



THE HABA LETTER

The Newsletter of the Houston Area Blacksmith's Association, Inc (HABA)

HABA Web Site: www.habairon.org

March 22, 2000

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The Houston Area Blacksmith's Association is incorporated. The Board of Directors met March 2 to hold the first Board Meeting. Officers were elected and resolutions were passed. HABA is now

a real live operating Texas Non-profit Corporation.

INTRODUCTION

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**OLDENBURG
HAMMERFEST 3**
April 7, 8, 9, 2000

DEMONSTRATIONS
BUY
SELL
TRADE
AUCTION Saturday 5:00 pm

HOUSTON AREA BLACKSMITH'S ASSOCIATION, INC.

OLDENBURG HAMMERFEST III 2000
Held in April and October each year.
MORE INFO:
Frank Walters 713-896-7566 days
Larry Hoff 281-890-8822 evenings

HOUSTON AREA BLACKSMITH'S ASSOC. INC.

The Houston Area Blacksmith's Association will host blacksmiths from Texas at Oldenburg, TX on April 7, 8, 9. Oldenburg Blacksmiths III is a selling and demonstrating opportunity on a five-acre plot of ground in Oldenburg. This event will take place in conjunction with the Round Top Antique Show. The Antique Show brings about 200,000 buyers and as many as 1,000 sellers to the Round Top area two times per year.

Kenny and Susan Hall offer the use of their property to HABA at no cost. Water and electricity are available. Those participating in this event will be asked to chip in a few bucks or a piece of iron to say thanks for the hospitality.

The public's response last October was surprising. People came to talk blacksmithing more than ever before. About 20 people wanted specific information about smithing organizations and equipment availability. From a contact point of view Oldenburg was a real 'glory hole' of interested people.

Sales were good last October and even more blacksmiths are expected back next month.

OLDENBURG BLACKSMITH'S AUCTION

HABA is also using Hammerfest 3 to raise money for a special fund. The special fund is to sponsor a demonstrator at IronFest, a regional smithing conference being planned for 2001 in Grapevine, TX.

The fund raising event will be an auction of donated ironwork and related tools and resources. Anyone donating something to the auction will have the option of reserving up to 50% of the selling price for themselves. The auction is planned for Saturday evening, April 8. The auction starts about 5:00 PM. The public and area vendors are all invited. This could be quite an event for everyone!

For more information and to reserve a spot, call Frank Walters, 713-896-7566 or Larry Hoff, 281-890-8822.

HABA MEETING SCHEDULE

April HABA Meeting –9:00 AM April 15, 2000

HABA will host about 20 Boy Scouts at Tudor Forge on April 15. We will need about 10 forges to keep everyone busy. The objectives of this meeting are to demonstrate blacksmithing for the scouts, give each one some forge experience and make sure each one takes a finished piece home at the end of the day.

The plan is to feature Mr. Wes Carpenter, Mountaineer Re-enactor and Expert Fire Starter. We will demonstrate how to make and use a fire making striker. The scouts will have an option to make a striker or an S-hook or two to carry things on a belt.

What To Bring: A pair of Safety Glasses with side shields: Full dress period clothing for those who have it: A sack lunch: A forge and hand tools if you have them.

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.

May HABA Meeting – 9:00 AM May 6, 2000

The May HABA meeting will take place at the Tomball Museum on May 6, 2000. There will be no HABA meeting on the usual third Saturday of May. The guest speaker and author will be Kurt House. Kurt will also have his latest book **JOE BIANCHI: VILLAGE BLACKSMITH OF VICTORIA, TEXAS** available for signing.

Mr. House will talk about the life and times of Mr. Bianchi and his work as a bit and spur maker.

There will be more about the Tomball Museum meeting in April's *The HABA Letter*.

BUSINESS ISSUES

The Initial Board of Director of the Houston Area Blacksmith's Association, Inc. met at the Luby's Cafeteria in Stafford, TX on March 2, 2000. All members of the Initial Board of Directors were present, Larry Hoff, Dave Koenig, Larry Newbern and Frank Walters.

The business of the meeting was to officially begin a new Texas corporation, the Houston Area Blacksmith's Association, Inc.

