

# HABA HABA

# THE HABA LETTER

The Newsletter of the Houston Area Blacksmith's Association Inc.

To Preserve and Promote the Art and Craft of Blacksmithing  
Through Education.

HABA Web Site: [www.habairon.org](http://www.habairon.org)

December 2002 Edition

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## A SHORT NOTE FROM THE PREZ

**ANNUAL HABA KNIFE MAKING  
WORKSHOP AND AUCTION  
JAN. 18 – LEE OATES SHOP – LA PORTE**

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## A QUICK WORD FROM THE PREZ

By Les Cook

I hope you and your families had a very Merry Christmas and wish you a very happy and prosperous New Year.

Let's extend a big welcome and thanks to Richard Boswell as a new board member and for assuming the vice president's position. Richard is working on the web page changes and associated items. He brings a lot of experience to us.

Many thanks go to Frank Walters and Larry Hoff who 'agreed' to extend their terms on the board and maintain their executive positions. They are long time board members in these positions. Thank you for your willingness to continue to share your time and expertise.

Dave Koenig has agreed to stay on as a board member and to continue to edit *The HABA Letter*. *The HABA Letter* is a very important line of communication and takes a great deal of time to create and publish. Dave is also working with us in the background, sharing his expertise and knowledge. He is very busy with



his ABANA commitments and I do not know where he gets the time. Maybe he has some at 03:00.

Thank yous go to James and Kathy Porter for taking on the bookkeeping and managing the membership roll. These are important jobs that keep HABA cohesive and again take a lot of time.

Some of the jobs that it takes to run HABA were mentioned. I also want to thank EVERY ONE that worked very hard this past year to make all of the events a success.

We are looking for more board members. Please do not be intimidated by the position. If you feel that you have some time that you could give to HABA, give us a call, e-mail, or tap us on the shoulder. The more the loads can be shared, the less the demands become.

I feel we are looking to another great year in 2003 and there are already some ideas for 2004. Again, please consider board membership or event involvement.

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Les Cook

See you at Bear Claw Knives for the annual knife making seminar

## JANUARY HABA MEETING KNIFE MAKING WORKSHOP AND AUCTION JANUARY 18 LA PORTE, TX

Lee Oates is ready to host HABA's fourth annual knife making workshop. This year the workshop will take place at Lee's new shop at 25 Utah Street in La Porte, TX. Directions to his shop are below.

The doors will open at 8:00 for people to arrive, sign-in, pay for materials, set up forges, say hello and get sneak previews of tailgate items. The workshop will start at 9:00 AM.

Things will get underway with introductions and a short meeting lead by Les Cook, HABA's new President. Lee will then begin the workshop by introducing everyone to the world of knife making and proceed with his demonstration of a skinning knife.

The HABA Fund Raising Auction will follow Lee's demonstration and lunch will follow the Auction. Taco Stew will be available for lunch and the cost will be \$3.00. You can always bring your own lunch or find a place to eat down the street.

After lunch, whatever time that may be, we will all get down to using the

information Lee gave us to make some knives. This schedule will give us several hours of uninterrupted time to complete the knives. These workshops are known to run right up close to suppertime!

A number of people took advantage of the offer made last month and ordered pattern welded steel to make some knives at the workshop.

For those of you who did not want to work with pattern welded steel, Lee will have carbon steel available for a nominal fee or you can bring your own steel.

In short if you want to forge a knife and do not have the materials, Lee will provide what you need at a nominal cost. If you have your own knife supplies, please bring them along to the workshop.

The knife Lee has in mind for this workshop is a skinner. If there is another style you would like to make, I am sure Lee will be happy to give you pointers.

### **What to Bring**

**Bring safety glasses with side**

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## **shields. This is a requirement!**

Bring your forge and tools if you have them.

If you do not have a forge and tools, please come anyway. There will be plenty of room at some forge during the workshop and someone to lend you a hand if you need it.

Bring Coal for your coal forge. Please do not bring any Forge Coke unless you know it is completely dry and have experience using it.

**NOTE: For those who recently purchased Forge Coke, please do not bring any unless you know it is thoroughly dry and you have experience using it. Forge Coke pops as a result of moisture trying to escape as it is heated fast. This popping can send bits of coke flying through the air with enough velocity to cut the skin.**

**Coke is a good hot fuel that takes time to learn how to use. Learning how to use it in a crowd of people is neither the time nor place.**

**Please contact Dave Koenig if you have any questions, 281-855-2869 or 76021.3660@compuserve.com.**

**Also see the e-mail from Ed Avolio below.**

Gloves and hearing protection are highly recommended.

HABA will provide water and soda.

## **The Auction**

This meeting is also HABA's annual fund raising auction. This year there will be some pretty nice pieces on the auction block. One is a 'cablemascus' knife and sheath that Lee made. We have John Crouchet's beautiful two piece riveted light switch cover demo piece from the September fly press demonstration. There are three pickets from Terry Clark's demonstration and a beautiful finial from Rob Lyon's demonstration.

