

ROCKY FORGE NEWS

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OCTOBER MEETING

The next meeting of the Rocky Forge Blacksmith Guild will be October 12th, 9:00, at Ted Stouts. The agenda will include a report from Rob Durrets training at the John C. Cambell Blacksmith class.

We will have a short meeting then go to the forges and continue with our program from the Randy McDaniel Book. At this point most have advanced from making hooks to making forks. Once you have mastered the fork then we will move on to the making of a cutoff hardie. When cold weather arrives we will pursue some of the professionals who have volunteered to give us a demonstration.

Bring items for the iron in the hat, anything related to the hobby or things you think this group would enjoy or could use. Also, things that you have made would be good. What may be junk or excess inventory to you may be a treasure to someone else.

Carol will prepare ham and bean soup, roast pork sandwiches, ice tea and whatever else. If you have some covered dish to contribute please bring it (with food in it). See you all on the 12th.

BAROQUE ART GUILDERS PASTE

At the SOFA gathering in Troy, Ohio Intercorp, Inc had a booth selling tins of a paste for coloring your metal work, wood, pottery or sculpture. Carol was even excited because she could use it for painting Santa Clauses or gourds. That's all the encouragement I needed.

This material is lighted brushed on to your metal work to give it a first class coloring. It makes the item have an antique look. Once applied it is lighted polished with a cloth and sprayed with a clear laquer. I will show how it works at our next meeting.

Their web site www.gilderspaste.com or 1-800-532-6303.

SOFA MEET AT TROY, OHIO (Quad State)

Carol and Ted were on their way back from Pittsburgh after loading a 20 foot trailer with toy trains for our son Greg. We finished the job on Thursday and Greg dropped us off at Dayton, Ohio late that evening. We had left our car at a motel with late reservations.

Friday morning hurricane Isador unleashed her fury on Ohio. It was pouring rain to the point of nearly zero visibility. We almost came home, but that draw for just one more hammer, anvil, tool or God only knows what else drew me to Troy, site of one of the countries largest tailgate sales and demonstrations.

We arrived in the rain at about 9:30 in the morning, not much going on, most of the vendors were covered.

However, there were a few huddled around under some of the canopies. I dawned a pancho and umbrella and struck out. Carol thought I was out of my mind. You know I was kind of out of my mind to find a bargain or rare tool.

The very first person I met was none other than our IBA president Jeff Sallot. Now for some reason I didn't feel quit so foolish, even though it was pouring down rain. I met several other old friends in the rain and even made some new ones.

After about an hour the rain let up to a gentle pour and by now I was really into it. Carol kept whining to go home, but she knew it was to no avail.

On a long trailer I spotted a couple of air hammers, a Dayton power hammer and several other treasures. The Dayton hammer looked real enticing. No one was around to claim this load so I went on. About a 300 feet down the way was motor home with an awning and several men standing under it. After introducing myself and a little bull, I asked who owned the load down at the end of the line. A gentleman spoke up and said "I do." "How much," I said, "for the Dayton power hammer." "Well" he said, "a man harassed me all day yesterday trying to get it for nothing, but I wouldn't budge cause I didn't like him. He was to pushy". Then he floored me by saying, "It would give me great pleasure to tell that S.O.B. that its sold." "How much" I said, repeating myself. "\$100 and its yours".

I think the hard cider the group was drinking might have contributed to my good fortune.

A friend from Tipton had a truck and brought my treasure home for me. That was fun, but just part of the story.....

IBA DUES

The Rocky Forge Blacksmith Guild is a Sattelite group of the Indiana Blacksmith Association (IBA). Therefore, we must all be members of the IBA to be members of the Rocky Forge. If you have not yet joined you can pick up a membership form at the October meeting. Also, the IBA is a chapter of ABANA (Artists Blacksmith of North America). You do not need to be a member of ABANA to join IBA. Confused..... talk to Ted at the meeting. To further confuse the issue we as members of Rocky Forge should also join the Illiana Steam and Power Associaation. That is where our blacksmith shop will eventually be built.

TO SPLIT METAL FOR FORKS AND VARIOUS OTHER PROJECTS

by Ted Stout

Many of the projects in our blacksmithing adventures require splitting a piece of metal. There are several techniques for splitting, some more popular than others, some easier than others.

When wrought iron was in use and a smith needed to make a split, a small hole was drilled at each end of the split. Because wrought is made up of fibers it has a tendency to split beyond the area needed. This is evident when examining old pieces. The holes limited the amount of split out.

Today with the advent of steel we really do not have the problem of further split out. However, when using steel, drilling can still offer some control over where the intended split should begin and end. The small hole gives a good point to set the hot cut and good point to imagine a straight line. Drilling is recommended, but not a necessity.

If you are working the end of section (such as a fork) and want to split further up the piece, then drill a small hole up whatever the distance needs to be and make a deep file mark on the outside edge where the split begins.

The actual splitting can be accomplished using a hot cut while the metal is at least a cherry red. When cutting on the anvil it is a good idea to back the piece (continued on next column)

with a device called a saddle. The saddle is simply a piece of metal 1/4 to 1/2 inch thick cut about 3-4 inches wide and bent over the anvil face. Sometimes the saddle is made to fit into the anvil hardy hole. (If you need one measure the face of your anvil and we will make it on Saturday.) The saddle protects the anvil face from damage. The area directly in front of the anvil step is for cutting, but no one wants to use it without protection. Some old anvils have this area damaged from chisels.

Place the hot metal over the saddle and align the hot cut. Continue to pound the hot cut into the metal until it splits or until the heat has left the metal. Then reheat and repeat the process until the split is complete. Be sure to cool the hot cut periodically in water then rub it in coal dust to dry it. I believe the coal dust also makes the cutter work better. If you are working on a thick piece, like 3/8 inch or greater it may be good to cut part way from one side then turn it over and finish cutting from the other side.

If you are making a slit in a section, not cutting out to the end, then it may be necessary to get the cut started and finish it by placing it over the jaws of the post vice. This allows you to drive the cutter clear though and far enough to insert a drift.

A cold cutter (shorter length) can be used on thin metal, but not recommended for metal over 1/4 inch. I have even used the hardie cut to make splits but you will not have much control because it is hard to see the underneath side of the metal and get the marks aligned.

My favorite way to do a split is with a hacksaw, especially a power bandsaw. The metal is cold and it is easy to cut between the marks. Of coarse this is not possible if making a split in mid section.

Another less familiar splitting method is to clamp the hot piece (cold if 1/8" or less) into the vice at the line to be cut. A cold chisel is used to make the cut. This is especially good for heavy sheet metal.

If you have any questions about any of these techniques please ask at the next meeting because splitting is essential to fork making.