



Balcones Forge Dispatch

President's Corner

October 2019



Greetings!

I think we are there! We have been waiting for fall all summer with the hope that we won't move directly into winter and skip fall altogether. Only time will tell.

The fall(?) fest at Wendish Museum in Serbin was great. We had a good Balcones crowd and a good group of visitors as well. The German music and food was excellent and we saw many of our old friends that help to put on this event. Many thanks to Tom Leining for bringing and erecting his canvas fly to help shade the forging area. I would have been very warm without it.

Jerry and Marsha Whitley will host the October meeting at the Rys-tic Forge in Devine for our 8th annual memorial meeting where we honor and remember all our fellow smiths who are no longer with us. Our special demonstrator will be Tom Lundquist of Bluebird Forge in Onalaska, TX. Tom has been blacksmithing for 44 years and puts on a good show. Be sure to bring a chair and plan to stay late or bring your RV or tent and spend the night. You are also welcome to come down on Friday afternoon and get in the forge. No trade item this month but please bring an item for the auction and a little cash to buy an item or two. The Whitleys will be serving lunch and dinner, please bring your own adult beverages.

Some of you are aware that various Tractor Supply Company locations are carrying Anthracite coal. There are two sizes: nut coal and rice coal. Nut coal ranges from walnut to pecan (in the shell) while rice coal is about the size of peanuts (without the shell). Both burn well once you get them started but it takes a good wood fire to get them lit.

Officers

President
Jerry Achterberg
treefarm@swbell.net
210/661-3293

Vice-President
Jerry Whitley
jerry.whitley@ymail.com
210/288-3961

Treasurer
Rudy Billings
rudy@balconesforge.org
512-461-7375

Secretary
Tim Tellander
ttellander@gtvc.com
830/980-2903



Editor

Vince Herod
spotteddogforge@yahoo.com
512/253-6045

Meeting Date is Sat Oct 26

President's Message continued on page 2.

President's Message continued.

I do not recommend using this coal with your 100 year old hand crank blower. These antique blowers were designed for easy to light bituminous coal and the hard cranking you would need to ignite this anthracite would soon wear them out. I do not like the smell of the fumes either, they are very harsh and I do my best to avoid them. The good thing is the price: \$8.99 for a 40 pound bag. Be sure to check availability at each store before you make the drive.

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.

Be safe and see ya'll in Devine.

Jerry Achterberg – Pres. Balcones Forge

210-842-3049

treefarm@swbell.net



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SECRETARY'S REPORT FROM SEPTEMBER MEETING



Indeed, the Serbin meeting for Balcones Forge is always a great place to meet new people and expose them to a little fire, smoke, and red hot metal that leaves them smiling with awe. My wife Shawn was able to attend this event and was totally surprised at the forged items our blacksmiths had on display and equally amazed at the \$280 dollars a homemade cake brought at the auction. As we had to leave early, I only brought a hammer & anvil but Ric Dawdy encouraged me to use his forge, so I will repay him with a bucket of coal. Thanks Ric!

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage any and all of our members to pitch in with ideas to coordinate events at Blackhawk Mills in the San Marcos area. This will be a brand new endeavor for most of us, having been made to feel so welcome at Sycamore ranch for so many years and want to thank John & Carolyn Crochet again for their unique Texas hospitality. As a member of the board, I have heard of the risks we might encounter as well as the positive rewards we stand to gain. Some people are natural born risk takers, jumping into action without hesitation. Others are perpetual worriers, constantly thinking too much about the possible consequences of their actions and failing to make decisions, as a result.

Risk takers start thinking and planning and if they are able to envision a positive goal, they are likely to pursue the plan. Worriers are typically paralyzed by doubts and fears which inhibit positive input and foresee impossibilities fueled by imaginary pitfalls. Some will see a new way of doing things as too difficult. Rounding up resources and doing things differently is no pic-nic, but if one is dedicated to the new idea, the overshadowing obstacles become opportunities and others are happy to help implement them.

