

# ROCKY FORGE NEWS

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## **NEXT MEETING:**

The November 8th meeting will be at Dan and Margie Michael's near Crawfordsville. The meeting will start at 9:00.

Directions are as follows: Take 47 south out of Crawfordsville to 550 south, turn west on 550, go about 1 mile (4th house on right). There is a red pole barn and white pole barn. We will be meeting in the white barn.

Bring food for a pitch in dinner. There will be ham and turkey furnished. Bring items for the iron-in-the hat. If good weather prevails feel free to bring your forge and anvil. After demonstrations (continued at bottom of page)

## **ROUNDUP AT STEGMIER'S**

The Rocky Forge group's October meeting was at **Shane and Karen Stegmeier's** out in the wilderness of nearby Independence. Their home is literally over the river and through the woods and down the old railroad bed to Shane and Karen's home. They are perched on a beautiful hillside, hidden in the woods along Pine Creek before it spills into the mighty Wabash River. Stegmeier's were host to both the Rocky Forge group and a group of Medieval Reenactors. Both groups had a good turn out and with open forges we learned from each other. What a great time and great day. As always the Rocky Forge encounters fantastic food, this was no exception. Karen had made loafs of whole grain bread, a wonderful stock pot of soup, homemade flavored goat cheese spreads and many other dishes. A large ham and a dish full of baked, flavored chicken wing drum sticks, chocolate cake, brownies, salad and many other delicious dishes to numerous to mention were brought in by the members.

No business meeting was held, but we did have a good iron in the hat.

Shanes' place is located on the site of an early century gravel pit. Remnants of the buildings used to load railcars still exist and the old railroad bed is the mile long drive to the house. His shop is located in what was an old brick smoke house or wood shed, it is really a neat building. with a 5-6 foot overhang on one side. Shane recently purchased a new air hammer so we had a chance to test drive that new tool. Shane and others worked to make blister steel while some made nail headers, hammer heads, basket handles, hooks and other items.

The women enjoyed a day of getting to know eachother and then some of the ladies had a lesson on felting from wool. The end products were a little less than perfect, but be sure to ask about their hats. Hopefully they will get good enough to give some classes on their own. They made some good contacts for the next steam and power show.

We had such a good time that day we voted to make this an annual event. We don't know whether Shane and Karen voted or not. Thank you two, we had a great time and great day!

## **NEXT MEETING (Continued)**

by Dan Michael and others, weather permitting, there will be time for open forge work to test what we learn in the morning.

Bring food, any items for show and tell plus some good stories and remember the iron the hat drawing. Plan on a good time in the rolling hills of Montgomery County.

See ya all at Dan and Margie's on Nov 8th.

from the 09-29-2003 "Purdue Exponent"

## **Professor shares passion for blacksmithing**

By Chrissy Nethercutt  
Staff Writer

Whether he's teaching about iron oxides in class, shaping them for his blacksmithing hobby or turning them into paint for kids to enjoy, Darrell Schulze is ecstatic about what he is doing.

Professor of soil science is hardly the only title that defines Schulze, but a quick look around his office proves that the title describes one of his passions rather than just his job.

Lined with homemade crystal structure models of soil clay minerals, Schulze's office shelves bear tangible evidence of the countless hours of labor Schulze eagerly puts into his teaching.

Schulze's love of soil minerals — iron oxides in particular — began blossoming while he researched them as a part of his Ph.D. work in Munich, Germany.

A Texas native, Schulze came to Purdue after finishing school in 1982 and began sharing his passion for soil minerals with his students.

"I just couldn't get over how bright he was, when I first met him while he was interviewing at Purdue," said John Graveel, professor of environmental soil science and a colleague of Schulze.

Even the brightest researchers need hobbies, though, said Graveel. Hobbies allow researchers to come to work every day "charged up about what they're doing."

Schulze's love for iron diverged into a hobby a few years after his arrival at Purdue when his grandfather died and Schulze inherited a number of blacksmithing tools.

Although his grandfather had never taught him the trade, Schulze said he began discovering an interest in blacksmithing he could not ignore.

The interest, which was partially brought on by watching other blacksmiths working at the Feast of the Hunter's Moon, eventually caused Schulze to seek out blacksmithing classes through the Tippecanoe County Historical Association.

Schulze explained that in spite of the fact that blacksmiths are not a necessity in today's society he does it "just for the fun of trying out something that most people can't do."

With 16 years of blacksmithing experience, Schulze is now an active member of the Rocky Forge Blacksmith Guild. He has also become one of the regular Ouiatenon Blacksmiths at the Feast.

