



THE HABA LETTER

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

HABA Web Site: www.habairon.org

November/December 2000 Edition

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January HABA Meeting – **Tours of Lark Heat Treating Inc. &** **Arcadia Ornamental Iron and Steel–** **January 20, 2001**

HABA Is Selling A 100 Pound Little

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Giant!

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JANUARY HABA MEETING – JANUARY 20, 2001

The January 2001 HABA Meeting will take place at two new locations, Lark Heat Treating Incorporated and Arcadia Ornamental Iron and Steel.

The meeting will start about 9:00 AM on January 20. Mr. Frank Clark, owner, will take HABA members through his commercial heat treating operations. This is an opportunity for all of us to get a much better understanding of how steel alloys can be manipulated with heat to change their characteristics.

Arcadia Ornamental Iron and Steel is located a few miles east Lark Heat Treating. Mr. Don McLain, Vice President, will give us a tour of Arcadia's new warehouse. This will be an opportunity to see many different cast and forged components any of us will be able to use in future projects. Don also offered to serve us lunch.

I see the full day going something like this. We will gather-up at Lark Heat Treating and get a whole new understanding of heat treating. My guess is that we will spend an hour or two here. Then we will drive down to Arcadia's warehouse to see their inventory and have lunch.

After an hour or two at Arcadia we will drive down to Frank Walter's shop and take a look at a 100 pound Little Giant power hammer that was donated to HABA by Bob Collier.

This hammer appears to be in very good mechanical shape but does not come with a motor. The asking price for this hammer that weighs 3000 pounds is \$2500. The HABA Board would like to offer the hammer for sale to HABA members first and then to the public. Any HABA member interested in purchasing or seeing the hammer before the January meeting, should contact Frank Walters at 713-896-7566.

Directions to Lark Heat Treating

The address for Lark Heat Treating is 6440 Mayard Rd., Houston, TX. This is a couple blocks south of Frank Walter's shop.

From loop 610 and highway 290 go west on 290. Take the Eldridge Parkway exit and go south to FM 529. At FM 529 turn left or east one block to Mayard. At Mayard Rd. turn right or south and follow Mayard until it T's into Emmett Rd. Lark Heat Treating will be on the left or East corner of the intersection.

Directions to Arcadia Ornamental Iron and Steel

Arcadia's address is 11955-A FM 529. From loop 610 and highway 290 go west on 290. Take the 529 exit and go west, under the freeway. You will see a large industrial area on the south side of the road. There are three different entrances each marked with flag poles. Turn left into the middle one. Arcadia will be on the left.

NOVEMBER HABA MEETING SUMMARY

HABA's November meeting was at the Barrington Living History Farm in Washington on the Brazos State Park. About 14 members came to the farm on Saturday and Sunday, the 11th and 12th.



Five brought their forges, tools and stock to build a clevis or tines for a new harrow.

Well, the results were mixed. The final clevis count was six of all different sizes. No



tines got made but the corral gate got an iron

fastening loop and the back gate of the Anson Jones house got a reinforced hook to keep it closed.

In spite of some poor weather that came through that weekend, those who came to the park to forge, visit or watch had a great time.

There were two new forges that showed up at the park. Ray Hinnant came with a forge made out of a brake drum. Frank Walters rolled out his brand new bellows powered

forge with a clay firebox. It seems that this forge will be Frank's demo forge in the future. Once he figured out how to keep it from backfiring, it exceeded all expectations.

Ed Cotton and Ray Hinnant got their heads together late Saturday afternoon and made the corral gate latch/fastening loop that hopefully the oxen will not figure out how to open. Ed also remade the hook for the fence gate.

The people who made a clevis... as I can recall... are: Frank Walters, Larry Hoff and



Dave Koenig. These same people and Steve and Debby

Blankenship and Ray Hinnant each brought a forge with them.

Reynolds Cushman, Frank Walters and Dave Koenig were the only members forging on Sunday. There were a few advantages to working that day. One was the pace was a little more leisurely. Another was all of the lunch available in the kitchen. The final advantage was that we all made the Feature Section in the Navasota *Examiner*.

Tom Turner, writer/photographer for the Examiner, spent a couple of hours with the three of us at the forge and in the kitchen. Tom did a great job of capturing our

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bantering and musings about blacksmithing
and HABA.

FYI, plans are still in the works to make sure
the farm gets a harrow.

REMOVING RUST WITH ELECTRICITY

By Rogers Collins

Recently, while cleaning out my old shop, I found a project I had done 3 or 4 years ago.

