



Eunice Harris, Photo Researcher

Dave Koenig
7418 Branch Point
Houston, TX
77095-2649

281-855-2869

July 23, 1998

To: HABA Distribution List

Re: The June/July Meetings Of The Proposed Houston Area Blacksmiths' Association (HABA)

THE JULY HABA MEETING

By Paul Bonner

Let me begin this by saying, I was just flat conned into writing this article. Something about an object Dave has that doesn't do a darn thing except just sit and stare...

I think everyone will agree that it was another one of those hot days when even the varmints hated to move around and I think it went for us humans too.

A few of us hardy souls from the Houston Area Blacksmith's Association and East Texas Blacksmiths' Alliance got out on those black-ribbons and darted and dodged around crazy people to reach the Heathcock Forge. Charles and Sharon Heathcock operate the forge and I must say they are the most gracious hosts. The forge nestles back under gigantic post oaks and is in the shade all day. In reality the house and all of the out-buildings are in the shade. The big'ol dogs are roaming around and don't bite (I think), with chickens, guineas and a couple of geese. I understand things there die of old age or varmints. It all reminds me of Tudor forge except it is under tall pines...my kind of trees. But enough of this. All are invited to each place and then you know God has a hand in each.

I think I counted about 22 heads talking and thinking hot iron. John Soars was talking and heating a piece of cable in a gas forge. I do not know who owned it. I also noticed after a little while that he moved over to the big coal forge and went whopping on the cable. When he finished and it cooled, I scoped it out and can report that it looked really good. I wish him luck with his detailing because he is capable of turning out a beautiful blade. I am looking forward to seeing the finished knife.

Another demonstration was also going on by a 'little fellow' we all know as Lee Oates. He was hammering out a knife blade and his mouth was really going. Five or six guys had him cornered around the forge a-talking and asking questions. I never did find out if that was 1050, 1095 or 5160 they were talking about. Have to give ol'Lee this: he's a fine blade smith and a heck of a guy I have the pleasure to call friend.

A couple of us were noticing that the East Texas group does not seem to get as big a crowd at their meetings as the Houston group. We also noticed the East Texas group seems to get many different people demonstrating. HABA seems to have only

a few people who demonstrate. This should change and I bet that our HABA president or his Potentate, Marilyn, can remedy this.

We all need to know what's happening in the smithing world and we have a few aspiring young artist smiths. We need to have these young smiths show the rest of us what they can do. Does anyone else feel that way?

Now to the best part....we had a lunch feast set up in a pavilion...BBQ, potato salad, beans & cheese (a new way), chips, bread, drinks and two kinds of cobbler. (I liked to been late!)

I want to thank Sharon and Charles for opening the Heathcock Forge and putting together a really good meeting. Also there are Sharon's mother and dad who made all the food possible. I personally want to thank all of you for being present and I think we had good fellowship. May the Almighty take a liking to all and keep our iron hot and hammer true.

THE JUNE HABA MEETING

By Jim Wheeler

The June meeting of the Houston Area Blacksmith's Association was held on the 20th of the month at Frank Walters' Stafford Cabinet Co. in far west-northwest Houston. It was a warm, muggy Saturday morning just a day before the beginning of summer. Twelve people braved the heat and attended. Instead of a regular meeting it was primarily a workshop for presentation on the assembly and operation for a small gas-fired forge like the one demonstrated by Bill Bastas earlier this year at the March meeting.

It was also an opportunity for those who had previously ordered the forge components, to pick up the kits. Accordingly, there was no formal business discussed and no Raffle. The HABA Hat however brought in \$28.00 and Larry Hoff, HABA's Treasurer, bought us up to date on the finances. Because of the extremely warm weather we had been (and are) having, the meeting was a short one that was fairly well over by noon. No one cared to hang around in the large metal building that Frank said would become an oven by one o'clock (Solar-powered, heat treat furnace?).

Those who bought a parts kit had Frank to thank for the chance to do so. It was he who had ordered the materials in bulk quantity, put them up in individual packages and made them available virtually at cost while donating a good deal of his won time and effort to boot. All the kits were organized and set out on a table very professionally. It was obvious to even a casual observer that someone had put some work into the project. Evidently everyone who ordered one picked up his or her kit....there were none left unclaimed.

Frank had planned, he said, to actually assemble one of the forges but due to constraints of the heat and of a therefore shorter meeting, decided against it. Instead he gave us a step-by-step explanation of how to build one of the little infernos as well as details about its operation. Several people seemed to be taking notes and it would be really nice if these could be worked into a written set of instructions to later be printed in the newsletter...any volunteers???

Frank spoke for about three quarters of an hour fielding question as he went along. Then he took a short break for some cold drinks provided by HABA and to enjoy the fresh doughnuts brought by Byrom Wehner. Then Frank finished his talk. Either he was adept at impromptu speaking or else he prepared his comments in advance. His presentation was concise and well organized.

There was no forging done at the meeting but our host did light off his own version of the gas forge. An interesting accessory he added to it was an electronic pyrometer, which, although it was 'on-the-fritz' would normally allow him to accurately gauge the temperature for heat treating and/or forging. (I made a mental note to ask him about the device, yet forgot to do so.)

Byrom Wehner not only contributed the always welcome doughnuts, in addition he provided his copy of a new book about anvils titled *Anvils In America* for the Show-and Tell table. I leafed through it only briefly but it appeared to be the definitive testament of the subject...the first and only book ever devoted to anvils as far as I know. Although it is expensive (it is privately published by the author) it is a nice volume...hard cover with quality paper that will last...and is sure to become a classic reference. Byrom said it cost \$60 plus shipping and handling.

There were only 1500 copies in the first printing and the first 1000 will be signed by the author, Richard A. Postman and recorded by number. Byrom's is number 468 (I believe) and Dave Koenig has number 764. Since it looks likely the first edition will quickly be sold out, it is to be hoped that a second printing will be done.

Two other books that were on the Show-And Tell table were *Iron Age Primitives* and *Antler and Iron II*, both written by

Gene Chapman. These dealt with knives and other cutting tools and were provided by Frank Walters. They are available from Centaur Forge. Centaur Forge's new 1998-1999 catalog is out, by the way, along with its new prices on many items.

Sharon Heathcock, HABA's Secretary, informed me that the coal arrived as ordered by the East Texas Blacksmith Alliance. It is supposed to sell for \$15.00 per one hundred pounds and there is not supposed to be a minimum order requirement. Buyers must provide their own bags or other container for the coal and must go after it themselves. For more information about purchasing coal from the East Texas Blacksmith Alliance, contact Robert Robinette at 409-721-6199.

THE AUGUST MEETING

The August meeting will be held at the Tudor Forge. Bring your forge, something to eat and your safety glasses.

This meeting will be an opportunity to forge some aluminum. Jack Kalhm demonstrated aluminum forging at the ABANA Conference. It sure is different than forging steel. The August meeting will simply explore what can and cannot be done with aluminum. I have some one and two inch schedule 40 pipe, some one inch round and five-eighths square. That should give us plenty of material to experiment with.

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.