Successful fulfillment in getting a new way to work does not require a fancy college degree or specific DNA genetics, it's done by believing in an idea and working hard to make it a reality. There are countless individuals that have special talents and tapping into these resources will often lead to richer and positive partnerships. Everyone has something to offer and by writing off the credibility of new ideas one can start exploring the possibilities by ironing out the details, big and small.

The pursuit to fulfillment and practical application may be filled with risks but a few glitches or even occasional blunders are calculated risks that can be overcome by moving forward and working hard which is a reward for everyone involved. thanks

Tim Tellander
Balcones Forge Secretary

DEMO OPPORTUNITY

Hello we are hosting a pioneer day here in Laredo Texas and was inquiring if your group does demonstrations. Our Event is on November 16. We are also bringing the Texas Rangers re-enactment group. We would love to have a blacksmith demonstrations. Please let me know what we need to do and if this is an option for your group. Thank you

Nora May
Recreation Superintendent, City of Laredo Parks And Recreation Department, Tel:(956)-729-4600

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Saturday Oct 26, 2019
Rustyk Forge, Devine, TX
Tom Lundquist, Demonstrator

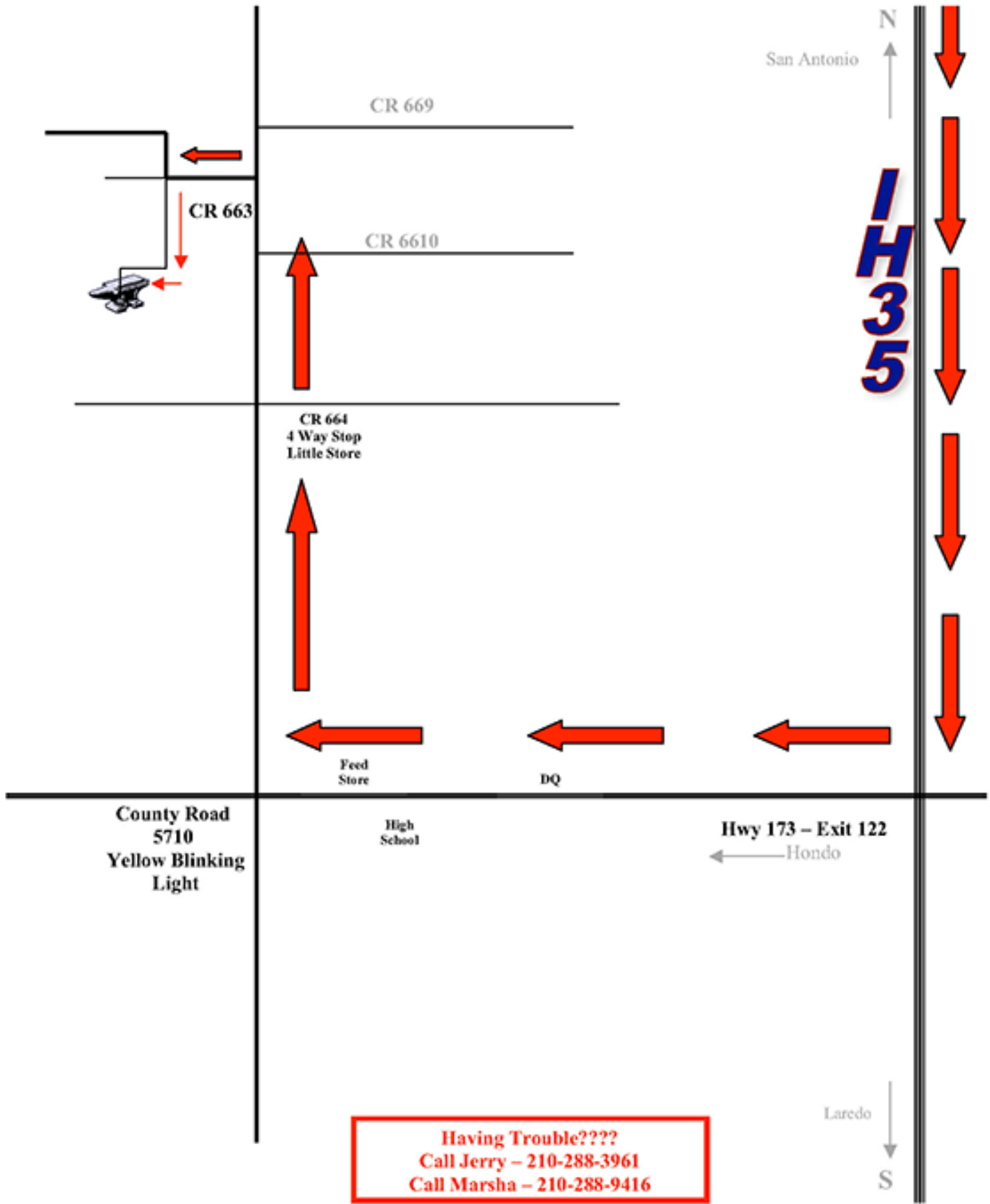
Nov: TBD

Dec: Tentative date is Dec 14, 2019

Jan: TBD

Saturday February 22, 2020
The Lee Brothers in Bryan, TX
10th Annual Combo Demo







8th Annual Rustyk Forge Demo & Memorial



Saturday, October 26, 2019

**At: Jerry & Marsha Whitley's
Rustyk Forge
295 CR 663
Devine, Texas 78016**

**We will fire up the forge at 9:00am
Our Featured Artist & Demonstrator will be
Mr. Tom Lundquist**

**Barbeque Dinner will be served
(Donation to cover the dinner will be greatly appreciated)**

**For those that would like to participate in the Open Forge,
we will have a shaded area set up away from the demo area.
*Bring your Forge, Anvil & Tools***

**Rather than a Trade Item,
we ask that you please help support our auction.
*This has always been a free event because of the success of the
auction.***

Bring your "Tailgate" & "Show & Tell" items.

**Fine Print – To participate in the "Open Forge", you must be a
member and signed in on the sign in sheet.**

**We can get you signed up at the event with \$25.00 and a
completed Registration Form.**

