



THE HABA LETTER

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

HABA Web Site: www.habairon.org

May, 2000

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The Houston Area Blacksmith's Association Offers Memberships...First Time!

Next HABA Meeting at Tudor Forge June 17.

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HABA MEETING SCHEDULE

June HABA Meeting – 9:00 AM June 17, 2000

The June HABA meeting will be at Tudor Forge. The plan is to make simple tools we can all use like, chisels, punches, tongs, scrolling pliers, etc. Doug Block will also be there to demonstrate and talk about the HABA Web Site.

This year is almost half over and we produced some useful ironwork this year, twenty some railroad spike knives in January, four sign stands for the Tomball Museum in February, fifteen or so strikers, some neckerchief rings and who knows how many letter openers for the Boy Scouts in April, and 22 chain links for the upcoming ABANA Conference. The June meeting looks like it could be even more productive.

There are a number of people expressing interest in smithing for the first time and these hands-on kinds of meetings are hard to beat as a learning experience.

Mark June 17 on your calendar. Come-see-us with your safety glasses with side shields, gloves, a forge and hand tools if you have them and an eagerness to share what you know and to learn even more. (Please Note: You can work at a forge even if you do not own a forge and hand tools. Others do and are willing to get you started.)

HABA will provide water, soda, and some round stock (AKA coil springs) for the chisels and punches.

HABA will begin collecting Family Membership dues starting June 1 2000. Family Membership is \$20.00. You might just put some extra cash in your pocket and ‘officially’ join HABA. Chances are you will enjoy the membership cards too...full color business card size, two sided!

Directions to Tudor Forge

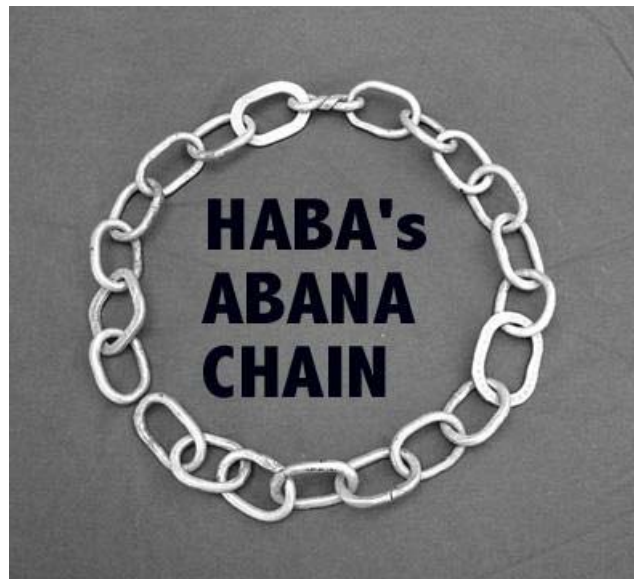
Take 249 NW from Houston. Travel through the towns of Tomball, Decker Prairie and Pinehurst. At Pinehurst, 249 changes to 1774. Stay on 1774. About three miles ahead on 1774 look for a Texaco station on the west-side of the road. One half mile past the Texaco station, turn left or west on Tudor Way. 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

The May 20 HABA meeting was held at Dave Cruvey's shop. Fourteen brave souls ventured out onto the streets after a night of very heavy rain. The rain stopped before we got started and the sun was out by the time we all packed up to go home.

Mr. Leonard Paul, a new dues-paying member, joined us for the first time. Len was one of the first to officially write HABA a \$20.00 Family Membership check and kick-off HABA's first ever June and July Membership Drive. (There is more about HABA Membership below.).



Those who did not take a chance on the weather missed an energetic meeting, an opportunity to learn how to forge weld chain links and two great meals.

Twenty-one chain links were forge welded for the ABANA chain project. Not all of the attempts turned out but we had 21 links put together at the end of the day. If the Prez read and followed the directions for the chain project, the 21 links of the chain would have been oval before we left the Cruvey Forge. As it turned out the links were mostly round, one square and a couple oval.

Well, the Prez did redeem himself to some degree. Before he mailed the completed chain to the Saltfork Craftsmen in Alva, OK., all of the links were 'oval-ish' in shape. Everyone will be pleased to know that all of the welds held for the links that were changed from round or square to oval. He also got rid of all the forge scale, marked the unmarked links 'HABA', added an extra link and clear coated everything.

