



# THE HABA LETTER

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

HABA Web Site: [www.habairon.org](http://www.habairon.org)

January 2001 Edition

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## **February 17 HABA Meeting – 9AM**

**FRICITION FOLDING KNIFE  
WORKSHOP  
AT C&S FORGE DOBBIN, TX  
ANVILS FOR SALE AND AUCTION**

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## 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.



### **What to Bring**

1. \$5.00 for the blade stock and pins. Lee will provide this material.
2. A forge if you have one and an extra anvil if you have one.
3. Your favorite hammer and flat jawed tongs.
4. Gloves, safety glasses with side shields and maybe some hearing protection. It might get a little noisy with all that hammering going on.
5. Some thumb size antler for the handle. Extra would be good for those who do not have any. A piece of hard wood would work well too.
6. A few bucks for lunch. Charles and Sharon say they will provide food for those who would like to eat at the shop.
7. Something for the auction. It's going to be good.

### **HABA Will Bring**

1. Some soda.
2. A few pair of loaner safety glasses.
3. Lee Oates will have handouts to refresh our memory as we forge the blade and build the knife.

### Auction

The 'rain day' for the Oldenburg Auction will be February 17 too! 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.**

### **Anvils for Sale and Other Stuff**

It looks like there will be some anvils for sale. Bob Collier and Dave Koenig plan to bring some. As I recall there will be 1 about

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450 pounds, 3 in the 250 range, one about 200 pounds, maybe 2 in the 100 pound range and one about 50 pounds. If you have some anvils for sale, now is the time to dig them out.

Bob Collier will also have a small blower and a Buffalo pressed forge and blower for sale. There may be more things too.

### **Directions to C&S Forge**

From the North side of Houston, go North on interstate 45 to Conroe. At Conroe go West on state highway 105 about 20 miles. You will go by beautiful Lake Conroe and the town of Montgomery. (Montgomery is loaded with small shops.) About five miles West of Montgomery you will come to the town of Dobbin. There is not much to see in Dobbin while passing through on 105 so you need to pay attention about now.

There will be a caution light. Slow down and continue through the caution light on 105 because you will be making a left hand turn. Continue up the hill past the caution light to Mount Miriah Road. Turn left on Mount Miriah and go south. The C&S Forge will be at the second drive on your left. You will not be able to miss it. Sharon will have signs out, the dogs will be barking and there will be a lot of other cars trying to get into

the driveway!

From the West Side of Houston, go Northwest on state highway 249 through Tomball, Decker Prairie and Pinehurst. This should all sound familiar because it is the way to Tudor Forge. When 249 ends at Pinehurst, continue Northwest past the turn to Tudor forge on FM 1774 all the way to Magnolia. FM 1774 will “T” into FM 1488 in downtown Magnolia. Go right at the ‘T’ across the tracks and turn immediately to the left and continue Northwest on 1774.

Continue Northwest on 1774 two miles or so to the first road on the right, FM1486. Turn right on FM 1486 and go North about twelve miles to 105. Turn left on 105 and go towards the top of the hill. Make a left turn on Mount Miriah Road. The C&S Forge will be at the second drive on your left

## **JANUARY HABA MEETING SUMMARY**

The January meeting drew a crowd of about 20 people. There were several members who we have not seen in a while too and it was good to have them there. The purpose of the meeting was to visit Lark Heat Treating, a commercial heat treating company and Arcadia Ornamental Iron and Steel, a supplier of ornamental iron and forged steel products.

### **Lark Heat Treating**

Frank and James Clark opened the doors of Lark Heat Treating wide for us. Their Marketing Manager Calvin McIver gave us an orientation about the business and

answered a lot of questions in the office and out the shop floor.

Lark receives parts of all different sizes, shapes and materials from many different industries in and around the Houston area. Their job is to take the customers’ work and change the characteristics of the parts with heat and quenching to meet their customer’s specifications. At the risk of over simplifying each part is made harder or softer than it was when it arrived. The change makes the part more usable on its way to becoming a finished product or as a finished product.

The parts we saw being heat-treated ranged in weight from tons to ounces. The furnaces and quench tanks ranged in size from pickup trucks to big enough heat treat a whole pickup truck.

The principles used to do commercial heat-treating are no different than what we do at the forge when making some kind of cutting too. The big difference is that the commercial heat-treating is done on a grand scale, in a controlled environment and using standard procedures.

Walking onto the shop floor was a feast for the senses. There were large forged valve bodies and other large parts stacked on cooling racks. The radiant heat from these racks was quite noticeable even at a black heat. There was one basket of parts that were nearing a black heat on the outside and were a deep red on the center.