**I am sure that we can come up with a hammer or two, but if
you plan to forge please try to bring your own tooling and
stock.**

Feel free to bring your anvil and forge.

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



Above: Hadley Deters came back for a second year of instruction from Tom-the-Blacksmith-from-Wimberley

Below: We had a nice large turn out in Serbin. Always a fun day.



How to Forge a Forge– Bob Pickens

Have you run across a rivet forge that is in really bad shape? Thought about it, perhaps even bought it and are at a crossroads regarding how to fix it and put it back together? Rivet forges like this one (photo, right) can be brought back to life with some perseverance and care and add a little determination. Rivet forges like this one was commonly found on farms during the late 1800's to the early 1900's. They were easy to dismantle and reassemble on site. They were also used quite a bit on early structural buildings and bridges to assemble components.

Bob Pickens purchased this sad forge from Fred Hamilton with the hopes of bringing it back! He found the letter "C" cast into the metal which is believed to identify it as a Columbia forge. Champion products usually have the whole name spelled. First, disassemble all parts and examine for defects. What was in need of extensive repair was the firepot which had two major cracks and the impeller was missing all the blades.

How to repair the firepot.

Grind the cracks out, preheat to about 250 degrees, squeeze it back together. Use box clamps and /or furniture clamps to pull it together. Since it is cast iron you have two choices: weld with nickel or braze it. The nickel did not work well because the cast iron was too degraded from heating and the nickel will not blend with the cast iron. Bob chose next to braze the firepot. The brazing was successful because it is more forgiving to expansion. After brazing, cover with a fire blanket and let cool slowly, you can also bury it in wood ashes.



*This is the before, see the renovated forge at Country Fab on October 21!
It looks GREAT!!!*



How to repair and impeller.

The impeller was in terrible shape, all the blades were missing. What Bob had to work from was a "homemade adaption". Many of these forges were left outside and water and rain would deteriorate this part first. If yours has a blade or part of a blade, you can trace it and make a pattern.

