



# Balcones Forge Dispatch

President's Corner

March 2019



Greetings!

What a show! The Lee Brothers did it again. The Combo demo at Steep Hollow forge in Bryan was a great event with almost too many things to see at one time. All the demonstrators and entertainers were first class

and really put on a good show. The chicken dinner was wonderful and I don't think I have ever been to a more intense fast moving auction. A big thank you to Alan and Jeff and all the folks that helped make this event another one for the record books and we are looking forward to doing this again next year.

Please note: This is a free event and this event has the biggest collection of blacksmithing tools for sale in this part of the country.

I would also like to thank the Austin Metal Authority for putting on the Austin Forging Competition at the First Community Village's Mobile Loaves & Fishes smithy. Eight teams from all over the country competed in a timed challenge to produce a traditionally forged masterpiece while the crowd looked on. This was blacksmithing at its best and will happen again next year. Balcones Forge sponsored one of the teams this year and also donated four gas forges and propane tanks to the smithy to help the residents that work in the forge turn out items that they sell to earn their keep at the village. The folks at MLF were most grateful for our donation.

## Demo Date is Saturday March 30

*President's Message continued on page 2.*



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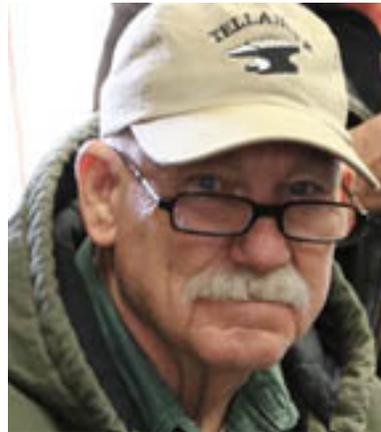
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## SECRETARY'S REPORT FROM FEBRUARY MEETING

*President's Message continued.*

2019 Bluebonnet Demo— featuring Rachel David – March 30th. At John Crockett's Sycamore Creek Ranch in Marble Falls. Make your reservations now! This is our big money making event for the year. We need several items for the live and silent auctions like your best hand forged artwork or that extra hammer you got last Christmas. All your donations and purchases help to keep us going through the year by funding events like the Bluebonnet demo and helping to keep the art of blacksmithing alive. There will be knife making workshops available with Tim Tellander on Thursday and Friday, March 28th & 29th and Rachel will teach workshops on Sunday and Monday, March 31st and April 1st. Please call Laura Armstrong at 832-605-6150 to check on availability. If you plan to bring an RV or camp overnight please call John Crockett at 830-798-3710 for more information.



Jerry Achterberg & I left the comfortably warm Bulverde area about 5:30 am this Saturday morning in blue jeans and light shirts with the A/C on and about half way to Brian, we stopped for a taco. We were shocked to find out the temperature difference was noticeably 20 degrees colder with an occasional misting of light rain. Luckily, I had an old carhart jacket and a pair of gloves in the back seat of my truck and after talking to a few other attendees, seems very few came properly attired. Throughout the day, the Richard DelaHoussaye iron smelt area was quite popular. Nevertheless, there was standing room only as the forging events started to unfold.

Balcones Forge still needs your help. Vince needs meeting photos and articles for the newsletter, Aaron needs help with the t-shirts, and we need a few members-at-large to help the board with keeping this organization running. We also need folks to host a meeting and folks to demonstrate. Please contact one of the board members if you would like to help.

See ya'll in Marble Falls.

Jerry Achterberg – Pres. Balcones Forge

My new address is:

31627 Wildcat Dr.  
Bulverde, TX 78163

210-842-3049  
treefarm@swbell.net

Two well known bladesmiths, Richard Epting and Peter (Cowboy) Symanski began forging a Damascus blade in the Ray Kirk (Mastersmith, American Bladesmith Society) style with an integral finger guard. Richard did a wonderful job in explaining each step that Cowboy forged into the blade, and there were quite a few important technical questions from the crowd. After normalizing and quenching, the TV watchers of Forged in Fire, of which there were many at this particular demo, were pleased that the blade did not warp.

