

# THE HOT IRON SPARKLE

\* Newsletter of the North Carolina ABANA \*

www.ncabana.org

Volume 27 Number 1



1 st. Quarter 2009 – Jan/Feb/Mar



**Jimmy Alexander, Richard Coley, Peter Ross, and Ben Kastner at the Southeastern Blacksmith Group's Meeting in Wilmington**

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## A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



Jimmy Alexander  
Photo by: Hill Willis

### PRESIDENT LETTER

We had our 4th quarter meeting in November at my shop in Durham, NC. We had a great meeting with about 35 people in attendance. Jim Kennady, a scholarship recipient, showed the crowd what he had learned from taking a class at the folk school with Doug Merkel. He demonstrated how to make a hammer head and how to punch the head, he made a nail header, vegetable chopper and also a trivet. We feasted on hamburgers, hot dogs, baked beans and potato salad for lunch. Everyone seemed to have a good time.

Our 1<sup>st</sup> meeting for next year will be the 6<sup>th</sup> annual meeting at Dean Curfman's shop in Morganton on March 21. There are always vendors and tailgate sales along with a great demonstration using the BIG BLU power hammer. Dean always hosts a great meeting so don't miss out. Unfortunately, Cindy and I will not be able to attend as we have a SBA board meeting in Madison Ga. to finish planning for the conference in May.

The SBA blacksmith conference will be held on May 14-16, 2009. Wednesday May 14 is vendor and tail gate set up. Registration begins Thursday am along with blacksmith demonstrations and family activities. This is a great conference to attend with a huge tailgate sales and vendor area, green coal area, iron-n-hat, gallery and auction along with blacksmith demonstrations and family programs. Of course I can't forget about the traditional anvil shoot that Tim Ryan does! All are welcome to bring a piece of their work for the gallery and to donate something for the auction and iron-n-hat. The featured demonstrators are Mark Asprey from California and our own Jerry Darnell from NC. It would be great to see some NC chapter members attend! Watch for the conference information coming in the mail next month and sign up. The NC Chapter is in charge of the gallery and the auction this year and we will need helpers. Please let us know if you are going and can volunteer to help

The special project for this year is a forged SBA logo grill. Each chapter will need to replicate their logo in metal and it should fit within a 10" square space and should not be thicker than 3". Anyone interested in helping me please let me know. This would need to be made and taken to the conference in May.

Madison conference is held every other year, for the next conference in 2011 the NC chapter will chair the conference. Anyone interested in assisting us with this conference please let either Cindy or myself know.

Forge safely,

Jimmy

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Submissions to the HOT IRON SPARKLE can be made to:

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**EDITOR'S NOTES**

Dear Readers,

The chapter is excited to have a new regional group in the southeast corner of the state. Richard Coley and Ben Kastner, who run Intracoastal Iron in Wilmington, started the new group late in 2008. We have not had an active regional chapter east of the Research Triangle in quite a few years. This effectively cut off most blacksmiths, in the eastern third of North Carolina, from NC ABANA. For their second meeting, Richard and Ben threw a great event, with as many participants as we usually find at a statewide chapter meeting. Many traveled from South Carolina and from the central part of our state. Many came to see Peter Ross demonstrate. He held the position of Master Blacksmith at Colonial Williamsburg for 25 years. Peter, a member of NC ABANA, for a little while, had been kind of lying low, fixing up his newly acquired old country home and maintaining his business. Now with the house effort mostly behind him, he appeared on the NC ABANA scene in a big way by giving a marvelous demonstration. Please read the report of the meeting on page 8 and read my interview of Peter on page 16. It was great to be reunited with blacksmiths and their families who we have not seen for far too long and to meet such an accomplished person as Peter Ross.

We are grateful to, once again, be getting Regional Group meeting reports from the Southern Foothills Blacksmiths. Randy Calhoun has sent us several reports of meeting they have had at Steve Barringer's shop in Mooresville, NC. Nice to hear from you Randy – keep the reports coming. On the other hand, it was discouraging to hear from Shirley Kayne, saying there are no future meetings scheduled for the Western North Carolina Blacksmiths. Shirley says they stopped because of the difficulty finding demonstrators. There are a lot of blacksmiths out that way - a good portion of our membership lives in western North Carolina. Here's hoping some person or persons can come to the aid of the Kaynes so they can continue having meetings or that others can take up the slack in that region.

I am glad to say we have received a lot of content from you members for this issue. I wish to thank the regions for sending their meeting reports. Thanks also to contributors Randy Stolty, Parks Low, Jim Kennady, Gail Wail, Ian Thomsen, and Doug Merkel.

For those of you expecting to see the chapter directory, I'm putting that off to the next issue. Reason – there was just too much good stuff to put into this issue.

I have included a change of address form on page 32. Please, as soon as you change your address, phone number, or e-mail address let me know. If you wait, you may miss a newsletter. If you have e-mail, it is important that I have your current e-mail address. I sometimes send out messages to the membership like I did for the meeting in Wilmington early in January. A lot of the e-mail addresses I had for you members bounced back to me because they were invalid. Also, make sure you can receive e-mail from ncabanaml@earthlink.net. Add me to your list of OK senders.

Happy Reading and Good Blacksmithing,

Martin Lyon, Editor

**SECRETARY'S NOTES**

There is no Secretary's Report for this quarter

Respectively Submitted,

Martin Lyon, Secretary NC ABANA

## REGIONAL GROUP MEETINGS

### Triangle Blacksmiths Guild Meetings by Randy Stoltz

#### Meeting at Roger Barbour's Shop – December 8, 2008

The Triangle Blacksmiths Guild met Saturday, December 6, 2009 at Roger Barbour's shop in Clayton, NC. On a cold December morning with 15 members present, Roger demonstrated setting up and using an Oxy-Fuel cutting torch on various thickness and shapes of steel. Roger uses propane instead of acetylene for his cutting torches as it is cheaper and in many cases makes a cleaner cut. Following the demonstration everyone was given the opportunity to use the cutting torches to practice cutting the different pieces of steel. Following the cutting torch workshop, the forge was fired up and several new members given some hands on instructions on blacksmithing.



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### New England School of Metalwork 2009 Summer Session Instructor Workshop dates



**Don Fogg – Mastering the Hamon May 1 -4**

**Clay Spencer – Forging Spike Novelties May 29 June 1**

**Elizabeth Brim – Sculptural Inflation June 5 – 8**

**Zack Noble – Hinged Outlook June 19 – 23**

**Rick Smith – Iron on the Wall July 10 – 14**

**James Batson – Forging Bell Dirks & Woodhead Bowies July 24 – 28**

**Peter Ross – Thinking Inside the Box August 7 – 11**

**Mark Asprey – Mastering the Fundamentals of Blacksmithing August 28 – September 1**

**Charley Orlando – Effective Forging Techniques September 11 – 14**

**Meagan Crowley – Foundations of Form September 25 – 28**

**Jonathan Nedbor – From Soup to Nuts October 9 – 13**

**Josh Dow & Lauren Holmgren – Cast Iron Sculpture October 23-26**

**Inquiries to: [dglaser@newenglandsofmetalwork.com](mailto:dglaser@newenglandsofmetalwork.com)**

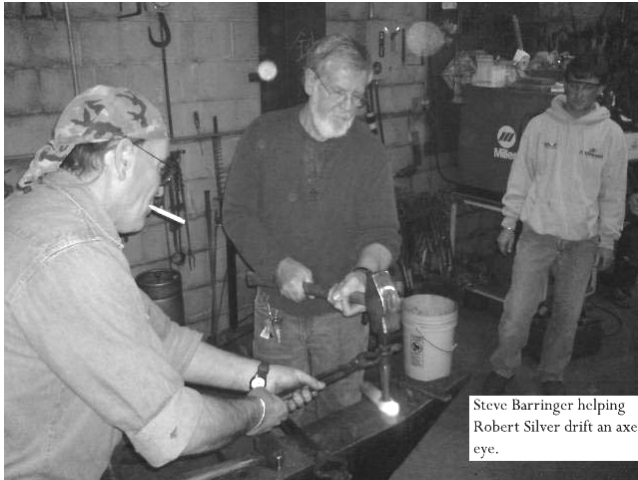
**1-888-753-7502**

**[www.newenglandsofmetalwork.com](http://www.newenglandsofmetalwork.com)**

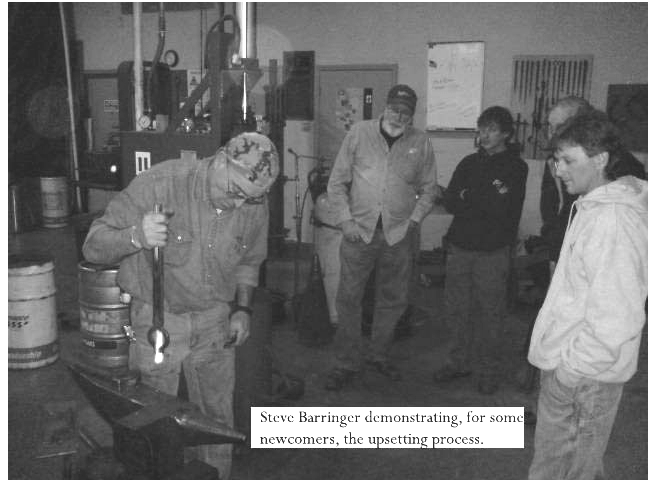
## Southern Foothills Blacksmiths by Randy Calhoun

### December 16 Meeting

The Southern Foothills Blacksmiths met Sunday December 16, 2008 at Steve Barringer's shop in Mooresville, NC. This time, we were lucky enough to have almost as many newcomers as regulars. As usual Steve was a very generous host, allowing an open forge environment and giving advice to everyone that had a question. Several new people received their first blacksmithing lesson and the rest of us added to our previous knowledge in one way or another. All in all, it was a very successful meeting and a great time.



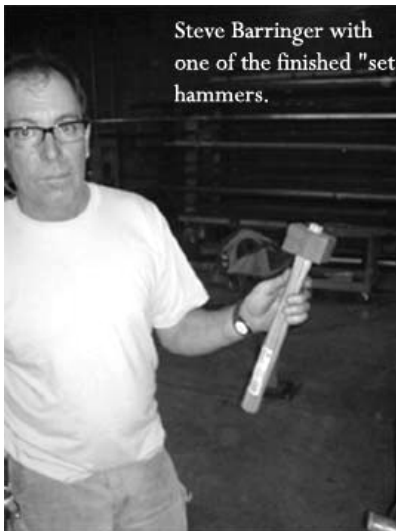
Steve Barringer helping Robert Silver drift an axe eye.



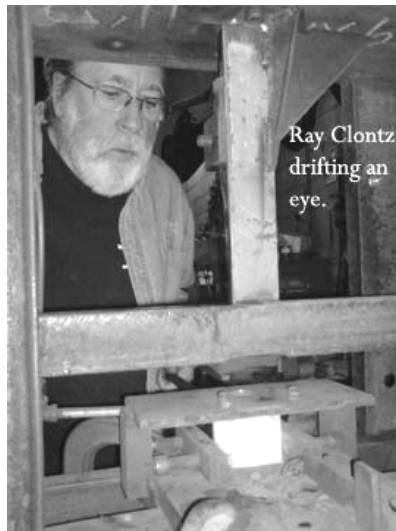
Steve Barringer demonstrating, for some newcomers, the upsetting process.

### January 11 Meeting

The Southern Foothills Blacksmiths met on Sunday, January 11 at Steve Barringer's shop in Mooresville, NC. When we arrived, Steve had already pre-cut some hammer blanks, turned on the forge and set up the hydraulic press. We all made enough "set" hammers for each member to leave with one. It was a great lesson in slitting and drifting, especially for those of us with minimal hydraulic press experience. Aside from the hammer making, we also had open forge time and several members demonstrated various techniques. Ray Clontz brought his new propane forge, made by Diamondback Ironworks, for show and tell. As usual, it was a great meeting and we thank Steve for his hospitality.



Steve Barringer with one of the finished "set" hammers.



Ray Clontz drifting an eye.



Hammers cooling after drifting.

## **Triad Area Blacksmiths by Marshall Swaringen**

### **Dixie Classic Fair – October 3 – October 12**

The Dixie Classic Fair ran from October 3<sup>rd</sup> through the 12<sup>th</sup>. The Triad Area Blacksmiths were well represented. We had more than twenty different members demonstrating during the Fair. We want to give a special thanks to Billy Phelps and the morning crew for having everything ready each morning.

One project for the fair was the Ralph Zimmerman museum. An antique bellows was donated by Bernd Mergener. Brackets were made and it was hung from the ceiling. Larry Crews donated steps and a handrail. Larry Crews, Billy Phelps and George Manuel rounded up some bricks and blocks and installed the steps and handrail. About fifteen feet of “store” bought chain was used as a rail inside the museum. This did not last long as members began to make “s” links and started forming a chain. When Ian Thomsen showed up, he took the task of finishing the chain and replacing the other chain. On one of our workdays Gail Wall painted the name on the museum in bright red. There is still more work to be done but a great start.

With the camp fire beside the shop, you know that somebody will be cooking. Tuesday night Billy Phelps treated us to a roast with potatoes, carrots, onions, and some biscuits that were better than grandmas’. This was our October meeting and it was suggested that we eat instead of meet and all agreed. Thursday night Richard Howard supplied crappies and Billy did the frying. Larry Crews supplied a chicken stew on the last Friday. Yes we needed a nap afterwards each night!

