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To: HABA Distribution List

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

THE MEETING IN SUMMARY

HABA met on September 19, 1998 at Tudor Forge. Fourteen people were present. I would like to welcome our newest members Keri Phillips and Darryl Guerdin. The focus of the meeting was to swap and sell. Lots of things arrived and changed hands including a complete portable forge. Four forges were lit and everyone was engaged at some time or another at a forge, wheeling and dealing, purchasing raffle tickets or loading some new gem into the truck or car. The size of the group was little smaller than usual but the enthusiasm was larger. The generosity of time to share information was quite abundant. Some haggling skills were raised to new levels. There were some real bargains. Lady luck was really doing her thing during the raffle. And, HABA's coffers were increased

After the meeting the Treasurer, Larry Hoff, took some time to count all the money and to pay all the bills. Here are the highlights. The HABA Hat at the September meeting brought in \$30 and the Raffle \$94.50. Several months of bills for the HABA Letter, soda, name tags, etc. amounted to \$151.29. This left the HABA coffers with a total of \$415.50.

There was a short business meeting. Coming events included an invitation for us to demonstrate at Fanthrop Inn State Park, a talk by Dave Koenig at the Tomball Museum, and more on the continuing discussion about HABA incorporating or becoming a forge of TABA or another organization.

A Special Thanks to Frank Walters for about five lots of wrought iron and Jim Wheeler for four beautiful pine stumps for the raffle. And thanks to everyone else for making their contributions to a successful day.

The gates of Tudor Forge closed about 5:00. It was a very good day!

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The next HABA Letter will be published in November, 1998. The next HABA Letter will include the events at the October and November meetings.

HABA/TABA MEETING

Dave Koenig, Jerry Achterburg, the newly elected President of TABA, and Gary Evensen, TABA's VP met in Luling on September 27. The purpose of the meeting was to meet Jerry and to discuss issues relating to TABA and HABA. We talked

about four hours. We shared a lot of information and concerns. An issue for HABA was to explore different ways HABA may become a forge of TABA.

The results of the meeting were that we got to understand each other's concerns, Jerry came away with some questions to answer for TABA and HABA's becoming a forge of TABA is still an issue that needs more time and thought. The lines of communication are wide open and need to be used to see if HABA and TABA can benefit from an association.

In the mean time, HABA needs to look more closely into becoming a sub-chapter of ABANA. Any such association starts with HABA becoming incorporated as a not-profit Texas Corporation. So, is there any HABA member or does any HABA member know of someone they could recommend to give us some guidance with the incorporation issue? If you know of someone, please give me a telephone number and I will make the contact.

FANTHROP INN DEMONSTRATION

Charles and Sharon Heathcock, Larry Hoff and Dave Koenig set up at the inn. Larry Newbern set up in the town square. Speaking for us at the inn, we had a wonderful time. There was a steady flow of people. We managed to find some shade, forge some steel and aluminum and talk with others interested in smithing. Sharon and Charles made an absolutely delicious pepper stew that was followed by desserts provided by the park. Come join us next year. It is a lot of fun.

TOMBALL MUSEUM TALK

Dave Koenig talked about an hour to the Board of Directors and members of the Tomball Museum on September 28. Dave and Marilyn brought about 20 forge items they collected and made over the years. There were also a number of smithing books and newsletters from ABANA and the Texas/Louisiana smithing organizations. The purpose of the talk was to let people know that smithing in the world, U.S., TX and right here in the Houston area is alive and well. I think the message came across in words, metal and paper.

Mr. Troy Stallones and Keri Phillips also attended the talk.

FACTS AND TIPS FOR GAS FORGES

Larry Tankersley, Gainesville, FL

Facts about Propane

1. Propane is a liquid in the cylinder, but is burned as a gas.
2. Propane gas must exit, be pulled off, from the TOP of the cylinder.
3. As the propane vapor (gas) is pulled off, evaporation of more liquid propane within the cylinder cools the cylinder.
4. As the liquid propane cools, the pressure of the vapor above it drops.
5. Overheating liquid propane will cause dramatic, and potentially catastrophic, increase in the pressure of the vapor above it.
6. Liquid propane is not only flammable, it is an effective solvent. (The gas is not a solvent.)
7. A propane cylinder could leak, and it is best to assume it DOES leak.
8. Propane is denser than air and can settle in basins or run along the ground to a source of ignition, then flash-back. It could also drain into a sewer and cause an underground explosion hazard.
9. Propane plus air in a confined space (i.e., indoors) is a recipe for an explosion.

