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To: HABA Distribution List

Re: The April Meeting Of The Proposed Houston Area Blacksmith's Association (HABA)

SUMMARY

Nine people met at the Brazos Forge on April 18, 1998. The day was just a little damp. Rain fell the entire day. About all the rain did is keep people away from a really informative meeting and a scrumptious lunch.

Charlotte and Larry Newbern, our hosts, prepared a BBQ lunch with all the fixing. The brisket was done to perfection, cornbread, beans, all kinds of condiments, and tea. This was all topped off with a delicious peach cobbler. We all sat around the dining room table enjoying the meal and conversation. It is going to be a long time before HABA enjoys another lunch like this one! Thanks for the hospitality and lunch Charlotte and Larry.

Larry began demonstrating some of his production jigs and other tricks of the trade to make production smithing more profitable about 10:00. Things got started a little late. We were all distracted by the beautiful gas forge Frank Walters brought to the meeting. Frank tried his hand at constructing a gas forge patterned after the forge Bill Bastas showed us at the March meeting.

Bill's forge was made with many found items and worked very very well. Frank went a step further. He included some found items and purposefully constructed the forge housing including a stand and coat of paint. The result is a good looking and functional forge. The craftsmanship just jumps at you.

Frank will demonstrate how to make a gas forge like his at the June meeting. And you too can come away from that meeting with the materials to build the same kind of forge. See the information about the June meeting below.

NOTE: The June meeting at Frank's shop will not be a workshop as previously advertised. It will be a regular meeting. If you want to purchase any forge components be sure to call Frank before June 5. Again see below for more details.

BUSINESS MEETING

There was no formal business meeting. Some business issues of interest are:

Cash on hand at the start of the April meeting is $158.00. The April meeting took-in a total of $59.00: $30 from the HABA Hat, $19 for Lunch and $10 from the Raffle. Larry was paid $19 for lunch and the estimated cost of the April HABA Letter is $55.00. The estimated closing balance on May 10 is $143.00.

No additional work was done on the draft HABA Bylaws.

Note to Texas Artist Blacksmiths' Association (TABA) members: There is a call for nominations for the office of TABA President. If you have not returned a nomination, please give the issue some thought and return your nomination immediately.

More importantly, cast a vote when you receive your ballot about the third week in May. Ballots will be counted at the TABA meeting on May 30th. The TABA meeting will be held at Gary Evensen's shop near Lake Travis in Austin.

Lee Oates reported that the East Texas Blacksmith Alliance is in the process of receiving 20 tons of coal. Those of us who ordered some need to make some arrangements to get it when we know the final delivery point. It sounded like there was going to be coal available for people who did not put in an order. And it may be possible to purchase some of this extra coal in 100 pound bags. More specific information as it becomes available.

The Texas Brand and Upsetting Tip

By: Reynolds Cushman.

Larry Newbern was kind enough to open his shop to HABA for the April meeting and shared a number of techniques with those in attendance. Larry is keen on making and using jigs and has plenty of experience in both. For making a branding iron in the shape of Texas Larry offered the following as a procedure to expedite making multiples.

First, take a piece of ½" flat and cut out the shape of Texas on a band saw. Weld this onto a 20" piece 1" round rod. Then Larry fashioned a lever to push the stock into the concave areas on the perimeter of the Texas jig. Larry shaped a piece of 1" by ¼" into a U shape, drilling a hole 2" from the bend. Through this hole pass the bolt through outside of U, through branding iron handle and through other side of U. Secure bolt with wing nut. In the open end

of the U fashion a tomahawk shaped piece pointed at the top end where the Texas jig is situated. Weld this tomahawk piece in between the open end of the U and perpendicular to U's sides. This is now your jig.

Your brand will be larger than your jig as the flat bar will be shaped around this jig. Heat one end of ¼" by 1" flat bar. Over the anvil put a 90 degree bend. This will fit onto the jig starting at El Paso and running to Midland/Odessa. At Midland/Odessa make the 90 degree turn. Reheat. Bend stock at western end of Texas-Oklahoma border by using a hammer. Do the same at eastern end of TX/OK border. Reheat. Use
the tomahawk to push stock into bend at TX/OK border at the Red River. Repeat at the Sabine River, the Gulf Coast. Reheat. Hammer bend around Rio Grande up to Del Rio and around back to where you began at El Paso. Before your stock cools, remove from jig at the last hammer bend.

Larry's Friendly Tip: To upset a piece of stock easier than holding a piece with one hand and striking on end with your hammer try this. Heat the end of stock and grip it with both hands (like holding a sword and your are about to drive the sword in a stump in front of you). Repeatedly strike anvil surface, rotating stock ¼ turn after each strike. This applies equal force to all sides of the stock. Practice this and you will see it produces an even upset with less effort and fewer heats.

Here is more about what Larry showed us:

The first jig Larry showed us was used to bend pieces for a bootjack. He used a quarter by one inch stock. The bending could be done cold and the forging was limited in this case to the feet of the jack. The jack has a total of six pieces: two sides, two legs, one collar and one cross piece. All the pieces are welded together and the horns of the jack are finished in leather. It is a functional and handsome piece.