We were able to sell enough items from the display table to reimburse George Manuel for the cost of Ralph Zimmerman’s anvil. It will be in place for the new fair.

The best part of the fair was watching the kids’ faces as we showed them how to make a nail, leaf, or hook. When we were finished, giving the item to the one that could not take his eyes off the red metal was a treat. You had to wonder, did I do enough, do I have him hooked, and will he become a NCABANA member? Hope so!

### **November 4, 2008 Meeting**

The November meeting was opened at 6:30 PM. There were thirty members in attendance. A summary of the Dixie Classic Fair was given. The goal was reached for the anvil fund. We received an OK and thank you for a job well done from the fair director David Sparks.

We have had many discussions about moving our business meeting from the first Tuesday of the month to a Saturday. After much discussion, it was voted to move our business meeting and Iron in the Hat to the third Saturday of each month starting in January 2009 at 9 AM. The first Tuesday will be a demonstration only night. This way we can increase the forge time of our members that only get to hammer at our meetings.

George Manuel was reimbursed for Ralph Zimmerman’s anvil. He will make arrangements to have it delivered to the museum.

### **December 2, 2008 Meeting**

The December meeting opened at 6:30 PM with sixteen members present. Old business was handled and the new meeting schedule was explained to everybody. George Manuel will start the demonstrations in January with lessons on tool making and tool maintenance. The first Saturday meeting is January 17<sup>th</sup> at 9 AM.

Richard Howard used information from the third quarter chapter meeting to make a trivet jig. He gave a short demonstration on the use of the jig and how to make the jig.

Ian Thomsen attended a week long class at John C. Campbell Folk School. Ian displayed some of the items he made in class and gave instruction on how some of the items were made. He had an interesting design for a twist and did a demonstration on how to complete a “cut” twist. Ian will be our demonstrator for the Chapter meeting held at our shop in 2009.

## **Brasstown Blacksmiths by Paul Garrett**

### **Combined NC ABANA and Appalachian Area Blacksmiths Meeting**

The annual Blacksmiths Meeting and Auction at the John Campbell Folk School was held as usual on the first Saturday of November. We had a great turn out, with Clay Spencer as our featured demonstrator.

The Appalachian Area Blacksmiths also held a chapter meeting late in the morning with a business meeting, and iron-in-the-hat, and had a large number of members in attendance.

The day started out as usual with hot coffee, donuts, and cookies, and with several tailgaters set up in the sales area.

Clay's demo focused on selected pieces of his vast collection of blacksmithing tools and jigs. The collection, built over two decades of learning, teaching, and trial and error, is comprised of his own hand made tooling, acquisitions, and gifts from other smiths. He did some forging to demonstrate some tool uses, but mostly talked about the tooling and its origins, and purposes.

Clay also talked about useful little tid-bits and tips to make life easier for smiths including such simple things such as making a deep center punch mark for drilling so that the bit will not wander- one tip among many that he picked up from Francis Whitaker- and many others.

Anyone who has ever been to Clay's shop could easily recognize his piles of tooling, all painted with his signature silver spray paint, each one with at least one specific purpose, and all well used.

After a lunch of chili and cornbread in the dining hall, the auction began in Keith house. There were about two hundred hand made items on the block, all donated to benefit the Folk School. Those donors that checked the appropriate box on their donation forms could designate the proceeds or the sales of their items to go directly into the new Forge Building fundraising fund. It was my understanding that the buyer of any item can also designate his or her payment to do the same.

## **Southeastern Group by Ben Kastner**

### **October 25, 2008 Meeting**

Our first meeting went pretty well. We had a nice turnout of about a dozen people and a few which couldn't make it this time but were excited about the idea. During the meeting we went over what every one wants to get out of a local group, and any suggestions on how or when to hold meetings. We cooked wild pig and hamburgers on the grill for everyone and talked some blacksmith'n. We think that several more people would be interested in making the next meeting if we could get a demonstrator.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The Southeastern Group is the newest regional group of NC ABANA. They meet at Intracoastal Iron Shop, 2725 Old Wrightsboro Rd., Unit 8-C, Wilmington NC 28405

## **Southeastern Group by Marty Lyon**

### **January 31, 2009 Meeting**

Our newest regional group had its second meeting at their founder's shop in Wilmington. Their last meeting notes (above) said if they could get a demonstrator they might get more people to attend. Well, they were certainly right. They got two demonstrators and the attendance jumped to about sixty people, with many coming from well outside the southeastern corner of the state. Jimmy Alexander demonstrated in the morning and Peter Ross demonstrated in the afternoon. Between demonstrations, we were treated to a great lunch. Iron-in-the-hat followed lunch, with items donated by Dillon Supply, Harbour Freight, and, of course by individual blacksmiths.

Jimmy warmed up by making a nail, emphasizing the need to warm-up with a task best done by rather light blows before heavy hitting at the anvil. Once warmed up he demonstrated making a drinking cup from 1.25" schedule 40, tested pipe. Then, Jimmy demonstrated what a demonstrator does when he finds he has finished his demonstration piece and still has a whole lot of time to fill. I guess we call that the need for blacksmith ad-libbing. Anyway, Jimmy had no idea what to make next, so he made another nail, and then proceeded to take a piece of pipe to the power hammer and anvil and fashioned – something. By popular acclaim it was determined to be a bubblegum wrapper. Really, it was kind of neat looking and did demonstrate some useful techniques. Jimmy's demonstrations, filled with humor and practical advice, are always pleasure to watch.

The afternoon demonstration was a particular treat because it featured Peter Ross, one of the most experienced blacksmiths you can find. Peter spent 25 years as the Master Blacksmith at Colonial Williamsburg, and the best part of another decade working in his own shop. The position at Colonial Williamsburg fit right into Peter's blacksmithing interest, which was to study and produce tools and hardware used in 18<sup>th</sup> century America. The blacksmith shop was responsible for making items such as nails, hinges, locks, keys, and shutter dogs, as well as the tools, used to construct, or repair the many buildings at Colonial Williamsburg. It was not uncommon for them to make 50,000 nails in a year.

Once Peter stepped up to the anvil, you know you were in the presence of a serious blacksmith. His posture was ever so precise. He stood square to the anvil, feet together, quite upright. When swinging the hammer, he had very little body movement below his shoulders. The hammer in his left hand, struck repeatedly at the same precise place, only the angle of the strike would change when necessary. The work, held in his right hand would move under the hammer to the next place where it had to be struck to move the metal. He kind of reminded you of a human power-hammer. The look on his face was of near total concentration. You could tell that his eyes and mind were directing his arms to move the metal precisely where it had to go. I later asked him about how he developed this posture – was it something he learned from other smiths, his teachers? No, he says he just developed that as an expedient to be able to produce work like the blacksmiths of old who made commodities that had to be made fast so they could earn a living wage. So, Peter learned piecework, making the same thing over and over - a one-man mass producer of goods. He also credits his many, many drawing courses at the Rhode Island School of Design. He says learning how to draw, helped him see shapes, properly, and to develop a "quick eye," allowing him to, unconsciously, know when a piece had the correct shape, size, taper, line, and flatness.

His demonstration piece was what is called a cross garnet hinge. These hinges were the choice to use when securing a heavy door to its frame. While elegant to look at, with its taper and disk at the end, it was a purely functional piece. It was not adorned by the addition of any design element.

Peter left Williamsburg in 2004 and now makes his living producing those hinges and other items that were so plentiful in the American colonies. He has found a niche clientele. His clients are knowledgeable about the life in those times and want their homes to reflect this interest and their love of the period. Rather than purchasing the latest design fad, they want reproductions that are as close to these several hundred-year-old items as possible. And, they know what to look for to make quite sure they get what they want.



Peter explained every step of the way, stopping to allow us to see the results of the intermediate steps. Time was taken to explain things and make drawings to show what he was achieving. When the hinge was partially formed, he took it to the power hammer to draw out the end. Some wise guy (actually, yours truly) asked him how many power hammers they had at Colonial Williamsburg. He said they quite a few – other blacksmiths he could call on as strikers. He said a couple of strikers, at the anvil, are as good as a power hammer any day. Lacking those strikers, these days, he has a small (25 pound) Little Giant in his shop.

We really had a great meeting in Wilmington. Richard Coley, and Ben Krastner organized a fine event. The food, the large crowd, and the iron-in-the-hat made, you think we were at a chapter meeting. Since we have not had a meeting in the southeastern part of North Carolina in years, it was good to see people we have not seen for quite some time, including some from our neighboring state of South Carolina. Keep up the good work Richard, and Ben.



Jimmy Talking About His Work



Forging The Drinking Cup



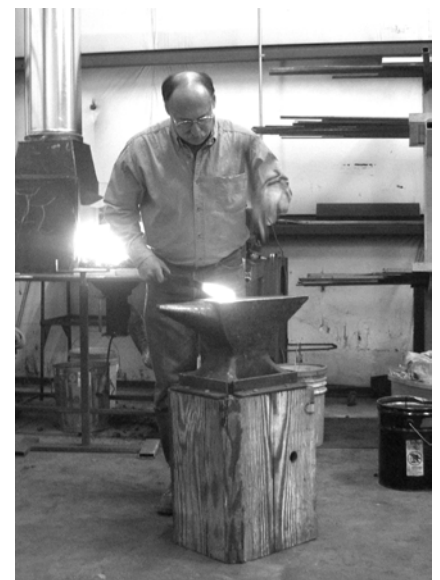
Making The Bubblegum Wrapper



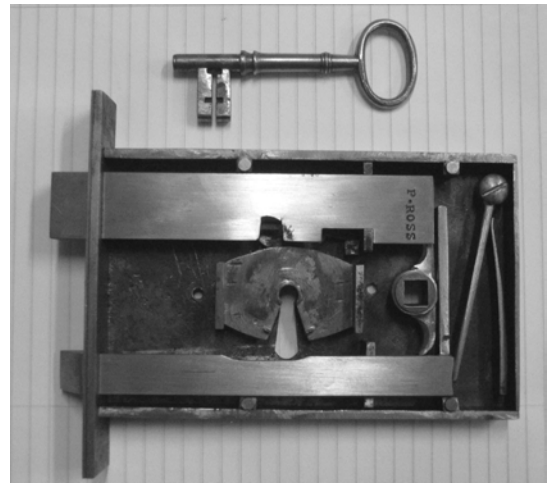
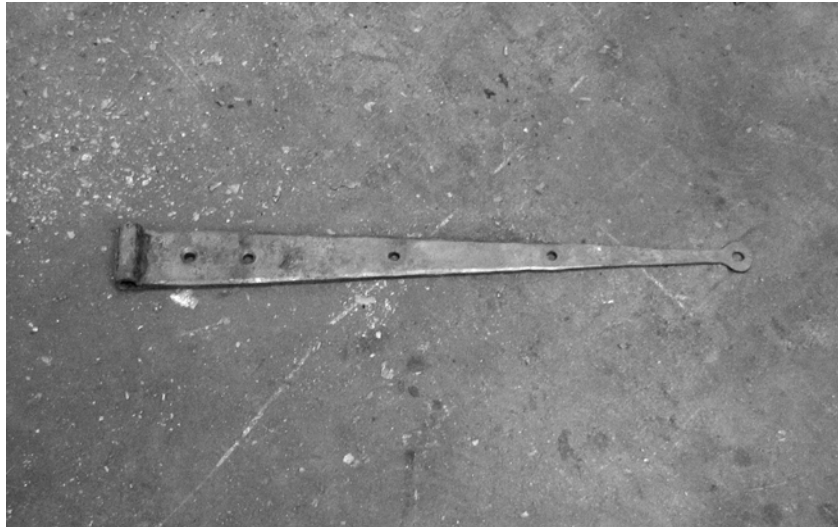
Jimmy's Cup From Pipe



Peter Ross



Peter At the Forge



From Upper Left:

- Peter Ross at the Power Hammer
- Part of Cross Garnet Hinge
- On the left end of the anvil: two parts of the hinge just lacking the pin.
- Lock and Key made by Peter Ross
- From the left: Jimmy Alexander, Richard Coley, Peter Ross, and Ben Kastner

## FORTH QUARTER, 2008 CHAPTER MEETING

### Jimmy Alexander's Shop, Durham, NC – November 15, 2008

A good crowd assembled at Jimmy's shop to see Jim Kennady, our featured demonstrator. He fulfilled the demonstration portion of his requirements for accepting a scholarship from NC ABANA. Jim attended Doug Merkel's "Beyond Hooks and Pokers" class at the J.C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, NC. You can see his scholarship report in the second quarter newsletter ("The Hot Iron Sparkle". Volume 26, Number 2, Page 11).