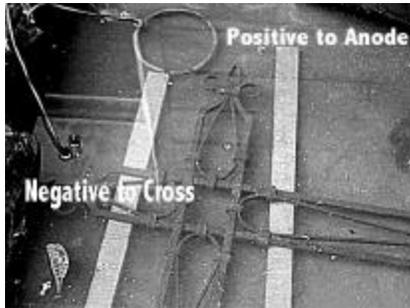


Corrosion had really taken over. I thought the HABA members might be interested in my efforts to clean it up.

I decided to try a method I read about that required very little manual labor (I'm lazy). First I needed a container filled with water and large enough to hold the work. I nailed together 4 2x6's to form a rectangular box frame laying on the ground and lined it with black poly.

To the water I added a handful of Sodium Carbonate (Arm & Hammer washing soda). Next, I hooked the negative lead from a battery charger to the work and the positive to a sacrificial anode

and submerged both.

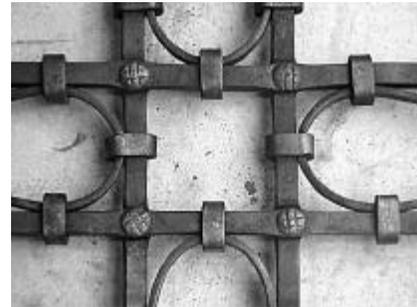


Make sure the two pieces of steel are not touching. (WARNING.. if you reverse the polarity you will wind up with a nice clean anode and a really rusty work piece.)

I later changed the anode to a long piece of square stock and placed it directly over the work. This seemed to work better.

Again, make sure the two

pieces are not touching. The current has to flow through the soup. After about 24 hours I turned the work over and left it for another 12 hours. When it came out it was covered with a black goop that I washed off at the car wash.



The result was a rust free piece of work.

FUTURE HABA MEETINGS

FEBRUARY HABA MEETING –FEBRUARY 17, 2001.

Knife Making Workshop

The February 2001 HABA Meeting will take place at C&S Forge in Dobbin, TX. Lee Oates, professional knife maker, will conduct another one of his blade smithing workshops. Lee will demonstrate and then you will have an opportunity to make a

friction- folding knife. Antler makes a beautiful handle for this knife. If you do not have any antler, a piece of hard wood will do. You want a piece that will fit your hand well.

Here is a note from Lee and Judy about the workshop.

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I would like you to put in the next newsletter some info on the demo I'll be doing in February.

Folks need to look around the house, garage, neighbors garage, etc. for some deer antlers. They do not have to be large ones and everybody knows someone who hunts and has small (thumb size) and medium size (3/4" to 1") antlers that haven't been made into wall mounts. BRING THEM .

Also, they need to bring:

- 1. \$5.00 for the steel (this way everyone starts on the same page, so to speak) and pivot pins that I will supply at the demo.***
- 2. Their favorite hammer and a pair of flat jawed tongs to hold the steel while forging and***
- 3. Their forge if they have one. I figure everyone is going to be REAL busy if it's anything like last years demo.***

I'll have hand outs and hopefully step by step to-go-by sheets/display. I

can't think of anything else that will be needed, other than some money for the raffle and maybe lunch.

***Merry Christmas and Happy New Year,
Lee & Judy***

Auction

The 'rain day' for the Oldenburg Auction will be February 17 too! Bring something to sell. At print time, here is a partial list of items that will be offered for sale:

- ? ? four post vises
- ? ? one blower
- ? ? a beautiful copper leaf sculpture by A.J. Garret
- ? ? one blacksmith box made by Troy Stollones
- ? ? hammers of different sizes and shapes
- ? ? a leather apron
- ? ? a unique matched set of drive hooks

Remember, up to 50% of the auction price may be returned to the person donating the auction item.

A NEW WEB MASTER-A REFURBISHED SITE

HABA has a new Web Master, Andy Walters. Andy took over the Web Master responsibilities from Doug Block a couple of months ago and gave it an entirely new look and enhanced content. The new site at **www.habairon.org** is working. People are finding it and the president is getting questions from people out of the blue about blacksmithing.

Andy, we all thank you for taking on this job and like what you did to the page!



If you have not taken a look at the site in a while, please do it now. You will not be disappointed. If you have pictures of your work, Andy will welcome a copy and include them in the Gallery.

Doug Block, the past Web Master, is still hosting the HABA site on his computer. In addition to hosting the site, Doug got habairon.org up and running. It was his first web page. Doug, we appreciate you getting habairon.org up and running and where you are keeping us! Thanks.

TEXAS SMITH BUILDS AIRPLANE

From: David Wilson <dwwilson@flash.net>

"The Pliska Aeroplane was built in 1911 in Midland, Texas by John V. Pliska, a blacksmith, and Gray Coggin, a chauffeur and auto mechanic. It was the first aeroplane built and flown in the state of Texas.