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The hammer forged bottle opener had about 35 participants and the first & second place photos are pictured below. My somewhat ho-hum horse head opener from a horse shoe didn't even get tested by the judges but it was fun to make. After lunch and foot stomping music by Joe Magee, the auction began and one of the pricier items was a bundle of forging tools (see photo) donated by Lyle Wynn & Stan Bryant. Balcones forge member Matt Pohoresky did some unique forging and forge welding as did Sam Fontenot also demonstrated making a hammer. Also demonstrating blades forging in a separate area were STAB members James Helmes, Alex Ruiz and Tobin Nieto. There were plenty of vendors today and forging hammers seemed to be very popular. Nathan Robertson sold over 30 hammers and I was very impressed with the hammers Haley Woodward (Austin Community College) had on display. Jerry & I delivered the 4 new forges and forge stands for Community First (Loaves & Fishes) group and Haley took them back to Austin with him.

I talked with Alan & Jeff Lee the next Saturday at a knife show in Bastrop, and they were well pleased with the outcome of the Steephollow demo, and plan on doing it again next year.

Tim Tellander  
Balcones Forge Secretary



Photos from the February "big doins" in Bryan" by Tim Tellander



# Patch Knife Class with Tim Tellander

## Journeyman Bladesmith American Bladesmith Society & Texas Knife Guild

This knife represents a knife used primarily during the American Civil War by riflemen to open patches of black powder for their muskets, of which the design and use is legendary and useful to the present. The 6 inch piece of high carbon steel (1095) is from a horse or tractor drawn hay rake for drawing fresh cut grass into rows for harvesting.

We will be utilizing gas forges, and the only tools needed is one hammer with both flat & rounded faces, and another with a cross peen. The actual forging and bending will take 3-4 hours, sharpening and heat treat will take the remainder of the day.

The photos identify the round bar and 2 differently sized examples and I forged a 3rd example to show completion. I had it tested by a knife guild member (Gary Powell), and it resulted in a Rockwell hardness of 61.

Class #1 of 10 participants: Thursday March 28 (9:30am - 4:30pm)

Class #2 of 10 participants: Friday March 29 (9:30am - 4:30pm)

Contact: Laura Armstrong (832) 605-6150 with a text message and you will receive an invoice which is paid on line with credit card to reserve a spot.

### DEMO OPPORTUNITY

Hello!

I am president of the Friends of Nameless School, a one-room schoolhouse and the one remaining structure of the Nameless Community on Nameless Road in Northwestern Travis County. You can find us on Facebook to see more about us at Friends of Nameless School.

We are again inviting the community and surrounding areas to spend some time at the school to experience some old-time festivities from the late 1800s to early 1900s.

To that end, we hope to have soap makers, story tellers, spinners and weavers, folks who might present some "living history", reenactors, and demonstrators from bygone eras (Civil War, early West), music, etc.

In addition to our "Day in Historic Nameless" we will also host our biennial community-wide barbecue. If the April 2019 Saturday is anything like this past April 7, we will be even more crowded inside the schoolhouse—but that's ok!

We won't be charging money to attend, nor will we offer remuneration to presenters/participants. We are a non-profit, 501(c)(3) association, so any participating you do will qualify as tax-deductible on your part.

We hope you'll consider sending a representative (or several!) to join us **Saturday, April 13, 2019** for A Day in Historic Nameless. Please forward this to friends who also might be interested in joining us! Thank you so much.

Sincerely,

Mary Cameron, President  
Friends of Nameless School  
maryc2@austin.rr.com

# Welcome to the 2019 Bluebonnet Demo!

By John Crouchet

Carolyn and I are glad to welcome you to the Bluebonnet Demo, both our old friends of many years and newcomers that we are meeting for the first time! We are fortunate to live in a beautiful place and we are pleased to share it with you. We hope you will bring a friend when you come.

We have an exciting, action-packed demo planned this year featuring blacksmith Rachel David and her crew. In addition, there are knife making classes with Tim Tellander planned for the two days before the demo and forging classes with Rachel planned for the two days following the demo.

You will find the ranch just 5 1/2 miles east of Marble Falls on Ranch Road 1431. Watch for the round anvil signs.

We will have camping spots available around the big pond, down the hill from the blacksmith shop and in the pasture behind the shop, so bring your tent or your travel trailer if you wish. There will be a porta potty placed in the camping area for your convenience. There is no electricity in the camping areas.

