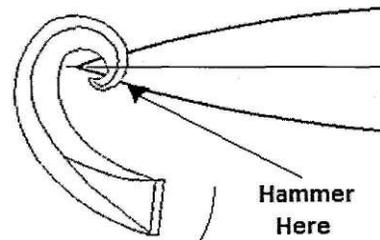


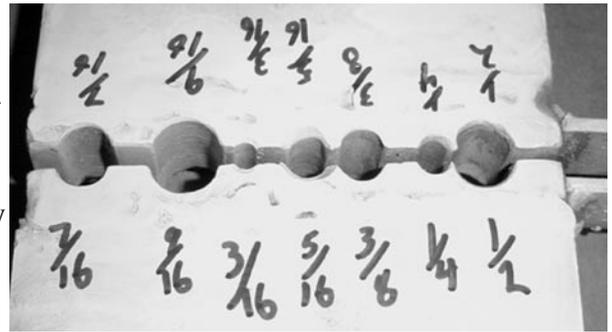
Figure 4

The trick to turning the scroll 90 degrees to the parent bar is to keep the centerline of the scroll perpendicular to the center line of the anvil horn and rotate the scroll as you feed it over the horn. A wooden or rawhide mallet works well to protect the bevel during this process. Once you’ve made the transition you can finish the scroll using your preferred method. (Figure 4.)

Round Bar Vice Jaws

By Bob Ehrenberger

I recently needed to bend some large round bars, on my first attempt, I clamped a bar in the vice hot and hammer it over. It developed a nasty burr where the jaw of the vice dug into the bar. I decided that I needed to make set of jaws that would match the shape of the bar and hold it tighter to prevent the burr. Many years ago I made a set of jaws to hold small round bars to make rivet heads on them. I cleaned and painted the old tool for this article. Now I needed a larger version for my current project.



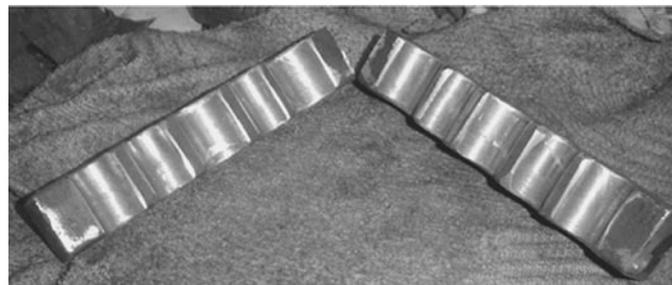
Old vice jaws to hold 3/16" thru 9/16" round

I selected some stock that was 1" x 1 1/8". I cut 2-6" long pieces, since my vice is 6" wide. I made an 1/8" shim to fit between them and tack welded the two pieces together with the 1/8" shim between them. The shim is to assure that the jaws will not hit before making contact with the piece to be clamped. My drill press is a little under powered so I needed to drill the holes progressively starting with 1/4" and working my way up to the largest drill that I have which is 1". In order to make the tool more versatile I created 5 different sizes 5/8, 11/16, 3/4, 7/8, and 1". 11/16" was the one that I had to have, the rest were just so I had a variety for future projects.



The bundle is drilled and chamfered

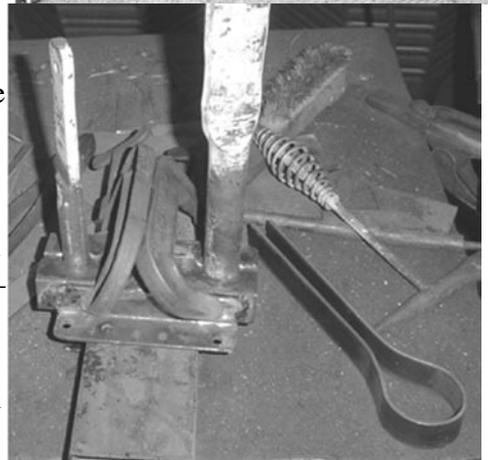
After the block was drilled and chamfered, I welded a pair of angle irons on to them before grinding off the tack welds.



Inside the dies after the sharp edges have been filed.

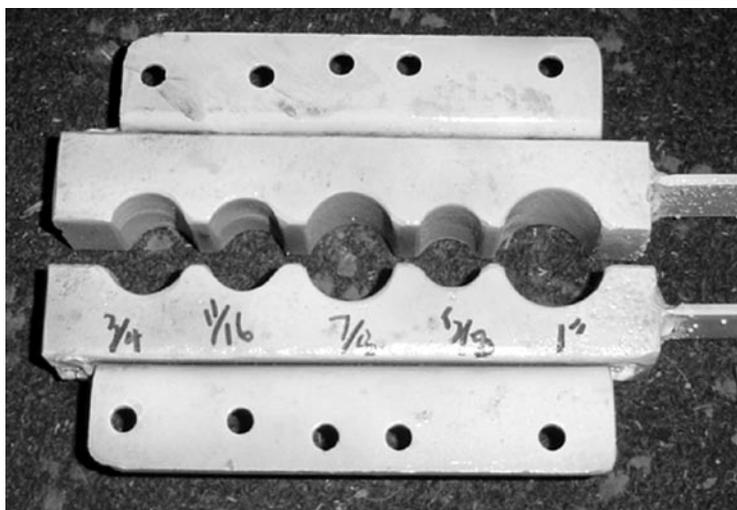
I then opened them up so that I could file and sand all the sharp edges off of the two halves where they meet.