A vise mounted set of bending horns got my attention. They were very simple and versatile. Each side of the horn is a separate piece. It consists of a half inch by three-quarter inch piece of rod about four inches long. A two inch piece of three eighths round rod is welded to the half inch side of the four inch bars. The bars with the vertical round horns can be positioned in a vise at different distances to fit the stock. To increase the radius of a bend, just put an old wrench socket on the horn and bend away. This is a simple and effective tool.

Larry demonstrated how to make a ring using the cone mandrel, a very useful tool.

Third hands are always helpful. These are stands to help hold long pieces of iron, for example at the forge. They are usually light and easily adjustable The Cadillac versions are tripods with an adjustable rod in the center with a rod tightening feature that makes it easy to adjust the height. Some non-Cadillac versions include the tripod with a vise-grip to adjust the height. And, shops with dirt floors can simply drive a rod with a T-top into the floor where needed.

The square three-quarter rod used to demonstrate the two-handed upsetting technique Reynolds mentioned above, became the stock for several twists. Larry showed some of the basics. One was

the diamond twist. Twist the square rod an even number of times and flatten the twist on all four sides. To complete the twist, reverse the same twist one half the number of times of the first twist.

There was the reverse twist. Twist the bar first on one direction for a certain number of revolutions and than do the same number of revolutions in the opposite direction adjacent to the first twist.

Another twist is to score the center of the square rod with a chisel on all four sides. Make the length of the scores even on each side. Than heat the bar and twist the scored section in one direction. A variation is to twist half of the scored section in one direction and than reverse the twist for the second half. The result is a twist that looks like four bars are twisted together.

Twists are a lot of fun and the variations are endless. When you are at the forge and need a break or don't quite know what to do next, do a variation on a twist. See what you can create!

The last twist required a piece of one inch by three-quarters inch. Step one is to chamfer all the corners for the length of the desired twist. Next, chisel a six inch long rectangle beginning just inside the chamfered edge on the two one-inch sides. Connect the parallel lines at the top and bottom with the chisel. Next chisel diagonal lines beginning in one corner and extending about a half-inch down the other side. Make the chisel marks about one half inch apart, thin and deep and the same on each side. Heat the area and twist in the opposite direction of the diagonal lines. The result should be a rounded looking twist because of the chamfer and blocks of iron that look like they are just sitting in the middle of a framed twist.

DISCLAIMER: **There are hazards involved in all aspects of blacksmithing. If you choose to use the information presented in this letter, you do so at your own risk!**

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

Several people have a mark they put on their work. Frank Walters suggests that we gather-up examples of these marks and write them up in the HABA Letter. If we provide the marks, Frank will be willing to illustrate them. I think each mark should be accompanied with a short bio of each smith and perhaps some history of the shop.

If you have a mark and are coming to the next meeting, how about bringing an example of it. If we get a few of these, we can get something started.

Here's another idea. I first read about this is the LAMAGRAM and then received suggestions from two different people. The suggestion is to have a HABA meeting where we all work together on one project. Maybe we can complete something on one day and maybe it will take a couple of meetings. I think it would be pretty simple to gather up several forges and twice as many anvils and go to work. What we make, what we do with the piece and when we do it is up to our imagination. What do you think?

SPECIAL THANKS

A very special thanks to Charlotte and Larry Newbern not only for opening the Brazos Forge and a fine series of demonstrations but also the delicious lunch. The lunch was quite unexpected and will be difficult to top!

To Frank Walters for the superb illustration of his new gas forge. See the attached illustration. And for bringing out his new gas forge in the wet weather. It seems the water on the firebrick popped a couple when he fired it up.

And a belated special thanks to Charles and Sharon Heathcock for bringing their portable generator to the Bill Bastas' demonstration. The generator was going to provide some light in the Tudor Forge in the event the demonstration needed to go indoors.

NEXT MEETINGS

MAY MEETING

The next HABA meeting will be held at the Tudor Forge between Pinehurst and Magnolia, TX. The date is May 16 1998 and the start time is 9:00 am.

The featured demonstrator (tentative that is) will be our very own Gary Hilton. This is the last time Gary will be a resident of Houston when we have one of our meetings. Sue and Gary will be moving to the hill country, Hunt area, next month. The tentative part is to take care of any construction problems that might arise on the new house.

Gary plans to demonstrate the following: a large pepper from a one and one-half inch pipe…or larger?; a basket twist handle, a forge welded poker, a spring fuller and whatever else we can talk him into demonstrating.

Should Gary have to bow out, yours truly will demonstrate a couple of new pieces I am working to develop; a one piece spatula and a one piece honey dipper. For those of us who do not have our own mark, I will demonstrate how to make a simple and functional one.

Frank Walters plans to bring his new gas forge too. For those of you interested in building a forge, this is a good opportunity to look one over closely before deciding to build your own.

So, bring your safety glasses with side shields, Show-and-Tell items, Resources you would like to share with others, something for the Raffle and a bite to eat.