Don't forget to visit the beautiful town of Marble Falls while you are here. Besides being the home of the world famous Bluebonnet Cafe, it is an interesting place with a range of parks, shops, antiques, chocolates and other enticements available.

**PLEASE DRIVE SLOWLY ON THE RANCH.** Our roads are all single lane roads and you may meet oncoming traffic at any moment. Baby calves and baby deer will NOT get out of the road when they see your car coming.

Please don't drive across the pastures.

No smoking at our house or at my shop.

Camping will be available starting Wednesday, March 27th. Even if you are not enrolled in the classes before the demo, it is always free to come watch and you will learn lot!

Classes will continue each day on Thursday, March 28 and Friday, March 29 and following the big Demo on Saturday, March 30, there will be more classes on Sunday, March 31 and on Monday, April 1.

For more information or directions, call me at 830-798-3710.

John Crouchet



# Balcones Forge Bluebonnet Demo

featuring

## RACHEL DAVID



March 30, 2019

Marble Falls, Texas

**Rachel David**, raised in Maryland and a resident of New Orleans, is a blacksmith, sculptor, designer, and maker. Her practice includes sculpture, custom architectural work, and furniture, all working to convey social and environmental justice, and workshops that build community rather than competition. Rachel's methods for moving metal are extraordinary. You will be amazed and inspired!

**Balcones Forge** will be providing two different hands-on workshops, two days before and two days after the Saturday Demo – one conducted by Rachel, and the other by our own **Tim Tellander**, providing an ever popular knife-making workshop. There are only 20 spots available for each workshop, so check the next newsletter for registration info.

Besides motels five miles away in Marble Falls, free camping spots are available around the pond on beautiful Sycamore Creek. Bring your tent or RV and your fishing pole! Sorry – no dogs or campfires. Show up at the shop Friday night for the Balcones Shrimp Boil, a party that has become a tradition. We would love to see you there!

Don't miss the catered barbeque and vegetarian dinner Saturday night followed by our famous annual **Balcones Forge Auction**. Please create items and find unused tools to donate, then prepare to bid on fantastic creations and blacksmithing tools -- maybe one of Rachel's or Tim's latest creation!

**Demo Times:** 8:57–Noon Morning Demo  
Noon–1:03 Lunch: *Since Marble Falls is about 20 minutes away, it is recommended to order a sandwich, chips and drink.*  
1:03–5:09 Afternoon Demo  
6:01 Dinner  
7:08 If not attending dinner, please join us at this time for the fantastic auction

Our fantastic hosts are John and Carolyn Crouchet at their beautiful Sycamore Creek Ranch, at 5828 East Ranch Road 1431. If the gate is open, just drive in. If the gate is closed, there are cattle in this pasture, so please close the gate behind you. Continue crossing 4 cattle guards before you see the big metal shop on your left. Welcome! Lost? Call John at 830-798-3710.

**For more info contact:** **John Crouchet**, 830-798-3710 or [JohnCrouchet@iCloud.com](mailto:JohnCrouchet@iCloud.com), **Jerry Achterberg** 210-842-3049 or [treefarm@swbell.net](mailto:treefarm@swbell.net), or **Rudy Billings**, 512-461-7375 or [Rudy@BalconesForge.com](mailto:Rudy@BalconesForge.com)

See the latest newsletter or website ([www.BalconesForge.org](http://www.BalconesForge.org)) for Registration Form

DON'T FORGET YOUR SAFETY GLASSES AND CUSHION. HELP US BY REGISTERING EARLY

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

# Sign Up Now for Bluebonnet Workshops!

This is your chance to sign up for our annual blacksmithing workshops, held in conjunction with the Bluebonnet Demo!

We are offering four days of classes this year:

March 28, Thursday - **“Patch knife making class”** with Tim Tellander

March 29, Friday - **“Patch knife making class”** with Tim Tellander

March 30, Saturday - Bluebonnet Demo

March 31, Sunday - **“Butcher Tools, moving mass”** with Rachel David

April 1, Monday - **“Butcher tools, moving mass”** with Rachel David

On Thursday and Friday before the Demo, our bladesmith extraordinaire, **Tim Tellander**, will be teaching classes on building patch knives. Tim will teach the entire process to forge, file, and finish a completed knife in this class. Balcones members have shown a tremendous interest in bladesmithing this year, and this is a great opportunity to forge your own knife, start to finish! Many of Tim’s beautiful knives are shown in the Balcones Forge website gallery.