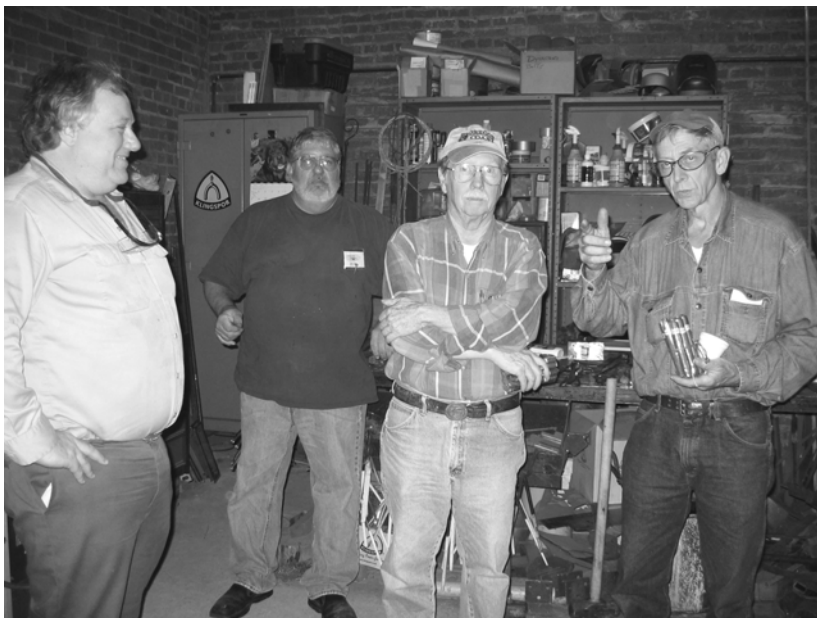
Jim showed some elements of constructing a nail setter and hammer making. The main feature of his demo was the forging of a quite beautiful trivet. This trivet was one of the featured projects of Doug Merkel's class.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** I forgot that Jim Kennady sent me photos of the hammer he started at the meeting. Since there was no way to fit the photo into this report without reformatting the whole newsletter, it appears on page 37. Sorry Jim!



Jim's trivet forged during his demonstration

Jimmy Alexander Striking for Jim Kennady forging nail header (left) and hammer head (right)



← Garret Dunn presenting Al Andrews and Parks Low cigars in honor of their time and dedication to the running of the blacksmith shop at the NC State Fair.

## FIRST QUARTER, 2009 CHAPTER MEETING

**Big BLU Manufacturing Co, Morganton, NC – March 21, 2008**

**Hear Ye!! Hear Ye!!**

Mark your calendars for the 6th Annual  
**Big Blu Hammer-in / NC-ABANA Meeting.**  
Saturday March 21, 2009. Time 9:00 a.m. until??

**Location:**

Big BLU Manufacturing Co.  
3308 Frank Whisnant Road  
Morganton, NC 28655  
828-437-5348

## See the Big BLU MAX in operation!

**Come with great expectations**

- Demonstrations! - 9:00 A.M.-4:00 P.M.
- Good natured blacksmith bartering
- See the NEW Big Blu MAX Power Hammer demonstrated in its original home
- Experience the newest techniques in artist blacksmithing
- Seminar level education opportunity
- Observation and discussion time
- Please bring Iron in the Hat Items to Benefit NC-Abana Scholarship Fund.
- Barbecue meal with all the trimmings provided on site. Cost \$5.00
- Venders with product samples.
- Blacksmith Tool suppliers w/ An array of quality tools.
- Tailgaters Welcome so come come and sell.

The Big Blu Crew, who have become well known in the blacksmith circles, welcomes all to their facility for the 6th Annual Big Blu Hammer-in; Saturday, March 21, 2009.

### DEMONSTRATORS

The Big Blu Crew will be our morning demonstrator this year. The prime focus of the demonstration is to not only present power hammer and hand hammer technique; but also to point by point follow through with a completely finished project.

The afternoon demonstrator is to be Zach Noble. Zack Noble owns and operates his forge in Bakersville, North Carolina. He has been working with metals for over 10 years. He was trained in traditional iron work at the Penland School of Crafts and has studied with numerous artists and craftspeople around the world. Zach's demo will show traditional forging techniques by hand hammer as well as some forming under the power hammer.

So come expecting, come glean some techniques, pointers, and short cuts in making beautiful ironwork that you too will be proud to display and sell.

### DIRECTIONS

- Get off exit 105 on I-40 take a right off ramp - go 1.9 miles.
- Continue on S GREEN ST - go 0.5 mi
- Continue on N GREEN ST - go 3.7 mi
- Continue on NC-181 NORTH - go 0.9 mi
- Turn Left on FRANK WHISNANT RD - go 0.2 mi
- Bear Right on FRANK WHISNANT RD - go 1.0 mi (Water Mill Road goes straight)
- Arrive at Big BLU Manufacturing Co., 3308 FRANK WHISNANT RD, MORGANTON

# REPORT FROM THE HERITAGE FORGE – NC STATE FAIR

## Submitted By Parks Low, Cashier Heritage Forge

*North Carolina Blacksmith's Association  
Heritage Forge – NC State Fair  
October 16 - 26, 2008*

Here is a summary of the sales and a list of the demonstrators for the 2008 State Fair. This year's fair ran for ten and a half days. There were two days when it rained. The gross sales for this year were \$19,990.50. The chapter's share of sales was \$2,127.70.

Workers and demonstrators this year were:

Jim Alexander	David Clement	Garrett Dunn
Don Dillon	John Fluke	Alan Green
Erin Hammeke	Lucas House	Jim Kennady
Bill Koppler	Jim Kroeger	Chris Lee
Lenny Moore	David Pennington	Dan Ritchie
Nick Pennington	Dick Snow	Kevin Teachey
Asby Spratley	Paul Tooley	Robert Timberlake
Randy Stoltz	Gail Wall	Roger Barbour
Tom Watkins	Parks Low	Camilla Low
Al Andrews		

There were nine individuals that brought items for sale this year.

Gross Sales for the last nine years have been as follows:

2000	\$14,557.00	2004	\$17,356.00
2001	\$12,456.50	2005	\$17,164.50
2002	\$15,410.20	2006	\$15,276.50
2003	\$20,573.00	2007	\$20,744.00
		2008	\$19,990.50



Nice Crowd Watching Erin Hammeke Demonstrate

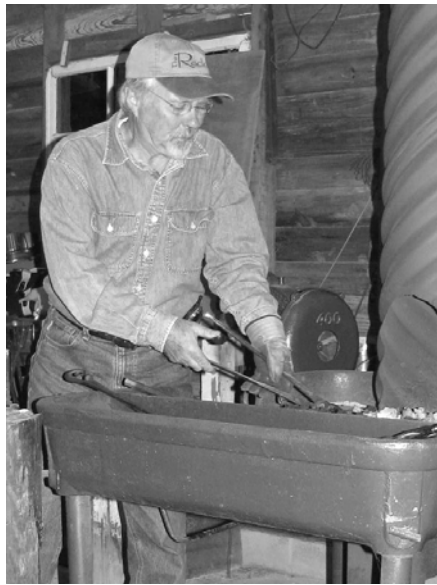


Lenny Moore Watching the Store

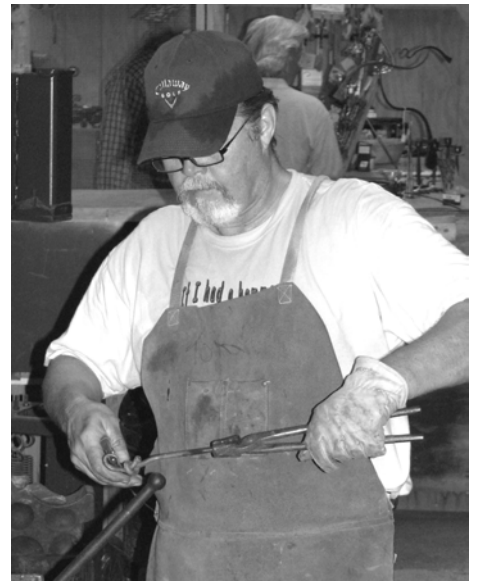
**Photos by Randy Stoltz**



Erin Hammeke



Dan Ritchie



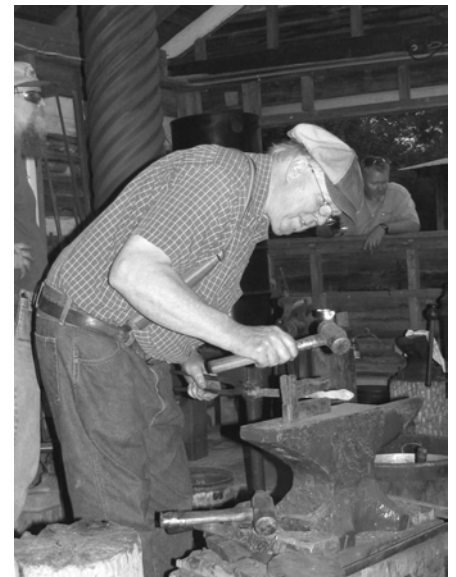
Tom Watkins



Dave Clement



Lenny Moore



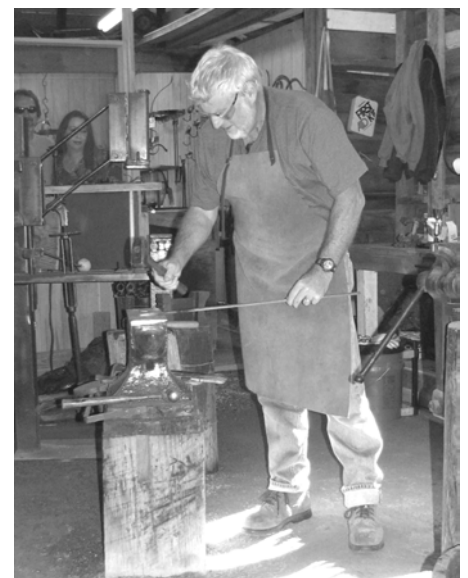
Don Dillon



John Fluke and Dick Snow



Robert Timberlake



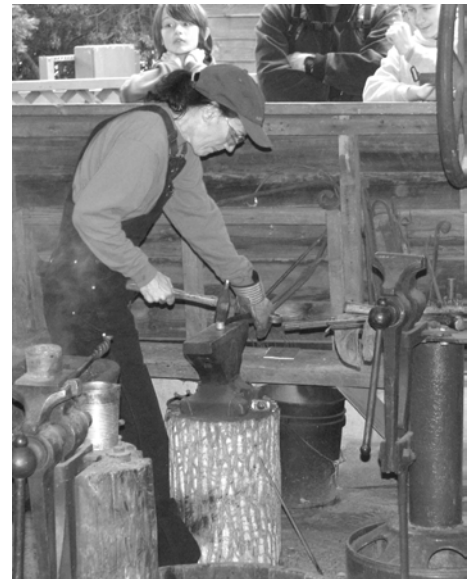
Allan Green



Jimmy Alexander



Paul Tooley



Gail Wail



Chris Lee



Garrett Dunn and Al Andrews



*North Carolina State Fair 2008*  
*Amateur 3-D*  
*1<sup>st</sup> Place*  
***Garret Dunn***  
*Chapel Hill*

We congratulate Garret Dunn for winning a blue ribbon from the NC State Fair for his forged sculpture. He won the same prize in 2006. The ribbon says "First Premium – Arts and Photography – Raleigh 2008". The placard below the piece is reproduced above. That's Garret in the photo above, at the anvil.

## Interview With Peter Ross

By Marty Lyon

Many of us had the good fortune of meeting Peter Ross for the first time at Intracoastal Iron's regional meeting in Wilmington (see report of their meeting on page 8 of this issue). However, we may first have known Peter from his appearances on Roy Underhill's PBS program, "The Woodwright's Shop". Roy often filmed at the blacksmith's shop at Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia, where Peter was the Master Blacksmith. For many people, those programs may have been their first, or only, exposure to blacksmithing. In fact, one of those episodes introduced me to blacksmithing. I recall watching a blacksmith forging an ax head. I was fascinated. It was a definitely a "WOW" moment. Even though I did not act on it for several years, that show definitely brought me to blacksmithing.

Today, at Peter's home and shop, I had the chance to tell him that he might have been the one who got me started in blacksmithing (he doesn't remember if he was the one on that episode). Turn around being fair play, I then asked how he started into blacksmithing. He answered that he became interested in High School while living on Long Island, New York. His introduction and first training was at the Stony Brook Museum in 1970 and later at Old Bethpage Village on Long Island. His work, mainly, consisted of copying antique iron pieces for use in the museums. Thus began his interest in recreating 18<sup>th</sup> century ironwork that became, and remains to this day, his occupation. Stony Brook and Old Bethpage were ideal places to learn because they provided the standard to which to work. One could see from the original antique pieces what the end product had to emulate. Peter says, "That a problem people have who teach themselves is they don't always know what to strive for, so in the beginning, everything may look great. At the museums, they knew what they had to strive for because they had exact examples."

He later attended Rhode Island School of Design, a very well known school for contemporary design. Although his interests were far from the contemporary, he felt he learned a lot, chiefly in the art of drawing. In the first year, alone, he spent 30 to 40 hours a week in drawing classes. That was a tremendous benefit to him. He says, "Learning to draw is largely learning to see. You are training your eye to perceive light and shadow and shape and line. When I see an old piece, the shapes seem much clearer, as are the way shapes relate to each other. That seems much more obvious to me than if I hadn't taken those classes. Drawing helps develop a 'quick eye', which really helps forging, because while the piece is hot, you want to make quick judgments. You want to be able to look at it, at a glance, and know what to do next."