Bob had a similar forge, so he was familiar with the type of impeller he had to replicate. He made a pattern and had the blades cut from 1/8" plate also know as 11GA. Line them up with the shaft, braze or weld into position back onto the shaft with the impeller plate. Check for clearance and sand with a flapper disc.



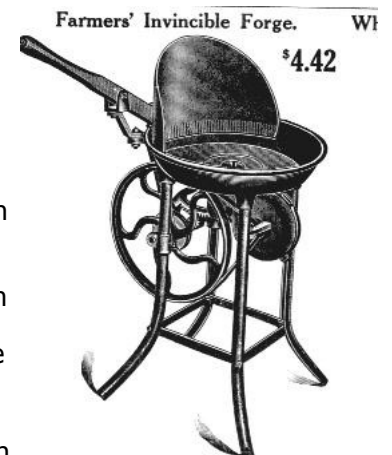
How to repair bushings on the fan.

Since it is low speed and not severe service you can replace the bearing with a piece of copper tubing or brass pipe. Ideally, you might like to repour the babbit, but if you are unfamiliar with this process, a piece of pipe will work fine and give you many years of service.

Completion.

Clean all parts, prime and paint. On this particular forge the shafting is in excellent shape, the gear teeth are in excellent shape, and the ratchet is in good shape. The gear teeth, ratchet, shafting should be examined when purchasing. It appears that this forge was not used very much, but had been neglected by being left out in the weather. Interestingly, the wooden oak handle is believed to be original and in very good shape. You should also expect to replace the leather belt. Bob also replicated new legs for the forge. The originals were rusty and weakened.

The photo (bottom, right) is from a 1915 Sears catalog. It advertised the forge as a "Sears Lever Action Forge". The benefit was the pumping action in stead of cranking and not using bellows. It is very easy to use this type of forge and takes much less energy. The price at that time was \$4.42!



Basic information for the 2020 Conference

ABANA 2020 Saratoga is on its way. It is THE blacksmithing get-together that you have been waiting for. We have a distinguished array of demonstrators in eight separate demo sites, a 20 forge teaching area, a youth teaching site, lectures, competitions, vendors, tailgating, family programs, members' gallery, auction and BBQ and the Blacksmith's Arm Pub. There will be a Saturday night dinner and coffee and donuts early mornings. Also there will be food available onsite all four days. Whether you are a novice, a part-time smith or a full time professional there will be something for everyone, including time to sit and share ideas, techniques, and learn from each others' experience. Even for those who are just curious about blacksmithing this is the place to see smithing at its best. You won't find a better place for all things blacksmith whether you come for just a single day or the entire four days.

Conference Pricing

Before April 1st 2020

Member Registration = \$295

You will receive a FREE T-shirt.

Spouse Registration = \$75

You will receive a FREE T-shirt.

Child Registration = \$35

You will receive a FREE T-shirt.

Non-Member Registration = \$355

You will receive a FREE T-shirt.

Non-Member Spouse Registration = \$90
You will receive a FREE T-shirt.

Day Passes

Single Day - Member = \$95

Single day - Spouse or Child = \$30

Single day Non-Member = \$110

Saturday Dinner = \$15

You can purchase this dinner separately for Saturday - single day attendees

After March 31st 2020

Member Registration = \$345

Will not come with t-shirt

Member Spouse = \$100

Will not come with t-shirt

Non-Member Registration = \$415

Will not come with t-shirt

Non-Member Spouse Registration = \$120

Will not come with t-shirt

Extra Goodies

T-Shirt = \$25.68

ABANA Lapel Pin = \$4.28

Conference Hat = \$23.54

2020 Conference Mini Anvil = \$28.89

Slack-Tub Bourbon

Laser Etched - two liter = \$85.60

This is a Commemorative Cask

Reserve your bottle of Slack-Tub = \$1

Just visit the Springbrook Distillery at the Blacksmith Arms Pub when you arrive to make your purchase. Cost is \$44 for empty Cask or \$84 for the cask filled.