Our 2019 Bluebonnet Demo demonstrator is blacksmith **Rachel David** from New Orleans. You can see her work at [www.redmetal.net](http://www.redmetal.net). As you can see from her architectural and sculptural work, she is a master at shifting metal to achieve unusual, flowing forms. She will teach classes on the Sunday and Monday after the Demo focused on “calculating, isolating, and redistributing mass.” This is a chance to take your forging abilities to the next level, learning methods and subtleties of using top and bottom butcher tools in your work.

These popular all day **workshops are limited to only ten students per day.**

They will begin at 9:30 each morning and end at 4:30 each afternoon.

Blacksmiths and metalworking students sign up for these workshops each year to learn new forging techniques in a hands-on shop environment without spending great wads of cash or traveling long distances.

Balcones Forge provides the anvils, forges, tools, and professional-level instructors.

Cost to take a class is \$125.00. All needed materials and tools will be furnished, along with lunch and drinks for everyone.

**Please Note:** Class size is limited and is available only on a “first come, first served” basis. If you wish to be in a class, apply quickly.

***To sign up for a class, text Laura Armstrong at 830-605-6150. Tell her your email address and what class you want. She will send you an invoice by email which you can pay online by credit card or by ApplePay to reserve your space. If this does not work for you, call Laura directly and she can make other arrangements for you.***

Due to our insurance requirements, you must be a Balcones Forge member to take these classes. Dues are a very reasonable twenty dollars per year and you can become a member immediately by contacting Rudy Billings at [rudy@balconesforge.org](mailto:rudy@balconesforge.org).

All classes and the annual Bluebonnet Demo will be held at Sycamore Creek Ranch, 5828 East FM 1431, Marble Falls, TX 78654. Free camping space is available here on the ranch. Bring your tent or travel trailer. Bring a friend.

We are looking forward to a memorable and exciting Bluebonnet Demo and classes this year. We hope you will join us!

*John Crouchet*  
*Text: 830-798-3710*



Photos from Austin Forging Competition by Robin Ream

## SECRETARY'S REPORT FROM FORGING COMPETITION

My plan during the recent Austin Forging Competition on Hog Eye Road, was to identify one blacksmith team for each round of competition. Not knowing any of the competing blacksmiths and unaware of what unique piece was going to be forged added an additional curiosity for me as well as others. Their struggles for accuracy and uniformity are experienced by all of us, but rarely does something magnificent emerge from the fire. This must border on the old adage about your attitude, not your aptitude, determines your altitude! -- so I am obviously flying too close to the ground.

Michael Dillon and David Ponsier paired up for the first round of competition today and the stainless steel media consisted of a 2X2 square foot of 1/8 steel which was folded and flattened to represent & honor & the Mobil Loaves & Fishes' commitment to the underprivileged individuals of this community. Albeit a delicate and interesting piece, my research about Michael & David substantiates the fact that these blacksmiths are highly regarded their originality and craftsmanship. The following paragraphs are quoted from Michael's website of which I hope the reader might further explore:

*"Dillon Forge is located in Crabapple, Georgia - just north of Atlanta. Michael has more than twenty years experience producing both functional and non-representational metal sculptures. He works with iron, bronze, aluminum, stainless steel, and carved stone. My goal is to create a visual dialogue with each client that will result in highly crafted works of art. I enjoy the collaborative process and feel that the ongoing exchange with architects, clients and builders enhance and strengthen my work. Throughout a project, Michael generates concept drawings, scale drawings and sample models to further the understanding of the project for both the artist and the client. Heating metal red hot allows me to control the material in its briefly malleable state to create fluid and graceful structures."* Michael attended Kansas City Art Institute and did his graduate studies abroad at the University of Georgia, Cortona, Italy. Regarding Michael's striker and talented blacksmith David Ponsier, I was not able to positively identify via my google search and definitely did not want to err in this regard.

