

HABA  
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# THE HABA LETTER

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

To Preserve and Promote the Art and Craft of Blacksmithing  
Through Education.

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

*August 2002 Edition*

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**HAMMERFEST OCT. 4-6, OLDENBURG**

**SEPTEMBER DEMO – FLY PRESS**

**ORDER COKE AND/OR STEEL**

**ROB LYON COMING NOVEMBER**

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## **HAMMERFEST AT OLDENBURG, TX OCTOBER 4-6,2002**

Hammerfest at Oldenburg is only a few weeks away. An



Oldenburg Committee of Frank Walters, Les Cook, Pat and Tony Ahuero, Steve Blankinship, Andy Boro and Teresa Dillard are doing a lot of work this year to attract more people to the site.

Pat Ahuero put on a super demonstration last month to show us ways to make what we are trying to sell more attractive to buyers. This year the intent is to have one big selling area. Each person who wants to sell something in the central area needs to have each piece offered for sale marked with their name and a price.

Anyone is invited to come to Oldenburg and sell and/or demonstrate. Our gracious hosts are Kennie and Susan Hall. People are invited to sell any kind of crafts or antiques. There is no cost. A hat is

passed on Sunday to defray the expenses for power, water and porta-jons. Camping is available on-site with a hot and cold running water shower!

All Blacksmiths and friends and visitors are invited to sell, buy or just visit. Remember that the Hammerfest weekend is the same weekend as the Round Top Antique Show. Thousands of vendors and hundreds of thousands of buyers are roaming the countryside between Round Top, Warrenton, Oldenburg, Fayetteville and Shelby during this event.

**The Hammerfest site in Oldenburg, TX is located at the intersection of highway 237 and Bauer Road. The site is on the north end of town on the East Side of highway 237.**

**Oldenburg is located about eleven miles north of La Grange and about 5 miles south of Warrenton.**

**Come See Us! We have a grand time regardless of the**

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**weather!**

## **SEPTEMBER HABA MEETING –SEPTEMBER 21 2002**

The September HABA Meeting will be something new to almost everyone who attends. John Crouchet from Marble Falls, TX will demonstrate the use of a fly press. A fly press is a very old piece of technology that generates a lot of force using a large screw and human muscle. The machines come in all different sizes.

John spent many years operating a fly press as part of a production jewelry business that John and Ruth Carter (who some of you also know) used to run. John retired from the jewelry business and now works with Larry Crawford at Hammerfest Forge in Marble Falls.

John will put his press through it paces cutting, punching, straightening, bending etc. His demonstration should be especially informative because he will be able to describe the use of the press in terms of the accuracy required by jewelers and the flexibility it offers the

blacksmith to increase production.

The meeting will begin about 9:00 AM at Tudor Forge near Magnolia, TX. We will need a couple of people with strong backs to help off load the press about 8:30. Directions to Tudor Forge are below.

Bring your safety glasses with side shields and a sack lunch if you want to eat on site. HABA will provide water and soda.

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. There is a small white realtor office on the corner. You will find the forge about a mile down the road.



**Les and Guido Straightening Plate With A Fly Press**

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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.

## AUGUST HABA MEETING SUMMARY

The August 17 HABA meeting was very informative and well attended for all of the heat. Twenty-one came to Tudor Forge. David Maris attended his first meeting. Robin Butler who we have not seen lately brought a number of knives he made for the show-n-tell table.

The guest demonstrator was Pat Ahuero. Pat and Tony arrived with all kinds of things that got set up in a very appealing way. Pat did an excellent job of explaining how to display things for sale and why it was effective. Frank Walters made arrangements for HABA members to practice Pat's selling techniques at Traders Village on September 7<sup>th</sup>. The event was cancelled due to weather.

Pat and Tony will be at Oldenburg this year to give us a hand displaying our wares. The goal is to have a central selling area that will be inviting from the road. Things should be much different this time around. Come to shop, sell, demonstrate and just visit!

Dave Koenig demonstrated the flower form that was in the July edition of *The HABA Letter*. There was one small problem. During the spreading process the petals got welded together so the demonstration turned into a spatula. Dave also demonstrated a forged corner.

Tudor Forge got locked up about 6:00. Below is the handout that Pat prepared for us. It is loaded with great selling tips.

Below is a hand out Pat prepared for everyone.

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## Selling Your Products

By Pat Ahuero



To sell your product at retail you must first establish the wholesale price, and then the retail price. There are a variety of formulas for pricing. You may find that you will use more than one formula for your business line. The easiest formula to use may not always be the best.

Formulas can serve as guides, but the final price will need to be based on the market price, what the market will bear, or the image you want to project.

1) Cost-base pricing: The standard markup is added to the cost of materials and labor.