Camping

4 day - RV/Trailer = \$152

This includes Water/Electric/Graywater

4 day - RV/Trailer = \$128

includes Water/Electric

Additional day RV/Trailer = \$32/\$38

Must have purchased 4 day camping

4 day stay in the Bunkhouse = \$100

This is an on site Bunkhouse

Tent Camping per day = \$20

No water, no electric, pitch your own tent.

Conference Location

Washington County Fairgrounds

392 Old Schuylerville Road, Greenwich, NY 12834

Registration Contact: Karen Sims

Please call 1-860-300-0013 or email karensims@gmail.com



Early Registration is now open!

Register early, get a free T-shirt and save \$55.00!

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Hammer Selection

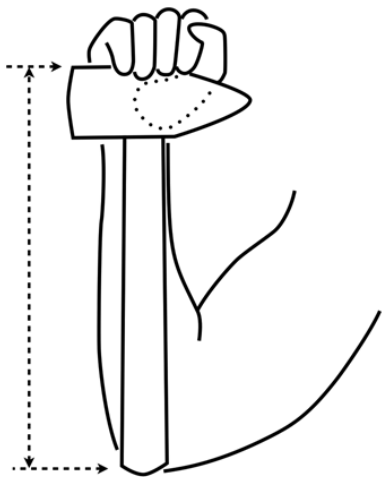
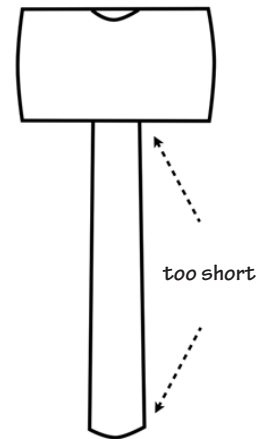
Mike Chisham, Petaluma

This is a first in a series of articles from Mike's Never Fail Forge.

Soon after acquiring a blacksmith-looking hammer, the new smith is chomping at the bit to get into the fire and begin a newly found forging career. It doesn't take long for the promising new smith to discover that there's more to forging than just smashing hot metal. Though I will admit that some prefer to do just that.

This article contains an accumulation of gleaned and practiced knowledge that has helped me acquire my own personal and efficient control of a hand-held forging hammer.

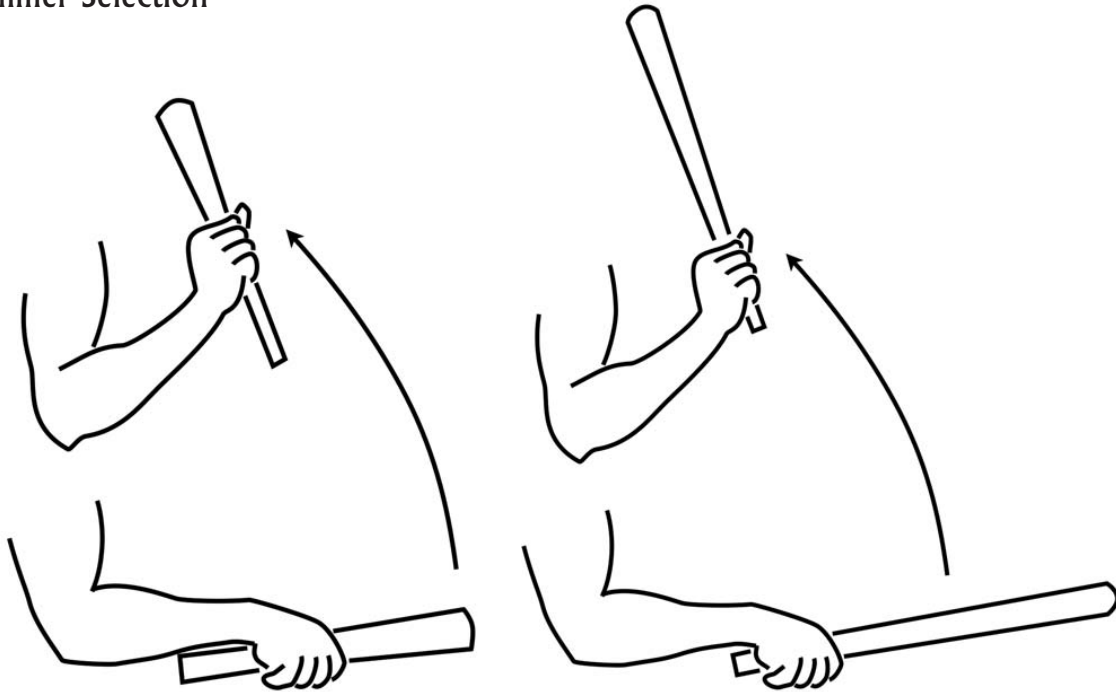
Let's begin this session with a proper hammer handle. I prefer a wooden handle over a synthetic material for several reasons. First is shock. A wooden handle will absorb more shock than a dense man-made material. As the hammer face contacts the surface of the material being forged that is, hopefully, hot metal, the shock from the contacting impact is transferred into and through the hammer head, to the handle and terminates in the arm of the smith. This excessive vibration can lead to future forging problems. What makes buildings fall in an earthquake is not the movement of the building. It's the vibration that eventually weakens the holding forces and causes the building to collapse. A wooden handle will absorb more shock than a dense, rigid, non-forgiving material. Also, most synthetic handles are constructed way too short to be of use as a forging device. (*right*) Most are made for the construction industry, not for fine forging – a hand-held battering ram. A wooden handle that is too short, too long or defective can be removed with a minimal amount of labor and replaced with a new handle. The same cannot be said of a fiberglass handle, though it can be done. But, I will have to admit, a fiberglass handle is a lifesaver when it comes to poorly executed, missed hammer blows. Several replaced wooden handles will make you a better smith much



