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To: Distribution

Re: A Houston Area Blacksmith Association

I spoke with most of you a month or two ago about starting a Houston blacksmith association and received a very positive response.

The purpose of this letter is threefold:

1. To let you know what is happening.
2. To begin a dialog about a Houston blacksmith's organization.
3. To get feedback from you about forming Houston blacksmiths' organization.
4. To set up a meeting of interested people to further discuss the concept.

Summary

There is interest in creating a Houston blacksmith association as expressed by area smiths and others I talked to at demonstrations.

Most of the people receiving this letter are members of TABA or are past members who I understand may have an interest in seeing a Houston group formed.

TABA officers are very supportive of seeing a Houston group formed and contributed to the content of the DRAFT by-laws that are attached.

I drafted the attached by-laws using the TABA by-laws as a template. As a result the DRAFT by-laws reflect a Houston organization that would become associated with TABA.

Any future Houston blacksmiths' association does not need to be associated with TABA. An association with TABA, however, is the easiest way to get a Houston group started and is the reason for the content of the DRAFT by-laws.

Communications

Getting a Houston group of blacksmiths organized is going to take a lot of work on everyone's part. This letter is intended to open the door to communications so that we can determine if there really is enough interest to form a Houston association.

If there really is interest in getting a group together, we will all need to get better at communicating with each other.

Affiliation

A fundamental question to be answered by the group is:

How should a Houston association be organized?

There seem to be at least three options:

1. Affiliate with ABANA.
2. Affiliate with TABA.
3. Start an independent group.

Affiliating with ABANA will require us to set up a new corporation and publish our own Newsletter.

Affiliating with TABA will require at least half of a Houston association's officers and members to be TABA members. There would be no need to form a new corporation or create a new Newsletter. And it takes at least 5 TABA members and quarterly meetings to be recognized by TABA.

As I understand some of the options, the independent route requires us to set up a new corporation.

Any more specific information you may have on these issues needs to be brought forward.

Meeting Location for the Association

I spoke with Mark Texal at the George Ranch about using the blacksmith shop there as possible meeting place. There was interest in letting us use the shop on a quarterly basis.

Another person mentioned that Jesse Jones State Park may be a place to meet.

A member's shop is an obvious place to meet.

Feedback

I am asking you to think about a Houston Area Blacksmith's Association, the need for one, your level of involvement, comments on the form of organization, possible meeting places and any other issues that come to mind.

You will find some questions that came to my mind in the body of the DRAFT by-laws. Hopefully these questions will raise others for you.

Path Forward

I would like to hear from you either by phone, e-mail, or letter. I will take your comments and roll them into another letter to everyone.

If there is enough interest to develop an agenda, I propose that we get together for a meeting and begin working an agenda. I know there are a million questions on everyone's mind and all of them need to be listened to and addressed.

If you have any suggestions for a first meeting location, please let me know.

If possible I would like to hear from you by January 11. After this date, please leave a voice-mail message.

I may not be able to get the next letter out until some time in February.

Please pass this information along to anyone else you think is interested.

I can be reached in the following ways:

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Sincerely,

Dave Koenig

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