

ROCKY FORGE NEWS

Volume 3, Issue 5

May 2004

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Rocky Forge Blacksmith Guild will be May 8th at Ted Stout's.

For you new members call 765-572-2467 for directions. Coffee and doughnuts will be available at 8:30 and the meeting will begin at 9:00.

Right after lunch we will hold the iron-in-the-hat drawing, so bring plenty of goodies for this fun drawing. Lets get creative for the drawing and bring some real surprises.

If you guys bring a covered dish Carol has offered to do hamburgers on the grill. So if you want something to eat bring a covered dish.

APRIL MEETING AT INDEPENDENCE WAS WELL ATTENDED

Our April meeting at Independence was not only well attended (26) but everyone seemed to have a great time. It is a small shop, but with good weather we were able to set up about 8 forging stations. We had smoke and scale flying all over the place. Several visitors from the area stopped by to see what we were doing. One gentlemen in particular, a retired gunsmith, really enjoyed our show. He even went home a couple times to return with some history books and rifles that he had built.

Several items were made for the old blacksmith shop. I did not see all the items made, but there was a pair of tongs, cutoff hardy, a bending jig for the anvil, hooks, fire tools and other items. Thanks to Pete Rollett and the Independence Heritage group for the opportunity to visit the shop and for the historic overviews at the beginning of our meeting.

It was a pleasure to see Dave Wells and Jim McClure from the Indianapolis area. Jim and Dave are both accomplished blacksmiths so it was fun to watch them work at making things for the shop. They are both very active in the Rural Smiths of Mid America and IBA.

Ted Stout has several items from the old original Independence blacksmith shop and has taken the challenge to restore these items for return to the shop. Also, I have volunteered to assist rebuilding a second forge in the building. Pete Rollett, a member of our guild, is the forge master for Independence. Any volunteers toward this restoration effort would be appreciated. There will be a lot of power wire brushing, some wood stands to build and a lot of elbow grease. The reward will be worth the effort.

FINISHED WOOD ITEMS CAN BE HARDENED by boiling in olive oil for 8-10 minutes. It will be as hard as copper when

ITS JUST A RUMOR!!!

Contrary to the rumor, City Coal Yard, Brazil, Indiana, is not closing. They did tell me however, a price increase is expected with their next deliveries. As of Tuesday, April 13th, the price was \$148/ton or \$8.50 per 50# bag. That is cheaper than our last load, we paid \$167/ton. A \$20 pickup and delivery fee is usually allowed for whoever makes the trip. (Only covers the gas and a cup of coffee.) The guild charges members 15 cents per pound and nonmembers 20 cents. We are looking for a nice metal bin or horse water tank to store our coal. Call 572-2467. Preferably one that holds about a 1 to 1.5 tons. They are not closing!

ILLIANA STEAM AND POWER SHOW JUST AROUND THE CORNER

Start making plans for the Show this July, its just around the corner. We have had a really good program at the last two shows, I hope we can do even better. People really like to see the blacksmiths work. The kids learn from it, the adults reminisce and the older generation lived it. If anyone has suggestions to make a good show please let me know.

I would also like some input on whether to bring the power hammers, large drill press and power hacksaw? Its a lot of work and I am willing to do it but need to know if the rest of the group wants it done.

Is there a theme or some catchy thing we could do this year? I wonder about combining some metal work with wood working. Many old smiths built wagons and other wood parts for farm machinery. I can come up with several projects if someone knows of, or would like to take on such a project at the show. The tools and materials would be furnished.

Any better way to lay out the blacksmith shop for the show? The fence worked great and we still have sections needing to be restored.

As you are brimming with ideas, I'll be waiting by the phone to hear from you.

EDUCATED THE YOUNGER GENERATION

On April 29th some of the Guild members explained and demonstrated blacksmithing to a group of 3rd graders at the Independence blacksmith shop. We were one of several stops during an afternoon outing for the students.

We explained where the iron came from in the early days with a show and tell of charcoal, limestone and iron ore. Then we had a pigiron ingot and wrought iron to show the product the blacksmith had for doing his work.

On May 7th, the day before our meeting, another group will be entertained at the Illiana Show grounds. At that show there will be 10-12 stations the students will be shown. The blacksmiths will be one of those stations. A total of about 300 students and adults will be in attendance.

These activities are what its all about, passing on the information and knowledge we have acquired. There may be several future blacksmiths in these groups. After all who else is going to buy all those tools when they have our auctions?

Anyone willing to help at the Illiana Show grounds on May 7th, give me a ring. There may be jobs other than the blacksmithing.