sooner. A wooden handle can be shaped to fit the hand more easily than a fiberglass one. One thing about a wooden handle, you have the option of reshaping it to fit more comfortably in your hand. Rasping or filing fiberglass does not lend itself very easily to this option.

As for length of a handle, everyone has different length arms; therefore each person will require a different length hammer handle. A good place to start is to grasp the head of a one-pound forging hammer inside a lightly closed fist with the end of the handle terminating someplace close to your elbow. The end of the handle should be long enough to reach the tip of your elbow. (*left*) I add $\frac{1}{2}$ " of handle length for each half-pound of added hammer head weight. That is, a one-pound hammer has a handle length of 11", and a three-pound hammer will have a handle length of 13".

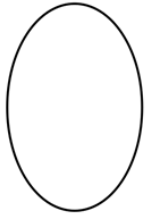
Hammer Selection



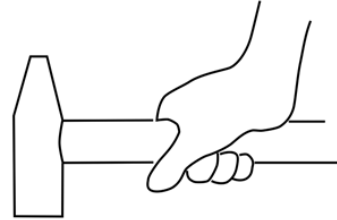
Some will say, "Why such a long handle?" Balance, that's why. (*above*) If you pick up a baseball bat in the center of the bat, it can easily be raised upward as you touch your nose with the heavy end and then raise it over your head. You will also easily control holding it, especially if it's then held over your head and you are moving around. If you were allowed to only pick up the bat by grasping the knob at the small end, it would require an incredible amount of force to raise the heavy end of the bat and touch it to your nose and then raise it over your head. It would also require a lot more strength and agility to keep it in place while moving around. A hammer handle is no different. A proper length handle needs to be in balance to be of efficient use. The effort to use too short a handle is illustrated in the figure on the left.

How about the size or how big around it is? If a handle is too thick or big, it will require the smith to tightly grasp the handle to keep it from slipping out of the hand while using it. The same holds true for too skinny of a handle. Holding a handle very tightly while trying to forge means that your arm muscles never get a chance to rest. Lactic acid builds up inside tight muscles and leads to cramping muscles. It's hard to do a good job if you hurt while trying to do it. Also, a tight grip means that you can never move your hand along the length of the handle to obtain efficient, controlled hammer blows. Missed or improper hammer marks usually lead to a lot of frustration.