Bushey Ironworks, composed of brothers Jesse and Aaron Bushey from Kings Beach, California. Double headed cobras were forge welded onto a candelabra stem, complimented with silver inlay of the candle vestibule was the focus of their forging today (see photo). I thoroughly enjoyed the synchronized technique in which both would become striker for the other and very little conversation other than thank you took place, mostly it was just a double hammer strike on the anvil. The following bio's were obtained from their web page, and again, I encourage you to examine this publication also. *"After high school in Cabot, Vermont, Jesse became an apprentice in Tahoe. After many ears of learning the trade, pursuing lessons from expert smiths across US & Europe, traveling to learn and living to forge, he finally called himself a blacksmith. Building intricate room dividers for a hotel located in Aman, Jordan is an example of some of his significant works as well as a wide array of ironwork styles in the Tahoe area. Aaron, by age 10 often visited his brothers shop and by age 12 had built his own 10X10 shop in his mom's backyard. The tiny shop packed a punch and he became the 'town smith' making signs and Christmas gifts. He is a full-time resident of Tahoe City and travels extensively across the US as well as Europe, but he is devoted to and significantly contributes to the success of Bushey Ironworks"*.

I didn't hear anything about the two LAMA raffle tickets I purchased at the Lee Brother's regarding a prize consisting of an anvil & a workbox full of tools, so I'll entertain mid month at the Pioneer Museum in Fredricksburg. Looking forward to the knife making classes end of the month. Remember to bring a cross peen and rounding hammer, and I'll see you there.

Tim Tellander  
Balcones Forge Secretary

# AUSTIN FORGING COMPETITION

20

19



## TICKETS

[MLF.ORG/AFC](http://MLF.ORG/AFC)

## DATE

MARCH 2, 2019

AUSTIN METAL AUTHORITY **AND** MOBILE LOAVES & FISHES  
COMMUNITY FIRST! VILLAGE · 9301 HOG EYE RD · AUSTIN, TX · 78724



ALAMO

Centaur  
forge



# Summertime Hammertime

*Editor's Note. The following articles cover ideas that I have collected over the past few years. They are not by any stretch an exhaustive survey of hammers. However, they do provide insight into one of our essential tools and shed light on creating and maintaining them.*



*Hammerheads forged by David Lange and Will Perkins at the recent Hard Rock Hammer-In. Photo by Tom Davisson*

## Revitalizing a Hammer

story & photos by Mark Aspery, Springville



I just revitalized an 8lb sledge hammer that had many cracks running across the face.



Wearing glasses, mask and LPR100 dust mask, I cut about  $\frac{3}{8}$ " back from the face with a zip disc to get clean material without cracks. Next, I treated the steel as a W1 with a water quench.

## Hammertime - Revitalizing

I ground the face and then stood the hammer vertically in a solid fuel forge until about 1/2" of material was 1400°F or so. This pulled a brown temper color at the peen end – no big deal.

