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To: HABA Distribution List

Re: The May Meeting Of The Proposed Houston Area Blacksmiths' Association (HABA)

### **SUMMARY**

HABA met at the Tudor Forge on May 16, 1998. Twenty people came out into the hot, calm smoke filled Houston air to watch Gary Hilton demonstrate. Gary really worked. He completed an ambitious agenda of demonstrating how to forge peppers...from two and one half inch pipe, to forge weld a half inch poker shaft to a one inch handle and to forge a basket twist from four three-eighths round rods.

Several people got involved in the effort. Charlie Heathcock, Reynolds Cushman, Dave Koenig, Byrom Weiner, Sharon Heathcock, Frank Walters and probably one or two others took turns forging, striking, tending the fire and sharing information. For some reason Gary thought all that help in a hot sticky shop was really helpful.

We all took several breaks to re-hydrate on what felt like a mid August day. The soda, tea and water consumption was way up!

The Show-and-Tell table was filled with all kinds of things from a beautiful set of ante-bellum andirons from Louisiana, work in progress, books, pictures and handmade tools. Frank Walters brought out his new gas forge and lit it up several times to show and demonstrate what it can do. The forge is good looking, most functional and very quiet.

If you would like to learn how to build one of these forges and purchase the pieces to complete one at home, come to the June 20 meeting at Frank's shop ***and let Frank know you would like to purchase the components by June 5.*** See below for more details.

### **ITEMS OF INTEREST**

Some items of interest are:

The HABA cash on hand after the May meeting is \$238.10. Larry Hoff plans to give a financial report at the June meeting.

The coal ordered by the East Texas Blacksmith's Association has not arrived. More information as it becomes available.

TABA will be electing a new president at the end of May. TABA members, be sure to vote.

The idea of having a HABA meeting dedicated to completing a construction project was revisited. There is definitely support for some kind of project. Charles Heathcock suggests that HABA considers a forge with a side draft flue. This sounds like a good project. What is your interest in this project? And, do you have any other suggestions.

There is also support for the idea of recording Houston area blacksmith's marks. If we supply an example of our marks, Frank Walters will illustrate them. It would be a good idea to include some information about the smith and the shop too.

There was some discussion about producing the HABA Letter every two months instead of every month. When the HABA Letter is not published, a one-page flyer would be sent to members announcing the next meeting and items of interest. I think this change would do a couple of things. It would keep all of us up-to-date on what is happening with HABA and cut down on the reproduction costs. If you have any comments, please get in touch with Dave Koenig, Larry Newbern, Sharon Heathcock, or Reynolds Cushman.

## DEMONSTRATION

Gary started off forging a pepper from a one and five-eighths inch pipe. The stem of the pepper got fullered a little thin and split from the pipe. Efforts to save the work failed. The next step was to start over. Now that Gary was warmed up, the decision was made to start a new pepper from a two and one-half inch piece of pipe. We all learned from the first attempt to forge the pepper cap and the second cap was a success.

The stem was forged from a five-eighths inch round. The stem was extended from one end of the pepper to the other. The idea was that the stem could be welded at the tip of the pepper as it was being tapered. The welded stem at the tip of the pepper did not materialize. The sixteen inch pepper was completed with instructions to mig the stem in place and clean up the tip. A sixteen-inch pepper from a two and one half inch piece of pipe is impressive.

The pepper was fullered with two different guillotine fullers. Byrom brought one with that would accept the two and one half inch pipe with room to spare. The fullers were a little sharp and tended to cut the pipe. This is why the first attempt at fullering the pepper cap failed. This large fuller was good to get things started. Once begun, the fullering for the cap and point was

done with hammers and the edge of the anvil and with a much smaller diameter but wider guillotine fuller.

After lunch Gary began with the fire poker demonstration using an eighteen-inch piece of one half inch round for the shaft and a nine inch piece of one inch round for the handle. After a couple of tries, the forge weld was completed. The handle was begun and we all learned a little more about the vagaries of forge welding.

Gary's final demonstration was to forge a basket twist from four three-eighths inch round rod. The rods were each about eight inches long held together in the middle with a stainless steel hose clamp. Gary fluxed and heated one end to welding heat. Then he used a V section of the swedge block to weld the ends together. The result was a beautiful weld. Frank Walters than tried his hand at forge welding at the other end of the bundle.

It became quite obvious that we had one fine teacher in our midst. Frank's first try at a forge weld was a complete success! At this rate it won't be too long before the student will become the master.

By this time there was not a breath of breeze blowing through the shop. Gary in particular was soaking wet and we all decided to break and donate to the HABA cause via the Raffle.

We all learned a lot and came away with a smile on our face.

## **SPECIAL THANKS**

To Gary Hilton for his informative demonstrations under some pretty adverse conditions.

To Frank Walter for demonstrating his gas forge.

To Byrom Wehner for the supply of doughnuts and letting us all see the beautiful ante-bellum andirons. The construction of these andirons is certainly different and enlightening.

To Kip Coe for his spike donation to the Raffle.

To Dean Arnold for donating one of his now famous 12 x12 inch western cedar blocks for the Raffle and his ring binder full of the Blacksmith's Journals at the Show-and-Tell table.

To Jim Wheeler for bringing a beautifully fashioned monkey tool to form the tang on a chisel. The tool was made from a three-quarter inch bolt.

## **NEXT MEETINGS**

JUNE

The June meeting will be at Frank Walters' wood/metal working shop. Frank will demonstrate how to construct a gas forge. The demonstration will begin at 9:00 am Saturday, June 20 and should be complete by 2:00 pm. He plans to complete the construction of one complete forge.

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

Here is the plan. If you are interested in building your own forge and purchasing the parts, 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 complete 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.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE: 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 about two weeks 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!***

Come to the meeting prepared. This includes a pair of safety glasses with side shields, a chair, money for the materials you ordered, something you made to Raffle, maybe a Show-and-Tell item, a lunch if you would like to dine-in and a few extra bucks for lunch if dining-out and all the wonderful things you might want to purchase.

#### 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 long building on your left 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 8 miles 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.

JULY

The location and agenda for the July meeting is not yet determined.

XXXX

May HABA Letter

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