Dave Crucey is an experienced metalworker and his son Jeremy, also a creative metalworker, professional clown and juggler were our gracious hosts. There was plenty of room in and around the shop for everything we needed. There is lots of shade and HABA has an invitation to return to the Crucey Forge in the future.

We hardly got started it seemed, when red beans and rice, condiments and desert was served for lunch. The lunch break was used as an opportunity for a meeting too. Here are some highlights:

Many ideas were put forward to increase HABA's public involvement and growth. The Prez reminded everyone that these are things that can surely be done. All we need is someone to lead the effort. HABA Committees need to be formed and the workload shared among the committee members.

One committee that needs to be formed soon is an Oldenburg Committee. This committee would be responsible for setting up the site and advertising and running the auction.

The HABA Web Site is changing too as a result of the hard work of our Web Master, Doug Block. See below for an update of what is happening.

HABA's insurance is limited to 12 meetings per year and two special events. This does not mean that every time a group of HABA members demonstrates together, Fanthorp Inn for example, that the group is covered by HABA's insurance. If HABA wants to have insurance coverage for more events than mentioned above, an extra fee will need to be paid.

There was a lot of interest in getting hats with the HABA logo on them. That is being done as a result of the meeting. The hats should be available in time for the June 17 meeting. So bring a few more bucks, \$10.00, to the next meeting and be one of the first to get a HABA hat.

After lunch the three forges were going again and more links were beginning to show up. The chain was starting to come together. About three, it was just a little warm and the energy level was maybe sagging. That was not a problem because a full BBQ dinner showed up, compliments of the clowns in the family returning from a show. There were clowns in and out all day...no not the usual ones at our meetings...real ones dressed in bright colors and looking happy!!

Thanks to Doug Hendrickson, Dave Koenig's smithing mentor, for providing pieces of grader blades for the taking. There are still about five pieces left and will be available at the June meeting. The steel in grader blades makes very good tools like bending forks.



The Show-N-Tell table also had forging hammers by John Murray for sale and samples of spun steel, copper and brass cups by Maurice Ellis. See the For Sale section. There were three small pieces of sculpture by Len Paul, a rock door knocker by Doug Hendrickson, a forged pitch pot and 25 roughed-out chasing tools, a blacksmith's box by Troy Stallones made from four different kinds of wood (raffle item for the June Meeting), a beautiful twisted rebar plant bracket by Jeremy Cruey and a few other pieces that escaped my camera and memory.

We owe Dave and Jeremy Cruey a very special thanks for hosting the May meeting. The few who braved the weather had a great time and everyone who worked on a link feels a lot more comfortable with forge welding. A special thanks to Doug Hendrickson for the grader blade material too.

HABA FAMILY MEMBERSHIP

HABA will conduct its first Membership drive during the months of June and July 2000. The cost of membership is \$20.00 per year. Membership is a Family Membership. HABA Membership entitles 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.

Receive one Family Membership Card.

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 any HABA function. All children must be accompanied by an adult HABA Family Member.)

Please fill out the membership information below and send it to the HABA Treasurer, **Larry Hoff at: 8026 Durklyn, Houston, TX 77070-3747**. This information will be used to update existing Membership information and to add new people to the new HABA Membership List.

Name: _____ Address _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Home Phone No.: _____ Work Phone No.: _____

E-Mail Address: _____@_____

Please Check One:

_____ Yes, I would prefer to receive *The HABA Letter* through the U. S. Mail.

_____ Yes, I will retrieve *The HABA Letter* over the internet at www.habairon.org and save HABA
some mailing costs.

Please Check One or More:

_____ I am interested in serving on the HABA Board of Directors.

_____ I am interested in serving on the HABA Advisory Board.

_____ I am interested in serving on Other HABA Committees.

(Please Note: All mailing lists will be updated August 1, 2000)

WWW.HABAIRON.ORG

HABA's web site, www.habairon.org is reaching more people all the time thanks to the efforts of HABA's Web Master, Doug Block.

Maybe a good way to peak your interest in www.habairon.org is to refer you to www.habairon.org/reports/. The reports section is nothing but the site's metrics. For example from May 14 though May 21, the site was accessed 1296 times. The people visiting the site retrieved 538 pages of information. People visited the site from Japan and Sweden. There are more stats here than you can imagine.