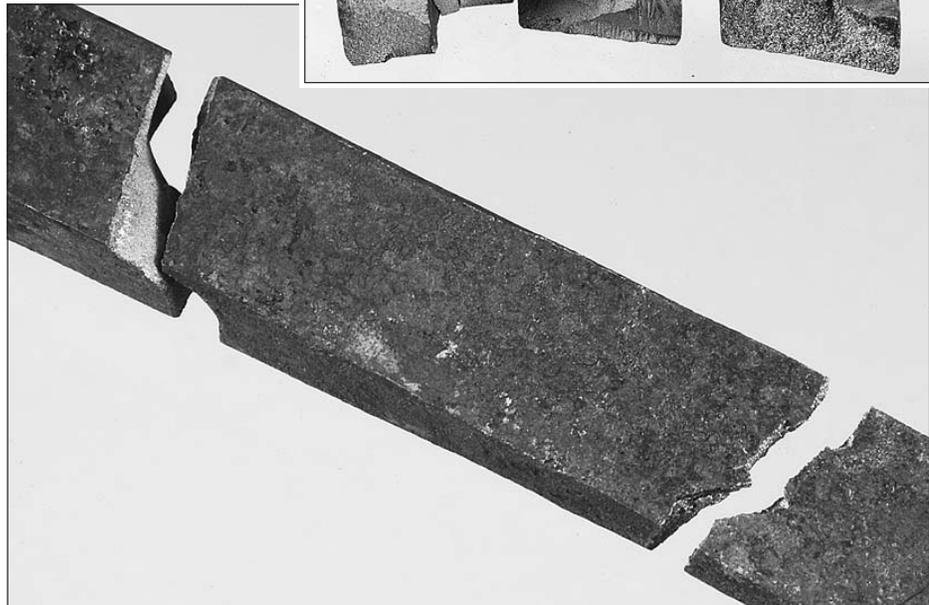
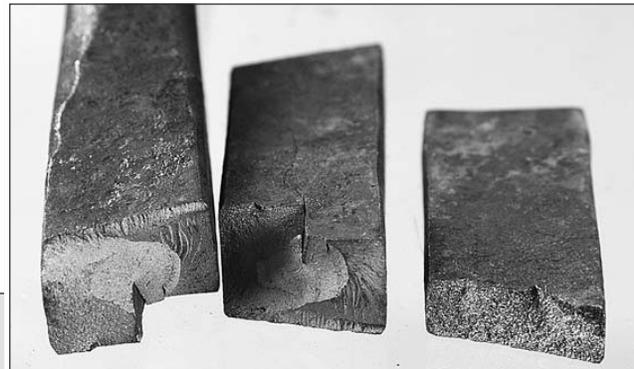
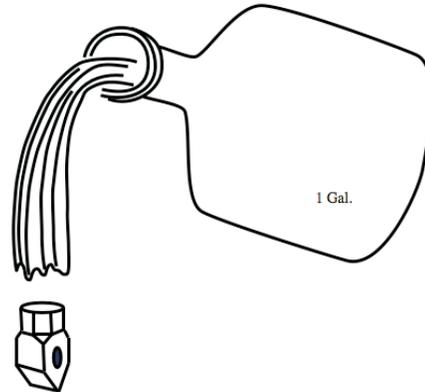
I quenched using a gallon jug of water, pouring it in a steady stream on the center of the face, again, holding the hammer vertically with the face uppermost. I allowed the water to run off the face until the water started to bead. I used a steady stream of water, not just a big dump over the face.

**Note.** Keep to the side when quenching, as it generates quite a bit of steam. Use a face shield for the cutting off and for the quenching.

The hammer held sufficient heat to pull a blue temper after polishing.

### Why Temper?

For insight, these photos show a failed tool – slot punch, made of 4140. You can see how all the bits fit together, but note how different the grain structure is. You can see that the tool has a coarse grain structure toward the working end, demonstrating that the tool was not tempered sufficiently or that it was allowed to get too hot during use and was quenched without tempering. For strength, you want the small grain structure that is achieved by tempering. ♣



# Balcones Forge Bluebonnet Demo

featuring **Rachel David - March 30**

<sup>S</sup>  
Please print clearly

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Current Member .....	\$45	_____
2019 Membership if unpaid.	\$20	_____
Non-member .....	\$65	_____
Saturday Lunch .....	\$ 7	_____
Saturday Evening Meal...	\$15	_____
	<b>Total \$</b>	_____

**Please register by March 15**

**Make check payable to Balcones Forge.**

Send to Rudy Billings

12302 Indian Mound, Austin, TX 78758

**To pay by credit card, email**

**rudy@balconesforge.org**

**PLEASE READ AND COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING RELEASE FORM: FORM MUST BE SIGNED AND DATED BY EACH MEMBER, GUEST AND PARENT OR GUARDIAN OF ANY MINOR IN ATTENDANCE.**

In consideration of the Balcones Forge Blacksmith Association providing demonstrators and workshops and making these events available and granting permission to enter the area of said event, I, individually and as parent or guardian of the minor child attending such event, hereby waive all claims for damage and/or loss to my person or property, or the person or property of such minor child, which may be caused by an act, or failure to act of the Balcones Forge Blacksmith Association, its officers, directors, agents or employees and the hosts and demonstrators. I understand that there are inherent dangers in blacksmithing and I assume all risk of all dangerous conditions in and about such demonstration and workshop and waive any and all specific notice of the existence of such conditions. By signing this waiver, I acknowledge that I have read and understand this waiver.

**X**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Vincent Herod  
Spotted Dog Forge  
166 Granite Road  
Paige, TX 78659-4922

