



Blacksmiths of Central Texas

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July 2007

The Prez says:

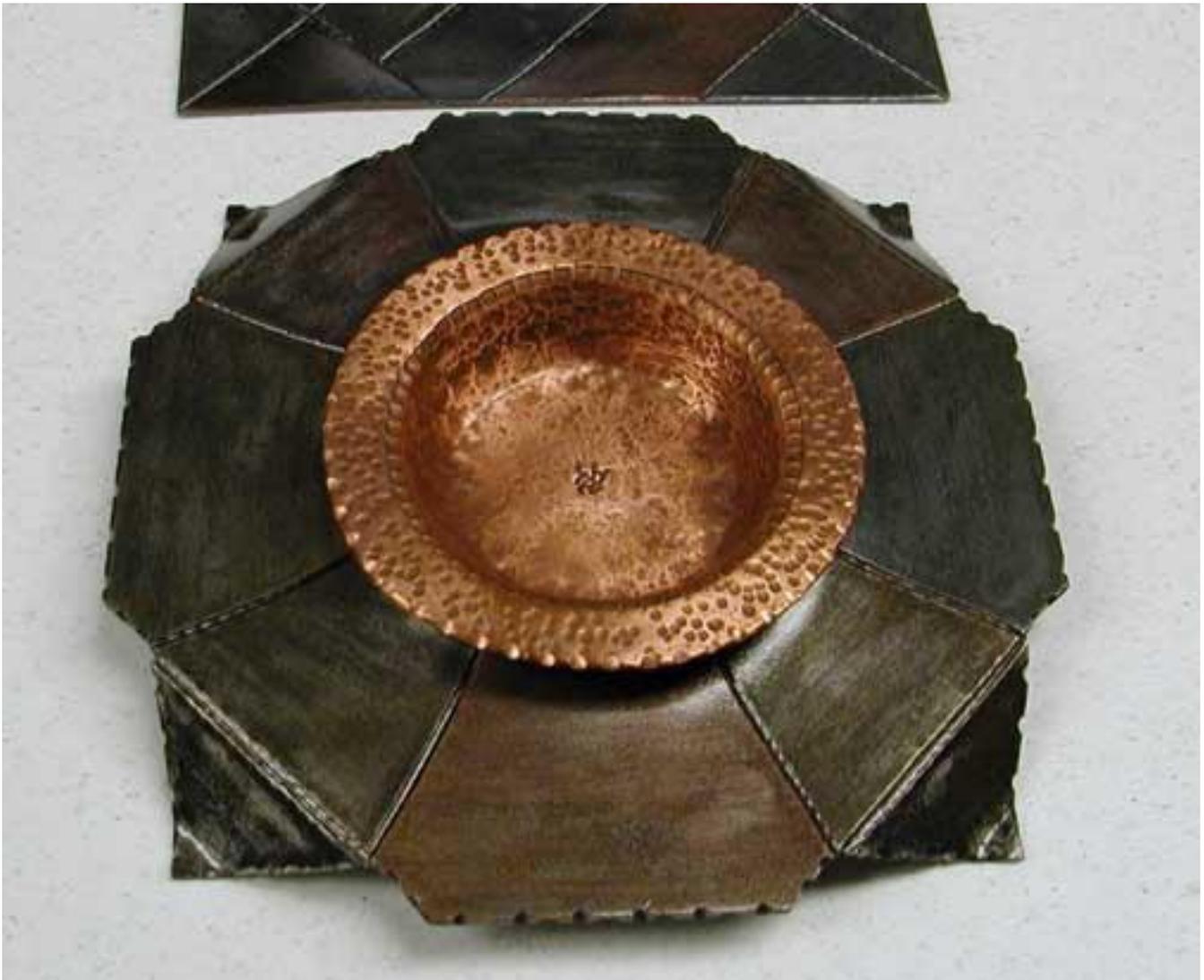
I grew up in Louisville along with some other folks you may have heard of, like Cassius Clay, Victor Mature, and Diane Sawyer to name a few. But don't ask me how exciting it is to attend the Kentucky Derby. Sorry to say, I have never been. Why is it when we have something so accessible we take it for granted, while others travel from the far side of the globe to experience it? Odd, isn't it?

Don't let that same thinking stop you from attending our Free Summer Workshop, July 28. Even though our demonstrator, Dave Koenig is a friendly face we often see, you won't want to miss this event! Dave is an excellent demonstrator with some very unique methods and materials in his repertoire. He will be passing on his experience of forging vessels from aluminum among other things.

Our second largest auction of the year will take place that day too. Instead of a trade item, please make something for the auction. Also look around your shop for those tongs you never use, that extra grinder, maybe some usable iron from your scrap bin -- anything a blacksmith could use. We also have four beautiful bronze pieces forged by Dorothy Stiegler to be auctioned. So along with the goodies you bring, don't forget your checkbook! Your shop (or mantel) will be glad you did!

