

David W. Koenig  
7418 Branch Point  
Houston, Texas  
77095-2649

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To: HABA Distribution List

Re: August 16, 1997 Meeting Of The Proposed Houston Area Blacksmiths' Association  
(HABA) and the Heiner Zimmermann Workshop August 23 and 24.

### **HEINER ZIMMERMANN WORKSHOP**

What a workshop! There was something for everyone. Heiner Zimmermann, 28 years old, conducted the two day workshop with the skill and presence of a smith with 28 years of experience. Heiner's experience as a smith is worldwide and it showed while forging, teaching design, answering workshop questions and carrying on individual conversations with just about everyone.

Alan Flashing and Heiner teamed up at the forge. Alan took on the heavy work...managing the fire, getting the iron hot and striking. It was quite obvious Alan and Heiner worked together before. They worked as a team.

During the two days Heiner demonstrated how to forge many individual architectural elements that any of us could use in our own work. He exhorted us to take these designs and to build our own designs from them...to change them to suit our needs and to expand the concepts.

Heiner and Alan forged two pieces that really showcased the way things were done before the days of power hammers. A swan that would fill your two hands and a flower the size of a soft ball were forged from a piece of one and a half inch round stock. While Alan reheated the piece and caught his breath Heiner fielded questions and filled us in with information and lore from around the world.

The workshop ended with a two hour slide show of Heiner's work and that of the family shop. I think we all came out of there thinking we could make anything.

Later on in this letter are two articles about the workshop. I hope more details about the forged elements, poker, swan and flower will emerge in future letters. For those of you who took notes at the meeting, please share them with others via this letter. We need the ideas you captured. The editor can put the words around the ideas.

## **MONTHLY MEETING SUMMARY**

The August HABA meeting took place one week before the Heiner Zimmermann Workshop. It drew a total of 22 people, 17 members and five guests. Two of the members are new to HABA. Three forges were going during the day, two from Tudor Forge and Larry Hoff's. The project for the day was a forged heart with a clip. Howard Owen finished his and did very well. Larry Hickman got a good start on his heart and ended up with the pattern heart in the Raffle. Larry Newbern demonstrated how to forge the blown leaf and Dave Koenig finished the day welding a collar on a hardie stake.

The business meeting covered a number of topics important to the group especially the upcoming workshop. Some volunteers came foreword to help with getting things prepared. We talked about how the group would like to see some things addressed at future workshops and at future HABA meetings.

Great News! Larry Hoff agreed to act as the Treasurer for HABA...after some very skillful arm twisting by Marilyn Koenig and Lora Neumann. Many thanks from all of us to Larry for accepting. (And those of you feel your arm being twisted...take note...)

Revenues generated during the day totaled \$225, \$183 from the Raffle and \$42 from the HABA Hat. Much thanks to everyone who chipped-in and congratulations to those whose lucky number was pulled from the coffee can.

The gate on Tudor Forge got locked up about 4:30.

## **HANDS-ON SMITHING**

A part of this month's HABA meeting was a project to forge a heart hook. Those who wanted some hands-on experience at the forge were invited to use a heart forged by Dave Koenig as a pattern. The heart was forged from a 14 inch piece of quarter inch round rod and clipped where the sections of the heart met in the middle. The clip allowed the heart to be hung as a hook. The exercise required about eight inches of the bar to be drawn out at four different locations. Two three inch sections needed to be spread.

Howard Owen and Larry Hickman accepted the challenge. Howard finished his heart and Larry ran out of time due to a late start.

Bob La Roe was able to get in some forge time too. He practiced drawing out.

Larry Hoff brought his forge again and got quickly to work on what Jesse Kirk calls a 'Texas Love Knot'. Most of us know it as a square knot. With a little guidance from Larry Newbern, Larry Hoff ended up with a pretty darn good looking knot in the middle of two pieces of rebar. Now we need to see how Larry incorporates the element into one of his projects.

Larry Newbern then found a forge that needed to be used and began to demonstrate the forging of the blown leaf. From a three quarter by quarter inch bar, Larry showed us how to make a right and left handed leaf. He sure made it look easy. Larry brought a plant stand he was in the process of making as a Show-and-Tell item. The stand used two large blown leaf scrolls as an element at the top of the stand. It is going to be stunning when completed... and another satisfied customer.

Dave Koenig finished the day by forge welding a half inch square bar collar to a one inch square bar he intends to use as a stake hardie. With some coaching from Larry Newbern the collar stuck the first time. Nothing like a little practice and coaching to get things done right!

## **BUSINESS MEETING**

Dave Koenig got the business meeting started about 11:00.

There was the reminder to use safety glasses with side shields when forging and watching a demonstration.

