



# Balcones Forge Dispatch

President's Corner

September 2016



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Sunday!

Sunday!!  
Sunday!!!

The meeting is on Sunday, Sept 25

at the picnic grounds in Serbin, TX

you really should look at the webpage listed on pages 2 & 3

*continued on page 2*

*President's message continued.*

Our September meeting will take us to Serbin, just south of Giddings for the Wendish Festival. The meeting will take place on September 25th, which is a **Sunday**, at our usual start time of 9:30a. Hopefully this will give some of folks with Saturday jobs a chance to attend. This is an open forge event which means we will need a few forges and anvils set up for ourselves as well as to demo for the public. Please bring your show-n-tell items and anything else that you might want to sell. We would like to see trade items donated to the festival silent auction, however there will be a prize for the best. Please see the attached link for directions and more information on the event.

<http://texaswendish.org/2016/08/28th-annual-wendish-fest-on-september-25/>

#### COMAL BLACKSMITH SHOP AUCTION OCTOBER 29TH

October will take us to the Comal blacksmith shop located just south of New Braunfels on the 29th, where Balcones Forge will auction the entire contents of the smithy. The shop is now owned by the Zipp family, who will be hosting the meeting. The smithy has not been in operation for many years and is now in disrepair. The Zipp family would like to see this equipment go to blacksmiths that will continue to use it and pass it on to future smiths.

Meeting time: 9:30.

Trade item theme :Halloween

There is also a historical marker in the front of the shop.

Comal Blacksmith & Mechanical Shop  
New Braunfels  
Comal County, Texas  
29 38.725' N 98 13.395' W

Text: The Wenzel/Schwab (aka Comal) Blacksmith Shop was originally established sometime prior to 1915 by Peter Ignatz Wenzel, one of the original founding colonists of New Braunfels, Texas. On June 10, 1851 and again in 1864 Ignatz Wenzel purchased 100 acres and 303 acres of land, respectively, in the Comal Settlement Area (seven miles southwest of New Braunfels, Texas) where besides farming operations he established the community's first blacksmith shop (exact date of formation unknown) along the historic "Post Road" that has since become FM 482. In 1915, ownership of the blacksmith shop passed to Bruno Schwab, grandson of Valentine Joseph Schwab an original settler of the Comal Settlement Area and after whom Schwab Road is named. Bruno was an inventor who developed many devices for use by the farmers of the area such as a "Pear Burner" for use in burning off the stickers of the cactus plant so the cattle could eat the cactus in very dry seasons when no vegetation was growing. He patented the first hard rubber tire remover with the U.S. Government Patent Office. He was an original manufacturer of farm implements and ranch gates spread throughout the Texas Hill Country area. Bruno enjoyed music and played in bands for special occasions throughout the Comal County area. The blacksmith was a vital part of the prosperity of the farming communities due to the farmer's dependence upon the blacksmith's skills to keep their horses shod, wagons repaired, cattle branded, etc. Presented by the Schertz Historical Preservation Committee.

Stay cool!

Jerry Achterberg,  
President, Balcones Forge

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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

**SEPTEMBER MEETING INFO**

We are doing something a little different for our September meeting. We will be having our meeting on Sunday, September 25th, 2016 in Serbin, Texas.

For those that don't know where Serbin, Texas is located, (I had to look it up too) it is located midway between Bastrop and Brenham, about 7 miles from Giddings. This will be very convenient to our eastern members as well as some of the HABA group. Instead of a "Trade Item" we would like to suggest a donation of a forged item to their silent auction.

This is going to be a great event, and we are looking forward to seeing everyone there.

Jerry Whitley

<http://texaswendish.org/2016/08/28th-annual-wendish-fest-on-september-25/>

## Lee Sauder's Technique for Making Square Corners

I recently learned of a new approach to making square corners when discussing an upcoming project with a friend.

The new technique came recommended to me by Brett Moten, a Reno-based blacksmith, when I attended a hammer-in at Roaring Camp Railroad in Felton, California.

Brett recommended I watch the YouTube video in which Lee Sauder of Lexington, Virginia, reveals his clever approach.

I watched the video by Googling "[forging square corner by Lee Sauder YouTube](#)," and I recommend you do as well. Lee's approach seems much quicker than the technique of making a gentle bend and upsetting the metal towards the outside corners.