2) Customer-based pricing: Market

research enables you to target prices. Experience has proven that this is an extremely effective pricing method. You work backwards from competition pricing to determine the amount of labor and material cost you can afford to use thus keeping within the limits of that final price. It is essential to gather reliable information about your competition if this formula is used.

Material cost + labor cost + overhead  
= wholesale price

3) Profits and competition: To sustain business growth, it's not enough to meet expenses and mark-up your materials and labor. Your



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business must earn consistent profits to finance expansion; and this profit must be built into your pricing.

Material + overhead + labor + profit  
= wholesale price

What constitutes a reasonable profit percentage? Although no hard and fast rules apply, traditionally added profits equal 20-30 percent of their product's total cost. For services, a 10-20 percent profit margin is more typical. The best pricing strategy is one that's flexible enough to take profits when possible, or to trim profits when necessary to meet competition.

"Keystone pricing" means you double the wholesale price of the product to obtain a retail price.

Wholesale price x 2 = retail price

Price is only one element in business success. Obviously, your company must back up its pricing with high-quality products. The process identifying the correct combination of product, price, and sales outlet can be a long process.

**Selling Retail** - First, identify your market by theme, season, and customer base.

**HABA Sale and Demo in Oldenburg**

- Texas in early October is our project this time. Blacksmithing, Iron Art, Public Education, Antique Sale in the fall brings customers from South and Central Texas driving by the pasture location before the Halloween, Fall and Christmas buying seasons.

These facts give you ideas for display, signage, color scheme, and products. Brainstorming will guide a group venture to develop winning ideas.

**Fall Colors**- dark green, barn red, gold, off-white, and dusty blue are earth tones that will show off metal products.

**Props**- wooden tables, primitive furniture, vintage textiles, shutters for back staging. Wheelbarrows, wooden benches, and other display items can be for sale too. It will take a lot of products to catch the eye of a speedy driver.

**Signage** - "Smitty on Duty", "Iron Art for Sale", "Demo in Action", "Free Parking"

There should also be "Not Responsible for Accidents" signs.

**Booth Location** - Should be central and set out in the open so customers flow with ease. Other sales booths could be set next to and back of focus tent. Demos can be active to the outside of the sales tents. Customer parking should be clearly marked in

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the front. Club member parking should be directed to the far back behind the tents.

**Booth Set-up** - Ideally a booth should be segmented into sections where consumers can find products for the different parts of their lives, arranged as closely as possible to look as though it might fit in a home.

**Vignettes** - Give a better visual of how the product will work in their lives and how they work with other products.

Example: Fireplace tools next to a log holder with firewood in place. The benefit to this display, of course, is that they will buy more than one piece.

**Sections of Display** - Should reflect the different types of ironwork and customer interest.

- 1) Traditional iron work- Old World products and skills.
- 2) Art and jewelry, and gifts.
- 3) Home products and furniture can be dark in one vignette, and hi-tech polished steel in another vignette.
- 4) Whimsical yard art and sculpture.
- 5) Tools and trade items.

Colors of display props should flow from one vignette to the other. Making it too busy takes the focus off the product. Using warm color tones in your backdrops keeps the mood moderate. Gold, brown and dark greens are fall colors good for table covers. Add some texture with the use of fall leaves, river rock, grapevine, and berries.

Make your customer feel at home. Have fun, and keep experimenting until you find what works for you.

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## NOVEMBER MEETING – ROB LYON DEMONSTRATOR

Rob Lyon, Master Blacksmith from Old Sturbridge Village, MA is coming to Houston for a lecture Friday evening November 15th and demonstrations and a workshop Saturday the 16<sup>th</sup> and more demonstrations Sunday the 17th.

The lecture will be held in the church of the Tomball Museum Center, 7:00 PM. The public is invited and there is no charge for the lecture.

The Saturday and Sunday demonstrations and workshop Saturday evening will be at Robert Killbuck's shop in Magnolia, TX.

The charge for two days of demonstrations and the workshop will be \$25. There will be a reduced charge for Teachers \$15 and Students \$10.

Below is a short description of Rob's lecture, a list of the demonstrations and his résumé.

Additional details and directions to the Tomball Museum and Robert Killbuck's shop will be in the October edition of *The HABA Letter*.

### DEMONSTRATION AGENDA

#### **Friday Evening**

- A slide talk on the world of New

England blacksmiths in the early 1800s, and some of the reproduction and restoration ironwork done at Old Sturbridge Village for their programs over the past twenty-five years.

#### **Saturday and Sunday**

- The making of a traditional New England "bean" style door latch, with all of the parts.
- The forging of authentic nails of the eighteenth century and a unique trivet, copying one from the Old Sturbridge Village collection.
- Forging and decorating a pot rack, using simple tools anyone can make.
- How to create shapes from a bar of iron - rounds, ball and spear designs, arrow, etc.
- Hinge making - strap hinges, H&L and butterfly designs.
- Techniques of historic filing on ironwork and what makes for truly good early ironwork will be discussed throughout the demonstration.