After college he went to work for Dick Everett, a blacksmith in central Connecticut whose interest was in restoration hardware and the restoration of antique ironwork. Peter feels that this is where he learned the most and put him on the path that he is still on today. A year with Everett, and afterward, four years of his own business taught him the need to produce, not only quality work, but also the need to produce work in quantity to satisfy the economic realities of business and life. "Having my own business was a great experience because you're on piecework. You only get paid for what you finish, not paid for good intentions. Learning to work fast without sacrificing quality is really important."

Peter was uniquely qualified for his position with Williamsburg due to his experience in copying antique ironwork, and his study of the period pieces he reproduced. He was hired in the summer of 1979 to take over the shop, becoming the Master Blacksmith, when John Algood retired. Algood was one of the founding fathers of ABANA. He says, "The focus of the work at Williamsburg was to produce things that were needed for use by the museum, but also to figure out how they had been made in the 1700's and to try to relearn the skills to do it. Those are two different things, you can figure how something was made but then you had to develop the skills to do it."



It's interesting to hear of his comparison of this new position with his prior years in business. "The main difference is the lack of time pressure in the museum setting. In the museum you are there to show people what you're doing and to share your research. People who train in the museum never learn the pressure to work quicker (of course Peter, himself, is the exception to this statement of his – *editor*). So in a sense, you're portraying something false in a museum (because the blacksmiths you are emulating certainly were production oriented and worked fast – *editor*). This is one of the inherent contradictions of museums". Of course, museum craftsmen have contributed enormously to preserving their crafts and contributing to the knowledge of those crafts.

Peter and I continued a discussion we had started at the Wilmington meeting about learning trades, blacksmithing in particular, from books and the apprentice system. He noted that in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, an effort was made to explain "everything". Several books were published documenting the trades. One of the earliest, first published in 1683, was by Englishman Joseph Moxon called "Mechanick Exercises or the Doctrine of Handy – Works". Peter noted that these books "only help if you already know how to do the work". Moxon's work is still available. Anvilfire's website has an illustration from the book showing a blacksmith shop with forge and bellows, anvil, tools, etc. It is surprising how little post vices have changed in over 300 years. Check it out at: <http://www.anvilfire.com/bookrev/pawpaw/moxon.htm>. The book can still be purchased (from Amazon.com for example). Because there is not much of an apprentice system, Peter says, "There are many more books being written today that are the next best thing to learning from an expert. They can teach you a lot in the absence of a skilled person but never as good as having a skilled person teaching you."

Discussing apprenticeships, he had this to say: "Apprentice training is geared to long-term results. You learn the basics so thoroughly that they become completely unconscious before you progress to more complicated things. That has the modern image of drudgery, and perhaps to someone young, who can't wait to sink their teeth into exciting work, that might be the case - but it is the best way to train. When you train in the hand skills, you are training your eye as much as anything. Training, and repetition teaches you to see, without much conscious thought, if an object is straight, or flat, if it has the right curve or not, or if it has uniform thickness, or has a uniform taper. If you can't see those things you can't make them. When these things become automatic it enables you to focus on the more complicated aspects without being distracted by the most elementary steps. In an apprenticeship you learn those basics so thoroughly that when you start to do more complicated objects they are not a big challenge."

Continuing on the same subject: "Apprenticeship does have its good and bad side. The good side is that you learn the basic skills so thoroughly that there is no doubt how to approach something. The bad side is that there is no doubt how to approach something. If you start your apprenticeship in 1938, the way they did things in 1938 was the proper way." Most who apprenticed at that time, for example, were not curious about how things were in the past or how things are done later. Peter goes on to say, "For some apprentices there is not the understanding that hand trades are continually evolving. But, of course, innovation usually comes from the few, anyway. And, innovation comes at a price. When you innovate, your production rate goes down, at least initially, and many people are not happy to take a cut in pay because of a great idea they think might work."

Talking about the differences between blacksmithing in the past and today, Peter noted that, in the past, "Most blacksmiths were working production. They were making standard commodities that had a standard fixed value. So if you took longer you did not get to charge more."

Peter says "One of the things that has attracted me to historic work is seeing how iron was used in earlier times when it was not simply a fashionable art trend, when making things by hand was necessary to having the common articles of life. Then, the material gets used in as many ways you can imagine. Whatever suits

the outcome best is what happens. By contrast, most of the forging that is done today is done for the fashionable market. I don't mean that it is not useful. Modern work is quite useful. If you make a gate, it functions as a gate. But the characteristics that are emphasized about modern work are what is fashionable at the moment. What I mean is quite subtle, what gets emphasized now is the plasticity of iron, not its rigidity. Because modern hand-made work is not the mainstream, but an alternative to the mainstream, it's not made to the same expedience that the mainstream work (from the factory) is made. What most blacksmiths make today, is more expensive because what the buyer wants, today, is something different." Peter's work, on the other hand, is sold to another type of buyer, one who doesn't want different, but wants something as close to the same as what was made several hundred years ago, when blacksmiths made commodities. And, he says, his clients know, precisely, if his reproductions are accurate. He says there is a market for all, if you can find it. Ironically, today, the number of blacksmiths making accurate reproduction items is far less than those making other works. Of course, the number of things coming from blacksmiths today is completely overwhelmed by the mainstream producers, the factories that now make the commodities. However, commodities today do not mean the same as in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Then, commodities were those itmes that you could not live without.

Peter left Williamsburg in 2004 to again strike out again on his own. From his well organized, and very neat shop, he still makes the same type of products he made at Williamsburg, that include, among other things, hinges, shutter dogs, locks and leys. Since joining NC ABANA about a year and a half ago, Peter has not been active in the organization. For the last three years, he and his wife have been renovating an over hundred year old home in the country, while maintaining his business. They moved into the home on the same weekend he demonstrated at Intracoastal Iron in Wilmington. Now that much of the time he devoted to the house can be devoted to other things, he is looking forward to active participation in the organization. He, like most of us, enjoy going to a meeting to see someone else work.

I really enjoyed the couple of hours I spent with Peter, listening to someone who can articulate, so well, his feelings and knowledge of the blacksmithing craft. I was as impressed with Peter, the man, as I was impressed with the skills he exhibited at the meeting in Wilmington. I only hope he did not get my cold.



Peter's Shop



Inside View – Very Neat and Organized



← 1823 Hinge used as Model with Peter Ross's Reproduction Below. Both of Wrought Iron



Production – Works In Progress



Lots of Hand Tools – Particularly Files



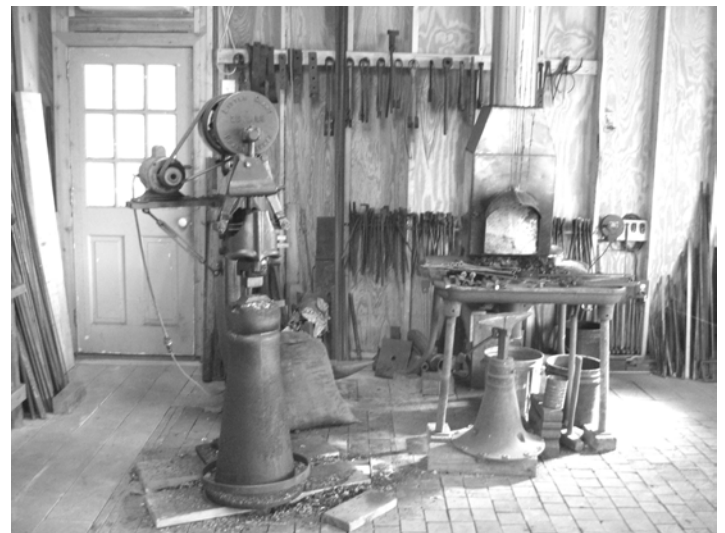
Peter Does Lots of Bench Work. Note Part of His Vast Collection of Reading Glasses (window sills and bench)



Examples of Work In Progress



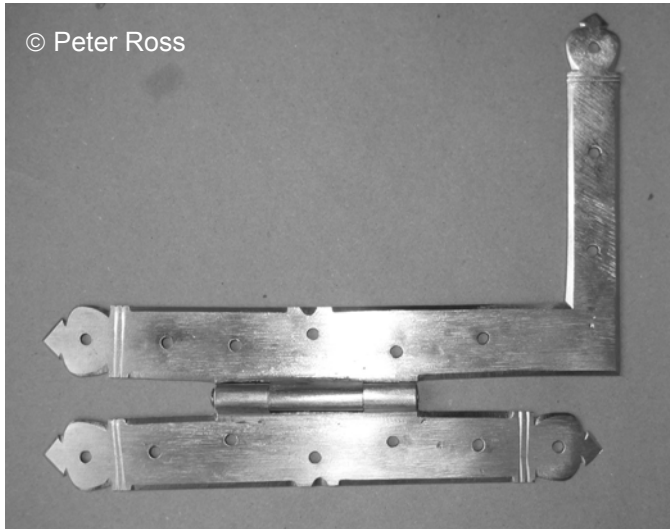
Shutter Dog



Another View of Shop

## Samples of Other Work by Peter Ross

The following four photographs are copyrighted by Peter Ross. **They are not to be reproduced without his permission.** You can contact him through the editor of this newsletter



**Peter Ross is also on the Faculty of New England School of Metalwork.** He will be teaching a five day course August 7 – 11 called “Thinking Inside the Box”. The class will be devoted to making box jointed tools. If you are interested you can contact the school at:

New England School of Metalwork  
7 Albiston Way Auburn, Maine 04210  
207-777-6211 Toll Free 888-753-7502  
Fax 207-784-5383

You can find them on the web at: [newenglandschoolofmetalwork.com](http://newenglandschoolofmetalwork.com)

## Gail Wall's Sculpture - "SoulMate" - Winner of the People's Choice Award of the Associated Artists of Winston Salem

Shown is Gail's winning work "SoulMate". She says of her sculpture: "This piece of art "SoulMate" was inspired by my love of metalwork and it's potential for great beauty. The peacock, which symbolizes wisdom and the soul, was born during a class I took at John C Campbell Folk School. I am always honored by the inspiration that the people and the place of Brasstown, NC bring to me."

Associated Artists of Winston-Salem (AAWS) is a non-profit fine arts organization located in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Founded in 1956, the organization is comprised of artists and art supporters from throughout the United States.

Associated Artists provides exhibition opportunities for any visual artist. Each of the eight gallery exhibits has a unique theme to encourage diverse artistic participation and audience. Exhibits remain on display for 5-6 weeks. There are two national juried exhibits held each year. The other six shows are for Associated Artists members only. Most of the work on display in these shows is for sale. All exhibitions are free and open to the public.

Viewpoints, 2008 was one of the Juried Member's Shows

Juried Membership is open to any member, 18 years of age or older, who successfully makes application to this advanced membership status. The artist is eligible to participate in all Juried Member shows in the medium in which he or she has been accepted.

The People's Choice Award is chosen by visitors to the Gallery for the first two weeks of the show.

For more info on AAWS go to [www.associatedartists.org](http://www.associatedartists.org)



## Growing a Third Hand - By Ian Thomsen

When doing Blacksmith work it seems like you are always at least one hand short of being able to easily accomplish a lot of things. You always need another appendage to hold or hit whatever it is that you are working on. Now short of serious breakthroughs in human gene mutation (sounds scary to me) we have to come up with some sort of solution.

One solution is the glorious and terribly useful treadle hammer, but even with it there are still some things you just need to do on the anvil. Also if like me (and many others I'm sure) you lack both the space and the necessary funds for a treadle hammer there is still hope!. Now before we get into the meat of the subject I would like to just give some beginning thoughts and maybe a little philosophy. I was told by a professional blacksmith whom I have a deep respect for that "The more complicated you make a hold-down, the more you have to fight with it and the more heat you loose". This is undoubtedly true, do keep it in mind while searching for your ideal "third hand(s)". That being said out of the three hold-downs I will talk about today none of them are super complicated but I myself end up struggling more with one or another of them more than the others. So I will say this about tools in general, with a few exceptions it is results, ease of work and personal preference in that order that should decide what tool you use.

Ok so now into the important stuff.

The simplest type of hold-down is probably familiar to most of you and is what I would call the kind of the standard hold down:



The idea is to have a shank that extends through the hardy hole at an angle and a foot that curves up around in an arc and eventually straightens out to be flush with the anvil face. When a piece of work is placed under the foot and downward pressure (a hammer blow) is applied to the top, the bottom of the shank will catch and bind on the edges of the hardy hole thus holding the piece fairly securely to the anvil face. To release it a sharp tap on the back of the curve will knock it free.

To make a very simple version of a hold down like this is fairly simple. You must first find the dimension of your hardy hole, then the general rule is to get a piece of stock that is  $\frac{1}{4}$ " smaller than that dimension allowing the stock to "tilt" in the hardy hole and bind effectively. So if you have a 1" hardy hole then you would need a piece of  $\frac{3}{4}$ " stock. Then determine the thickness of your anvil on the heel where the hardy hole passes through. After you have that dimension add about 12"-14" to make the curve and to shape the foot, so if the thickness of your anvil at the hardy hole is 4" then you would need roughly 16" of stock. Be sure not to make your curve too high or it won't bind and thus, won't hold so if you end up with a longer shank than is absolutely necessary it is not a problem so long as you are able to achieve that bind.