The Pliska family immigrated to the United States from Teene, Austria in 1897 and settle in Central Texas in a small farming community near LaGrange. Pliska found work as a blacksmith, however, in 1903 he set out for Mexico City to find his fortune. The train stopped in Midland and Pliska helped a local blacksmith who in turn offered him a job. He accepted and began

his new home in Midland."

Pliska first opened a shop in 1909, his blacksmith shop in Midland was torn down in 1962. However, his airplane is still on view in Midland at the airport.

Photo of Pliska and his plane in "Historic Photos including Shops" folder at:
<http://www.onelist.com/community/Texas/Blacksmith>. Full story at:
<http://www.odessahistory.com/pliska2.htm>

David W.

WHAT I LEARNED GOING TO FLAGSTAFF

By Jack Parks – Dakota Artist Blacksmith Association

Part 3 of 3

(Sorry, there are no pictures to augment Jack's article this time. ed)

The following day I went to see Robb Gunter, the father of Chad I saw the day before. It was evident that they spent much time together in the shop. Yet another example of that passing on of skill and knowledge that I think is so important.

Robb talked about junkyard steel and its use for tools. He made a cross peen hammer during the demo, all by hand, using junk steel and with junk steel tools. His program was filled with info, too much to include it all here.

The main gist of what he was offering was, I believe, that you can get started and go along way using junk steel and not be bogged down by high priced steel. By learning to spark test your finds, the type of steel can be determined fairly well. By knowing what the steel was used for before

will tell you what it would be good for now. For example lug wrenches resist bending well so would be well suited for bending forks. Jackhammer bits stand shock well so would make good chisels or punches.

Robb plugged his Super Quench again and proved its performance by making a chisel out of half square (A36), cutting it off, quenching in Super Quench after getting it to critical temp and then cutting through the parent stock with it... very good demo. Robb mentioned a good book that goes along with what he teaches. It is *Edge of the Anvil* by Jack Andrews. It tells about various tool steels.

The final demo I saw was put on by Tai Goo. He does primitive blade forging using charcoal. No, not briquettes but regular charcoal made from hardwood. His forge was made from an old wash tub, filled with wood ashes, scooped out into a valley, and an air pipe inserted into the bottom of the

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valley. He used a hand crank blower as well as some other primitive looking hammers and such.

I heard of Tai Goo before and saw some of his fantasy knives. They were very much high tech but his demo was just the opposite. I asked him why the turn around and he answered that he was getting too far away from why he got into Blacksmithing in the first place. It made sense to me. Tai's demo covered basic knife making steps to make a chopping knife.

Again, too many things to cover here, but the main message is (I think); one doesn't need a lot of fancy tools to do good work. Fancy tools and gizmos will never substitute for experience. Learn the basics well and they will take you far. Tai's message if heard by the beginner would further the art better than if he thinks he needs all kinds of paraphernalia. Anyway I would highly recommend Tai Goo's demos.

For nighttime entertainment they had a new feature called the Gong Show. Well, it was an old concept with a new twist anyway. I think this concept has great potential as a learning tool. Various people got up in front of the audience and demonstrated a helpful hint, with the fear of great humiliation I might add. I think this feature should be incorporated in future events.

The junkyard hammers were also demonstrated so that everyone could see how good they worked. Very nice!

Another nighttime display was the Rockridge Bloomery iron pour. A bloom was made out of iron ore using charcoal as the heat source. It took all afternoon and

into the night to get it done. The spectacular part was when they opened the furnace to get the bloom out. Sparks were flying and made for some good night time photos. The bloom still had lots of refining to be done to it before it was useable though and made one appreciate what the forefathers had to put up with to survive.

The conference in two words... ..Information Overload. There was so much to see and so little time to do it in. So many good people to meet and talk to and then suddenly it's time to go. I can understand why they only do this every two years. The amount of effort that goes into pulling this off is tremendous. Hats off to The Arizona group and to ABANA for there efforts. I hope they made a ton of money.

Well good-byes were said and final deals made on the remaining tailgate goodies and it was time to hit the road. We headed east out of Flagstaff over to Winslow and Holbrook, then on to New Mexico. Once in New Mexico, we hit Gallup then Albuquerque. It is still too arid for my tastes up till now. Santa Fe is where it started changing for the better. We spent the night in Las Vegas (NM). It wasn't quit the same as what I hear Las Vegas Nevada is. Then it was on to Raton and Raton Pass. This is nice country.

Once over the pass, we were in Colorado. This is all good country. Soon we were in Denver again and back to familiar territory. A very nice trip and made nicer by being able to attend the conference in Flagstaff. Now I'm already looking forward to the next conference, hopefully in LaCrosse WI. See you there.