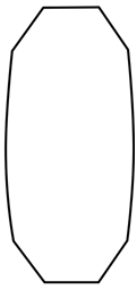
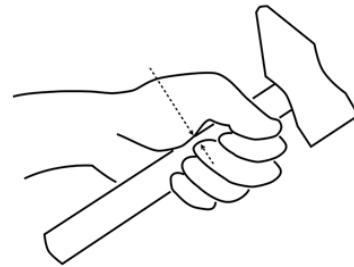
Hammer Selection



Most store-bought hammers, especially fiberglass ones, have handles that are almost round in shape. *(left)* A round handle cannot be controlled easily during intricate forging. As the hammer is raised, the rounded handle has a tendency to twist within your grip. As the hammer strikes the intended hot metal, the handle will want to twist even more from the torque of impact. With a rounded handle, if you continue to forge, you will soon notice that the hammer has turned so much that you have actually moved your body off to one side, toward your tong hand, in order to continue hammering. Close examination will show that after a number of repeated hammer blows, you are now holding the hammer on the inside of the handle and not on top where you first started, especially if the smith has an improper grip – which I will discuss later. *(right)*



To determine a proper diameter for your hand, try the following. *(right)* Lightly grasp the hammer handle in the center portion of the handle, not an *I-mean-business* death grip. Your middle finger should just barely touch the base of your thumb where it meets the palm of your hand. If the middle finger overlaps your thumb at all, the handle is too small. If the space is more than $\frac{1}{4}$ " wide, the handle is too big.

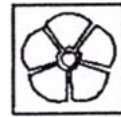


As for shape, the handle of a finish carpenter has a unique shape. It is oval, but it has eight flat edges or facets. In other words, it's oval, not round, yet octagon shaped. A finish carpenter is very worried about misplaced hammer marks. He needs to know exactly where his hammer head will be landing at all times. This is why he wants a precisely shaped handle on his hammer. I prefer this oval octagon-shaped handle. *(left)* Explaining this reasoning I must reserve until a later time when I give information on proper grip and the associated hammer marks.

A famous Scottish smith, Mr. Wilson, once told us, "A useful hammer is no more than a chunk of hard metal attached to a respectable, nicely shaped wooden handle." ♣