There was another call for a volunteer to serve as HABA Treasurer. By the time the Raffle was in full swing, Larry Hoff agreed to accept the authority and responsibility that goes with the office.

The Heiner Zimmermann Workshop was scheduled to begin in one week. Some of the topics discussed and agreed to relative to the workshop included:

Lunch on Saturday would be BBQ provided by the BBQ Hut of Magnolia rather than sandwiches.

HABA would borrow a set of bleachers from the Langham Creek YMCA for use at Coe Forge. Charles Heathcock, Jim Wheeler, Dave Koenig and others.... would pick up the bleachers on Friday the 22nd.

Charles and Sharon Heathcock would also bring a large fan to cool the shop, tarp to provide some shade and trailer to get the bleachers.

Marilyn Koenig volunteered to welcome and sign people in for the workshop.

There was a discussion about non-smithing spouses needing to pay to accompany smithing spouses to the workshop. The group decided that spouses not involved in smithing should not pay. (This kind of discussion identifies one of the needs for HABA to become more organized. Issues like this and others need to be addressed as part of the planning process of any function. Giving everyone in the group the opportunity to input their ideas is important to get the best decision for HABA.)

The group decided to Raffle a gift certificate at today's meeting for someone to attend the Heiner Zimmermann Workshop. See the results below.

The September HABA meeting will be hosted by Larry Newbern's Brazos Forge in Needville, TX. The particulars are included below in the Next Meeting section.

There was a discussion about what the group wanted to see take place at HABA meetings. Right now the meetings could be characterized as creative and free flowing. Several things seem to take place at our meetings at the same time: people forging, informal and formal demonstrating, a table with usually a Resource, Handout, and Show-and-Tell sections, a business meeting, Camp Stew, Raffle, Pass-the-Hat and many, many small conversations going on all over.

The consensus seemed to be that HABA is doing what most people think it should be doing.

Some things HABA might consider looking at are:

Setting up a resource library for members with books, tapes (examples of iron work from workshops and demonstrations with instructions that people can take home and practice.)

Sharing this information and resources with local schools including investigating what it would take to set up classes.

Preparing a flyer to distribute via steel and blacksmith suppliers that lets people know HABA is in the process of getting started. (See an example of such a flyer below. The Flyer will be a subject for the September business meeting.)

The meeting concluded with a quick review of workshops and opportunities to demonstrate in the area.

## **CAMP STEW**

The Camp Stew feature of our meeting was put on hold until the weather is a bit more conducive to an open fire. This week, everyone enjoyed their own lunch creations.

Larry Newbern managed to set his lunch cooler on top of, what else, a fire ant hill. In a matter of the time it takes to show someone how to create a 'Texas Love Knot' with rebar, the little devils were not only in the cooler but thick on the sandwich inside a sealed zip lock sandwich bag. Did this create any kind of problem for Larry? Noooooooooo. A few huffs and puffs and strategically placed flicks of the finger and voila...a sandwich fit for any good smith. I am not too sure about the ants that burrowed into the mayonnaise though.....

## **RAFFLE**

The Raffle got kicked off with Tim Cowden handling the tickets, Charles Heathcock the dollars and Lee Oates the ticket hat or rather the ticket coffee can. Jim Wheeler and Charles Heathcock

counted the proceeds and the new Treasurer, Larry Hoff put the final seal of approval on the count.

The August Raffle included some of the best items to date. Here is a run down of what, from whom and the winners:

Two DuPont Corian cutting boards from Bob La Roe: Pat Wornick and Gary Hilton

A beautifully forged knife and fork from small railroad spikes from Lee Oates: Tim Cowden

A Louisiana Metalsmiths' Association (LAMA) gift certificate to attend their 1997 *Banging on the Bayou IV* workshop featuring Peter Ross: Jim Wheeler. Jim made a donation with his ticket and asked that the gift certificate be raffled again. Sharon Heathcock was the lucky winner the second time around. Sharon and Charles were planning to attend...way to go!...and thank you Jim.

A 12" x 12" x 24" western cedar block of wood from Dean Arnold: Gary Hilton

A 24" x 24" x 15" styrofoam cooler from Sharon Heathcock: Lee Oates (It's still at Tudor Forge Lee.)

The coveted and most desired gift certificate of the day, the opportunity to attend the Heiner Zimmermann Workshop from HABA: The winner is....drum roooooool.....Larry Hickman....Yeaaaaaa for Larry!!!

A forged heart hook by Dave Koenig: Larry Hickman

It seems that Larry Hickman and Gary Hilton were the people to have pick your lottery numbers this week!