I attempt to keep my demonstrations on a level all participants can understand and try.

#### **Saturday Evening Workshop**

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I'd be happy to spend Saturday evening assisting participants in forging some of what I've demonstrated earlier.

## ROB LYON'S RESUME

Rob Lyon has been an employee of Old Sturbridge Village since 1972.

He is a master blacksmith, specializing in Colonial and Federal period hardware, fireplace and kitchen equipment and tools in general.

Rob maintains a private blacksmithing business, creating and restoring historic ironwork of all types for individuals, institutions and historic sites. Recently he completed ironwork for a newly restored exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC. Four of his weather vanes overlooks the skating rink at

Rockefeller Plaza.

He was privileged to study with two of the twentieth century's most renowned restoration blacksmiths, Donald Streeter and Francis Whitaker.

When not wielding a hammer, he keeps busy writing and lecturing on the subject of historic ironwork, its preservation and use in, on and around the home and hearth.

Rob is a Civil War and Revolutionary War historian and re-enactor, and is frequently asked to serve as an expert consultant on antique American weaponry and uniforms.

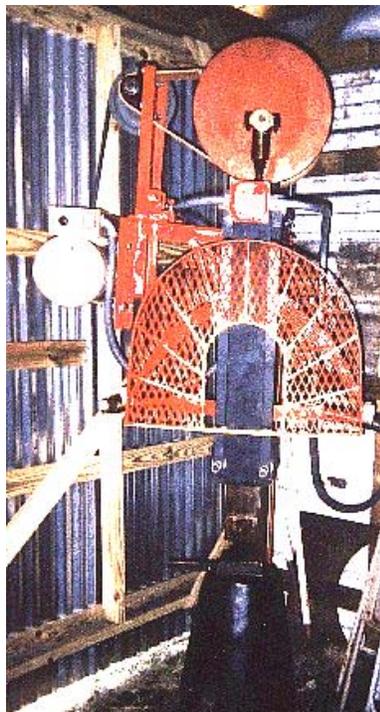
When he has time, he plays music on a variety of early musical instruments.

## HAMMER

By Clint Jones

I recently completed a rebuild on a mechanical hammer. It is an 80-pound Perfect as far as I can find out. It was made around 1915.

When I bought it the



## REPAIR

hammer was a basket case. The guides were broken, as were the leaf springs and the upper die. These were all poorly welded together. The crank was worn through. The babbitt and clutch plate were cracked.

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All the pins, links and arms were badly worn. The scary thing is it ran this way and no one was killed!

It took me two years and a lot of machine work to rebuild this hammer. I bolted plates to the guides then ground out and re-welded them. I made a new crank and clutch plate and did away with the babbitt bearings by turning a set out of 660 bearing bronze. I used firearm-bedding compound to support them, as the

casting was rough. So now I can change bearings easily. The motor is on a seesaw mount and its weight tensions the flat belt. I also added a spring guard and primed and painted everything as I went. It runs great.

Now I have to build tooling. The hammer was never rebuilt. I did my best to rebuild it to run another 80 or so years. Then the next smith can have a turn.

## SOME WORDS OF WISDOM

*Below is an e-mail the editor received from Robert Killbuck. Robert recently got some work at Minute Maid Stadium, Reliant Stadium and Cher....yes the real one... Needless to say it is exciting for him and all of us.*

“In every box of business cards there are 2 or 3 that will make you money. Since you don't know which ones, hand out all of the cards as fast as you can so those 2 or 3 cards will get out there. Wait and pray!

Most important, when ever you get a job, do like Terry Clark does. Say to yourself, "How in the hell am I going to do this!" Then do it. Be nice to people and follow your dream! I am hoping that someone does not pinch me and wake me up because I am really enjoying this dream. If they do wake me up because this is a dream, I will have quite a story to tell!!! Killbuck”

## FEELING OLD

*Ray Hinnant is into cars; Model A's in particular. His e-mail below is enough to get some of us thinking. ed.*

“Today, I was driving by Bryan

High School and a 1961 4-door hard top Chevy drove out of the parking lot. This started me thinking. When I was a senior in high school, very few cars made

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before 1950 were driven by us students. I remember seeing a couple of Model A Fords driven to school every now and then, including my future wife's. The 1931 Model A was 34 years old in 1965. This is the same as a

senior in high school today seeing a 1968 Camero or Malibu drive up in the parking lot. The 1961 Impala would have been like seeing a Model T driving to school. Wow, I really feel old today. Ray"

## **CHARLES HEATHCOCK INJURED**

On August 16 Charles Heathcock fell and broke both wrists. For those of you who would like to get in touch with Charles, his phone number is 936-597-4847. His address is Box 218 Mt. Mariah Rd, Dobbin, TX 77333.