Since the big city of Marble Falls (aka Water World) is down the road a piece, lunch will be provided for a nominal fee, or feel free to bring your own. The Workshop will start at 9:00 and will end around 3:00. Don't forget your seat cushion for the bleachers, safety glasses, extra water/soft drinks, auction items, and your mint julep. Oops! That's only at the Derby!

See you there!
Rudy



This is an example of the fine work Dave Koenig is doing and will be demonstrating on the 28th. Go to the Houston Area Blacksmiths Association website at:

www.habairon.org

Get a great preview of what we will see at the July meeting of Balcones Forge!

Photos borrowed from the HABA web site.

Dave founded the Houston Area Blacksmiths Association in 1997. In June of 2002 Dave was appointed to the ABANA Board of Directors and that same year became the chairperson for the 2004 ABANA Conference in Richmond, Kentucky.



W W W . B A L C O N E S F O R G E . O R G

SECRETARY'S REPORT

The June meeting was held at Centaur Forge. It was hosted by Mike and Tyrel Chambers. We had a really good turn-out with at least 27 members in attendance.

Rudy started the meeting off by asking people to take one of several numbered pieces of stock to put their favorite finishes on. The experiment will test the finishes to see how they hold up outdoors over a specified period of time.

We had a successful iron-in-the-hat, as several people brought things to auction off. Among the items were a container of Super Brite copper patina, a box of 200 earplugs, a leaf spring and a piece of mezzanine decking, three sets of 10 used horseshoes, a long section and a short section of insulation for making forges, and the book, "Pounding Out the Profits".

The trade item for the month was a hook made from a horseshoe. We had six really good hooks made and traded. Remember, if you want one of these cool creations, be sure to participate and make an item to trade.

We had several demonstrations at the meeting this time. Mike and Tyrel started by showing us how they shape and treat their hammer and sledge hammer handles. It was a really interesting demo. When purchasing manufactured hammers, they do their own finish work to have handles that work better for them. Following are some of the steps they take: they cut the handles shorter, shape them to their liking, rasp and sand them and/or use a sharp piece of glass to lightly to smooth out the handle, burn the wood (a propane torch works well to get an even color and dry the wood out), run a #00 steel wool lightly over the wood, lightly burn the steel wool leftovers off the handle with the propane torch, sand it lightly with

a 150 grit emery cloth, then heat it once more and oil it with generous amounts of linseed oil. They let the oil sit on the handle a couple of hours, reapplying as it dries.

After demonstrating how they finish hammer handles, Mike and Tyrel forged horseshoes from scratch. During the demo, they used a cut-off wedge, called an "Anvil Devil". The Anvil Devil is used like a hot cut, but is just a small triangular wedge made of high-impact steel that sits on the anvil face. They also gave us a tip for scribing a center line. You can get an open-end wrench that is the same size as the distance from the edge of your metal to the center line. You scribe your line with one side of the open-end while the other is run down along the edge of the metal you are scribing.

Mike Chambers donated a rounding hammer for a drawing. Everyone who attended got their name put into the pot. New member, Morrie Graves won the hammer. They also donated a Centaur Forge cap, which Jerry Achterberg won. Thanks Mike!

Finally, Jerry Achterberg pulled out his box of home-made tools. He has made some really cool tooling out of many different found objects, old pieces of heavy equipment and cheap Harbor Freight tools modified to do other things. There were tons of good ideas in that box.

Well, see y'all next month at John Crouchet's for the summer demo, featuring Dave Koenig of HABA.

Sue Murray - Balcones Forge Secretary

BOOKS ONLINE - FREE!

Check it out at
<http://www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/archive/publications/craftpublications.asp>

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JULY MEETING INFO

I spoke with Dave Koenig for awhile this week concerning the Summer Demo this month (July 28, 9:30 am). I also got some more information about what Dave is planning and thought you would all be interested.

Dave has been very intrigued with the process of blacksmithing different vessels for the last year and a half or so. He has been attending all sorts of workshops and blacksmithing schools, really working at learning techniques for forging bowls and plates and all sorts of containers and he has developed some unusual techniques.

If you saw the pictures of some of his bowls in the Hammers Blow (Spring 2007), then you know his stuff has gotten pretty fancy. What interests me is that Dave is building these vessels very, very quickly, using traditional hand blacksmithing tools. He manages to make these puppies, start to finish, in just a couple of hours! He is NOT using a powerhammer or flypress or any other expensive or powered device! In fact, he is doing it out of a plain old coal forge!

This is something new and different that most all of us could do with just the tooling we already have.

If you have ever suffered through traditional cold raising techniques to make a bowl, working for days and days to do one vessel, you are going to want to come watch Dave do his stuff. I know his bowls are quicker than I can do and they look way better, too! There is something worth learning here, guys!