This is just the bare bones version of this hold-down, there are lots of variations including welding two pieces of stock together to fortify the top section where the curve would be or two different stock thickness to achieve more springiness. It's all in what you like and what you need for the job.

The next hold-down I want to discuss is one that I think is of my own invention at least I have never seen one quite like it anywhere else. I have seen other hold-downs with foot pedals but nothing quite like this.



This works quite well for me. It is comprised of basically two pieces, the first is a top piece that has a three sided "dish" that holds the work attached to a shaft that extends down all the way through the hardy hole. The other piece is an S shaped foot pedal that hooks onto the shaft on the underside of the anvil. Lifting up on the foot pedal with the toe of my boot easily lifts up the top to allow me to slide a piece of metal underneath it. Using the downward pressure of my foot I can control how much pressure is put on the piece and allows me to reposition the piece by simply releasing pressure with my foot. I like this one

especially well because I can get the metal under there and ready to work with no hands, I can just pull it out of the fire and stick it under there and I'm ready to go.

Making a pedal hold down like this isn't terribly complicated either. Once again you will need to know the dimension of your hardy hole and the thickness of your anvil at the hardy hole. In selecting the stock for the shaft you should pretty much go with the size of stock that slides smoothly through the hardy hole but does not "wobble" from side to side. You might end up having to forge a piece of metal to achieve this but it will be worth it. Once you have determined the thickness of the anvil at the hardy hole you will need to add about 3", so if the thickness was 3" you would need about 6" of stock. Now that you have your stock cut the next step is to forge a tapered tenon on one end of the bar. This tenon should be round and be no less than 1/4" at its smallest point and around 3/8" at its largest dimension .



This picture is not the best sorry.

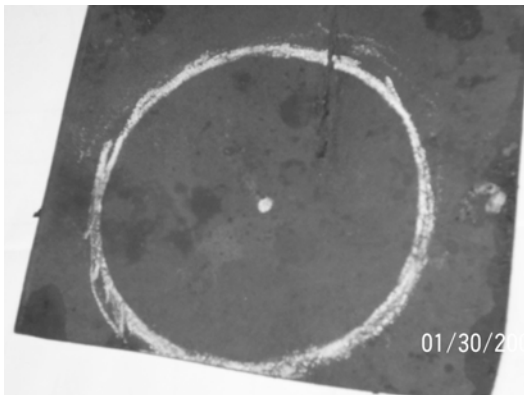
The reason you make the tenon tapered is that when you get ready to put the "dish" on you want it to kind of bind and hold fast so that it doesn't turn or wobble.

Next on the other end of that piece of stock you need to forge a one dimensional taper like so:



Remember not to increase the width of the bar or it will no go through the hardy hole!. After you have drawn out the taper you need to either drill or punch a 3/8”hole near the end of the taper.

Now we move on to making the “dish” you need to start with some 3/16” plate steel and cut a 3” diameter circle: Next you need to drill or punch a hole in the exact center of the circle that is the same size as the tenon at its largest point.



At this point I have to leave a decision up to you, you have two options. What I did was to just bend down three sides of the disc but if you have the time and the tools you could make it truly concave and it would look a little cleaner. Either way it will work just fine.

Now all that’s left to do for this piece is to get the tenon hot, hammer the shaped disk down securely on it and hammer out the end of the tenon into a good sturdy rivet like head. Now your done with that piece.



The last step is to make the pedal, I used some 1/2” square stock but some 1/4” X 1/2” would work just as well. (I can’t give you the length of the stock you need because that is dependent on anvil height, I am a pretty tall fella so if I gave you the length of mine it would probably hit the ground and not work. I think



you want the pedal end to be around 3"- 4" off the ground so just measure and "guesstimate".) Start by drawing out a smooth round taper about 6" long and then bend it over at a right angle(this taper needs to fit through the hole you made in the shaft). Now just bend down about 2" of the end of the taper slightly back towards the main bar.

Now you just need to make a pedal end for your foot to step on. Peen about 4" down to about a thickness of 1/4" and bend it at a right angle opposite to the bend of the other end.



Alright that's it slide the shaft down through the hardy hole, hook your pedal onto it and get to work!.



One Disadvantage to both of the hold-downs previously discussed is that they have trouble accommodating large dimension stock, I mean large dimension like 1" plus stuff.

Well here's an idea that works pretty well on that point and all you have to do is dig out your old racing bicycle. Take an old bike chain and loop it over the heel of the anvil, now if you make the chain the right length you can hook the same foot pedal that you use for the "dish" hold down onto it and your set.

This works very well considering its components and you don't have to fight with those pieces of big bar stock.



Ok well that's it. I hope this will help you in your search for a good "third hand" and that when you find one that works for you that it will serve you well.

**Happy hammerin',  
Ian Thomsen**

## Tong Clips- By Doug Merkel

Francis Whitaker once told me that he wished that he had started using clips to hold his tongs together sooner than he did. He said that it would have kept his left arm, wrist and hand from developing such bad arthritis. Sounded like good advice, so I have been using tong clips for the past 15 years.

Why should you use some type of clip to hold the tong handles together and not just your handgrip???? For the same reason that you use a light grip on your forging hammer, to reduce the transfer of vibrations from the tool to your body. Holding, swinging and striking with the hand hammer is an art in itself, but all the different techniques have one thing in common. They all try to reduce the amount of vibration transferred to your body. The less vibration transferred to your body through either/both arms then the longer you can work that day and for years to come.

One way to reduce vibration transfer is to use a very light grip. If you do not use a death grip to keep the tongs closed then you can use a very light grip just to control the piece on the anvil or under the power hammer. Let the tong clip hold the item to forge, that way you only have to concentrate on the forging part of the operation.

Enough talk, tong clips are made in many shapes and sizes. Just like shoes, tongs and hammers, you can never have enough. Some are an open design to be slipped on the tongs from the side and others are closed ended to be put on from the handle end.

This clip is made from stainless steel, because I had some in the scrap pile, but can be made from what ever you have around the shop. This started with some 11-gauge steel (1/8 inch, .125 inch) that was 2 ½ inches by 3 ½ inches. Any thinner and you end up with too massive a clip. If the clip gets too large it just ends up vibrating off of the tong handles during use.

Sketch out your design right on the steel. This one has one large hole and three smaller holes, each at a different distance from the one large hole. That way you get three clips in one. Center punch each of the four holes, drill them out, hack saw, band saw or cold cut most of the excess metal away. File/grind/belt sand the edges to shape. Stamp with your touch mark and use. The large hole on this one is 3/4 inch with 7/16-inch small holes. Make them to fit yo

You are blacksmithing, so you can hot punch the holes if you want, or hot cut the excess material. Use your skills and design your own clips. You will find as you use clips that it is much easier to concentrate on what you are doing with the hammer and not worry about holding onto the material. Your tongs and clip are doing that for you. As Francis told me “If you cannot hold it, then you cannot hit it!”

GET IT HOT, HIT IT HARD, QUIT WHEN IT'S DONE



11-gauge 1/8"x 2 ½" x 3 ½"

Finished Tong Clip

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This article was originally printed in the Fall 2004 issue of "Hammer's Blow". It is from a series of educational articles, directed towards beginning blacksmiths, made available by ABANA

## CONTROLLED HAND FORGING

# Forge Welding

By Dan Nauman

Illustrations by Tom Latané

Photos by Dan Nauman

Lesson Number 10– Forge Welding

### Definition:

Fusing two or more bars together by bringing them to a high heat in a forge, and applying pressure to the area being fused by hammer blows.

*Lesson:* Upsetting, scarfing (see \*Definitions, below), and forge welding the ends of two bars of equal size together to make one bar.

*Intent:* The smith will learn the technique of welding two bars of equal size together, accurately maintaining the original stock size and shape after welding.

*Materials:* Two 15" bars of 1/2" square mild steel.

*Tools needed:* Basic tools include standard cross peen hammer and anvil. Flux (see \*Definitions, below), either borax or EZ Weld. Calipers and a square can be used to evaluate your work.

### Method:

Forge welding is used in several circumstances: to produce a smooth transition of adjoining elements; to secure several elements into a bundle (i.e. leaves, grapes, acorns, basket twist); to join a bundle to another element; to close the ends of a single bar shaped in a ring, oval, or rectangular shape (as in a frame); to join mild steel to high carbon steel (as in an ax bit); or to laminate several bars together to form a billet (as in Damascus laminate).



A forge welded sample from Cyril Colnik

### Definitions:

- 1.) **Scarf** (scarfing): Preparation or preparing a portion, often the end of a bar for welding by tapering to a thin edge, which can be blended into the mating material.
- 2.) **Flux:** The product applied to the areas to be fused to reduce oxidation, and lower the melting temperature of the scale. (Examples: borax, EZ weld, etc.)
- 3.) **Clinker:** The hard, gritty, often glassy mass that congeals in the bottom of the fire-pit.
- 4.) **Coke:** Soft coal that has had the bulk of its impurities burned out. Coke's appearance is puffy. As good quality soft coal burns, it expands and congeals to the neighboring coal nugget forming a larger mass. Almost entirely carbon in its makeup.

*Note:* Just as there are different approaches to other aspects of forging, the same is true for forge welding. It cannot be said that any one way is best, as there are many experienced smiths who produce consistently sound welds in a different manner than explained here. Different scarf forms, different fluxes, and several other aspects of forge welding can be learned and utilized. To introduce these differences in this lesson would prove confusing to the student. Thus, this lesson will concentrate on the method taught to me in the 1970's. Differences aside, the fundamentals usually prove to be similar or identical.

In all cases, a high heat is needed at the point of fusion to successfully weld the bars together. The color of the bars should be yellow to yellow/white when removed from the fire. The only exception to this would be when welding high carbon steel to mild steel. A lower heat of orange/yellow should be the highest heat applied so as not to burn the carbon out of the carbon steel.

The gray scale that forms on a bar when heated is the enemy of the forge weld. The bars will not fuse properly when scale is present. Scale forms on the outside of the bar in the presence of oxygen. Flux forms a barrier around the areas to be fused, protecting it from oxidation. It is applied to the bars at an orange heat. Flux is not glue, or a bonding agent, rather it lowers the melting temperature of this scale, and prevents more scale from forming while heating in the fire. Some smiths theorize that to some degree flux also raises the burning temperature of the metal.

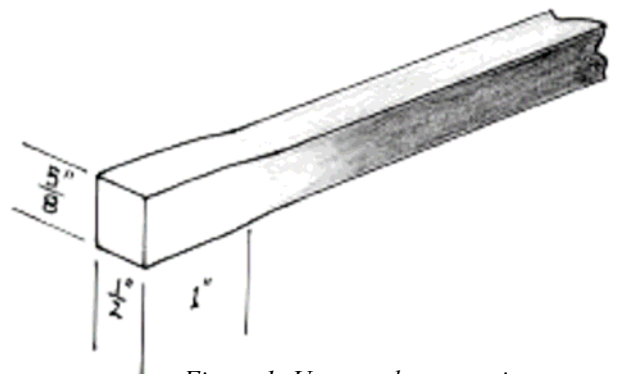


Figure 1: Upset end preparation

## CONTROLLED HAND FORGING

Another important aspect of welding is to be absolutely sure you have a “clean,” domed fire. A clean fire is free of a clinker in the fire-pit, and has no fresh coal burning in the center of the fire. A good welding fire also has an abundance of coke domed and banked in the fire-pit. Should the fire “hollow out” while heating the bars, only coke should be added to the fire to replenish the fuel. Fresh coal cools the fire, and also introduces impurities naturally found in coal. These impurities are largely burned out as the coal becomes coke.

When taking a welding heat, a good deep fire with the bar in the center of the fire under a good two or so inches of coke will reduce (but not eliminate) the amount of scale which forms on the bar during heating.

### Step One—Preparing the scarf:

Taking a short high (yellow) heat on the last 1" of the bar. Then upset about 1" of the end of the bar so that the bar measures at least 9/16" square. (See previous lesson Number 7) Next, forge one dimension back to 1/2" producing a cross section measuring 1/2" x 5/8".

### Step Two:

Take another yellow heat on the end of the bar, again on the last 1" of the bar, place the end of the bar (with the 5/8" sides vertical) squarely on the anvil's face with the end of the bar 1/4" from the inside edge of the anvil. The edge of the anvil should be somewhat sharp for this step. Hitting straight down with the hammer's face halfway above the anvil face and halfway beyond the anvil face (Figure 2, photo), reduce the cross section to about 1/2 the thickness of the material, in this case to 5/16".

Tip: In order to create a clean shoulder in this operation, put a slight downward pressure on the bar so the bar stays where you put it. Then after the first or second blow add a slight forward pressure to keep the bar from “stepping” off the anvil.