The business of the meeting included the following resolutions:

The HABA bylaws were accepted with the knowledge that some parts may need to be changed as a result of a pending review by the Texas Accountants and Lawyers for the Arts.



Larry Hoff, Dave Koenig, Frank Walters
and Larry Newbern

The annual Board of Directors meeting will take place on the first Thursday of June each year. Additional regular meetings of the board will take place on the first Thursday in the months of March, September and December.

The order of business for the board meetings would be informal until such time as the Board increased in size.

Directors and Officers of the corporation would serve without compensation and no bond would be required.

No Executive Committee would be formed at this time.

The fiscal year of the corporation will be from June 1 to May 31 of each calendar year.

The Board of Directors elected the following officers: Dave Koenig, President; Larry Newbern, Vice President; Frank Walters, Secretary; and Larry Hoff, Treasurer.

All resolutions were passed with the unanimous vote of the Board.

Liability Insurance

HABA purchased liability insurance for the corporation and its members. The policy is a generic policy for Texas corporations and will allow HABA to meet the minimum insurance requirements to demonstrate in the City of Houston. The cost of the policy was \$630.

HABA Membership

The Houston Area Blacksmith's Association is technically a non-member, non-profit corporation. The non-member part of this definition means that the Board of Directors is responsible for HABA, elects the officers and can dissolve the corporation.

The Board does want to offer a HABA membership. How membership will work is still undecided. The Board did decide to ask the potential HABA members for their input. That means anyone receiving *The HABA Letter* is invited to review the following membership ideas and comment on them by April 15, the next HABA meeting at Tudor Forge. (HABA will host about 20 Boy Scouts at this meeting. See above for details.)

The purpose of HABA Membership is to give members a voice in the work HABA does and to create a source of income to defray some of the corporate expenses.

Membership Fee

A proposed HABA Membership fee for one year is \$20. It is a breakeven fee assuming that during the first year there will be about 70 members and these 70 members receive a hard copy of *The HABA Letter*. About \$9 per person will pay for insurance and about \$10 per year will cover the cost of 10 hard copies of *The HABA Letter* per year.

Type of Member

The Board is thinking about different kinds of membership, Individual, Family, Corporate, etc.

From the first HABA meeting and subsequent meetings, the consensus of the group was that HABA Membership, when formally started, should be a Family Membership.

Here are some thoughts about a Family Membership:

For the sake of HABA Membership, a family refers to a single family unit.

HABA Membership would entitle the adult members of a family to:

- Attend all HABA functions at a member's rate.
- Receive one hard copy of *The HABA Letter* for the family.
- Be covered by liability insurance at HABA functions.
- Serve on the HABA Board of Directors.
- Serve on an Advisory Committee

- Serve on Other HABA Committees.

(Note: HABA encourages children less than 18 years of age to attend HABA functions. All children must be accompanied by an adult family member.)

HABA expects all members and visitors to conduct themselves in a way that minimizes the risk of personal injury to themselves, other members and other visitors.

Member Involvement

Because HABA is incorporated as a non-member corporation, the idea of membership may be different for HABA than other organizations to which you may belong. The only HABA Members who elect officers and are responsible for running the corporation are the HABA Members elected by the board to serve on the board.

HABA members will have the opportunity to influence the decisions of the board in two general ways. One is to voice your opinion about an issue before HABA at a regular HABA meeting. The membership issue mentioned above is an example. The second way is to serve on a committee. There are two types of committees on which members can serve, the Advisory Committee and an Other Committee (strange name for a committee).

The function and purpose of the advisory committee is to advise the board of directors on matters relating to the purpose of the organization and to suggest projects that the corporation may undertake.

'Other Committees' can be formed by the board of directors to address a specific issue or project. A couple examples would be an Oldenburg Committee to organize and run this HABA function. Another one may be a HABA Web Page Committee to keep the page informative and updated. Another might be a HABA Letter Committee to assist in the writing and publication

of *The HABA Letter*..

Membership involvement remains, as before incorporation, a critical ingredient to making HABA work. With no members the corporation would fold.