There were large atmospheric furnaces to the right and to the left. Some were in operation and some were not. At the end of the bay there were three large quenching tanks. One was filled with water, another with oil and the last with polymer. Around the corner were furnaces that are heated by radiant heat. These were small compared to the atmospheric furnaces. The parts never come in contact with air during the heating and quenching process.

About 10:45 we finally got everyone gathered-up and directed toward Arcadia. We thanked Calvin for coming on a Saturday morning and sharing a part of his business with all of us. The opportunity to see commercial heat treating in operation was most informative.

### **Arcadia Ornamental Iron and Steel**

The next stop was Arcadia Ornamental Iron and Steel. The drive from Lark Heat Treating was only a couple of miles. Our host at Arcadia was Don McLain, Vice President. The whole Arcadia family, including spouses and children, greeted us.

It felt more like coming into a home than a warehouse.

The warehouse is big and was filled with all kinds of forged steel and some cast iron that is made Singapore and China. Don did manage to corral us just long enough to give us an orientation of the warehouse and Arcadia.

Then the group seemed to scatter in every direction throughout the warehouse.

There were racks of patterned flat bar and textured square tubing. There were crates and crates of different kinds of pickets... forged, accent, belly and custom. I think most of us would refer to most of these balusters.

There were crates and crates of 'S', 'C', botanical and various accent scrolls.

There were crates and crates of rosettes,



Lloyd and David Hoffman  
At Lark Heat Treating



Lunch at Arcadia

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different kinds of baskets, and cast and forged elements, baseplates, bushings, rings, collars and hinges.

It was quite an experience to see so much forged steel in one spot. It seemed that each crate got a person thinking about another project. There were several lively conversations about how some of these elements could be used.

Around noon people began moving toward a wonderful BBQ spread orchestrated by Mrs. McLain. Don said they were going to have lunch catered but decided to do it themselves. HABA members definitely benefited from that decision. It was a big family dinner. What a pleasant surprise!

About 1:30 people started to leave. Several went over to the 'Sale 'crate and picked up a few more pickets. Mark Welby, President of Arcadia, also let us know that Arcadia would like to explore the possibility of importing custom gate and railing panels. If there is someone out there who has a production gate or railing, give Arcadia a call to explore the possibility of reducing your workload.

The January meeting was a little shorter than the norm but was jam-packed with all kinds of information and creative stimulation.

The feedback I received from the January meeting was really positive. It is not often that five or six people will come up to me and say how much they enjoyed the meeting. James Clark and Calvin McIver of Lark Heat Treating and Don McLain, Mark Welby and the staff and families at Arcadia Ornamental Iron and Steel can take a deep bow for making the first HABA meeting of the year so memorable. On behalf of all the HABA members at that meeting, Thank You.

James Clark and Don McLain each received a forged token of HABA's appreciation for their hospitality.

## **JUDY'S GREAT BLACKSMITHING ADVENTURE**

By Judy Fox Clifton

What do you do when you want to work with metal and don't know where to start? Well, I took a welding class at a local community college. Even though I learned a lot, it wasn't quite what I really envisioned when I thought about what I

wanted to make.



Then through a friend at work I met Larry Hoff who told me about blacksmithing. He invited me to my first HABA meeting and it was love at first sight. With the help of Larry and Frank Walters I was able to

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acquire an anvil, forge and blower. Now what do I do?  
I read some books and watched several demonstrations. It was so captivating I just knew I had to figure out how to forge iron.

As luck would have it at the ABANA conference I picked up a flyer about Tom Clark's Ozark School of Blacksmithing. I called and signed up for the beginner course taught by Uri Hofi.

I waited impatiently for October to come, when the weeklong adventure was to begin. I was not sure what to expect as I made the 15-hour drive to Missouri alone. Would I be the only woman there? Would I be the dumbest one there? How embarrassing was this going to be? What was this little town in the middle of the Ozarks going to be like? Was the motel going to be gross? What were the other people going to be like?

I arrived Sunday afternoon. The motel was very nice (thank goodness.). I talked to another student Sunday night at the motel. He was very friendly, so I was feeling a little more at ease. I could hardly wait till Monday morning.