You'll see how Lee makes an extreme bend where the square corner is to be, eventually prying it back open to 90 degrees. This technique is in direct contrast to the other method that I know in which making a bend past 90 degrees is verboten because it can lead to a cold shut.

I'm grateful for this passed-along tip. I've found that talking with fellow smiths is a valuable resource. There's quite a lot of help and guidance out there, so talk with other blacksmiths about what you're working on. You never know how timely your conversations might be...

Submitted by Laura Armstrong

# Dividing Circles

by Dan Jennings

Would you like to be able to divide a circle into an equal number of spaces? For instance, maybe you'd like to lay out a 5 pedal rose blank that is 3 inches in diameter. *Chordal Values* are the easy way to get it done.

From the chart below select 5 from the divisions column and multiply the number in the Length of Cord column times the diameter of the circle.

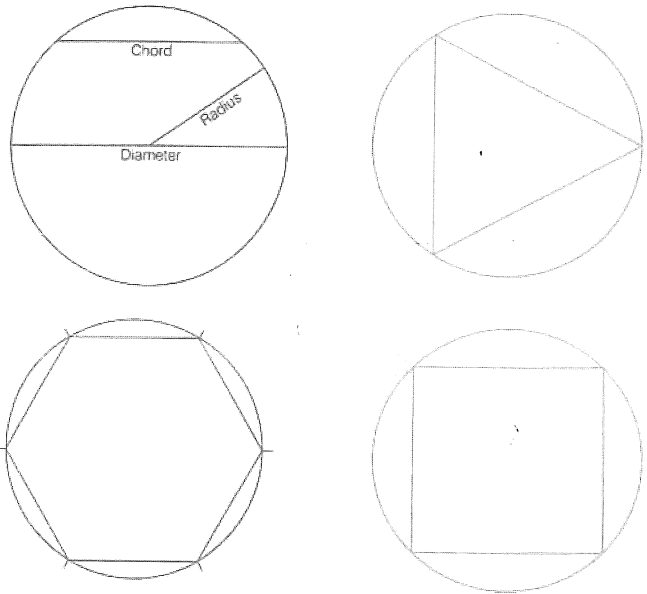
$$.5878 \times 3 = 1.7634$$

Set your dividers to 1.7634 and walk them around the perimeter of the circle.

What? Your tape measure only reads fractions? One cheap solution is to get a pair of digital calipers. I have a few cheap ones –that cost around \$20 from places like Harbor Freight and they work great. Of course, you can spend several hundred and get more expensive ones –I've got those, too.

Need more than 32 divisions? Machinery's Handbook lists up to 194 divisions.

Ref: Machinery's Handbook and Paul Quyle, in the June 2003 California Blacksmith.



## Chordal Values

Divisions	Length of Cord	Divisions	Length of Cord	Divisions	Length of Cord
3	.8660	13	.2393	23	.1362
4	.7071	14	.2225	24	.1305
5	.5878	15	.2079	25	.1253
6	.5000	16	.1951	26	.1205
7	.4339	17	.1838	27	.1161
8	.3827	18	.1736	28	.1120
9	.3420	19	.1646	29	.1081
10	.3090	20	.1564	30	.1045
11	.2817	21	.1490	31	.1012
12	.2588	22	.1423	32	.0980



## Featured Articles

### Back to Southeast Asia

#### Outdoor Forging in Vietnam and Cambodia

Article and photos by Chuck Beattie, Oriental Ironworks

#### Hanoi, Vietnam

I have just returned from a month long trip to Vietnam and Cambodia. It was not a trip to relive memories of my C-130 flying in Vietnam from 1970-72. My wife and I wanted to explore a little of SE Asia plus visit a blacksmith on Blacksmith Street, Old Quarter, Hanoi, subject of my First Quarter 2011 article about the last blacksmith in Hanoi as reported by NY Times reporter Seth Mydans. Since then I have heard of other areas of blacksmithing like the one south of Hanoi in Da Sy, Vietnam. This information is thanks to fellow blacksmith Ron Whitehurst. Unfortunately due to inclement weather I was unable to visit Da Sy on the day planned but my wife and I headed to the Old Quarter in Hanoi to try to find the "last blacksmith."