Facts about Regulators

1. Any regulator has a diaphragm, a poppet valve and several fittings. Any of these could leak.
2. In particular, the poppet valve, the diaphragm and the pressure gauge are or contain mechanical parts. Any mechanical part is subject to failure with use, sometimes suddenly.
3. Regulators are pressure-control devices, not shut-off valves. Always have a separate shut-off valve immediately upstream of a regulator. (This is always the case anyway when working with a propane cylinder.)
4. Regulators are typically designed to handle only gases. Solvents can harm internal components and cause dangerous breakdowns (e.g., of the diaphragm).

Facts about Refractories

1. Castable refractories need to be mixed with water, set up overnight, and fired slowly to cure. Too rapid heating the first time will cause spalling of the material.

2. Any refractory that becomes wet should be heated slowly to dry it before it is exposed to full heat.
3. Ceramic wool, like many "respirable" inorganic materials, is a suspect carcinogen. Avoid disturbing this material (and generating fine, airborne particles) more than necessary. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for respiratory protection.

4. Therefore I suggest the following safety measures:

General Tips

1. Never allow a propane cylinder to tip in use. Liquid may enter the regulator, possibly damaging the regulator and rendering it unsafe. The result is a surge of propane.
2. Never allow the heat from the forge to heat the propane cylinder.
4. The regulator and hose are vulnerable components and should be treated gently, protected from heat and harm (watch where you wave that hot iron) and inspected before use.
5. The first time you fire up a forge (especially if there is a castable refractory in its structure) do so delicately. Leave the ends open and heat at a slow rate. This will cure the refractory and/or stiffen the refractory fiber.
6. Place the forge on a non-combustible (metal) surface and keep other combustibles away.
7. Have a dry chemical fire extinguisher ("ABC" type) handy.
8. Never leave a hot forge unattended, even if the fuel is shut off.
9. Never store a propane cylinder indoors.

Suggested Procedure for Lighting a Forge

1. Inspect the propane cylinder (especially the valve), the regulator (especially the connector to the cylinder and its O-ring) and the burner (especially the hose) for any signs of wear or problems. Do not install the regulator if you see any sign of problem.
2. Back off the regulator knob or handle (turn it to the left) before installing the regulator. This prevents gas from passing beyond the regulator when the cylinder valve is opened.
3. Install the regulator by hand, without tools, until the nut (left-hand thread, remember) is fully seated. IMMEDIATELY tighten the nut with a wrench. (If you wait, you might forget and have a VERY serious propane leak when you turn on the propane.) Do not over tighten, as this will only ruin the connectors.
4. Make sure the forge is safely situated (no combustible material nearby), the burner properly and firmly installed, and all is well before lighting the forge. Have at least one end of the forge WIDE OPEN.
5. Recheck the regulator connection to the cylinder, and recheck that the regulator is backed off.
6. Then light a piece of newspaper and place it near the door of the forge. Stand to one side in case there is an accumulation of propane in the forge and the forge flashes back. If there is a flashback your face and any other part of your body does not want to be directly in front of the opening.
7. When you are sure there is no propane in the forge, put a piece of lit newspaper into the forge.
8. Then start the propane in this order. First turn on the propane at the cylinder. Slowly turn the regulator handle to the right until the forge lights. The forge should light easily and stay lit. If it does not, something is wrong.
9. If you even THINK anything is wrong, TURN OFF THE PROPANE AT THE CYLINDER VALVE (not at the regulator).

Use and Shut-Down of the Forge

1. After the forge is lit and the flame is stable, make any adjustments necessary to control the air fuel mix at the burner.
2. Close the open end of the forge as necessary to create the working environment needed.
3. Heat the forge rapidly to the desired temperature (except on the first firing of a forge), then back off on the fuel. This procedure usually conserves fuel while shortening the heat-up time.
4. Always shut down the forge by turning off the fuel at the cylinder, THEN backing off the regulator handle (as a safety precaution.)
5. When finished forging, remove the regulator from the cylinder and take the cylinder to its outside storage area at once.
6. Open the forge and allow it to cool for at least a half an hour before you leave the area. This is to prevent accidental fires.

OCTOBER HABA MEETING – SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17,1998

The next HABA meeting will be held at the Brazos Forge on October 17, 1998. Things will get underway about 9:00.

Larry Newbern will be demonstrating some of the work he is doing on a fireplace screen. This should be a very informative demonstration not only for the forging techniques used but to get a feel for some fabrication techniques. Gary also asks that you bring some of your forging and fabrication problems. If you are willing to ask the question he is, as always, willing to give you the best answer he can.