The organization and decision making process before and after incorporation remains pretty much the same in that decisions will be made by a relatively small group of people after getting input from the membership.

What needs to change now that HABA is incorporated is the need for more people to get involved and to pick up more of the load.

HELPWANTED | The 'Help Wanted' sign went up in the last HABA Letter. Doug Block, the HABA Web Master, was looking for a few good people to lend a hand with keeping www.habairon.org up-to-date and looking good. Steve Blankinship and Vernon Tuck responded to the request with an offer to help. Doug is trying to get something organized. If you have some skill to offer, Doug he will be most happy to talk with you.

The easiest way to get in touch with Doug is to e-mail him at: drblock@swbell.net.

Accounting

Who out there has any experience setting up the books for a non-profit corporation? This is an area where we could use some help. Please get in touch with Dave Koenig. All the contact numbers are on the first page.

Who would like to get on an Oldenburg Committee? Our Hammerfest 3 on April 7 –9 should be the best ever. We are going to need some help organizing the auction...checking-in items the smiths are offering for sale...tracking them during the auction, etc.

With a little more experience and understanding of the accounting procedures, the auction in October of 2000 may be expanded to sell things offered for sale by the public. When we get that far HABA will most likely use the services of the blacksmith/auctioneer Tom Lundquist of Onalaska, TX.

The Treasury

As of March 2, 2000 the HABA treasury had a total of \$620. Funds were paid out for insurance, \$630, and \$50 was paid to Texas Accountants and Lawyers for the Arts (TALA) for membership.

The cost of TALA membership which includes processing of incorporation and IRS papers is \$150. Dave Koenig made a pair of matching leaf-form paperweights that sold for \$100 at a recent TALA fundraising auction. That \$100 was applied towards HABA's TALA membership fee.

HABA SMITHING ACTIVITIES

The February HABA Meeting

Charles and Sharon Heathcock opened the doors of C & S Forge wide on February 19. They hosted the February HABA meeting in a grand style. Thirty three people came to the meeting.



Larry Hoff and Howard Owen

making the tool.

We would like to welcome some new people: Donna and Norman Graham of Tomball, Bobby Hawkins of Pollok and Grant Thomas of Tomball. There were also some people we did not see for a while: Rogers Collins, Howard Owen, and Paul Bonner. It was sure good to see so many people attend on beautiful Saturday afternoon.

The project for the day was to make some sign stands for the Tomball museum. After a short business meeting things began to happen. Larry Hoff got started on a stand using a piece of 5/8 round stock. He and Howard Owen teamed-up and got Charles Heathcock making a tool to hold the rod to a piece of pipe they were using as a jig. As it turned out the base of the stand got turned before Charles' finished

Eric Gruel and his nephew Sean McDonald got busy on Sean's forge to make another stand.

Dave Koenig had a stand pretty much done when he arrived but the plate to hold the sign needed some more work.

About a half an hour into the building process A. J. Garrett's creative mind zeroed in on a stand design and three stands were being forged.

By the end of the day Larry Hoff's stand had room for a sign, plant and candle. A. J.'s stand let you take a look at what the sign had to say then look up at a rose shaped finial. Sean and

Eric's had a leaf finial. Dave's was a little 'snakey'.

The Show-N-Tell table was covered with good work. Several of the spike knives that were forged at the January meeting returned in their finished form. Carl Martin takes the prize for the best presentation of a spike knife. His beautiful knife returned mounted on a cedar display rack. Frank Walters had an elaborate handle on his knife. Before he twisted the handle he chiseled in a ladder pattern on all four sides. The result was great.

Jim Wheeler brought a selection of about 10 different chisels and gouges he made from rebar, and screw drivers. Each was accompanied by an explanation of each tool. A couple of the tools had beautifully turned dogwood handles.

There was plenty to eat too. Byrom Wehner came to the meeting with his arms full of doughnuts. It is especially good to see Byrom coming about the time the coffee is done!



Eric Gruel, Sean McDonald and Larry Lamtman

Charles and Sharon fed everyone. They provided the makings for 'frito pies'. (This is a Lee Oates recipe. As I recall it was called something else at another meeting besides delicious!) Charles cooked the meat. Then Lee started opening cans into a BIG pot over a fish fryer. He stirred for a long time. Then Judy Oates took over and made

sure everyone had plenty to eat.