As promised, on Lo Ren Street (Pho Lo Ren), Mr. Hung



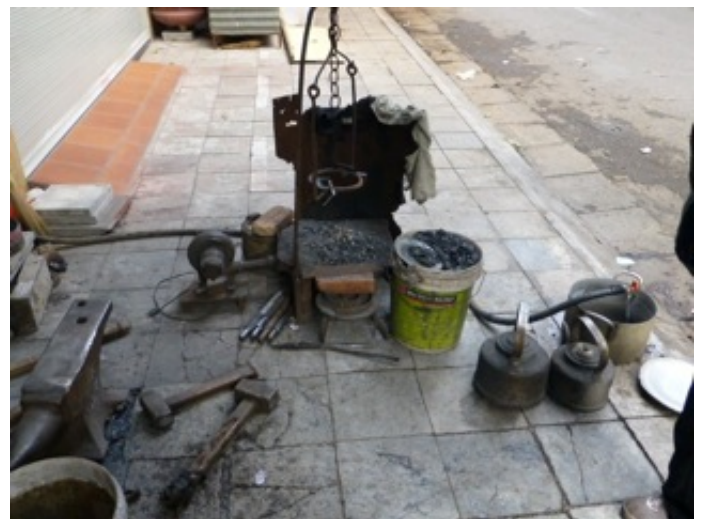
Nguyen was working his magic on bent chisels used in jackhammers. His 3.5 kg (7.7 lbs) hammer straightened out

the most stubborn of chisels taken hot from his small coal forge. Without an interpreter, I was unable to



chat much with him but I did exchange some pictures of my shop and he well understood that a fellow blacksmith had come

calling. He seemed pleased with the pictures of my working in my shop but I can only imagine what he was thinking that day when I departed. Quite obviously I wasn't making a living straightening out chisels. Hung now has competition down the street but the blacksmith wasn't at the shop. Pictured is his workplace on Lo Ren Street. Another example of the expansion of the blacksmithing market.



Vietnam, while Communist, has the capitalist lifestyle of China. The government stays out of day to day capital ventures and free markets are everywhere. Many clothing and electronic factories (e.g. Columbia Outerwear and Samsung) are in Vietnam. Exports of rice, farmed fish and shrimp are huge money earners for the government and the workers. Small farms v. the old collective ones of the mid-seventies are back and a large land redistribution took place in the late 1990s. You don't exactly "own" the land but....



#### Bending Iron in Hanoi

These pictures show a fellow bending square steel stock for a railing. He used no heat but a long bending fork and bending jig. He also



used a tube bender for the scrolls. The home-made bending fork was up to the task. It was a lot of “bend and fit” work but what railing isn’t?

### Kampong Tralach, Cambodia

On a river tour stop at Kapong Tralach, Cambodia, a small village along the Mekong River, was another blacksmith and



his wife hard at work. “Charlie,” as he wished to be called, his helper and his wife Sophie on the bellows

were busy forging iron into ax heads and meat cleavers. The axes are used to cut down large 30 foot bamboo stalks that



are bundled and used to float houses along the river. After 4-5 years the bamboo becomes water logged and needs replacing. The meat cleavers are for their obvious use. I can’t say I would buy much of the meat products hanging in the open air markets but then there aren’t a lot of Food Lions over there with refrigeration.

### Summary

There is definite lack of infrastructure (good roads, electricity, sewers) throughout SE Asia. These needs are slowly being addressed with aid from foreign governments. The US has just finished a major highway project in Cambodia and the Chinese were working on another main highway we traveled by bus over to Ton Lac Lake to join our river boat, AMALotus. Progress is measured in feet rather than miles but I am sure these improvements will help the Cambodian people get back on their feet. It must be remembered that Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge murdered 3.5 million people from 1975 to 1979. Almost 60 per cent of the population is under 30 years of age. Most of the educated class of doctors and educators were targeted and killed during the genocide. Human resources are rebuilding slowly. The people were always smiling. We could learn a lot from their culture of patience and tolerance.

Happy blacksmithing to all. If you are ever in the Oriental, NC area give me a call at 252-249-2249. You are always welcome.

Chuck Beattie,  
Oriental Ironworks



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