Compared to many other web sites HABA is quite small. But think of it, almost 200 people a day find their way to HABA. A lot of them get information from *THE HABA Letter* and others move on from HABA to other smithing sites. HABA is influencing many people and has the opportunity to influence more.

Here are some additional reasons to take a new look at the site for the first time:

The HABA Letter fresh off the press is highlighted and can be downloaded as one document or one page at a time.

Doug has a new 'For Sale' area set up. If you want to sell that old anvil you are tired of moving around the shop, here is your opportunity to let the world know you would like to sell it. All you need to do is let Doug know what you want to sell and other particulars and he will get your ad on the page. Be sure to send a picture of what you are selling too. It always, helps. Those with e-mail access can find him from the www.habairon.org. His mailing address is PO 1448 Tomball TX 77377.

There are two more new features at www.habairon.org. One is an area for designs you would like to share with others. It may be something you recently completed and want feedback from others. Hint, hint, there are always questions about building a 'first forge'. New members would sure appreciate a detailed drawing or two about putting together a simple, functional forge.

The other feature is the Message Forum. This forum is available to ask questions and get usable information about all kinds of problems related to ornamental blacksmithing.

Go on. Take a look at what is available to you. Enjoy this resource. It's yours for the using.

And a big thanks to Doug Block for all the work he has put into www.habairon.org.

Doug is still looking for some assistance to keep the page fresh and to get new ideas. If anyone would like to help maintain a section of the HABA page, for example the 'For Sale' section, it is a good chance to learn HTML and web pages.

People volunteering to update sections can keep in touch with one another, ask questions or post ideas in the Message Forum area under the "HABA WEB IDEAS" section. Doug will even offer to write the HTML code if a volunteer gets the data together and helps correct their own code. These jobs will require a person with more interest in learning than experience.

BUSINESS ISSUES

Bylaws

A few more changes are being made to the final draft of the HABA Bylaws. This version is expected to be approved at the next Board Meeting, June 8, 2000.

Membership

Membership was discussed at the May meeting. The consensus was to begin the Family Membership Drive and not be concerned about other types of membership at this time. The next type of HABA Membership to become available will probably be a HABA Corporate Membership.

HABA Membership Cards

After much gnashing of teeth at the computer, 70 copies of the HABA Family Membership Cards are printed and ready for distribution. The back of the card serves as a receipt and is a color picture of Lee Oates' railroad spike demonstration knife in the fire. It looks hot!

Finances

HABA finally has a bank account open and is ready to start writing checks. The plan is to pay all bills before the June 17 HABA Meeting. HABA also appreciates the patience of the people due a check from the Oldenburg Auction.

HABA Hats

Two dozen HABA hats will be available for sale at the June meeting. The caps are all cloth with a dark gray top and black bill. The HABA logo will be screened on the front, \$10.00.

NOTES ON THE FLYPRESS

By Brad Silberberg

Part 1 of 2



The flypress, or hand-operated screw press is a versatile and powerful machine that can be used for hot or cold straightening, bending, forming and chiseling of metal. The press is not a substitute for a power hammer or treadle hammer, but can be used to achieve some of the same results as the treadle hammer.

The flypress is a very simple machine, consisting of a heavy cast iron frame, a screw, and a cross arm with weights at the top. One or more handles hang down from the cross arm and are used to turn the screw. Turning the screw raises and lowers a ram that rides in guides. A hole in the ram accepts tooling, usually held in place with a simple set screw.

The press is used by lowering the tool held in the ram against the work piece and then advancing the tool into the work by

raising the screw about one eighth to one quarter of a turn and slamming the screw back down.

The body motion of using a flypress is nearly the same as that of opening and closing a door. The weights on top of the cross arm want to keep spinning when the screw bottoms out against the work. The momentum provides that last powerful torque on the screw that crushes against the work. The press provides a momentary SQUEEZE instead of a hammer-like blow.