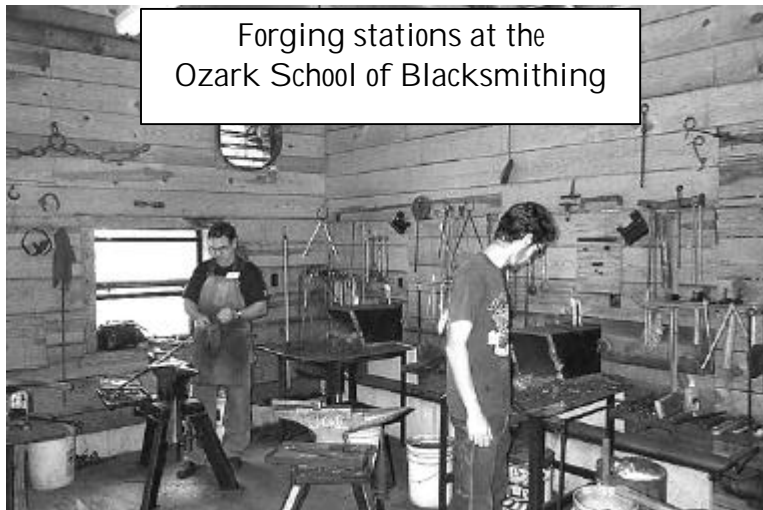
At 7:30 a.m. we made the drive out to the school. The setting was beautiful, acres of trees everywhere. The school and facilities were better than I had ever anticipated. In the "classroom" there were individual workstations with our own forge, anvil, and tools.

Since my experience was so limited, I had no idea what everything was even for, but it sure looked interesting. There was an

adjoining room with more equipment, where I would get my first look at an air hammer in operation.

After meeting the other nine students I didn't know why I was so nervous (there was even one other woman). They were a great group of people. Everyone had such interesting accounts of where they had been in life and how they got to the class. I could just listen to them all tell stories for a week, but that was not the plan. Although Uri Hofi was unable to come, there were two smiths from his shop, Amnon Erlichman and Amit Har-Lev, who were not only extremely knowledgeable and talented, but also very good teachers.

Since I could not even start a fire I knew their work was cut out for them. They taught a hammering style that seemed extremely logical to me. As they took the time to explain why they hammered they way they do, I thought I'm ready to give this a try.



After a few attempts I finally got the fire started (not a small feat, I thought). Then they began some basics (which seemed extremely advanced). I struggled through the exercises, feeling very overwhelmed

and inadequate. Amnon and Amit remained extremely patient, never seeming to tire of showing me one more time how to stand, how to hold the hammer, which way to bend or shape the metal, and why you do this to make it do that.

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After dinner that evening Tom Clark did a few demonstrations. I thought to myself, am I the only one who is exhausted? I was not used to hammering for ten hours a day. There was so much to learn I hated to quit, but it was time for bed.

For the next four days we hammered and hammered and hammered and hammered and hammered. After using I don't know how much vet wrap for the many blisters and burning the tip of every finger on my right hand (man, that metal gets hot), I thought am I ever going to get this.

The teachers maintained a good mix of instruction, joking, patience, and encouragement, as did the other students. By the end of the week on Friday the light was finally starting to click-on in my head. I could hold the hammer rights (most of the time), hit the metal and make it move, and I almost knew what all the tools were for. I thought I might be able to be a blacksmith after all.

As you can probably tell, I have nothing but very positive things to say about my week at Tom Clark's school. Tom was very hospitable. Everything was taken care of. He arranged the accommodations at the motel, which included breakfast. Lunch and dinner were at the school. All the equipment and supplies were there too, so all you had to think about was blacksmithing.

It turned out to be one of the most rewarding and educational experiences I had in a long time. The locale was beautiful, the facilities and instruction were excellent and the people were wonderful. I cannot wait to go back for another week (and another beginner class too). I think I am finally on my way to making my 'metal stuff'.

If anyone has any questions about the school feel free to e-mail me at [wesclifton@msn.com](mailto:wesclifton@msn.com).

## **FUTURE HABA MEETINGS**

### **March HABA Meeting – Tudor Forge, Magnolia, TX, March 17, 9 AM**

Dave Koenig will demonstrate a few things he learned about the art and craft of high relief chasing. Dave recently completed a weeklong course taught by Kristen Skiles at the John C. Campbell Folk School. Chasing is not much of a 'spectator sport'. It is a slow but rewarding process for the person doing it. Once everyone gets an idea of what is involved and what can be done in the pitch pot, there will be a chance for everyone to try his or her hand at it. Additional smithing demonstrations are planned for the forge.

### **April HABA Meeting – Oldenburg, TX, March 30 through April 1**

This is the first of two meetings at Oldenburg in 2001. This is an opportunity for smiths to meet the public, sell their work, do some tailgating and generate interest in the art and craft of blacksmithing.

The event is called Hammerfest V. Traditionally this is also a major fundraising event for HABA. Members are invited to donate things they made or tools that are no longer needed. The owner may retain up to 50% of the auction price.

Camping and RV Parking are available on the grounds. There is electricity, water and even a portable shower with hot and cold running water available!

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It's a great gathering of smiths and people interested in smithing!

### COMING EVENTS 2001

#### **TABA'S GEORGE DIXON DEMONSTRATION FEBRUARY 17 – 18 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.

George Dixon worked at the Samuel Yellin Metalworkers Co. and was prominent in the ABANA video *Samuel Yellin's Legacy*. He

was editor of *The Hammer's Blow* and Chairman of the 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.