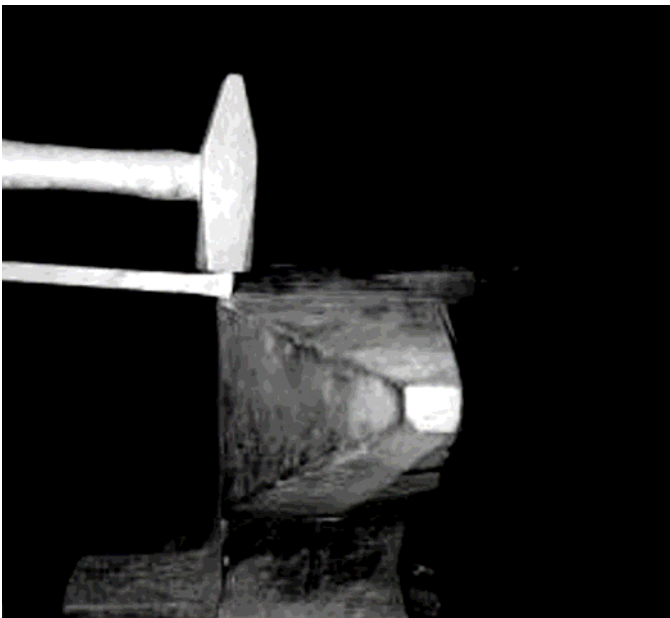


Figure 2: A half-face blow

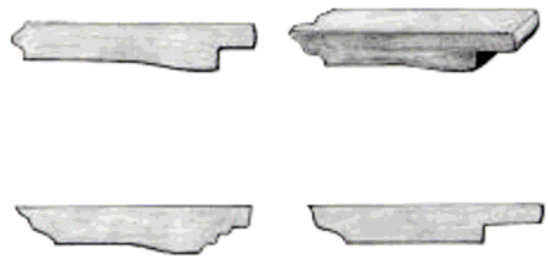


Figure 3: Above, correct. Below, incorrect. Left—initial shoulder backed off anvil too soon. Right—no upset remains for scarf to be laid upon during weld.

### Step Three:

The forging dynamics of the material will cause the area of the bar on top of the anvil to slightly spread wider than desired. In the same heat from step two, turn the bar 90 degrees, and forge this area back down to 1/2" in thickness.

### Step Four:

Take another yellow heat on the last inch of the bar. Place the shoulder produced on a sharp edge of the anvil, pressing the shoulder squarely against the side of the anvil. The hand the bar is holding should be lowered slightly so the face of the scarf is off the anvil face. (Figure 4, photo). Move the hand holding the bar to the left of square, and take a blow. Moving the bar back and forth at a 90 degree angle (right to left), and using each step produced by the previous blow to brace against the side of the anvil, slowly step the bar off the anvil. (Figure 5, photos). In this same process, the profile of the bar should be drawn out to a flat point. (Figure 6, photo). If done correctly, the face of the scarfs should have steps as shown in the figure 7 below. When the scarf is drawn out, forge a slight curve at the end of the scarf. (Figure7) You should be able to do all of step four in one heat.



Figure 4

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**CONTROLLED HAND FORGING**


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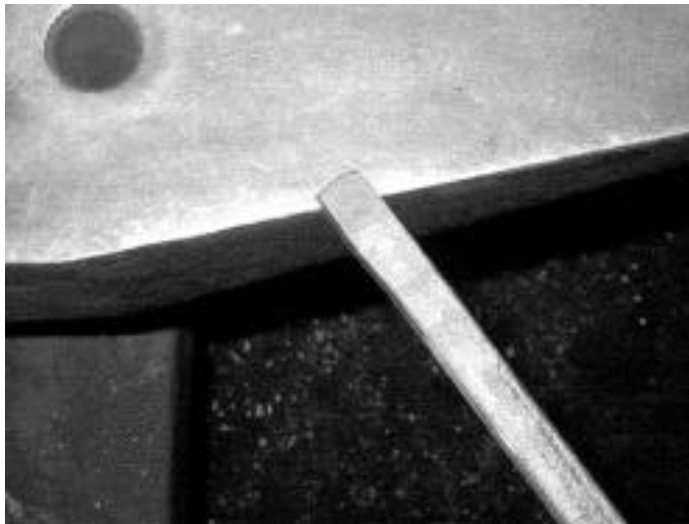


Figure 5

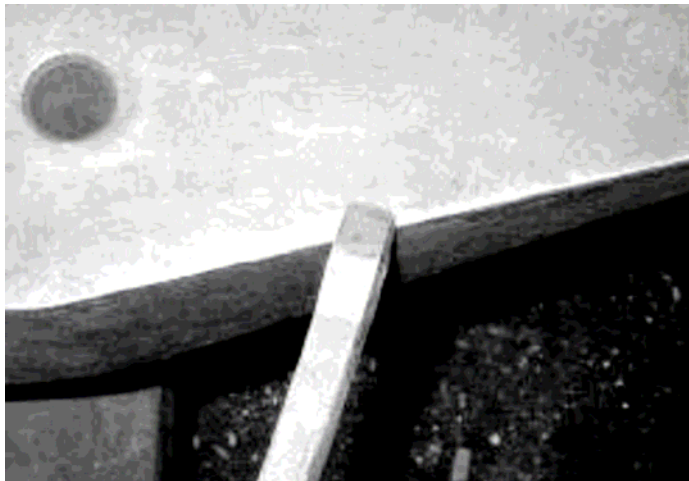


Figure 6

*Notes on scarves:*

The reason for the curve at the end of the scarf is simple. The anvil acts as a heat sink when hot metal is applied to it. If the end of the scarf is not off the anvil when welding, it might cool too rapidly, and the weld will not be properly fused in this area. The curve keeps the thin edge of the scarf off the anvil before the first blow, retaining the heat longer to produce a sound weld. The thin tapered edge of the scarf is formed to produce a smooth weld joint. A scarf with a thick edge will produce a weld with a very visible seam (Drawing, figure 8).

**Step Five:**

Repeat steps One through Four on the second bar.

**Step Six: Fluxing the scarves.**

*SAFETY!* - Some fluxes may emit noxious fumes when heated. Make sure your forge and building are vented properly. Reduce the air blast in the fire if you have an electric blower. If you are manually applying the air blast, reduce the force of the blast to more of a whisper. This will reduce the chances of burning the

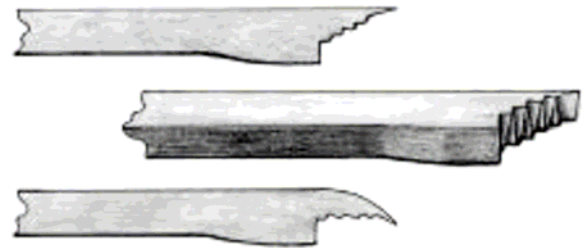


Figure 7: Top—shouldered and stepped scarf. Bottom—Curved tip. Shoulder prevents scarf from overlapping beyond upset area when scarfs are quickly placed together.

scarves while fluxing by reducing the available oxygen in the fire.

Making sure you have a clean and deep fire, place the scarves into the center of the fire, face up. If the bars are not covered with coke, cover them. When the bars reach a bright orange, with the bars remaining in the fire, take your fire rake make a hole in the fire over the scarves so flux may be sprinkled on the face of the scarves. With a small spoon with a long handle (so you do not burn your hand), apply enough flux with to cover the scarf, as well as beyond the scarf where the other scarf will join. (Figure 9, drawing). Cover the bars once again with coke. When you are finished fluxing the scarves, position them so they are facing down in the fire.

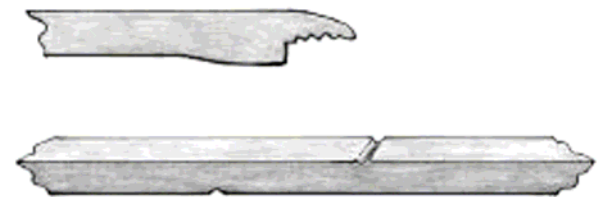


Figure 8: Blunt scarf makes seam difficult to blend

*Notes:*

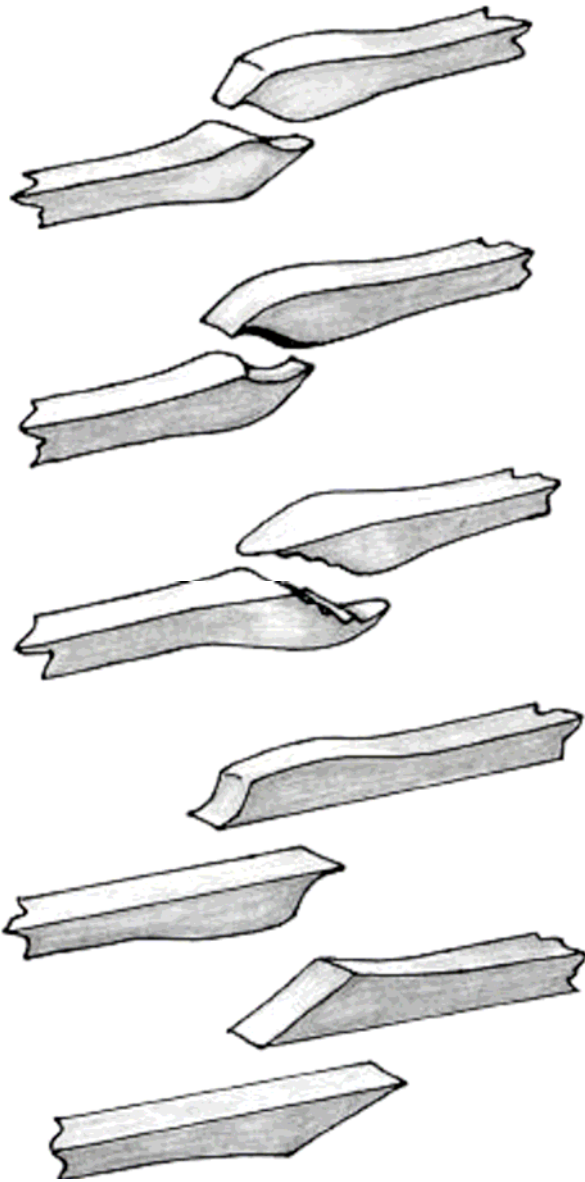
One of the biggest mistakes beginners make in welding is not applying the flux back far enough on the bar where the bars will be fused.

Some smiths prefer to flux all sides of the scarves, while others simply apply flux to the scarf faces. The theory behind fluxing all sides of the bar is to insure that all surfaces are free from scale, as well as to increase the burning temperature of the bar. The bar can and will burn if allowed to get to a full sparkling white heat, at which point the flux will also burn off. The bars likely will not weld at this high temperature. Also, the molecular structure of the material will break down, creating a weaker joint, and often an unsightly weld.

CONTROLLED HAND FORGING



Figure 9: Fluxed face heated from below.



Some other forms of bar end scarfs. The 90° shoulder on the scarf described in the text will aid in quick alignment of bars to be welded, preventing overlap beyond upset material.

If you choose to flux all sides of the scarves, turn the bar 90 degrees only after you are certain the flux has adhered to the scarf surface. You will know when this happens, as the flux will be the same color as the bar. If one bar gets hotter than the other, move it to the side of the fire where the fire is cooler, or reduce the air blast further. Fluxing the scarves in the fire keeps them hot, and reduces the amount of scale formed, therefore shortening the time it takes to produce the weld. Removing the bars from the fire to flux the scarves is not necessarily wrong, as many smiths prefer this procedure, and do so successfully. Sometimes, fluxing in the fire is virtually impossible (i.e. welding a wagon wheel tire.) In these cases, removing the bar from the fire is necessary.

Always keep coke on top of the bars when not in the act of fluxing. *Tip:* Rub soapstone or chalk on the face side of the bar to indicate direction of the scarf face when pulling the bars from the fire.

**Step Seven: Welding the bars**

Have your hammer at the anvil in a position to grab it quickly. The scarves are at a welding heat when they are at a yellow-white appearance in color (Often referred to as a “welding heat.”) Make sure the scarves are heated well beyond the shoulder where the mating bar will join. Some smiths wait to see just a few sparks coming from the fire, indicating the piece is just starting to burn. This is not necessary, and can lead to burning the tips off of the scarves.

*Tip:* If you are not sure if the pieces are at a welding heat, gently touch the pieces together in the fire. If they want to

stick, almost like a magnet, they are probably ready to weld. With experience, this touching in the fire will not be necessary.

*SAFETY :* When welding, molten sparks fly from the bars which can burn others, as well as you. Alert others in the area when performing a weld, and make sure other items in the shop that are flammable are protected from the sparks. Some smiths wear a protective leather apron when welding to prevent their clothes from burning. You and anyone else present should be wearing eye protection with side shields at all times. After welding, be aware of the possibility of fire caused from stray sparks in the surrounding area i.e. shop rags, charcoal, dry wood, etc. These items and others ignite easily from molten metal and flux spattered from the forge welding process.