The finances for this meeting went like this. The revenue included \$92 in the HABA Hat, \$60 from the donated meal, \$12 from tee shirt sales and a \$90 donation from Tudor Forge from the sale of the coke. The total revenue was \$254.

A very special thanks goes to Charles and Sharon for opening their shop to all of us, making us feel at home and making sure we did not go away hungry. A special thanks goes to the creators and helpers of the information stands for the Tomball Museum. A special thanks to everyone who brought something for the Show-N-Tell

table...especially those whose names I do not remember. A special thanks to Howard Owen for donating additional safety glasses with side shields. And, Thanks to everyone who came and added something special to a very productive day.



Dave. Koenig, A.J. Garrett, Larry Hoff,

Sean McDonald and Eric Gruel

The sign stands were delivered to the Tomball Museum. Here is a note the Executive Director of the Museum sent in return.

March 8, 2000

Dear Houston Area Blacksmiths,

The information stands which you made for the Tomball Museum are works of art! It is a true gift to be able to produce practical objects that are beautiful as well. We are proud to display them alone or as holding information cards.

All of us want you to know how grateful we are to have received these unique products of your talents. Three cheers and many thanks to you!

Sincerely,

Jean Alelamder

March HABA Meeting

The March HABA meeting at Washington on the Brazos State Park did not happen! For some reason, I thought there would be a group of HABA members at the ribbon cutting ceremony at the new Barrington Living History Farm on Sunday, March 5. We would have a short meeting to announce that HABA was incorporated, thank everyone for their work at the farm and then enjoy the program.

The only part that took place as planned is the 'enjoy the program' part.

HABA was invited to provide a forge and have someone demonstrate March 4 – 5 for the public. Tudor Forge provided a forge and Dave Koenig had a great time demonstrating and telling people that the Houston Area Blacksmith's Association gathered smiths from across the state to make the hardware that makes the doors, gates and shutters swing. A few people even took a flyer about HABA with them. Tim Cowden stopped by around noon on Sunday and demonstrated hooks for the public while Dave went to lunch.

Blacksmiths were well represented during the Independence Celebration at the park. Six additional smiths demonstrated near the Star of Texas Museum. They were: Larry Newbern, Tom Lundquist, Tom Leining, Larry Hoff, Ed Cotton and Lee Oates. As far as I know Barrington Farm was enriched by some additional ironwork from Lee Oates, Ed Cotton, Tim Cowden and Dave Koenig.

When Andy Sansom, the Director of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, toured the farm just before the ribbon cutting ceremony, he stopped by the HABA forge and thanked HABA for getting the smiths together. He said we all did a great job and made a big contribution to Barrington Farm. He said thank you for all of our work.

Now reach around and pat yourselves on the back. Take a deep breath and feel pretty darn good for any hammer blow you made as a result of Celebrate Smithing in Texas!. I know that people tried to make things for the farm that did not turn out and did not get offered. You are included too!

Celebrate Smithing in Texas! was an enlightening project. I hope HABA gets an opportunity to host another Celebrate Smithing in Texas!

COAL COKE CLIPPINGS

COAL/COKE FACTS – e-mail from Ed Avolio

This bituminous coal coke has about 12,000 -13,000 BTU value. Coke is usually graded on the amount of Fixed Carbon. Since this "L" coke has 90.5% Fixed Carbon, it is in the top of the line. A low ash coal usually has a higher BTU value than any coke. This is because BTU's are supplied by the volatile matter in coal. If you are looking just for BTU heat, coal will give you more. However, the BTU's supplied by volatiles will not supply high temperatures. The burning vols are what give the smoke and odors when burning coal. High heat comes when the vols are burned off and the carbon in coal remains as a heat source. That is why you will not get high heat with coal until it starts to coke. For a forge fuel, coal is only worth the amount of Fixed Carbon. Fixed Carbon in coal is usually below 80% because so much of coal is volatiles. If you buy a high volatile coal (28-38% vol) you will have a fixed carbon (100 - vols - ash) in the range of 55-65%. If you buy a low volatile coal (15-18% vols) you will have at best a coal of 75-82% fixed carbon (assuming a 7% ash).