HERE IS A LITTLE TIDBIT OF INFORMATION YOU MAY FIND INTERESTING...

You may have in your personal or club library one or two books published by Cosira in Britain. Their books are an

excellent resource for learning the basics and beyond of smithing. Included in their books are three catalogs of various iron

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work, weather vanes and iron gates. In these old publications you could order full size plans of the various projects. Cosira changed names and offices a couple of times (Rural District Council) and is now called the Countryside Agency. Their web address is www.countryside.gov.uk

I downloaded off their website an Acrobat file of course and materials list. Included in the list are the republications of the Cosira blacksmithing books and catalogs.

I confirmed by email that the plans in the catalogs are also still available and may be obtained from.

The Countryside Agency
Publications at:
P O Box 125, Wetherby, West Yorks, LS23
7EP. Tel: 0870 120 6466.

We may be able to order books/plans from the web site in the near future...

Paul McComb
Ontario Artist Blacksmiths Association
oaba@execulink.com

HABA HAS 100 POUND LITTLE GIANT FOR SALE

Bob Collier donated a 100 pound Little Giant power hammer to HABA. The purpose of the donation is to raise funds for HABA.

This hammer appears to be in very good mechanical shape but does not come with a motor. The asking price for this hammer that weighs 3000 pounds is \$2500, as is where is. The HABA Board would like to



offer the hammer for sale to HABA members first and then to the public. Any HABA member interested in purchasing or seeing the hammer should contact Frank Walters at 713-896-7566.

Bob, your gift is most appreciated!
Thank you very much!

COMING EVENTS 2001

George Dixon will demonstrate in Marble Falls, Texas on February 17-18, 2001. This TABA demo will be at Larry Crawford's shop, same location as the last January 2000, Dorothy Stiegler demo. At this time, the price for registration has not been finalized. George Dixon worked at the Samuel Yellin Metalworkers Co. and was prominent in the ABANA video tape-Samuel

Yellin's Legacy. He was editor of *The Hammer's Blow* and Chairman of ABANA Conference in 1998. George has an incredible collection of drawings from the Yellin studio, which occasionally appeared in *The Hammer's Blow*.

He is an outstanding metalworker.

IronFest

Blacksmithing Regional Conference

The IronFest registration brochures will be mailed to the South-central region chapters very soon. The brochure is also online on the resource page at <http://www.ironfest.org/resource.html>. It has visitors info included, with hotels, camping and related websites listed.

The schedule for the national demonstrations is now planned to be...

Friday, June 1, 2000, 9am - 5 pm
Jeff Mohr
Wendel Broussard

Saturday, June 2, 2000, 9am - 5 pm
Jeff Mohr
Wendel Broussard
Frank Turley
Mike Boone

Sunday, June 3, 2000, 9am - Noon
Frank Turley
Mike Boone

For the general demonstration theme;

Wendel Broussard and Mike Boone may work on a project together. The plan being considered is with Wendel creating an example of repousse work and joining it with a piece of Mike Boone's. Regardless, Wendel will create repousse and I'll talk to Mike Boone later to see what his ideas are.

Frank Turley will forge top and bottom tools.

Jeff Mohr will finish a complete fireplace set and donate it to the IronFest auction.

We look forward to seeing you at IronFest!

David W. Wilson
Chairman, IronFest Blacksmithing Regional Conference

Coal For Sale

George Ranch agreed to order and temporarily store coal for people who order it. The cost of the coal will be \$200 per ton. Before the order will be placed George Ranch will need \$3200 in hand for 16 tons of coal. If you would like to order some coal, please send a check made out to **George Ranch** for the amount you want and send it to Frank Walters. (address on first page). The minimum order is \$100, one half ton. You will be responsible for getting the coal

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from George Ranch. If there is not enough interest in purchasing the coal, your check will be returned.

100 lb. Little Giant For Sale

Includes brake, spring guard and extra 5 hp motor. Runs good. \$5000. Contact Larry Crawford, Hammerfest Forge, 2401 Commerce, Marble Falls Texas 78654, (830) 693-1391.



The Artist-Blacksmith's Association of America is looking for a few good men and women. Pick up a membership flyer at the next HABA meeting or visit ABANA's web site at www.abana.org. It's a deal that is hard to beat!

Little Giant Hammer Rebuilding Seminars

Two Seminars will be offered in Nebraska City, Nebraska March 16 – 18 and March 23 – 25. The cost is \$95. For more details write Sid Suedmeier, Little Giant, 420 4th Corso, Suite B, Nebraska City, NE or call 402-873-6603. Hmmmhhh buy the HABA Hammer and attend the seminar!!!

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