DIRECTIONS TO TUDOR FORGE

Take 249 NW from Houston. Travel through the towns of Tomball, Decker Prairie and Pinehurst. At Pinehurst, 249 changes to 1774. Stay on 1774. About three miles ahead on 1774 look for a

Texaco station on the west side of the road. One half mile past the Texaco station, turn left or west on Tudor Way. You will find the forge about a mile down the road.

From the intersection of 1488 and 1774 in Magnolia, go south on 1774 about 4 miles. Look for Tudor Way just after the Country Jamboree building. If you see the Texaco station you went too far.

JUNE MEETING

The June meeting will be at Frank Walters' wood/metal working shop. Frank will demonstrate how to construct a gas forge. See a beautiful illustration of the forge attached. The demonstration will begin at 9:00 am Saturday, June 20.

The forge Frank will demonstrate is a design similar to the one Bill Bastas demonstrated for HABA in March.

Originally Frank was thinking about having a workshop where everyone would go home with a forge they made. Well, for all kinds of reasons, this is not possible. What is possible though is for everyone to learn how to build their own gas forge and go home with all the parts to assemble it.

Here is the plan. If you are interested in building your own forge, call Frank and get on his 'supplies' list. You will need to tell him a couple of things.

Do you want to leave the meeting with the forge housing and all the refractory to complete the firebox? If yes, bring $66 to cover the cost.

Do you want to leave the meeting with all of the piping to compete the burner assembly? If yes bring $54. This includes everything from the hose connection to the MIG tip. It does not include the propane bottle, regulator and hose. See Franks drawing of the forge that is attached.

NOTE: If you plan to purchase either the forge housing assembly kit or the forge piping assembly kit or both, call frank at 713-896-7566 before Friday June 5, 1998. Frank needs this time to gather materials.

If you just have an interest to learn how a gas forge works and is assembled there is no need to call Frank by June 5. Just come to the meeting and enjoy!

DISCLAIMER: **As with all aspects of blacksmithing, there are hazards involved in building and operating a forge. If you choose to use the information presented in this letter and at Frank's demonstration, you do so at your own risk!**

DIRECTIONS TO FRANK'S SHOP

From highway 290, exit at Eldridge. Eldridge is located one exit east of the intersections of 290 and FM 1960/Highway 6. (Highway 6 is south of 290 and FM 1960 is North of 290.) Go south

on Eldridge about 4 miles to FM 529. Continue south on Eldridge past 529 about a quarter of a mile. On the east or left side of Eldridge, look for a sign for Perfection Fireplace. Turn where you see all the BBQ pits outside. Go to the end of the building and look for Stafford Cabinet Company. The address is 6742 Eldridge.

From I 10, exit at Eldridge. Eldridge is located between the Highway 6 and Dairy Ashord exits. Go north about 8miles to 6742 Eldridge. Look for the Perfection Fireplace sign. Turn where you see all the BBQ pits outside. Go to the end of the building and look for Stafford Cabinet Company. If you come to the intersection of Eldridge and FM 529 you went too far. Frank's telephone number is 713-896-7566

FOR SALE

Two GREAT mechanical hammers to sell…….

250 lb. Moloch, # 105, big flat dies, nice guard, new flat belt. Runs on a 5 hp. 220 volt motor, weighs 7,000 lb. All bushings are tight, very good clutch, has some wear in the guides (easy to machine out). This hammer is in daily use. $2500. Can be hauled with a tandem axle trailer and 3/4 ton truck. Any large wrecker can load & unload ($100?).

50 lb. Little Giant, # K5429, again an excellent hammer. Large flat dies, new flat belt, new spring, 1 yr. old 3 hp. motor, weighs 1800 lb. mounted on a wooden pallet made of treated 4 x 6's bolted together. Tight bushings, good clutch blocks. This hammer is also in daily use. $2,000.

Both of these hammers can be seen on the LAMA web site.
HYPERLINK http://www.wild.net/~lama http://www.wild.net/~lama Go to the "tips" page.

Both of these hammers are in "plug and play" condition. Need the space and the cash to build a big Kinyon type
air hammer.

Dave Mudge / Magic Hammer Forge
magichammer@geocities.com

IRON ON DISPLAY

I just wanted to tell you that my iron work will be showing -off Tiffany & Company engagement jewelry. The Houston Tiffany store will use my work to decorate their six exterior show windows at the Galleria. Our work will be on public display beginning Monday May 11 through May 31.

This all happened because someone asked.

I was demonstrating at Washington on the Brazos last weekend. A woman came up and started telling me how much she liked my work. She purchased two pieces and left. A few hours later she called me and said that she talked to the woman who decorates the Tiffany store windows.

Tiffany agreed to look at my work. It was delivered Tuesday. I heard back from Tiffany Friday and they are going to use it Monday!

At first I understood that the two women knew each other. This is not the case. This opportunity is simply the result of one person having the idea that my work would look good at Tiffany's and asking the company if they would be interested. A week later it's in the window!

So if you just happen to be doing some shopping at the Galleria during the next two weeks, you might take a few minutes to check out the outside Tiffany display windows to see some really good looking iron....oh yes and some jewelry too.

Tiffany & Company is located right next to Neiman Marcus and faces Westheimer.

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