

Rocky Forge News

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Next Meeting: (4/9/11)

The next meeting will be Saturday, April 9th at Ted's shop. Dan Michael is going to review a recent conference he attended regarding the restoration of wrought iron bridges and buildings instead of demolition. His employer, Nucor Steel, was a sponsor of the workshop and sent Dan for the three-day event. He will show 3-4 short videos during his presentation and a photographic summary of the event. The distinction between wrought iron and steel will also be discussed. Welding of wrought to wrought iron and steel to wrought iron has been a challenge in the past. Dan will inform us how it should be done. Don't miss this one! It looks to be very interesting and informative to the metalsmith and to the historians.

The remainder of the day will be an open forge time so we can hone our skills. Bring your tools, any special metal you need and iron-in-the-hat-items.

Please bring the items made from the old scooter, better known as the "Scooter Project" to the next meeting. I hope to get more entries and photograph the results. This was a fun and educational project on converting total junk into useable goods.

Lunch will be a special dish and bread prepared by our only Norwegian member, KJ. If you wish to bring a covered dish to pass, we always enjoy sharing our food. Perhaps, said another way "We all enjoy eating!" I am looking forward to the day, and hope to see many of you for an informative, educational, and fun day of friendship.

Coffee and doughnuts will be ready by 8:30, see you then. Ted

Last Meeting: (3/12/11)

We had a good meeting, with a large attendance for the March gathering. A lot of junk metal was reformed into useable stuff. There were 6 newcomers and we gave a beginners class for their benefit. We are recognizing Randy Padish as a very good teacher. We hope to see the beginners at future meetings. Ted



Jim Bolen's Park Bench

Many of you saw Jim's bench at the last meeting and were impressed. I am proud to report that as of last Monday Jim has sold \$138 worth of raffle tickets. Jim has taken this project on as a raffle to raise money for the Rocky Forge group. We need to help Jim sell tickets and take the bench to the IBA conference and Illiana Steam and Power Show for ticket sales. Please give Jim a special thanks and encouragement for his effort. Ted

An Engine Story

A gentleman from the Ozark hills of Missouri was in the firewood business during the 1970's. He supplied wood to customers in St. Louis and surrounding areas. It was a lucrative business and he was good at it. He was so good that his claim to fame was that he could split firewood by hand faster than two guys on a hydraulic wood splitter. To settle the argument they set up a plan with a TV program to film the competition. With everything in place the race was on and being taped. The winner was the lone man, not the hydraulic wood splitter. His name is Tom Clark of Potosi, Missouri. The wood splitting video has been shown numerous times on national TV.

Tom Clark had another interest, blacksmithing, and to make a long story short he became one of the country's most renowned blacksmiths and operated the "Ozark School of Blacksmithing" with his wife Thelma. He totally quit the wood business and now was a teacher and vendor of blacksmithing tools. To this day his blacksmith tongs "Tom Tongs" are the best available, along with his power hammers from Pakistan.

While on one of his frequent trips to Pakistan, Tom discovered a company making diesel hit and miss engines. These engines are still widely used in industry throughout Pakistan and Turkey. He saw the value of these engines for many purposes in this country so he bought into the company and started importing them to the U.S. He was selling them for around \$7500 to \$8500 each and had one mounted on a trailer for travel to various tractor shows.

Tom was diagnosed with cancer and went through many treatments and surgeries until the cancer finally won. He was a small frame individual and many people compared him to the energizer bunny. What a shock and loss to the blacksmithing community. Tom has been missed and eulogized all over the country. He was a good friend to Carol and me. We miss him.



Thelma had a real chore on her hands to disperse his school assets, which included the buildings, tools, metal, and the many personal items Tom had made or acquired. There were two hit and miss engines remaining in his inventory, and she had no idea of what to do with them. The larger of the two, a 23 HP and 26HP, was the one he took to the various tractor shows. Since I had ordered one of his anvils with my name molded into it, Carol and I had to make the trip to pick up the anvil. Thelma proceeded to tell us about her dilemma and I simply said “Boy those would be neat at our steam and power show.” Those were the words she wanted to hear because that is exactly where Tom would want them to end up: at a steam and power show!

We negotiated a price and were able to interest several investors from the Illiana group to purchase Tom Clark’s engines.

Getting the engines back to Indiana has been a very complicated affair. First off, they weight in at an estimated 6000 pounds each and Thelma had no way to load them. Fortunately, there is a very nice gentleman down the road from Thelma that operates a sawmill. He has a large loader capable of handling the weight of the engines.

At 5:55 A.M on Thursday March 24th, Roger Horn with his new flat-bed trailer and Ron Gamble riding shotgun met Ted Stout in his truck with his friend and neighbor Raymond Reeves riding shotgun. They met at Odell and set out for Potosi, Missouri, some 365 miles away. The trip was easy with low traffic even around St. Louis. We did pass through some snowflakes on the way, but nothing to slow us down. Loading the engines was a breeze and the trip back was also uneventful, thank God. We

arrived back to the Odell area about 12:30AM tired, but very happy to have the engines in Indiana.

On Tuesday, March 29th, the engines were carefully unloaded by Kenny Evans with his heavy-duty outfit. They are now sitting on the ground in the barn at the Illiana grounds, snug as bug in a rug!! Whew!

Since most of the engine investors are farmers, we now look forward to them getting the crops in so that time will permit cleaning and setting up the engines for the next Illiana show in July. Seems like we can hear them belching already! What an attraction these engines will be to the show. Ted

ABANA Posts YouTube Videos

ABANA now has two YouTube channels. A channel is a collection of video clips on a common theme. You can subscribe to a channel and be informed when a video is added. The first channel can be accessed at the following web site. <http://www.youtube.com/user/ABANAorg>.

There are eight videos that feature work that is a part of ABANA’s National Curriculum, such as the grille project, and also others that illustrate the controlled hand fusion lessons that you can find at the ABANA web site. There is also an extensive video about the 2010 ABANA Conference in Memphis.

The second channel can be accessed at: <http://www.youtube.com/user/hammersblow>.

This channel has one video about Jim Austin’s bearded Viking axe. Jim’s work is excellent!

The videos I have watched were first rate. Anybody starting out in blacksmithing should be encouraged to watch these. There is something for us all to learn from these well-made and free video blacksmithing lessons.

Dates to Remember

April 9, 2011: Rocky Forge meeting at Ted’s.

May 14, 2011: Rocky Forge meeting.

June 3-5, 2011: IBA Conference, Tipton.

July 15-17, 2011: Illiana Antique Power Exhibition.

July 15-17, 2011: Upper Midwest Regional Blacksmithing Conference, Pontiac, Illinois.

Sept. 24-25, 2011: Feast of the Hunter’s Moon.

Sept. 23-25, 2011: SOFA QuadState Conference.

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