

ROCKY FORGE NEWS

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NOTICE NOTICE NOTICE NEXT MEETING DATE CHANGED NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting of the Rocky Forge Blacksmith Guild will not be the second Saturday, May 10th, but has been rescheduled to the 3rd **Saturday, May 17th**. That date change is only for this meeting. The reason for the change is Mr. Charlie Helton will be returning to teach a class on making tongs. His tongs are light, versatile and very useful for a number of operations. He will provide the materials and the class time. Each participant will need to pay \$25.00 to him for the class and buy your coal from the club. Observers are also welcome, but only as onlookers. All available forges will be in service and we need anyone else who can do so to bring your forge anvil, stump and hand tools. We may also have some class participants from the Jennings County satellite group. Please make them feel welcome. Having the exchange will be good for all of us.

Please give me a call if you intend on coming to the meeting or participating in the class. We need a head count for this meeting so plans can be made to accommodate everyone with forges and anvils.

Lunch will be provide by some of the wives and will consist of soup and sandwiches. If you can please bring a covered dish to go along with the menu. (Note: Charlie Terril please bring the same dish you brought at the April meeting and the recipe.)

Summary: No meeting for May 10th, rescheduled for May 17th to participate in a tong making class. Should be lots of fun.....

STEAM AND POWER SHOW

The Steam and Power Show will be July 18, 19, 20. The Rocky Forge group made such a great appearance last year we have a lot to do to top that performance. Set up day will be Thursday July 17th., I trust some of you will be available to help with getting the big items loaded and to the show grounds. Also, I hope we can have a list of items that can be easily made and put out for sale. If we can put together a list very soon then we could be making items for inventory and practicing our skills. Try to think of items we can make and sketch them out, even make one and bring it to the meeting. We have a lot of 1/2 round stock so think of items that would use it. We may want to spring for a few sticks of 1/4", 3/8" and 1/2" square to make some items. Also, if any of you could bring your own forge and anvil it would be helpful. For those of you who cannot bring your own let me know so that I can get some clean-up going. When the time comes I would really appreciate some help with the big equipment.

We have raffle tickets to sell at the show. Maybe we should set up a card table with the swage block and afghan and have someone at the table at all times to sell tickets. Any of you going to blacksmithing events should try to sell some of the tickets. We definitely should have a table setup at the IBA June Conference at Tipton. That will be June 7th and 8th.

If anyone has an idea of something that would make the blacksmith shop even better than last year and would be achievable please let me, Jim Keith or Dan Michael know. Its our show and we do it for our fun and educational experience for us and the public.

FROM THE APRIL MEETING

The April 12th meeting of the Rocky Forge Blacksmith Guild had a beautiful Saturday for their meeting. There were 22 smiths in attendance. We were fortunate enough to have Charlie Helton as our demonstrator. We learned more from him than we have from any other source. He is a wonderful teacher and we thank him for driving so far to demonstrate his skills for us. Some of the things he left with us may be summarized as follows:

-Safety was discussed as the very first item.

-Before starting the day at the forge and anvil do some exercises to loosen the muscles in the arms and hands.

-As an extension to the exercises make a nail or two to get your eye to hand co-ordination warmed up.

-The importance of the anvil and the various zones for hitting, including the directions of hits was discussed.

-One of the most important things Mr. Helton shared with us was how he holds the hammer between the thumb and index finger. It is not a good idea to place the thumb on the top of the hammer handle as many of us have been taught in the past. That practice can cause carpal tunnel, neck and back pain.

-It is a good idea to take a piece of wood and practice hammer blows and your aim.

-Many blacksmithing principles were demonstrated, some of them were: drawing out, bending, slitting, punching, mortise and tenon, fullering and much more.

-Some of the items demonstrated were: a handle project, napkin rings, Christoff Friedicks Cross (spelling?), musical note, cross joint for gates or other projects, demonstration of a finial, and an interesting loop. The tooling for these projects was also discussed, which was very interesting.

-The use of a pine tar and peat moss mixture for lubricating hot cutting or drilling tools was shared. Apparently, this has been a practice used by many old time farriers for years. A great tip for the blacksmiths. It is called "Forshners Hoof Pack"
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-He demonstrated a jig to hold round stock for hot punching. Also, he showed the type of punch he made and how to use it with the jig.

There were many other (to numerous to mention) tips and tools that Mr. Helton demonstrated for the day.

Our noon meal was pan fried chicken and a lot of pitch in side dishes. For us chicken lovers (there are a lot of us) we thought we had died and gone to heaven. Thanks to the ladies for their contribution of the day.

The Rocky Forge group is selling tickets to raffle a Greene and Mengel swage block as first prize and a beautiful afghan made by Carol Stout as second prize. The tickets sell for \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00. Please let us know if you would like to buy tickets.

"The Blacksmithing Study Guide" books were printed with a cover and spiral bound. These books were made available to the group for \$11.00 each. Centaur Forge mailed a supply of catalogs for distribution to the group. By 5:00 in the afternoon the group had pretty well called it quits and the cleanup was done. Thanks again to Charlie Helton.

TIDBITS OF INFORMATION

-I just ordered a book on African Blacksmiths from the I.U. Press. Normal price at the bookstores is \$32.95, currently, they are on sale at I.U. for \$9.95. The I.U. Press has a large list of books on sale and you can get a copy of the list by calling 1-800-842-6796 or look at my copy at the next meeting.

-The material used by Mr. Helton for lubricating his cutting equipment is called "Forshners Hoof Pack" and is available from many Farrier suppliers. Jim Keith ordered a 25# pail for the club. I have a bunch of one pound tins for repacking the stuff. Hopefully, it will be available for the next meeting. Jim also bought a half whisky barrel for us to use at the show for a quench tank. Thanks Jim.

-Gene Hollingsworth left a VCR tape after the last meeting. One of the movies is called "The Iron Tree" and it is wonderful. Thanks Gene.