And again for this meeting, you will not have to worry about packing a lunch! Larry and Charlotte will provide the fixings for sandwiches. Larry says it will not be anything special....ya I bet.....

Please remember to bring your safety glasses with side shields and something for the Show-N-Tell table.

DIRECTIONS TO BRAZOS FORGE

Go south from Houston on highway 59. Cross the Brazos River and proceed to highway 36...Richmond-Rosenberg area. Go south on highway 36 and through the village of Pleak. Just past the village of Pleak look for a Chevron station on the west side of the road. Turn west at the Chevron station onto Gerkin Rd. Go one half mile on Gerkin Rd. and turn south on Fenske Rd. Go three miles on Fenske Rd. to Foster School Rd. Turn west or right on Foster School Rd. Go one half mile on Foster School Rd. The Brazos Forge is on the south side of the road.

The address of Brazos Forge is 4918 Foster School Road. Larry's phone number is 409-793-4362.

NOVEMBER HABA MEETING – NOVEMBER 21, 1998

The November HABA meeting will be held at the Tudor Forge on November 21, 1998. Things will get underway about 9:00. The focus of this meeting will be HABA events during 1999. So, bring your dreams for HABA. Let's put them all on the table and put together a plan for 1999.

Bring a forge, something for lunch, safety glasses, something for the Show-N-Tell table and maybe something for the Raffle.

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.

COMING EVENTS

1. The East Texas Blacksmith Alliance meets the second Saturday of each month at the Heritage Village Museum in Woodville, TX. The Museum is on the north side of highway 190 on the west side of Woodville. You cannot miss it. For more information, call 409-283-2272.
2. The North Texas Blacksmiths Association will meet on October 10 in Plano, TX and on November 14 in Ft. Worth. Call John Plantz, 972-335-9097, for more information.
3. The Belcones Forge, a sub-chapter of the Texas Artists Blacksmith Association, meets the third Saturday of the month. Call Gary Evensen, 512-266-2430, for more information. Visit their Web Site:
<http://www.flash.net/~dwwilson/ntba/>
4. Gas Forge Workshop 13 December 1998

Chuck Robinson will conduct a Gas Forge Building Workshop at John Perilloux's shop on 13 December 1998. The forge is a modified version of the Famous Donn Fogg vertical "Bird Cage" pipe forge. It is inexpensive and easy to build and burns less than ½ gph of propane at welding temperatures (about 2400 F). The material needed for forge construction is estimated to cost between \$125 to \$150 depending on the size of the forge and the number of LAMA members who sign up for the workshop.

Materials List For One Forge

- 2 pieces of steel plate 1/4" min, 2'x2'

- 1 piece of steel pipe 12 to 16" inside diam., 24" long, 1/4" wall min.
- 1 piece 1"x 14" round stock
- 1 piece 1" x 2' black iron pipe
- 1 Piece of 3"x 3" x 8" x 1/4" angle iron
- 1 2" to 1 1/2" black iron bell reducer
- 3 2" close nipples
- 1 4" black iron nipple
- 1 2" black iron "T"
- 1 2" Black iron pipe plug
- 1 1/4" x 6" black iron nipple
- 1 1/4" pipe cap
- 1 1/4" brass "T"
- 1 1/4 brass gas valve
- 1 0-15 psi pressure gage
- 1 1/4" male thread hose barb
- 1 2" brass gate valve
- 1 115 cfm centrifugal blower
- 1 piece A P Green Inswool 1" thick x 2 ft high x 6' to 10' long (size determined by id of pipe shell size)
- 4 lbs A P Green Satenite high temperature mortar mix

Any LAMA members who did not sign up for the work shop at the August meeting should contact Chuck ASAP so that he can get a better estimate on the amount of materials to be purchased for this work shop. His phone number and e-mail address are: Chuck Robinson, 601-798-0060 and crobin@datastar.net

FOR SALE

1. Toward the end of October I will be having an auction of my father's blacksmith shop (he was the blacksmith at Fort Larned). He has enough stuff to equip four to five complete shops. It will be in Wichita, KS.

Questions??? Mark Kenyon can be reached work @ 316-652-9955 ext 22 or at home at 316-775-5785.
2. Looking for some good forging coal? Call Robert Robinett, 409-721-6199. The cost is \$150 per ton or \$15.00 per hundred pounds.

WANTED

Bill Bastas is looking for a supply of Bois D'Arc or Osage Orange as it is known in some parts. If you know of anyone knocking down a tree or of someone who has some for sale, Bill would appreciate a call at 512-447-9091.