Charles you are in our thoughts and prayers for a speedy recovery!

*I talked with Charles on September 8. He sounded good and is on the mend. ed.*

## **HABA COORDINATES FORGE COKE ORDER**

**GET YOUR ORDER INTO ARLIE BECKENDORF BY SEPTEMBER 30, 2002.**

"L" Brand ForgeCoke is now available in 50-pound bags. Below is an e-mail from Ed Avolio announcing the marketing change in "L" Brand ForgeCoke.

HABA will accumulate orders for forge coke in bag quantities and pallet quantities and sell it for \$10 per bag. HABA will order a minimum of one ton of coke.

For those of you who do now know about commercial coke, it is a very clean and hot burning fuel. It takes some getting used to because it is harder to start than coal and harder to keep going than coal. Most people burn some coal with the coke to make it easier to start and stay lit.

All coke HABA orders will be delivered to Frank Walter's shop on the NW side of Houston. Frank has a forklift to offload and then help you reload your order. Any money HABA can save on transportation will go into HABA's coffers.

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To order forge coke, please contact Arlie Beckendorf at 20412 Cypress-Rosehill Rd, Tomball, TX 77375, 281-351-0259 or [arlieb@fccuhouston.org](mailto:arlieb@fccuhouston.org).

Please give him your name, address, phone number and e-mail address if you have one. Make checks out to HABA. The cost of the coke will be \$10 per bag. The cost of \$10 per bag is based on a quote received from Ed Avolio. As far as we know there will be not sales tax. If there is and HABA is not able to cover the cost, HABA will get back in touch with you.

NOTE: The order will be placed October 1, 2002. Your money needs to be in Arlie's hands by Monday September 30. Arlei will let you know when the coke arrives and give you directions to Frank Walter's shop.

Please Note: The check to pay for your order needs to be in Arlie's hands no later than September 30!

If you want to order coke directly from Ed Avolio, give him a call at 800-441-0616. If you give him your zip code he will quote you a price to your door.

From Ed Avolio, "L" Brand\* ForgeCoke\* is now packaged in 50 LB bags, 1,000 LB bulk sacks on pallets and 2,000 LB bulk sacks on pallets.

The 50-LB bags are currently packed 10, 20 and 40 bags per pallet. The 10 bag pallets are 500 LB, the 20 bag pallets are 1,000 LB and the 40 bag pallets are 2,000 LB. The 50-LB package is a 4 mil plastic bag.

## **KENT FOWLER COORDINATES STEEL ORDER**

Kent Fowler searched the market place and found a supplier of tool steels. The prices quoted are less than two common suppliers of smithing related items. In addition, the shipping for the first order is free.

Kent is willing to accumulate orders from others and turn in one larger order. The prices for H 13 are ½ inch round x 36 inches long = \$3.41, 5/8 inch round x 36 inches long = about \$5.00 and ¾ inch round x 36 inches long = about \$8.00. The cost of A2 ½ inch x 36 inches = \$4.50.

H13 is an air hardening tool steel that is good for hot and cold work. A2 is another air hardening tool steel good for cold punching.

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Contact Kent Fowler for details at 119 Meadow Bend, League City, TX 77573.  
Kent's phone number is-281-334-6845 and his e-mail address is chisosmt@gte.net.

Make all checks out to "Kent Fowler" and get your money to him by September 30, 2002

## HABA WEB SITE STATS

*Below is an e-mail note from the HABA Web Master, Andy Walters. HABAIRON.ORG is popular and maintaining the gallery is very important. Ed*

Dave, here is a list of compiled stats for the HABA site:

	Pageviews	Sessions
Feb	590	60
March	6117	2241
April	5413	2339
May	4196	2192
June	3026	1768
July	3372	1945

A pageview can be defined as a 'hit' by anyone. For example I can be on the HABA site and look at five different pages. These all register as pageviews.

A session is unique to each person. For example, someone that uses AOL is one session.

The most popular pages for July from most popular to least are:

Gallery, Designs, For Sale, Wanted, Newsletter, Coal Bin, Meetings, Links, HABA Handout, Membership, Application.

The most popular way that people found our site in July from most popular to least are:

Directly typing in HABAIRON.ORG  
Google Search, Yahoo Search, Link from Keenjunk, ABANA Link, Boswell Farms, MSN Search, IronFest Link.

Most popular service provider extension visits (including countries):

.COM-commercial, .EDU – education, Canada, Australia, .ORG Non-profit groups, Lithuania, Poland, South Africa, Japan, Russian Federation.

All in all, the averages look pretty good. 3786 pageviews per month with 1756 sessions per month. Based

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on the amount of overseas  
correspondence we get through the                      Andy  
site, I think we are pretty easily found  
all over the world.

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