I made a handle for the tool out of 1/8" x 1" strap material which keeps them aligned and gives them some spring.



Clamped together ready for the handle

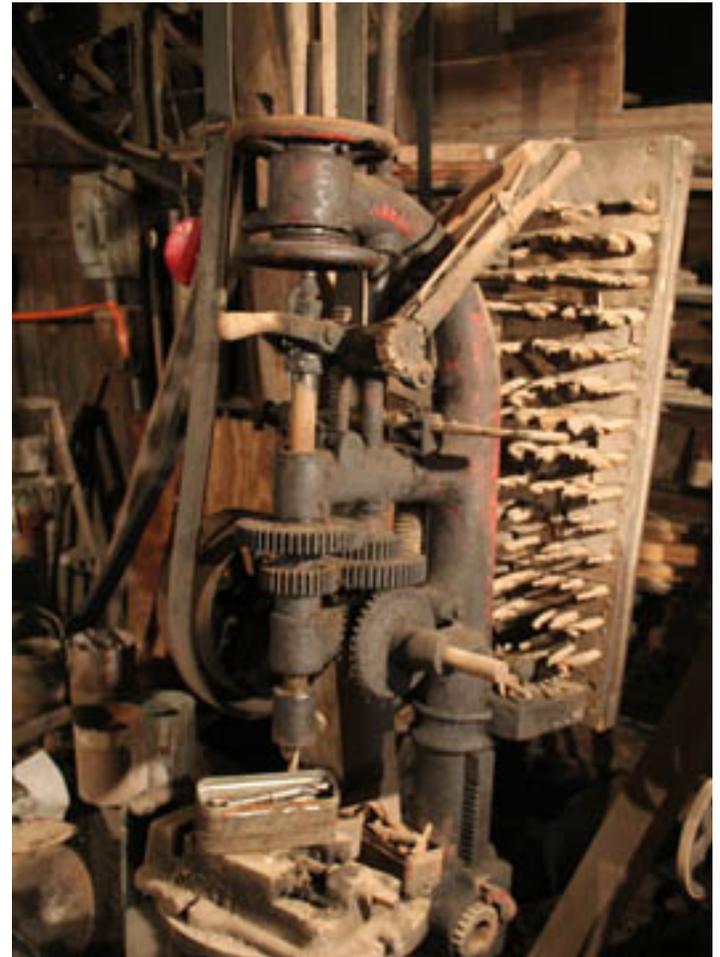
In order to get them aligned to weld the handles on, I clamped them together with the 1" and 3/4" mandrels in place. This lined up the grooves and gave the proper spacing.



Finished tool, with sizes labeled



photos from October meeting by Vince Herod



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San Antonio

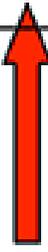
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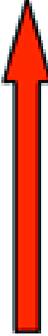


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NEWSLETTER CHANGES COMING

by Daniel Harrington

Balcones Forge has offered members a printed and mailed copy of the Balcones Forge Dispatch at a very low cost (\$5/year) for a number of years... Probably forever. We have also known for some time that the actual cost of producing and mailing these letters is higher than the additional membership fee.

After looking into the actual costs to produce these letters, which about 33% of our members receive, we got a big surprise! The cost to print and mail twelve newsletters to a single member is **over \$26.00**. Since we're only charging \$5, that mean's were loosing... Well, y'all can do the math.

The Board chewed on this one for a while and looked for ways to fix the problem. We considered increasing the fee for membership with hard copy newsletter to \$30/year (from \$25,) but that still leaves us \$16 short for every member receiving a newsletter in the mail. We agreed that increasing the cost to our members any further than that was not an option. This essentially left us with two choices: continue to provide the newsletters at a loss, or move away from the printed newsletter altogether.

After much wailing and gnashing of teeth, we decide to stop mailing the newsletters. The last issue to be mailed out to members will be December 2016.

Our hope is that members understand that this was a difficult decision, but one we felt necessary to make. Our goal is to continue to produce a dozen or so hard copies to be made available at meetings for those who would like to take a hardcopy home with them. Otherwise, the newsletters will be available on our website, and all members who have provided an email address will receive a link each month.

Happy Forging,
DH

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