Kitchen Utensil Hanger

by Steve Bloom

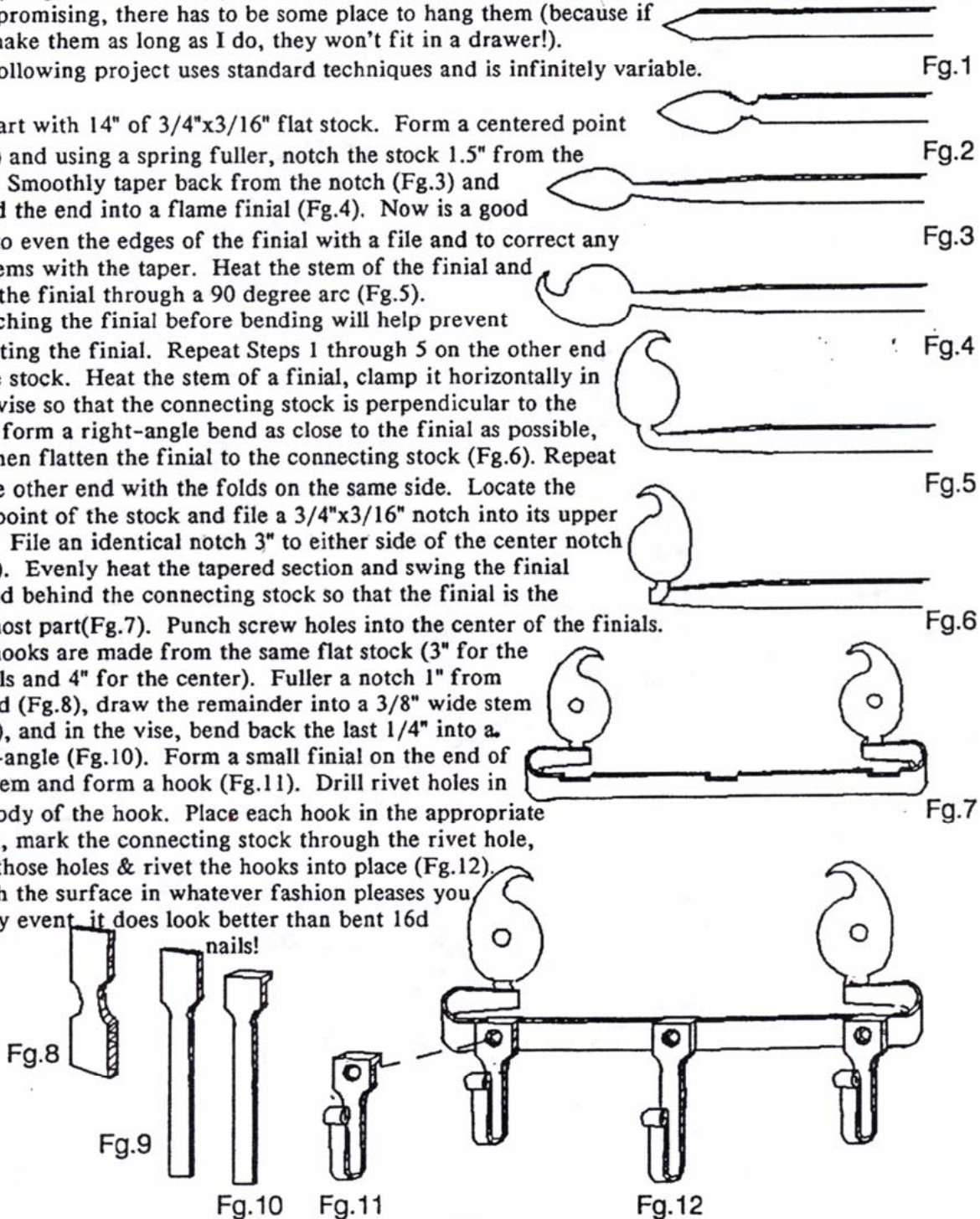


Once you get done making your wife (or significant other) those ladles, spoons, and forks that you've been promising, there has to be some place to hang them (because if you make them as long as I do, they won't fit in a drawer!).

The following project uses standard techniques and is infinitely variable.

Start with 14" of 3/4"x3/16" flat stock. Form a centered point (Fig.1) and using a spring fuller, notch the stock 1.5" from the point. Smoothly taper back from the notch (Fig.3) and spread the end into a flame finial (Fig.4). Now is a good time to even the edges of the finial with a file and to correct any problems with the taper. Heat the stem of the finial and bend the finial through a 90 degree arc (Fig.5). Quenching the finial before bending will help prevent distorting the finial. Repeat Steps 1 through 5 on the other end of the stock. Heat the stem of a finial, clamp it horizontally in your vise so that the connecting stock is perpendicular to the jaws, form a right-angle bend as close to the finial as possible, and then flatten the finial to the connecting stock (Fig.6). Repeat on the other end with the folds on the same side. Locate the mid-point of the stock and file a 3/4"x3/16" notch into its upper edge. File an identical notch 3" to either side of the center notch (Fig.7). Evenly heat the tapered section and swing the finial around behind the connecting stock so that the finial is the rearmost part (Fig.7). Punch screw holes into the center of the finials.

The hooks are made from the same flat stock (3" for the laterals and 4" for the center). Fuller a notch 1" from an end (Fig.8), draw the remainder into a 3/8" wide stem (Fig.9), and in the vise, bend back the last 1/4" into a right-angle (Fig.10). Form a small finial on the end of the stem and form a hook (Fig.11). Drill rivet holes in the body of the hook. Place each hook in the appropriate notch, mark the connecting stock through the rivet hole, drill those holes & rivet the hooks into place (Fig.12). Finish the surface in whatever fashion pleases you. In any event, it does look better than bent 16d



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Artist-Blacksmith's Association of North America, Inc.

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Phone: [423-913-1022](tel:423-913-1022), Fax: [423-913-1023](tel:423-913-1023)

centraloffice@abana.org

M E M B E R S H I P A P P L I C A T I O N