"(The Ouiatenon Blacksmiths) exist primarily for those two days," said Schulze with a chuckle. "I just love the smells and sounds of it!"

Schulze's creativity is not limited to the ornamental hooks, sign stands, shepherd's crooks and other iron pieces he fashions at the Feast, though.

"He will come up with creative ideas that no one else would think about," said Graveel. "Take for instance how he started a booth at Spring Fest using various iron oxides to make paintings with little kids."

The paintings, which currently hang in a case in Lilly Hall, are Schulze's quiet testament that there are no limits when it comes to a passion.

## **WHICH WAY SHOULD MY ANVIL BE POSITIONED?**

Ever wonder the correct answer to that question? Well here is one good answer: For a right handed person face the horn of the anvil to your right and for a left handed person just the opposite. The reason for this is that if you forget to remove the hardy tool it will be on the opposite end of your swing and thus less likely to hit it and have a painful accident. You will be swinging near the horn, the heel, containing the hardy is at the opposite end. (This rule of thumb excludes European anvils.)

## **PUMPKINFEST AT ZIONSVILLE**

To those who participated in the Zionsville Pumpkin Festival we owe a big thanks. They worked their tails off and came home with a profit of \$600!!! That should buy a lot building. It sounds like they worked, but had a good time doing it. Those involved were Jim Keith (coordinator), Gene and Helen Hollinsworth, John and Lucille Young, Dick Fontaine, Donna Starry. A special thanks to Gene who simply went the extra mile for our group. Thanks Gene. Several other members made items to sell at the show. Thanks to all of you, a job well done. Also, Jim said they want us back next year. Lets hear some discussion about this event at the next meeting.

## **SOUTHERN OHIO FORGE ASSOCIATION (SOFA)**

The Nations 2nd largest gathering of blacksmiths is held the end of September each year at the Miami County fairgrounds Troy, Ohio. The event is referred to as “Quad State” or “Sofa”. This years 3 day show that starts trading 2-3 days before the actual event had row after row of tailgate sales, vendor sales, groups selling and even a few factory direct sales. There were 25-30 power hammers for sale and hundreds of anvils. About every tool the blacksmith could use and a lot he thinks are needed. All kinds of metals were offered, some high priced and some just plain cheap. I bought 5 pieces of high quality wrought iron 1.5” by 2.5” by 4-6 feet long for \$5.00 each. Another booth was selling wrought iron for \$5.00 per pound. The book dealers caught my eye. I had some picked out but decided the two major items I had purchased was pushing my luck so I laid low. I laid low at home too.

The demonstrations were four buildings housing the professional demonstrators. I watched all of them for a while and was learning so much my head started spinning with ideas. It was fun. Another interesting area was the rows of display showing what people had made and brought in for all to see. That is a good place to get some ideas. I would recommend this show to anyone interested in blacksmithing. It was a 3.5 hour drive east on highway 28 to Troy.

## **TOOL TIPS**

Jim Hayden Jr., a neighbor and farrier, gave me a brochure with numerous tips for the farrier. Some of those are directly applicable to blacksmithing.

1. Always wear safety glasses. You are striking steel against steel and working with hot material. Anything can happen, so be safe.
2. Always strike the tool in the center of the striking surface. Striking off center or on the edge will cause breakage and possible injury.
3. Always strike the tool with the round face of your hammer. Striking with the flat face cause deflection of the rounded surface of the tool. The round face of your hammer produces a solid hit.
4. Always pritchel at a black heat. This allows you to shear the material and avoid heat buildup in the pritchel. You will get much longer life from your pritchel and better nail holes. (editorial: I have not tried drilling holes at black heat, it may be okay for 1/4” thickness.)
5. Always maintain your tools. If your tool should mushroom on the struck end, grind off the mushroomed area. If the working end should deform for any reason, regrind to the proper size and shape. Do not overheat.
- 6 Never let the working end of your tool get too hot. Allowing your tools to remain in the hot material too long will create a heat build up in the working end of the tool that will destroy the heat treatment and hardness of the tool. The result will be deformed working ends. This is especially critical with the forepunch and drift.
7. Never put the tools in the fire to adjust them. Excessive heat will destroy the heat treating and render the tool useless.
8. Never quench your tools in water. If your tools get hot they should be allowed to air cool. In normal work we recommend that you dip your tools in Forshners Hoof Packing to provide cooling and lubrication. (The club still has this material for sale at \$3.00 per tin.)
- 9 Never quench tongs in water. If you make adjustments to your tongs do not quench them. Allow them to air cool before you use them. In normal work, you can quench them in water provided there is no color in the tong. Keep the iron hot, have fun and be safe....