## **WORKSHOP AUCTION**

We also had a short auction at the workshop. Three people donated items to be auctioned. Hear is what was donated, by whom and the successful bidders:

1. Tong by Clint Jackson: Frank Walters
2. Heart by Dave Koenig: Larry Hoff
3. Sculpture by Charles Stolte: Mary Jackson. Many of you may remember Bill Epps hearing the auctioneer's hammer hit the block for this item. However, Mary and Bill struck a deal.

## **NEW MEMBER WELCOME**

The sixty one people on the HABA mailing list would like to extend a warm welcome to the following people who decided to become a part or our group: Tim Cowden, Lee Oates, Ken Blum, Gary Hobbs, Dave Redden, Dave Roberts, Ande De Jean, John Key, Greg Allen, Gary Hobbs, Dophitt Briggs and Fred Westerfield II. Your interest, knowledge and willingness to learn and to

teach blacksmithing are most welcome. We look forward to seeing you at all the meetings you can make.

## **CONCLUSION**

HABA's seventh meeting was well attended and the mailing list is growing steadily. There seems to be an interest to see the organization expand without having its creativity hampered. A primary function of each regular meeting should be to make forging available for people to try their hand.

There was a need expressed to create a resource library of materials like books, tapes and examples of forged items.

HABA now has a President and Treasurer by acclamation.

## **SPECIAL THANKS**

To Larry Hoff for accepting the task of HABA Treasurer and bringing his forge. And an additional big thanks for capturing Heiner's demonstrations on tape. The tape, when edited, will be the first workshop tape for the HABA library.

To Marilyn Koenig and Lora Neumann for taking care of the paperwork and encouraging Larry Hoff to accept the Treasurer post.

To Tim Cowden, Lee Oates, Charles Heathcock and Jim Wheeler for conducting the Raffle.

To Howard Owen for coming early and helping to get the Tudor Forge ready for the meeting.

Very special thanks needs to be extended to Kip Coe for getting the Coe Forge in shape for the occasion of Heiner's workshop. Kip also hosted Heiner, Alan and Bill Epps during their stay at Decker Prairie.

A very special thanks needs to be extended too to Charles and Sharon Heathcock. Workshop participants enjoyed the air provided by one of the two big fans and the bleachers. Their truck and trailer retrieved and returned the bleachers to and from the Langham Creek YMCA. Jim Wheeler, John Soares, Sharon's father and Dave Koenig acted as swamper for this effort.

The return trip of the bleachers lasted about three hours longer than expected. Under Charles' tutelage, Jim, John and Dave learned how to jack up the front end of a Dodge, diesel, dually while it sinks into soft ground almost to the frame and get it out without calling a wrecker.

And Thank You Charles Majors for providing the second large fan to keep us cool at the workshop.

## NOTICES

1. Lamar University, Beaumont, TX is offering *Elementary Blacksmithing* as one of their non-credit programs. The class will meet on Thursday evenings from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. October 9 through November 6.

Call 409-880-2233 for Registration Information.

2. Peter Ross will be featured at The Louisiana Metalsmiths Association's (LAMA) annual event, *Banging on the Bayou IV*, October 4 and 5. The venue is Bogue Falaya Park in Covington, LA. Contact Buddy Leonard, 504-892-1137 for more information and registration.

For those of you who may be on the edge of going or not, be aware that Norm Larson will be at the show. Norm is traveling through the area and will have his great selection of smithing books for those interested.

## NEXT MEETING

SEPTEMBER 20, 1997

The next HABA Meeting will be held at the Brazos Forge, Needville, TX September 20, 1997.

Be sure to bring a pair of safety glasses with side shields and wear gloves where appropriate!

The focus will be hands-on forging. Between Larry's forges and the ones the rest of us can bring, there should be an opportunity for everyone to do a little forging. Larry, Kip Coe and Dave Koenig have a demonstration or two to share for those interested.

Larry and Dave played with designs Heiner demonstrated. Some results are more sublime than others. The meeting should be very informative and fun.

Soda and water will be provided by HABA.

Bring your own lunch!

So, bring your forge, Show-and-Tell items, Resources you would like to share with others and something for the Raffle.

**DIRECTIONS TO BRAZOS FORGE** are as follows:

Go south from Houston on highway 59.

Cross the Brazos River and proceed to highway 36...Richmond-Rosenberg area.

Go south on highway 36 and through the village of Pleak.

Just past the village of Pleak look for a Chevron station on the West side of the road.

Turn west at the Chevron station onto Gerkin Rd.  
Go one half mile on Gerkin Rd. and turn south on Fenske Rd.  
Go three miles on Fenske Rd. to Foster School Rd.  
Turn west or right on Foster School Rd.  
Go one half mile on Foster School Rd.  
The Brazos Forge is on the south side of the road.  
The address of Brazos Forge is 4918 Foster School Road, 409-793-4362.  
Enjoy!