Please take a look around and see what you can donate to this auction.

This event is also a great opportunity to do some tailgating. If you have an anvil or vise, or anything you no longer need, throw it in the truck and put a price tag on it. This event draws a lot of buyers.

HABA will have some Forge Coke for sale too.

## **Directions to Lee's Shop**

From the East 610 loop travel east on Hwy 225 until you get to Hwy 146. Turn south on 146 and go to Spencer Hwy/Main St. Exit in La Porte. Turn left on Main Street. and go east on Main passing the downtown area, (several traffic lights). About two blocks past the downtown area, there is a large old antique shop on the left (...used to be an old feed store). The next street is UTAH. Turn left and

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go to the barricades. HABA signs will be up at the turn on Utah Street.

Just follow the signs to the shop.

## DECEMBER MEETING SUMMARY

Tudor Forge hosted 8 Boy Scouts from Spring, TX...Buddy Sullivan was the troop leader. The order of business for the day was to make a camp fire tripod and all kinds of hooks.



By early afternoon the Scouts made enough hooks and began some projects of their own. Everyone was energized and had a great time. The scouts then spent about an hour talking about what they accomplished

Frank Walters brought his gas forge and Jim Wheeler brought his bellows forge. Les Cook, Steve Blankinship and Gregg Schuman lent a hand in the morning.

and compared their work with some of the merit badge requirements. All of the scouts made a lot of progress towards the merit badge. Every scout was ready to do it all again!

## THE FEBRUARY 15 HABA MEETING

The February HABA Meeting will be held at Tudor Forge in Magnolia, TX. The start time for the meeting will be 9:00.

Dave Koenig recently completed four sets of gate hardware. There were a total of 12 angle hinges, two



bolts, two Suffolk latches and two "U shaped flip latches". The February meeting demonstration will focus on making a one piece pintle and an angle hinge that requires a "T" weld.

The stock size for the angle hinges was three sixteenths by one inch flat

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bar. The pintle stock size was seven sixteenths round bar.

If time permits, he will also demonstrate the Suffolk latch handle from one quarter inch by one inch flat bar.

## “L” BRAND FORGE COKE... A POPPING PROBLEM

An E-mail from Ed Avolio, “L” Brand Forge Coke Manager

*(This e-mail from Ed is in response to an e-mail from Dave Koenig asking Ed how to minimize the popping of the coke. During the last six weeks, Dave was struck several times with popping coke. One piece of popping coke cut his nose.)*

“All “L” (Brand Forge Coke) is unicellular. This means that all the open cells are connected. Because of this, moisture can still be in the coke even when it is dry to the touch.

When first starting “L”, popping should not occur if it is put on when the starter fuel is first lit.

Only “L” that has been heated around the on going fire should be added on a hot “L” fire. You already know what happens if you don't

preheat as you add. The “L” fire is so hot that it instantly vaporizes the moisture in the center of the coke. The result is that the steam blows up the coke (popping).

Preheating before adding to a hot fire is the only way to prevent popping. It will help if a batch is allowed to air dry but this will not prevent it.

In effect, baking is the only way to prevent popping.

Sorry about your accident. I don't want anything to happen to such a staunch supporter.

Have a great Holiday Season,

Ed Avolio”

## 2003 CALENDAR OF HABA MEETINGS AND RELATED EVENTS

This Calendar will be updated on a regular basis.

HABA MEETINGS	RELATED EVENTS
January 18 - Knife Making Workshop - La Porte, TX	

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HABA MEETINGS	RELATED EVENTS
Lee Oates - Demonstrator	
February 15 Angle Hinge Demo, Magnolia, TX Dave Koenig Demonstrator	February 22-23 Jeffery Funk Demo, Marble Falls, TX <a href="http://www.balconesforge.org">www.balconesforge.org</a> .
March 15 Proposed Arc Welding Workshop - Magnolia, TX Robert Killbuck's Shop	March 1-2, Texas Independence Celebration Public Demonstrations - Washington, TX Barrington Farm at Washington on the Brazos State Park
April 4-6 Hammerfest, Oldenburg, TX Demo/Sales Event	
May 17 Proposed - Fly Press and Treadle Hammer Tool Making Workshop	May 30/June 1 IronFest, Grapevine, TX <a href="http://www.ironfest.org">www.ironfest.org</a>
June 21 and July 19 TBA	July 8 - 11 'Gathering of the Guilds' Houston Center of Contemporary Craft  July 10 - 13 CanIRON IV Hamilton, Ontario <a href="http://www.caniron.com">www.caniron.com</a>
August 16 HABA Organization Meeting/How to Value and Display Your Work Location TBA	
September 20 Proposed Outside Demonstrator/Lock Workshop, Location TBA	
October 3-5 Hammerfest, Oldenburg, TX Demo/Sales Event	Public Demonstrations - Anderson, TX Fanthorp Inn Historical Park
November 15	