VOLUNTEER BLACKSMITHS NEEDED

Billy Creek Village is looking for volunteers to do blacksmithing on weekends. This is a recreated village of the early 1900's located in Parke County, just outside of Rockville on U.S. 36. Call 765-569-3430

INDIANA BLACKSMITH ASSOCIATION NEWS

The leadership of the IBA has changed, the new president replacing Jeff Sallot, is John Zile. John is a very accomplished blacksmith and will bring good things to the organization. Because Jeff Sallot had to resign due to job commitments John Zile has his work cut out. Maybe we can help make the transition easier. John needs help for the annual conference to be held the first weekend of June (June 5-6 Tipton Fairgrounds). First he needs people who have video cameras to record the demonstrators. If you do this he will be sure you get a copy, plus a copy of all the other demonstrations. This would be a good way to get your personal library started.

Second, John is asking for Satellite assistance to make items for the auction to be held on Saturday night. This is one of the ways the IBA has of making money, so if you make an item for contribution to the auction, it would be appreciated.

Third, an iron-in-the-hat will be held right after lunch on Saturday of the conference.

Contributions to that effort are also being solicited. I know you guys can help here because our guild has one of the best iron-in-the-hat drawings in the whole state.

Do what you can to help the IBA. You can call John Zile at 765-533-4153 or Ted at 572-2467.

BLACKSMITHING AT THE INDIANA STATE FAIR

As many of you know I have been setting the stage for us to blacksmith at the Indiana State Fair. This effort has been ongoing for about 2 years. Plans were being made to erect a building on the grounds of the Pioneer Village, a shop that would accommodate 1-2 forges. The last word was that we would indeed be doing the blacksmithing in the new shop.

Then, Jim Keith was at the Hoosier Horse Fair at the fair grounds in March. Jim picked up a flyer advertising the new blacksmith shop and a description of the group to do the blacksmithing. It is a high school group that has the only blacksmithing class in the entire US.

I am very pleased for the kids and they will probably do a good job. However, we never had a single communication about this change. I guess we slipped through the crack. My feeling was a whole lot worse and I think the people responsible did a great injustice by not notifying this group.

Good luck to the High School group!

THE OLD-ORDER AMISH

from "2004 Rockome Review"

The old-order Amish, "the plain people", today still maintain much of the same existence as their forefathers had in 1864. Here is some interesting information.

Buggies: They are made locally in blacksmith and buggy shops and cost more than \$3000 new. With proper maintenance they will last over 20 years. In the winter, some families opt to install propane gas heaters on the dashboard.

Buggies average 12 mph with a good horse.

Amish families buy their sons a new or used buggy when they turn age 16. Motorists should reduce speed when approaching buggies.

Lighting: The amish use propane lamps and camping lanterns to light their homes and a few use kerosene lamps. They do not use electricity at all on their farms.

(per Ted: There are still many operating amish blacksmiths throughout the country. Some I have visited are in Shipshewana and Topeka, Indiana; Millersburg, Ohio and Arthur, Ill.)

BLACKSMITHING CALENDARS

I have ordered 15 blacksmithing calendars for the group. These calendars have very good, old blacksmithing shop photos from the late 1800's to the 1900's. Each month has a different picture. These pictures are good enough to be framed. The cost of these calendars will be \$10.00 each. There are only 15 so get yours early. They should be here by meeting time.

CABLE KNIVES

Want to make a neat knife from a piece of cable? Here is a way to do it. Choose a piece of cable, preferably 3/4" diameter and with no fiber core. I have used rusty cable, but you will get a better knife if new or shiny cable is used. Clean the cable with a degreaser or gasoline. Cut a piece about 7-8" long and weld or wire the ends. Find a pair of tongs that fit the cable well. Place the section in the fire and heat to dull red. Heating will also help clean the cable. Once hot place one end in the vice and twist the cable tight.

Place it back into the fire and bring it up to red heat, then add borax flux. Heat to welding heat and forge weld the ends of the cable section. Again twist it to be sure it is a tight. Finish welding the entire length.

Once welded, forge the cable into a billet about 3/4" wide. Begin to form the blade, choil, recasso and tang. After the blade is formed hand sand it with a piece of 80 grit emery paper. Submerge it into a solution of ferric chloride (from Radio Shack) for however long it takes to get the level of pattern etch (10 to 40 minutes). Temper and add the handle and your are in business. (Opps I'm out of space.)

FOR SALE OR WANTED

*Blacksmith Coal from the Guild

15 cents/pound for members

20 cents/pound for nonmembers

*100# power hammer, John Paul Jenkins

765-893-4955

*Learn Damascus or patterned steel knife blades or learn to make knives from the beginning.

John Paul Jenkins 765-893-4955