HOT FIRE POTS –e-mail from Gary Hilton

This note is to people that may use coke. Most of you (at the Dorothy Stiegler Demonstration) noticed we almost fried Larry's firepot while burning coke. I burned coke quite a bit today (some coal but at least half coke) and my pot was starting to glow so I took some of the coke out. Also, the clinkers seem to get hot enough to weld themselves on the clinker/breaker or grate. I'm going to try a coke pot because I think they have a heavier wall construction. I would suggest at least looking at your pot occasionally if you're using a fairly large fire and burning coke.

MY EXPERIENCE by Dave Koenig

I burned straight coke in my Laurel Foundry fire pot. My air supply is a hand-cranked blower. It seemed to take more cranking to get the fire hot. When it was hot it was hot! It takes a lot of air to get coke hot and to keep it hot.

I also noticed the clinker sticking to the clinker breaker too. I found that using straight coke seems to pack down and restrict airflow more often readily than coal. The bottom line is that burning straight coke in my forge requires more fire tending than coal. I now mix the coke about 50/50 with coal and like the results I get.

COAL/COKE RATIO AND COST – e-mail from Ed Avolio

The coal to coke ratio is dependent on how many volatiles are in the coal. For "L" Brand* it takes 1.35 ton of coal to make one ton of coke. Based only on the loss of volatiles, this means that the coal to make "L" Brand* contains 26% volatiles. Using BTUs as a judge of coal quality does not apply directly for forge fuel. This is because the BTUs left for forging are the BTUs left after the volatiles are burned off to make coke.

A coal with 15,500 BTU per lb. that has 30% volatiles will have only 10,850 ($15,500 \times .7$) BTU's left after the volatiles are burned to make coke. When using BTUs as a judge of coal, one must know the amount of volatiles in the coal.

If the average volatiles in coal to be coked is 30 % of the coal, (2000 lbs. of coal $\times .7 = 1400$ lbs. coke) (2000 lbs./1400 lbs.=1.43), it will take 1.43 tons of coal to make one ton of coke. If the coal has 25% volatiles it will take 1.33 tons of coal to make one ton of coke. The same ratios apply for a Smith to make his own coke (these are theoretical and based on the fact that no heat is wasted and all the forging is done with coke).

In general, if a coal has 35% volatiles, multiply the cost of 50 lb. of coal by 1.54 ($1/.65$) to get the cost of 50 lb. of coke made from that coal. For coal with 30% volatiles the multiplier is 1.43. For coal with 25% volatiles the multiplier is 1.33. For coal with 20% volatiles (lowest possible) the multiplier is 1.25.

If a coal with 30% volatiles costs \$5.00 for a 50 lb. bag, the coke made will be equal to a cost of \$7.15 ($1.43 \times \5.00) for 50 lb. If the Smith adds the cost of the time taken to wait on the coal to be coked, the price of using coal escalates. If a Smith waits just 12 minutes for 10 lb. of 30 % volatile coal to coke before forging, it will take 60 minutes of time to coke 50 lb. of coal. At just \$5.00 per hour, this is \$5.00 of time to make 35 lbs. of coke (50 lbs. coal – 30% volatiles). The time cost to make 50 lbs. of coke is then \$7.15 ($\5.00×1.43).

Add the time cost of making 50 lb. of coke to the actual cost of the coal to make 50 lbs. of homemade coke and it equals \$14.30 for 50 lbs. of homemade coke.

I admit that using a time cost for an Artist Blacksmith may not be a consideration. Nonetheless, I believe an Artist Blacksmith will get more done using "L" Brand* than using coal that must be coked.

COMING EVENTS 2000

Forging on the River Conference - Memphis, TN, - April 7 - 9

The River Forge Council will be hosting our 7th annual Forging On The River Conference this April 7, 8, and 9th at the National Ornamental Metal Museum's smithy. This year's demonstrators are: John Medwedeff, Peter Happney, and Daryl Meier.