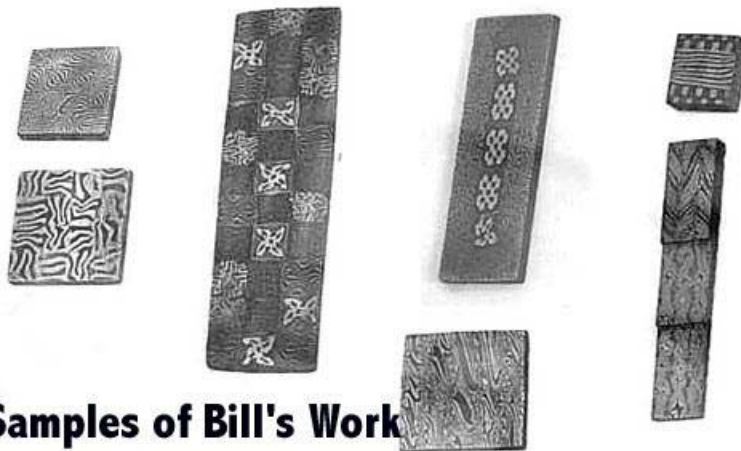
There are many advantages to having one or more flypresses in the blacksmith shop. Since the press tools are attached to the ram and bed of the machine, the work can be held in one hand and the press operated with the other. This makes it very easy for one person to perform tasks like straight or curved cold chisel incising, cold straightening of bent bar stock (without leaving tool marks!), hot cutting large stock, punching, etc. The mechanical advantage of the screw and spinning weights can generate great force with only reasonable physical effort. A small press can bend 1" square bar stock into a fairly tight radius without heating, and is great for adjusting hot bent work after it cools.

Flypresses are really made for repeat forming. Production runs of things like collar blanks, bent drawer pulls, cold 90 bends, etc., can be made quickly and accurately. Other uses for my flypresses include; veining leaves, straightening 20 foot lengths of bar stock (using roller head shop stands for in-feed and out-feed support), marking hot bars, cutting long cold chisel lines (with the aid of a guide fence), bending curtain rod brackets, flattening scrolls that were wrapped on a spiral jig, cold bending pot rack bands, edge bending flat bars, bending "flame" shapes, cold straightening twisted bars (with non-marring lead tools), bending hand rail cap molding, and much more!

Part 2 of this article will describe some things to look for when buying a flypress:

BAM Conference

By Dave Koenig



Samples of Bill's Work

A month ago I traveled to Warrenton, MO and the annual blacksmithing conference organized by the Blacksmiths' Association of Missouri (BAM). There were a number of reasons to go: see some great demonstrators, learn something about organizing conferences and visit my Penland mentor Doug Hendrickson. I learned much more than I ever imagined. Here is a summary of what happened and what I learned.



**Kirsten's
Leaf**

It's a long drive to Warrenton, MO. Doug Hendrickson and I drove from his home to Warrenton together. Along the way we stopped in Potosi, MO and visited Tom Clark's, Orzark School of Blacksmithing. Tom showed us around and I got to observe an advanced class being taught by Uri Hoffi. It was a pleasure to see Uri work and how Tom organizes his school.

There are ten student forges and an instructor's forge. From morning until evening students listen and forge. All stock is precut and students listen and practice. In general a week of instruction costs about \$500 and includes tuition, a place to sleep, two meals a day, snacks and drinks.

At Warrenton I helped Doug and Maurice Ellis organize the fairgrounds for the big event. I got to tote this, sweep that, wash tables and the other stuff. BAM has conference setup down to a fine art. The secret is: 'Keep it simple and delegate the work'. It works.

People started to arrive from WI, IL, IN, MO, NB, KS, TX, OK, KY and probably a few other states Thursday evening. By Friday noon there was a stream of people coming, usually with something to sell. A lot of tailgating went on throughout the conference. I walked through the tailgating area late Sunday morning and observed equipment moved from one vehicle to

another. A lot of people knew each other from previous conferences and the story telling was in full swing between deals.

The official start of the conference was a smithing contest. One competition was known and the other was not. The known competition was forging a 90 degree corner in a half inch square bar in three heats and six minutes. I knew what I would do in that event and passed. I opted for the unknown. It turned out to be slitting and drifting two half inch holes in a four inch piece of half inch square with three heats and five minutes. Yours truly managed second place and a \$35 dollar prize. There were six entrants.