I've got the ranch roads passable now and I will slick them up some more this weekend, so everything should be fine in time for the demo on Saturday, July 28th. I hope to see you all!

John Crouchet
Still wet, but drying out fast

IFORGEIRON.COM

If you are like me you might spend a bit of time at the computer to see what great blacksmithing information is out there on the internet. When Bill Epps was down to demo at the October meeting last year he recommended a sight called IFORGEIRON.COM and now, so do I.

Every Tuesday night at 9pm Central Time there is a live lesson presented in a special chat room set up just for that purpose. But what is really great is the archive of these "blueprints". There are many lessons from folks like.....Uri Hofi!

Check out the site and have a good look around. I know you will have a good time.

LITTLE GIANT RE-BUILD

Sid Suedmeier will be teaching a Little Giant re-building class at the Forgery School of Blacksmithing in Moriarty, NM August 3-5, 2007.

For more information:

Little Giant Power Hammer
Attn. Harlan "Sid" Suedmeier
420 4th Corso
Nebraska City, NE 68410

Phone: 402-873-6603

GOOD STUFF

Iron -- it can be drawn, formed, machined, cast, laminated, hammered, inlaid, etched, punched, split, rolled, bent, chased, spun, welded, riveted, collared, and more.

BAND SAW INFO

Do you have a small bandsaw that needs attention? Check out this site:

www.tinyisland.com/4x6bsFAQ.html

TRADE ITEM

The trade item for July is.....

AN AUCTION ITEM!

Remember the auctions at our demos are what really pays the costs of this organization. Our dues alone would barely cover the cost of the newsletter so it is YOUR generous donations to the auction that keep the organization going strong.



Trade Items from the June Meeting.

(Photo by Vince Herod)

Please bring either something you have made or perhaps a good tool that you no longer use and make a donation to the auction. Anything that relates to the work we do is welcome!

ABANA FOUNDER PASSES

Floyd Daniels of Madison Georgia was one of the 20 original members of ABANA when it was founded on March 17, 1973.

Mr. Daniels was 89 years old when he passed away peacefully in his sleep on March 1, 2007.

*This information from Bituminous Bits,
Journal of the Alabama Forge Council.*

KNIFE MAKING INFO

NTBA will have a meeting for knifemakers, August 11 at Center Cross Metal Works, 835 House Street, Fort Worth, 817-451-8243.

<http://www.centercross.com>.

Host Gene Osborn will discuss cable and composite blade making.

Directions: from Loop 820 on the east side of Fort Worth, take the Lancaster exit and turn right (west). At the third stop light, turn left on Tierney Rd. Turn right on N. Hampshire Blvd., then a left on House Street. Center Cross Metal Works is the fourth house from the end of the street on the left, the only one with a metal roof.

JULY MEETING DIRECTIONS

Sycamore Creek Ranch
5828 Ranch Road 1431 East,
Marble Falls, Texas 78654
Phone: 830-798-3710

If you come into Marble Falls from Austin or San Antonio, watch for the Colorado River. Once you cross the river into town, start counting the stoplights. The fifth stoplight will be RR 1431. Turn east (right) onto RR 1431, toward Lago Vista and Cedar Park. You will go 5.2 miles to our gate. At about five miles you will pass CR 341, which goes off to your left. Then you will go up a long, winding hill. At the very crest of the hill, suddenly turn left into our gate. This will surprise the heck out of whoever is tailgating you! You will follow this road across two cattle guards and past our green cabin, through another gate, and 1/4 mile further to the blacksmith shop.

A map is on the back page for your driving pleasure!

Dave has a lot planned so be on time.



This beautiful bronze piece will be auctioned off at the July meeting of Balcones Forge. This item was created by Dorothy and Jake at the Spring Demo in March.

Be sure and plan to spend the 28th of July in Marble Falls, Texas at John Crouchet's shop on the beautiful Sycamore Creek Ranch.

The special guest demonstrator for the July meeting will be Dave Koenig of Tudor Forge. Dave will be demonstrating forging with aluminum.

This special demo is open to all members of Balcones Forge as well as guests.

Photo by Rudy Billings.



Our Vice President, Harvey Wise, is back in the ICU.

Please send Harvey your thoughts and prayers so he can get better soon and be back with us at all the meetings.

You can send a card to:

Harvey P. Wise
2735 Smetana
Bryan, TX
77807-5263

Scenes from the June meeting.



Jerry Achterburg (top left) showed us his box full of tools, Mike Chambers (top right) showed us the proper way to make a shoe and Ty Chambers (left) showed us how to prepare a hammer handle.



Photos by Vince Herod

**Safety glasses are required
when watching demonstrations.**

Please bring your own pair.



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