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To: HABA Distribution List

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

The January meeting was the biggest monthly meeting to date. Forty people came to demonstrate, practice, pickup some resources, ask questions, go away with more smithing information than when they arrived and enjoy the day. We would like to extend a big HABA welcome to David Leyendecker, Neal Iverson, Robert Killbuck and Frank Schumacher as new members. The following family members and visitors who paid us a visit are: Harold Ganshirt, Gaylon Holderwreith, Joanna Peirce, Judy Oates, Russell Cushman, Luke Coe and Debbie Wallace. It was especially good to see Kip Coe, Lee Webb, Russ Klecka and Terry Sondag involved in a meeting again. This was a good meeting.

Kip Coe brought his forge and son Luke to demonstrate the wizardry of making wizard heads, describe the process of making pattern welded steel, better known as Damascus, and to answer all kinds of questions. Larry Newbern also demonstrated how to make a basket weave handle and Eric Gurel demonstrated how to forge a brass Roman "toga buckle". We would look at it and think belt buckle. (I knew I should have written the Latin name of that buckle down.)

A lot of activity was going on at our meeting simultaneously, the demonstrations, conversations at the Show-N-Tell Table, welcoming new members and orienting them to the resources, and the usual problem solving and story telling of small groups.

The Business meeting included the following:

Comments were received on the first draft of the HABA Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws. Comments are being incorporated into a second draft.

The February 6 HABA meeting hosted by Triple-S Steel Supply Company and featuring the smithing skills of Nana Showalter and Bob Bergman is coming together quite well. Word of the meeting is out to all of the other smithing groups in Texas and Louisiana. Seven Houston area Universities received fliers about the meeting. Bleachers from a local YMCA are reserved, and Triple-S is providing basic services, space, refreshments, lunch and a lot of excitement to make sure their Open House and our February meeting is a big success.

The budget for the February Meeting is \$250. This cost should cover a bleacher donation, PA system rental, reproduction costs for a HABA handout, phone charges, sign materials, postage, painters' hats and maybe a few other odds and ends.

HABA members need to take an active part to make sure things get done before and during this meeting. As co-hosts, there will be jobs to be done the entire day. The plan is to spread the work among many HABA members so that everyone will

have a chance to concentrate on some part of the demonstrations and the Triple-S resources.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO CARPOOL AND ARRIVE EARLY. PARKING FOR THIS EVENT WILL BE TIGHT.

Here are some of the jobs and the people who will get them organized:

Dave Koenig will get fliers out to the smithing groups and notify newspapers about the event.

Keri Phillips is working with Triple-S to design a candle shade. Triple-S plans to cut the shades out and make them available as door prizes.

Tim Crowden and his wife are making a number of signs for the event.

Lee Webb and Charles Heathcock will greet people at the Triple-S plant entrances, answer questions and direct them to parking areas.

Marilyn Koenig, Sharon Heathcock and Keri Phillips will get everyone signed-in, provide name tags, hand out door prize tickets and answer questions.

Frank Walters is putting together a PA system with some new and existing equipment. Frank's intent is to recoup his cost by renting the equipment to HABA and two other organizations of which he is a member.

The Show-N-Tell and Iron-In-The-Hat tables will be popular spots. If you have something like a piece of your work or a tool you would like people to see, please bring it along. Anything you would like to donate to HABA for an auction or raffle, please bring that too. Frank Walters, Byrom Wehner and Charles Heathcock plan to watch the table during the day and answer questions for people. We will probably need more people for this area. So, if someone taps you on the shoulder to lend a hand for while, we would sure appreciate your time.

Larry Newbern will provide any additional smithing tools Nana and Bob will need for their demonstrations. Larry also offered to be the fire-person at the forge.

Jason Neumann will be taking some pictures. Anyone else who would like to share a few pictures with the group is welcome to do so. I guess we need to start a HABA album.

Reynolds Cushman and Jim Wheeler will take some notes for the HABA Letter. This also means everyone else who is taking notes is welcome to send a copy to Dave Koenig. The importance of these notes is in the ideas they capture. Legibility, spelling, organization, punctuation....all that stuff is for the editor to worry about. Oh yes, any sketches are welcome too.

If there are some things you can think of to make this meeting run more smoothly, contact one of the officers.

The HABA coffers with all bills paid on January 16, 1999 include \$583.00.

The meeting broke up about 5:00.

Show-N-Tell

The Show-N-Tell table was especially rich with hand forged items this month. This table is always the focal point for many conversations and a catalyst to try something new. Here are some of the things I remember seeing.