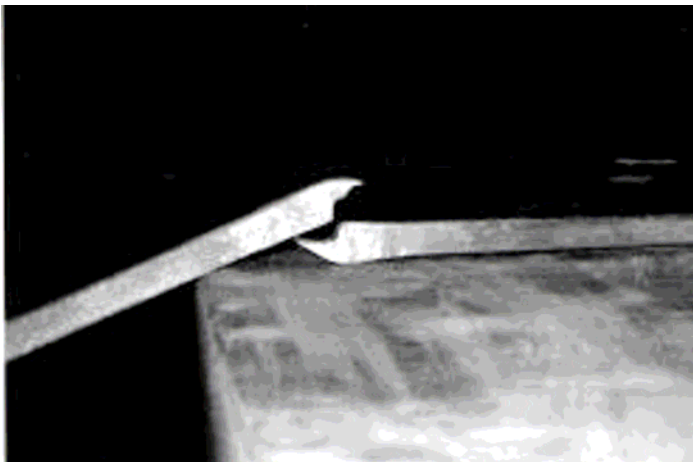


Figure 10

## CONTROLLED HAND FORGING

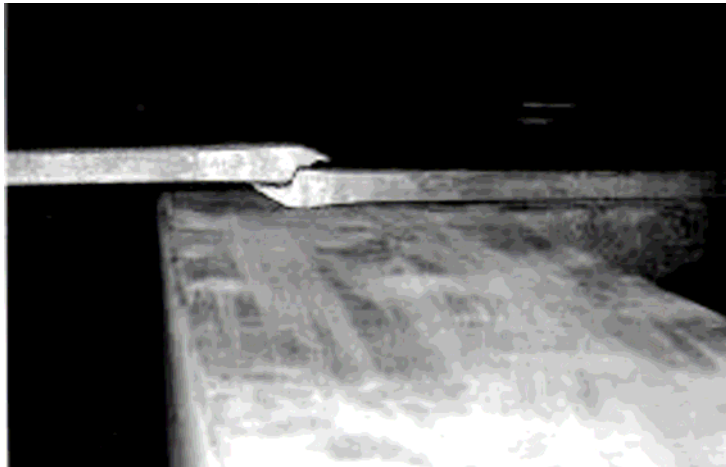


Figure 11



Figure 12

Bring the pieces out of the fire, rotating one piece 180 degrees so that the scarf is facing up. Place the bar with the face up on the center of the face of the anvil, coming in from the far side of the anvil. (This bar should be in your hammer hand.) Place the other bar on the near edge of the anvil, with the scarf off the face, pointing up at about a 45 degree angle. (Figure 10, photo). In a hinging fashion, lower the scarf down onto the opposing scarf, keeping contact with the edge of the anvil to control the accuracy of the placement of the scarf (Figure 11, photo) and press down on the opposing scarf. The heels of the scarves should be placed together as shown. (Figure 12, photo). Press down hard enough so you can release the bar in your hammer hand.

Release the bar in your hammer hand, grab the hammer, and strike firmly in the center of the joint. Forge the entire joint rapidly with six or seven blows. Make sure you forge the thin tip of the scarf as it will cool rapidly. Next, flip the now welded bar 180 degrees to forge the opposite side. Hit six or seven blows on the entire joint and then turn the bar 90 degrees and repeat five or six more blows on the joint. Flip the bar 180 degrees and hit the joint once again five or six blows. Repeat as necessary, never forging colder than a medium orange heat.

*Note:* Dark spots on the joint indicate cooling of the material and will not weld there. This may be caused by too low of heat, or inadequate fluxing. These areas must be fluxed again, returned to a welding heat, and forged to fuse the joint.



Figure 13: Bars for practice weld—no alignment of scarfs.

While welding, keep in mind that you do not want to forge the cross section of the joint down beyond the parent stock size. Also, be careful not to forge beyond the joint as this will reduce the cross section of the bar beyond the parent stock size.

With a properly executed weld there will not be any "dark spots" or evidence of a scarf. If there is evidence that the weld is not complete, flux the open seams of the joint, and take another welding heat. Remove the bar from the fire, and forge down carefully, so as not to greatly reduce the cross section of the bar beyond the parent stock size.

*Note:* Timing is important. If you take too much time getting the pieces from the fire to the anvil, you may lose too much heat to weld the bars together. To increase your proficiency, you may want to take a few "practice runs" by removing the bars while cold from the fire pit positioning them on the anvil as described in Step Seven. Do this until you are comfortable with the procedure. You will then be able to release the bar from your hammer hand and grasp the hammer without the bar falling to the ground.

*Tips:* -Some fluxes, such as EZ Weld brand, are very aggressive and may adhere to the metal after the weld has been completed. To remove it, take another welding heat, remove the bar from the fire, and scrub vigorously with a stiff wire brush. Flux is harder than a file, so do not try to file the flux off, as it can ruin your file.

-A lighter hammer of 1 1/2 to 2 pounds may work better than a larger hammer. With a lighter hammer, the hammer can be swung faster, and more accurately. Also, the chance of forging down beyond parent stock size is



Figure 14: Top—thin areas due to loss of material from burning, too little upset, or over-hammering, must be upset. Bottom—remaining bulge must be drawn down to dimension.

# CONTROLLED HAND FORGING

reduced with a smaller hammer, as you will not have the heavier force of the larger hammer.

-You may want to first practice a more simple weld to get used to the properties of forge welding. The faggot weld is a simple, crude weld which has no end preparation (no scarves.) Try bending a 3/16" x 3/4" piece in half and weld the last 3/4" of the end of the bars together. (Figure 13, drawing). Be extra careful when performing this type of weld, because the larger surface area causes more molten flux and sparks to fly from the joint.

### Step Eight: Refining the weld (If necessary)

If the cross section of the joint is still larger than the parent stock size, place the bar back in the fire and bring the joint to a



More examples of forge welding from Cyril Colnik

welding heat. Remove the bar from the fire, and carefully forge the joint back down to the parent stock size.

### Potential problems and solutions:

If the weld is properly executed, the joint is invisible, the bar has no bulges or "necked in" spots, and has sharp 90 degree corners. (Figure 14, See drawing of bulge and necked in spots). To refine the bulge, proceed as described in Step Eight.

If the bar is necked in it will be more difficult to fix. The portion of the bar where it is necked in is taken to a welding heat, and then upset (refer to Lesson Seven) back to the parent stock size. A poorly executed weld will begin to come apart or fail entirely in the upsetting process. If a parallelogram was formed at the joint, first upset the joint, then take another heat and forge down the acute angles slightly. (As explained in Lesson One.) Then carefully reduce to the parent stock size.

### Targets:

- The scarf is produced in one heat.
- The weld is completed in one to two heats, and the joint returned to the parent stock size.
- The joint is to be square in section with sharp corners, no necked in areas, and no bulges. You can check your accuracy with a pair of calipers. Check for squareness with a steel square.
- The welded bar is to be straight, have no twist, be free of flux residue and the bar should have no visual evidence of a seam.

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**Affiliate Letter November 2008****11/20/2008**

Hello ABANA Affiliate Members,

My name is Bruce Woodward. I am a new ABANA Board Member from Ohio and your new Affiliate Liaison member. I am the new kid on the block. Actually I am no kid. I am one of the gray beards but I still swing a mean hammer. One of the silver tops who, based on ABANA's survey, make up well over half of the blacksmiths in the US. My Board candidacy was based on attracting new people into blacksmithing. Evidently there are a lot of blacksmiths out there who feel the same as I do and took the time to vote for me. I thank you for that. Presently there are many very talented young smiths but not near enough. The veteran and established smiths are the core and stability of our affiliate groups. However attrition is taking far too many dedicated smiths lately. Local and international smiths who had once given so much of their time and efforts to the continuation and advancement of blacksmithing and asked for so very little in return. They asked us to just "pass it on". Well, as the man once said, "it is time to stand up and be counted". Our past and present ABANA Presidents Chris Winterstein and Rome Hutchings have said to find something you care about and work for it. I believe your rewards will be great.

With the economy of the world going into the pits, money is extremely tight for everyone. At the November ABANA Board Meeting of this year, the Board was very concerned with fiscal responsibility. We tried to cut costs where ever and whenever possible without drastically cutting services. Such as, you will notice a change in packaging and mailing of the Anvil's Ring. Even though we have slightly altered the AR, the ABANA Board is very protective of our publications. They are, along with the ABANA Conference, our flagships and our window to the world.

With the economy sour, it is very important, now more than ever before, for blacksmithing to be in the forefront of the general public's thoughts. Every blacksmith demonstration, every blacksmith exhibit, every blacksmith article is so important to remind the potential blacksmith customer that "Yes we can do your project and Yes we can do it well and Yes we will take only our share of what money is available".

We all know how much time and energy and expense goes into efforts to attract prospective blacksmiths from the general public, often with rather discouraging results. However there are a few groups, like the Boy Scouts through their Metalwork Merit Badge Program, who already have a beginning interest in blacksmithing. An interest that with encouragement and nurturing could grow into a lifelong passion. This program is an open door for blacksmithing to 3 million Scouts and 1 million adult advisors. Some of you are already certified Boy Scout Merit Badge Counselors or you have demonstrated at Scout events. I applaud you. However there is room for many more counselors. If this appeals to you, contact your local Boy Scout Council. Again, you may find it very rewarding. I would like to know just how many of our affiliate members are BSA Metalwork Merit Badge Counselors. If you are a counselor please send an email or letter to me stating also your affiliate and your local BSA council.

ABANA Board Member Kim Saliba has recently resigned from the Board for serious health reasons. Her energetic support at the past ABANA and CanIron Conferences will be greatly missed. We wish her Godspeed and safe journey.

ABANA has a number of new programs for its members this year such as health insurance. Check it out on our web site or contact ABANA's Central Office.

ABANA will also have a great Conference for all in June 2010 at Memphis, TN. The Conference is indeed ABANA's Window to the World. We mean to do it right. World renowned demonstrators, environmentally friendly tent camping, fiscally sound business workshops, universally acclaimed Affiliates Area, tantalizing tailgating, etc, etc. Details to follow in future installments.

For the past year, the ABANA Affiliate Letter has been written by Paul Boulay. He left some pretty big foot prints for me to follow in, however with Paul at my elbow for guidance and to keep me out of trouble and with your suggestions, we will do just fine.

Please stay in contact, Bruce Woodward

ABANA Affiliate Liaison Member  
Bruce Woodward  
6374 Lake Road West

ABANA Central Office  
15754 Widewater Drive  
Dumfries, VA 22025-1212

**ABANA Affiliate Liaison Letter: What is ABANA and what can it do for us?****1/28/2009**

ABANA is the Artist Blacksmith Association of North America. It is an organization that helps unite artist-blacksmiths from over 75 affiliated groups in the United States and other countries.

ABANA is an important resource for a wealth of artist-blacksmithing information from around the world. This information is passed on to its members via its two quarterly publications The Anvil's Ring which presents feature articles on many blacksmithing topics, affiliate news and many other subjects and the Hammer's Blow which features technical tips and techniques for the amateur and professional smiths.

ABANA has a very extensive and usually current web site. In addition to being an information resource, the web site allows affiliates and ABANA members to post a link to their own web sites and to post announcements of their conferences, exhibits and other events. ABANA's web site is also open to the public and has been very effective in reaching and educating the general public about what the artist-blacksmith can do.

ABANA is planning to resume its biennial national conference in June 2010 with a grand effort. It will be a gathering of international artist-blacksmiths from around the world with a sharing of their ideas and techniques. Coinciding with the conference is a National Ornamental Metal Museum international contemporary blacksmithing exhibit which will tour the US for two years after the conference.

ABANA's Scholarship Program provides financial assistance to its members for educational workshops or for extended study such as journeyman programs.

ABANA's Affiliate Grant Program provides financial support to ABANA Affiliates sponsoring a visiting artist for educational conferences or workshops.

ABANA members receive a 5 to 10% discount when shopping with blacksmith merchants supporting ABANA.

ABANA members can obtain affordable health insurance through Transamerica and Amerits; including limited medical and hospital, disability, dental and vision coverage.

These are but a few of the benefits ABANA offers blacksmiths. ABANA is continually seeking ways to benefit its membership, such as in obtaining affordable health insurance for the self-employed smith or for the recently laid off hobbyist who could not afford a COBRA or private insurance plan. ABANA is also working to soon have catastrophic medical and property and casualty insurance available to members.

The economy right now is terrifying and it is predicted to get worse before it recovers. And it will recover, however for now, millions of good workers have lost their jobs and many companies have shut their plants down permanently. Not since the great depression in the 1930's has the economy's outlook been so bleak. In the middle of all this mess are professional smiths who are trying hard to make a decent living from an honest day's work. There are amateur smiths, now unemployed because of plant closings, who are doing all they can to survive and turn their hobby into a fledging business and get through these rough times. And they can do it. For, unlike during the depression, today's artist-blacksmithing community has the resources and networking available to help them successfully compete in today's turbulent business world. And ABANA with its affiliates is at the center.

Some of our affiliates have been around a long time. Some of them were formed as local chapters of ABANA soon after ABANA was formed. Well, they have grown up. They are big boys now and no longer need the guidance and the direction and the assistance of their parent. And they really have done a great job of it. They have extensive workshops, great grant and scholarship programs, sponsor and promote artist-blacksmith exhibits, coordinate extensive demonstrations and conferences and the list goes on. ABANA is a very proud parent, and I am sure our founding fathers would heartily agree. As in any family, we have had our disagreements and conflicts, but we are all part of the family of blacksmiths and that's the way it is.

ABANA was begun many years ago with a gathering of blacksmiths to share ideas and methods. Demonstrate one and learn a dozen more. This marvelous method of sharing of knowledge was carried to Europe by British and German smiths and has since spread over the world. At the founding of ABANA, Dimitri Gerakaris said "Our task is great and so is our joy". And the joy of a proud parent is a wonderful thing indeed.

If you are a member of ABANA, we thank you.

If you are going to become a member of ABANA, we welcome you.

If blacksmithing is important to you but what ABANA can do for you is not enough, will you become an ABANA member for what ABANA can do for blacksmithing?