The first conference demonstrator was Kirsten Skiles. Kirsten showed us how to do chasing, working from the front of 18 gauge steel sheet as opposed to repoussé that is worked from the back. Her demo motivated me to forge my own pitch pot and rough out 25 chasing tools. I have pitch on order and am expecting a recommended book any day now.

Here are some chasing resources:

Allcraft 1-800-645-7124

Order Red German Pitch (Not the pitch jewelers use. It is too soft for chasing steel.)



Northwest Pitchworks - 360-715-1772

Order the medium grade pitch, \$8/ lb.. The hard is too hard and the soft is too soft.

If you want to purchase a pitch pot, call Keith Johnson, 218-751-9433.

A good basic book is: *Chasing: Ancient Metalworking Techniques* by Marcia Lewis. It is oriented more for nonferrous metals, but the concepts are the same.

Go to the Fiorini/Skiles web site: www.kokametalsmiths.com. You can see the shapes and sizes of all kinds of chasing tools and purchase some beautiful pattern welded steel from Bill Fiorini, twisted and mosaic.

Bill Fiorini demonstrated pattern welded steel next. I did not get to see much of his demonstration. I did catch two pieces of advice from Bill about forging a billet. One is to reduce the thickness of a billet by one half before forging the sides. Two, forge the back of the billet before the front. Bill also used a pointed quarter inch mild steel rod to test the temperature of the billet before welding. Heat the pointed rod in the forge. When the pointed rod starts to stick to the billet, it is ready to forge. It works.

Tom Latane did some hot chasing on a trunk handle and forged a human face. What a joy to watch.

All three of these demonstrators proved again that we all can do beautiful work with simple tools.

Before I started back to Houston I spent the night at the Hendrickson home and with the Latane family. Monday morning Doug had Tom and I working on a pair of door handles for a new addition to the house. I struck for Tom for about an hour and a half. Doug will need to complete the pulls but he has a very good start.

The rest of Monday, Doug and I forged two pitch pots and three bending forks and did some sightseeing.

I headed back to Houston Tuesday morning wore out and with a head full of new smithing ideas

COMING EVENTS 2000

Treadle Hammer Workshop

Bob Wolford, 915-372-3449, is organizing a treadle Hammer Workshop. As of this writing, I understand he has 12 names on the list and is looking for 15. If you have an interest, please give Bob a call.. The location of the workshop will be somewhere in the Hill Country. The father of the treadle hammer, Clay Spencer, will lead the workshop.

ABANA Conference 2000 'A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE' – July 12–16, Flagstaff, AZ

This year's ABANA Conference promises to be a great one. The conference is held on the campus of Northern Arizona University. A quick count of the demonstrators got me right at 50. There will be demonstrators from Italy, Germany, Czech Republic, Mexico, U.K., Ecuador and Israel. All areas of the art and craft of blacksmithing will be demonstrated from the basic to the most complex. This conference is a feast for the mind and senses.

If you have not seen a copy of the Registration Brochure, look for it at and the next HABA meeting. Right now I am aware of seven people from our area planning to attend. The Registration Fee is \$250. Room and Board – Double Occupancy is \$225 for ABANA Members. For more information about Registration, call Pat Mueller at 636-225-5492. Also see www.abana.org.

IRONFEST 2001

IronFest[®]

Blacksmithing Regional Conference
Grapevine, Texas • June 1-3, 2001
www.ironfest.org
ABANA Conference Edition - Flagstaff 2000

One year from now, IronFest, a five-state blacksmithing conference will be held in Grapevine, TX, Northwest of the Dallas/Fort Worth Airport. There are 10 blacksmithing organizations in the five state area of MS, LA, TX, OK and AR. IronFest will be managed by a small group of people from within the region and will operate under the corporate umbrella of the North Texas Blacksmiths Association and with support from the Artist-Blacksmith's Association of North America.

The IronFest site is Heritage Square in downtown Grapevine. IronFest will feature the talents of four nationally known blacksmiths. They are.

FRANK TURLEY - Santa Fe, NM

Frank Turley is a Master Blacksmith. He founded the Turley forge Blacksmithing School in 1969 and instructed many talented blacksmiths. A recent issue of *Anvil Magazine*, Jan/Feb, 2000, has a feature article on Turley.