Pictures: Larry Newbern and John Forsman passed around pictures of recently completed work. Larry showed us his installed fireplace screen. This is the screen he talked about and showed as work-in-progress at the November meeting. It looked to me like Larry managed to capture the flame of the fireplace in the iron itself.

John Forsman installed a curved stair banister. As I understand, it was John's first attempt at a curved banister. The design was open and very appealing. He is now working on another banister that will be similar in design and will include heavier forged components.

Lee Oates brought us a sampling of his knives. These always get a lot of attention because of the variety of shapes and materials and the quality of his work. Along with his display came the answers to any questions about how to make them.

Jim Wheeler showed us his completed bolt cutter heads cut and ground from a truck spring. There were also two chisels he forged from rebar and tempered. One chisel was filed and its twin was forged. If a person could choose one of the two, the decision would be difficult.

Dave Koenig had two aluminum walking sticks for inspection. One with a round head was complete and the other with a tee-head was in the rough forged stage.

Kip Coe and his son Luke showed us some spike knives, a steak turner, a Damascus blade, and several other beautifully forged items.

Tim Bailey brought an example of a curtain rod holder he is developing. The design is simple and bold. It is made of two forged pieces that were connected with one plug weld. A set screw will hold the curtain rod in place.

Byrom Wehner loaded one big swage block in the back of his pickup and made all of us wish we were the proud owners of this great old tool. My guess is that the block weighed close to 400 pounds. It was rectangular in shape, about two and one half feet in length, sixteen inches wide and about eight inches thick. Get with Byrom for the actual stats.

Keri Phillips had three pieces of her layered geometric shaped silver stickpins on the table. Many of the connections are mortise and tenons, and rivets. She applies many of the same metal forming techniques to silver on a small scale that most of us apply to steel on a much larger scale.

Frank Walters recently purchased some iron African money. It may not look like much to us who work at the anvil but it was real currency not too long ago.

NEXT HABA MEETING

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1999

- Location:** Triple-S Steel Supply Company, 6000 Jensen Drive, Houston, TX
- Agenda:** Traditional and modern forging demonstrations by Nana Showalter and Bob Bergman
Open House for Triple-S Steel. The doors are open for a day of learning and exploring the wonders of cutting and shaping steel.
- Time:** Things get underway at 9:00 a.m. The Open House will wind down around noon and the smithing demonstration later in the afternoon.
- Bring:** Safety Glasses, A Friend in Your Vehicle, Something to Show and Something to Donate
- Do:** Please forward the enclosed flier to others who may have an interest in the meeting. You might include a local community college, your favorite hardware store bulletin board or window, the local museum and other locations that come to mind.

Biographies

Bob Bergman of Blandchardville, WI was born 1946 in Mt. Vernon, NY. In 1967 he graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a degree in geology. He worked briefly for an advertising agency and a film company in NYC and realized he was not cutout for an office job. He moved to Blanchardville WI in 1968 where he bought a blacksmith shop built in 1856 and began to learn the trade from Alex Bealer's book and local craftsmen.

After learning the basics. Bob worked in shops around the U.S. as a journeyman. He also traveled to England as a journeyman in 1985 and worked in 20 different shops.

Bob attended classes at the John C. Campbell Folk School and now teaches there. He demonstrated at regional and national conferences. His current

focus of teaching is power hammer basics and tooling. One specialty is figurative work taught to him by the late Joe Volz.

Bob operated the Postville Blacksmith Shop since 1968 specializing in ornamental ironwork and machinery repair. His work ranges from antique restoration to traditional and contemporary design of architectural ironwork, including furniture, lighting fixtures, railings and gates.

Some recent commissions include gates for The International Crane Foundation in Baraboo, WI, a wall sculpture for The Chicago Stock Exchange and an entrance arch for St. Norbert's College, De Pere, WI.

Nana Showalter is a sculptor who uses Blacksmithing techniques in her work. She has over ten years of metalworking experience. Her work includes one of a kind interior sculpture, tables, candle stands, garden sculpture and commission work.

Nana studied at Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design, Milwaukee, WI and received both Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in Fine Art from UW-Madison. Her work was exhibited in numerous shows nationwide.

She is a former president and a board member of UMBA, the Upper Midwest Blacksmith Association and continues to serve on work committees for the group. She demonstrated metal working techniques at regional and national conferences in DE, IL, MO, WI, AL, NY, CO, and CA.