#### **RIVER FORGE COUNCIL DEMONSTRATION MARCH 30 – APRIL1, 2001**

The River Bluff Forge Council presents Forging on the River VIII from 7PM Friday March 30 through April 1, 2001. Forging on the River will take place at the National Ornamental Metal Museum in Memphis TN. The invited demonstrators are Brian

Russell, Wendel Broussard and David Court. Contact Ray Tanner 901-682-9771 or [rltanner@netzero.com](mailto:rltanner@netzero.com) for additional information. Please do not contact the museum for additional information about Forging on the River VIII.

#### **ALABAMA FORGE COUNCIL - APRIL 6-8, 2001 PRESENTS**

##### **The Thirteenth Annual Batson Bladesmithing Symposium & Knife Show Featuring:**

Powder Damascus steel  
Basic bladesmithing & silver wire inlay  
Knife grinding, finishing, fittings & lock backs  
Guards, bolsters, pommels & handles  
Hand forged 18th & 19th century knives-  
Knife making kinks & jigs  
Liner locks & automatics  
Belt axes & tomahawks -  
Open cutting competition  
Knife making by hand  
ABS knife judging criteria  
Engraving  
Hands-on bladesmithing

Steve Schwarzer  
Jay Hendrickson  
Alex Daniels  
Keith Kilby  
Tim Ridge  
Tommy McNabb  
Melvin Pardue  
Chuck Patrick  
Jerry Fisk  
Don Fogg  
Billy Ray Hughes & Jerry Fisk  
Billy Bates & Jesse Houser  
John Wayne Taylor

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Robby Armstrong, Sec.-Treasurer AFC  
(256) 539-3975

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Rarmstrong37@home.com

**THE HABA WEB SITE**

IT'A GREAT PLACE! IT'S AVAILABLE TO YOU! TAKE A LOOK!  
BRING SOME WORK TO THE FEBRUARY MEETING. WE WILL TAKE  
SOME PICTURES AND SHOW YOUR WORK IN THE GALLERY.

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### **CLAY SPENCER TREADLE HAMMER TOOL WORKSHOP APRIL 20 – 22, 2001**

The workshop will be at Pheil Forges, 200 Post Oak Drive, Llano, Texas. (915)-247-1370, e-mail bpheil@tstar.net . \$150.00 confirms your slot. Each person will take home approximately 10 to 12 tools. The value of these if you bought them from Clay would be \$445.00. All steel will be

furnished for the workshop. We will use coil springs, axles, H-13 and W-1. If you need a list of the tooling that we will make I can send that also. This workshop will fill quickly at that price so people need to check the dates and get in gear. First come first served.

### **TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION**

Mark your calendars for March 3 and 4. The annual Texas Independence Day Celebration will take place at Washington on the Brazos State Historical Park. There will be a number of blacksmiths demonstrating if the past is any indication of future events. It is a great event to take part in as a visitor or a demonstrator.

If you would like to demonstrate and have not received any information from the park, contact Todd Stockwell, Interpretive Specialist at 979-878-2214.

### **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 4<sup>th</sup> Corso, Suite B, Nebraska City, NE or call 402-873-6603.

### **WANTED**

Joe Pehoski, of Salado, Texas, is seeking a motivated, team-oriented person with an artistic and practical mindset. This person needs to have familiarity with shop tools and procedures, enjoy working in metals and have a passion for quality. Pehoski: Metal Smiths, Inc., founded in 1969 as Pehoski Blacksmithing, is a six-person shop involved in prestigious architectural commissions on a national basis.

Starting salary will be based on experience and ability. Performance is rewarded at quarterly reviews. Standard workweeks

consist of ten-hour days, Monday through Thursday. Employees are covered by Worker's Compensation, a family health plan is available after 90 days of full time employment, a retirement plan is available after two years of full time employment and bonuses are awarded, based on performance, at the end of the year.

If interested, contact Margaret Clausen, Business Manager, at (254) 947-5740. Our office hours are 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM Monday through Thursday.



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](http://www.abana.org). It's a deal that is hard to beat!

### **Good Stuff**

Here is an entire book about blacksmithing, scanned and available as images.  
<http://cdl.library.cornell.edu/cgi-bin/chla/chla-cgi?notisid=ABN5768>

#### **THE FINE PRINT**

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Dave Koenig  
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Houston, TX 77095

### **TO MAKE LIFE SIMPLER**

- 1. Figure out a way to lock your treadle hammerhead in the up position when not in use. It will keep the head from falling when making adjustments, when someone (like a child) steps on the treadle in play or when a spring breaks.**
- 2. Invest in some kind of hearing protection and wear it in the shop for a couple days. Odds are you will have more energy at the end of the day!**