MIKE BOONE - Delores, CO

Mike is a twelfth generation blacksmith who learned the craft from his father Dan Boone. Mike demonstrated and gave the closing address at the 1998 ABANA Conference. He has a home page at: www.boonewroughtiron.com.

WENDEL BROUSSARD – Smithville, TX

Wendel is one of the top repoussé artists in the country. Broussard studied the art at the Les Compagnos Du Devoir school of repoussé in France. IronFest will be a rare opportunity to see Wendel demonstrate in the Southcentral Region.

JEFF MOHR- Crawfordville, FL

Jeff Mohr began smithing in 1981. He instructed at the Campbell Folk School from 1991 to 1998 and was a member of the

Whitaker Ring Team at the 1998 ABANA Conference. Jeff is also featured in the *Forge and Anvil* series that airs on PBS.

This conference will be different than most others because of public involvement. Heritage Square is a very public place. It is the home of the Grapevine Visitor's Center, a depot for the Tarantula Railroad and a full time blacksmithing shop operated for the city by Jim White. We are told that the citizens of Grapevine are great supporters of events at Heritage Square and to expect an average well above the 250 people a day IronFest originally estimated.

The public will have free access to an Iron Art Gallery, the IronFest Auction, the vendors of food, tools, books, etc., tailgaters and a public demonstration area. The demonstrators for the public will be smiths from within the region who are coming to IronFest and who are willing to demonstrate for one hour. This should be quite an event all by itself.

Here is the first of many invitations you will receive to lend a hand. As a supporter of IronFest, HABA would like to see HABA members show their support for this event in many ways. Here are just a few:

Plan to attend IronFest one year from now.
Offer some of your time and experience to help plan different parts if this event.

Volunteer to put your name in the hat as a public demonstrator.

Purchase an IronFest T-shirt. A limited number of black T-shirts are being made right now. The cost of the shirts will be \$10 for shirts up to XL and \$12 for shirts up to 3X. If you are going to Flagstaff, you can help a lot by purchasing a shirt and wearing it in Flagstaff.

I hope HABA can form an IronFest Committee to work for IronFest's success. Contact Dave Koenig if you would like your name on a list of interested supporters. A lot of work was done to secure the site, the demonstrators and ABANA's moral and financial support. A lot of planning and just plane work remains to be done.

For updates of new developments about IronFest, keep an eye on *The HABA Letter* and www.ironfest.org. Doug Block is providing the computer space for this site and David Wilson of NTBA is the Web Master.

FOR SALE
Blacksmithing Tools and Equipment

Contact Dave Keonig or Doug Block to add something to the For Sale area.

New Forging Hammers

John Murray makes forging hammers from 4140 chrome/moly steel, straight, cross and slash peen. Three hammers will be offered for sale at the next HABA meeting, two cross and one straight peen. The weight is in the 2 to 3 pound range.

John's address is: Box 103, New Mille, MO 63365. His phone number is 636-398-4640.

Spun Metal Cups

Maurice Ellis of Belgrage, MO spins different sizes of cups in steel, copper and brass. These cups can be used for all kinds of projects from dippers to candle cups. An assortment of these cups will be available on the Show-N-tell table at the June meeting..

Here is Marurice's mailing address: Maurice Ellis,

RR1, Box 1442, Belgrade, MO 63622. The phone no. is: 573-766-5346. E-mail is mbellis@therural.net

Oh, Maurice also makes air hammers; 6, 20, 40 and 75 pound versions.

ForgeCoke

"L" Brand™ ForgeCoke™, Contact Ed Avolio, GrayStar™ Products, 800-441-0616 or e-mail benegy@idt.net or 5178 Kneale Bldg. Cleveland. OH 44124.

WANTED

Anvil, 100–150 pound range. Call Dean Mabry, 281-752-9363.

Forge Space, looking for someone to share forge space in Stafford area. Call Frank Walters, 713-896-7566.

THE FINE PRINT

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Dave Koenig
7418 Branch Point
Houston, TX 77095

TO MAKE LIFE SIMPLER

Wipe-up all spills as soon as you see them.

Don't believe all you hear, spend all you have or
sleep all you want.

Look over your shoulder before changing lanes.

"Who you are speaks so loudly I can't hear what
you are saying." Ralph Waldo Emerson