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HABA MEETINGS	RELATED EVENTS
Forging Plant Tour TBA	
December - No Meeting	

## FLY PRESS MAINTENANCE

An E-mail from Dan Morris

*(Robert Killbuck coordinated an order of four fly presses. Clint Jones, Tim Bailey, Stephen Green and Robert are the proud owners of the new presses. These four bring the total of fly presses among HABA members to at least eight. Below is an e-mail Dan Morris, fly press provider, sent to his new customers.)*

One thing that you and your fellow Texas fly press owners need to read that will enhance the use of the fly press and preserve it virtually forever, can be found on my tooling page for fly presses. These two simple concepts will preserve your new tool for decades or centuries to come. There are only two issues to deal with and they are: 1. Provide plenty of shoulder on your tooling that goes up into the ram tool hole. 2 Always work with as much of the ram up in the guides as possible.

What you absolutely do not want is a hardened piece of steel in the ram hole, where it bottoms out every time the tool hits your work. Eventually, it will jam the hardened tool into the cast iron ram. We all know what will win the battle between cast iron and hardened steel. This issue is easily

dealt with in the following ways discussed on this web page towards the bottom of the page. I even have two QuickTime movies of the fly press cold chiseling a piece of 3/8" square stock:

<http://oldworldanvils.com/flypresstooling/flypresstooling.htm>

When making up tooling for the fly press tooling hole, all tools should:

1. Have a shoulder to distribute the force of the tooling hitting the work. This will prevent the tool from being driven into the top of the ram tool hole and potentially upsetting or jamming it in the ram. What is worse is damaging the ram.

Over time this could do damage to the top of the tool hole and might upset a tool in the ram making it difficult to remove. A good solution to this is to go to the local farm store and buy some bolts with hex heads that are slightly shorter in length than the ram hole. Chamfer the sides of the top of bolt that goes up into the ram tooling hole with a grinder. You can also weld on more shoulder area to the hex head of the bolt for applications that will cause significant force against the tooling



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in the ram. This helps to distribute the rebounding force of the tool in the ram over more of the ram face and not the tooling hole in the ram.

2. Always work with as much of the ram up in the guides as possible. This gives the ram the most support in the guides and prevents any slop when the ram is at its full length. To do this, just raise your work with a piece of steel under it, so that the ram stays up in the guides as much as possible. I use a piece of 1" cold rolled that I bought at the steel store

and used this as the basis for the fence. I also will add a piece of 1" X 3" wide piece of hot rolled to raise the work to keep the ram in the guides, as much as possible.

Since I won't be able to place an envelope in each of the crates that you will be picking up, could you please make your fellow Texans aware of these points?

Thanks,

Dan Morris

## IronFest

Gary Hilton is extending and invitation to HABA members to help Balcones Forge set up and maintain the demonstration sites at IronFest.

As some of you know, IronFest is a regional blacksmithing Conference. Two years ago Balcones Forge accepted the job of making sure the demonstrations sites at IronFest had

the right tools and supplies requested by the demonstrators. In addition there is someone at the demonstration site all the time to solve any problems that may arise during the program. Balcones is taking on the same job this year. If you have an interest in lending a hand, please contact Gary at: 830-238-3406 or gwhilton@ktc.com.

## Announcing CanIRON IV

### ***Come Share Our Fire***

July 10-13 2003

McMaster University, Hamilton,  
Ontario, Canada

Featured Demonstrators: Elizabeth  
Brim, Cairn Cunnane, Lloyd  
Johnston, Scott Lankton, Doug

Newell, Charles Orlando, Eddie  
Payne, Dean Piesner, Jim Wallace,  
Doug Wilson.

Several forge areas in continuous  
operation, Juried and Open galleries  
of fine Ironwork, Trade Show,  
Tailgate Area all situated on the

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McMaster University Campus. Accommodations, demo sites and other venues are all within five minute walking distance. Family programs will be available.

Demonstrations will be open to registrants only, however the Trade Show, Vendors Area Galleries and

Lectures will be open to the general public.

Registration and accommodation fees are being finalized at this time. Ontario Artist Blacksmith Association  
www.caniron.com

## Jeffery Funk Demonstration

### Marble Falls - February 22 - 23, 2003

Balcones Forge is bringing Jeffery Funk to Marble Falls for a demonstration February 22 -23, 2003.

More details about the demonstration will be included in

the next edition of *The HABA Letter*. You can always contact Gary Hilton at: 830-238-3406 or gwhilton@ktc.com  
(*This will be a very good program. You might put this on your Calendar. I did. ed.*)

## FOR SALE

Jim Wheeler got a good deal on all kinds of band saw blades and is selling some of them at a very good price. To find out the particulars about his inventory, call Jim at: 281-259-8193.

### THE FINE PRINT

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WE HAVE THE  
TECHNOLOGY



HOUSTON AREA  
BLACKSMITHS

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