**Bruce Woodward**

**ABANA Affiliate Relations Committee Chair**

# Blacksmith's Exchange

*Have something for sale, or looking for something?  
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Send your "for sale" or "looking for" requests to Marty Lyon (at the address or email address on the back cover). Please include your name and phone number

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## Tire Hammer For Sale

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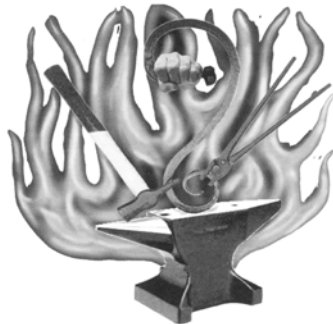
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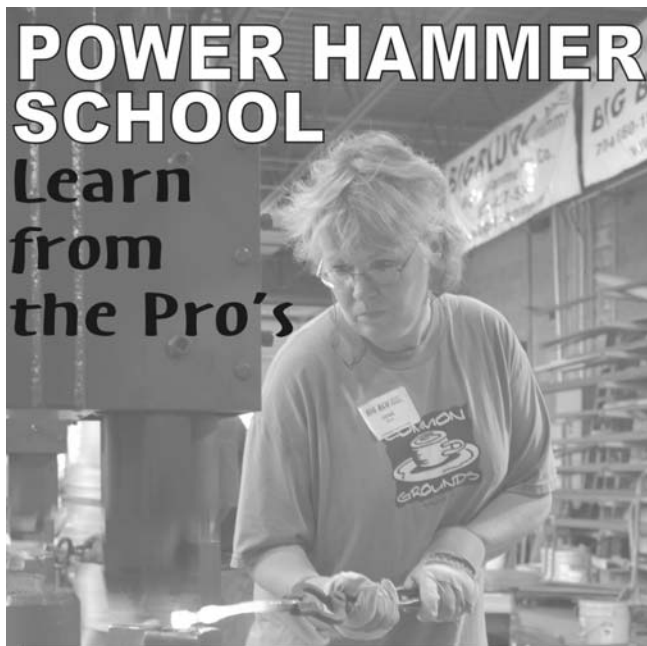
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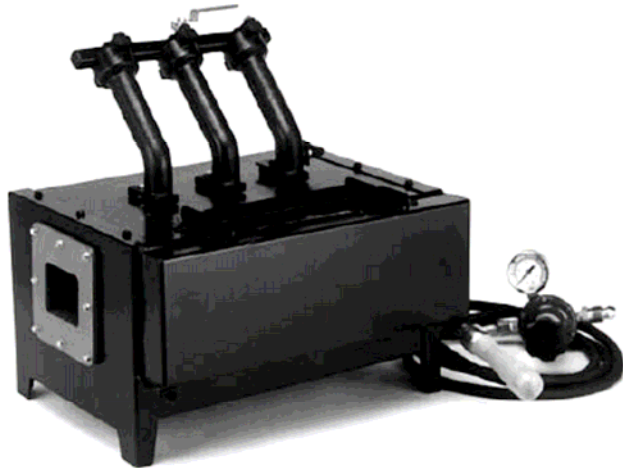
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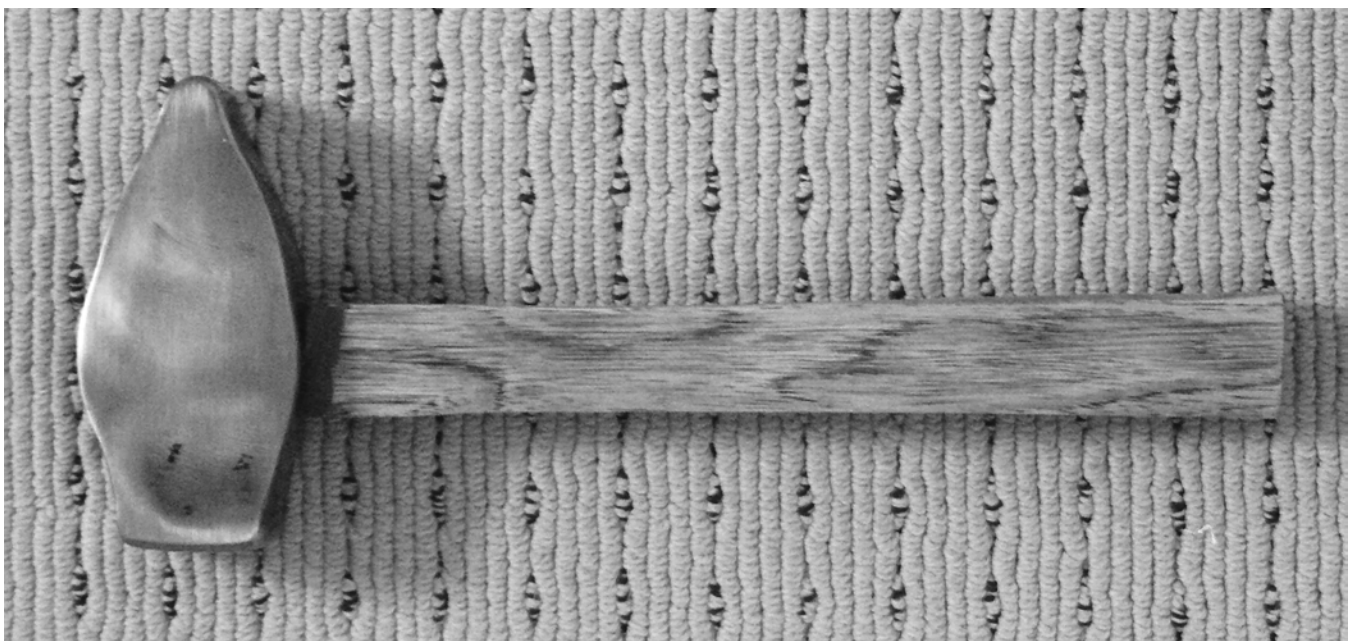
I have roughly 15 tons of Sewell Vein pea stoker washed coal from the Green Valley Mine. 15.5 BTU, 1.25-2% ash. I sell it in 50 lb. bags for \$10.00 and no charge for the bags-you pick up. Whatever bulk load the buyer wants, my front end loader bucket holds 400 lbs. \$10.00 loading fee (or I can furnish shovels). I prefer not to make deliveries. I should have a consistent supply for several years. References available. Fred Pugh 5332 NC87N Pittsboro, N.C. 919 542 4164

### Here is an Excellent Source of Tool Steel:

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### Jim Kennady's Finished Hammer (from page 11)

At our Forth Quarter Chapter Meeting, at Jimmy Alexander's shop, Jim Kennady began forging a hammer head. Unable to do the finish work at the meeting, he completed the hammer at his shop. The completed hammer, with handle appears in the photo below:



### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER OF ABANA

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## CHAPTER CALENDAR 2009

<b>JANUARY</b>	☞	<u>REGIONAL MEETINGS</u>
<b>FEBRUARY</b>	☞	<u>REGIONAL MEETINGS</u>
<b>MARCH</b>	☞	<u>REGIONAL MEETINGS</u>
	☞	<b><u>1<sup>ST</sup> Quarter Chapter Meeting</u></b> <b>MARCH 21</b> at 9:30 a.m. Dean Curfman's, Oak Hill Iron Works Morganton, NC
<b>APRIL</b>	☞	<u>REGIONAL MEETINGS</u>
<b>MAY</b>	☞	<u>REGIONAL MEETINGS</u>
	☞	<b><u>2<sup>ND</sup> Quarter Chapter Meeting</u></b> - <b>TBD</b>
<b>JUNE</b>	☞	<u>REGIONAL MEETINGS</u>
<b>JULY</b>	☞	<u>REGIONAL MEETINGS</u>
<b>AUGUST</b>	☞	<u>REGIONAL MEETINGS</u>
	☞	<b><u>3<sup>RD</sup> Quarter Chapter Meeting</u></b> <b>TBD</b>
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>	☞	<u>REGIONAL MEETINGS</u>
<b>OCTOBER</b>	☞	<u>REGIONAL MEETINGS</u>
	☞	<u>Dixie Classic Fair</u> <i>October 2 – October 11</i>
	☞	<u>North Carolina State Fair</u> <i>October 15 - 25</i>
<b>NOVEMBER</b>	☞	<u>REGIONAL MEETINGS</u>
	☞	<b><u>BONUS MEETING</u></b> <b>Date TBD</b> at 9:30 a.m. J.C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown
<b>DECEMBER</b>	☞	<u>REGIONAL MEETINGS</u>
	☞	<b><u>4<sup>TH</sup> Quarter Chapter Meeting</u></b> <b>DATE TBD</b> at 9:30 a.m. Intracoastal Iron, Wilmington, NC

## REGIONS

See map on bottom of the page for approximate locations of each region within North Carolina

(1)

### Western North Carolina Blacksmiths

Steve Kayne Candler, NC  
(828) 667-8868

2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday evening, each month  
(2)

### Triad Area Blacksmiths

Marshall Swaringen Advance, NC  
(336) 998-7827

1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday 6:30PM for demos  
3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday, 9AM for business  
and all day forging

Dixie Fairgrounds, Winston Salem, NC  
(3)

### Grand Buzzard's Nest

Tal Harris Waxhaw, NC  
(704) 843-5586

Last Saturday, even # months  
(4)

### Southern Foothills Blacksmiths

Steve Barringer Mooresville, NC  
(704) 660-1560

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday, each month  
(5)

### Triangle Blacksmith Guild

Randy Stoltz Cary, NC  
(919) 481-9263

1<sup>st</sup> Saturday, even # months  
(6)

### Brasstown Blacksmiths

Paul Garrett Brasstown, NC  
(828) 835-8441

3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday, even # months  
Noon to 4PM

*Note Changes*

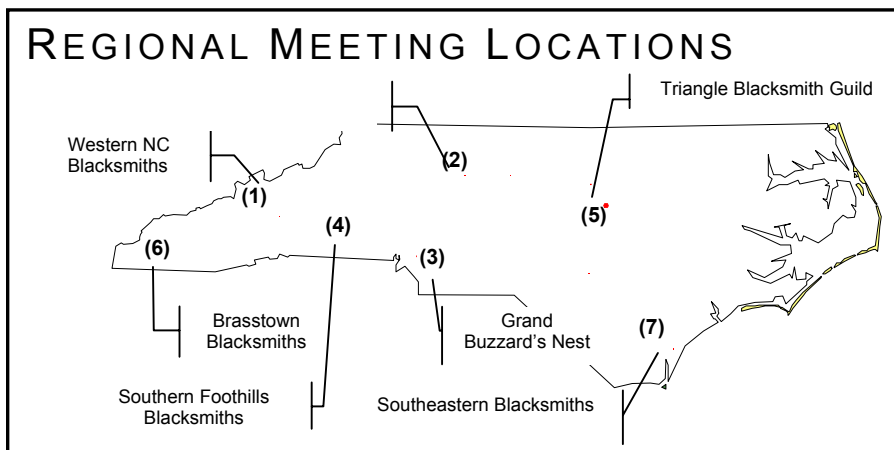
(7)

### Southeastern Blacksmiths

Richard Coley Wilmington, NC  
(910) 547-3131

Quarterly Meetings

Note: Any member is welcome at each of the Regional meetings. Call host to confirm date, time and location.



PRESIDENT

**Jimmy Alexander**  
922 Lakeside Drive  
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919 / 684-7820  
jima136040@aol.com

VICE-PRESIDENT

**Steve Barringer**  
1154 Bevan Drive  
Mooresville, NC 28115  
704 / 660-1560  
steve@powerhammerschool.com

SECRETARY

**Marty Lyon**  
220 Fearington Post  
Pittsboro, NC 27312  
919 / 642-0098  
NCABANAML@EARTHLINK.NET

TREASURER

**Parks Low**  
8108 Deermeadow Drive  
Apex, NC 27539  
919 / 772-4111  
P.Lowjr@att.net

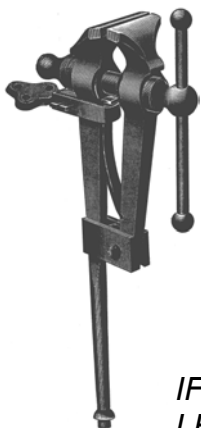
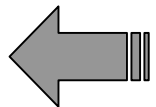
**PLEASE WELCOME THESE NEW MEMBERS**

Joel Rose	Roxboro	NC
Walt Beckwith	Durham	NC
Eric Campbell	Raleigh	NC
Joseph Hoggard	Windsor	NC
Tim Allen	Morgantown	NC
Michael Matthews	Charlotte	NC
Graeme Nichols		
Andy Henderson	New Hill	NC
Travis Hudson	Randleman	NC
Jeff Salter	Cameron	NC
Susan Owen	Boone	NC
Jacob L. Reavis	Boonville	NC
Carri & Michael St. Germain	Mebane	NC

**Don't Forget**  
**2009, 1st Quarter Chapter Meeting**

March 21 - 9:30 AM

Dean Curfman's Oak Hill Iron Works, Morganton, NC



**North Carolina Chapter Artist Blacksmith  
Association of North America**

**THE HOT IRON SPARKLE**

Marty Lyon, Editor  
220 Fearington Post  
Pittsboro, NC 27312  
919 / 642-0098

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