The weekend will begin Friday night with a slide show/social and possibly open forges. Registration fees include Friday social, lunch & dinner Saturday, & lunch on Sunday.

We are offering free registration to a representative from each chapter. The

pre-registration deadline is March 30th. A registration form is available online at <http://www.mindspring.com/~timbrogdon/ForgingOnTheRiver.htm>

For assistance, please call me at (901) 529-1580 or email <mailto:timbrogdon@mindspring.com>

Hope to see you here,

Jill Brogdon

President, River Bluff Forge Council

Dancin Hammers II – April 7 – 9, Canton, TX

The North Texas Blacksmiths' Association presents Dancin Hammers II. This event is hosted by Dick and Stephanie Cook at their Blacksmith Junction shop in Canton. The demonstrators are Susan Madacsi, Charles Stolte and Ruth Carter.

Contact Verl Underwood at 817-626-5909 or vaunder@aol.com for more information.

Treadle Hammer Workshop

Bob Wolford, 915-372-3449, is organizing a treadle Hammer workshop. If you have an interest, please give Bob a call.

The BAM's Annual Conference – May 5-6-7, , Warrenton, MO

The Blacksmiths Association of Missouri (BAM) Annual Conference will be held at the Warrenton, MO Fairgrounds off Interstate 70, 60 miles west of St. Louis, May 5-6-7, 2000.

The featured demonstrators will be:

Kirsten Skiles – High Relief Chasing and Respusse.

Bill Fiorini – Damascus Steel

Tom Latane - Decorative Detailing, Modeling, Chasing, Swaging and Filing

For Registration information contact:

Maurice Ellis

RR1, Box 1442

Belgrade, MO 63622

573-766-5346

Please bring something for our auction – books –tools or your own fine ironwork.

The Twelfth Annual Batson Bladesmithing Symposium & Knife Show April 7 - 9, 2000

Featuring:

OLD TIMEY KNIFE MAKING-----COUSIN WILLIAM WHITE
 MOSIAC DAMASCUS STEEL-----RICK DUNKERLEY
 SABER FORGING, DIRKS & FITTINGS-----VINCE EVANS
 FORGING ASSISTANT-----DON FOGG
 FANCY FOLDERS-----STEVE DUNN
 FRICTION FOLDERS-----CHUCK PATRICK
 HANDLES & GUARDS-----JOSEPH KEESLAR
 INTERFRAME FOLDERS-----MELVIN PARDUE
 DAMASCUS FOR BEGINNERS-----KEITH KILBY
 KNIFE GRINDING, FINISHING & SHEATH FITTINGS-----ALEX DANIELS
 HANDSON BLADESMITHING -----BILLY WATSON
 JAMES BOWIE'S LIFE -----BELL R. HUGHES
 LEARN TO SCRIMSHAW -----MARY BAILEY
 BADER GRINDERS-----DAN JOHNSON
 LEATHERSHEATHS-----KENNY ROWE
 TREADLE HAMMER FORGED BLADES-----GAVIN HARRIS
 BUILD YOUR OWN AIR HAMMER-----MARK LINN
 SIMPLE ENGRAVING & SELLING YOUR KNIVES-----BILLY BATES

These artisans will demonstrate their craft and teach hands-on Mini Seminars.

Pre-registration & Entrance Fee

The Symposium fee is \$125.00 per person. Please preregister. Send registration and fee to Robby Armstrong, 189 Brad Armstrong Dr., Brownsboro, AL 35741 (256-5393975) or robbya@hiwaay.net.

Robby Armstrong

FOR SALE

Blacksmithing Tools and Equipment

The upcoming Hammerfest 3 at Oldenburg, TX should be an uncommon source of smithing tools. Last October there were an assortment of forges, anvils and hand tools. This April we are expecting even more tools including two Little Giant hammers, lots of tongs and who knows what else. Come see us!

The use any of the material in *The HABA Letter* is at your own risk. All persons associated with this material disclaim any responsibility or liability for damages or injuries resulting from the use or application of this information. They assume no responsibility or liability for the accuracy, fitness, proper design, safety or safe use of any information presented here.

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