

# Rocky Forge News

Volume 7, issue 8 – August, 2008

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*This month if you are looking for coherence, look elsewhere.- DEC*

## Next Meeting

Where has the time gone? It is hard to believe summer is almost over, did we ever have spring?

Let's have a hammer-in! Meet on September 13th at Greg Searcy's place, which is on the high banks of pine creek in Warren County, Rainsville. Go to the main stop (um, the only stop) in Rainsville and turn to the east. Follow that street to the dead end and there is Greg and Trevor's place. He is going to prepare his now famous tenderloin roast. So we should all bring a covered dish to share and we will have a pitch in lunch with all the trimmings.

Also, if you want to sit down bring a chair, a folding chair, a rocking chair, a straight chair, a lounge chair or maybe a high chair, just bring a chair.

Bring your forge, anvil, coal, metal and tools so you will have toys to play with.

Rocky Forge had to pay the electricians bill so we are about \$200 in the hole, so bring some enticing items for the iron-in-the-hat. Most of all, be sure to attend, we need a good group gathering to renew our ties to the club. It would also be fun to bring some of the things you have made during the summer, even while demonstrating. Perhaps we may even see a lizard or a piece of creative art work. This should be a fun day, one to look forward to. If it would happen to rain, we could move to the new building at the Illiana grounds. Think positively...

Ted

## Hand Stamps

*per Ted Stout*

Many of you have ask again where you can get a stamp with your name. You can have your own hand stamp with your name or your logo custom made by Columbia Marking Tools (CMT). My stamp with (T. STOUT) cost \$72 and is well made. It appears to be the same one that Centaur Forge wanted \$120 for. I guess they have to make money

too. My first stamp has lasted for over 20 years and it still works. Columbia can be reached by the internet at <http://www.columbiamt.com/> or by phone at 586-949-8400

## Smoke and Noise

### Articles from e-mail and the Internet

*Compiled by David Childress*

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From: Mike Spencer

Date: Sep 1

Subject [TheForge] Re: OT Goats [was: Beware the quiet welder]

A fellow that lived here in Uvalde had a goat that went everywhere with him. It was said that he invented the automatic transmission, and was worth millions....He would always pay his bills in person, and with silver dollars.

Good yarn, Robert!

When I was in high school, late 50s, I used to go to the bank whenever I had more than a sawbuck and buy silver dollars -- real ones, not Susan Bs -- and spend them. I got a kick out of the consternation.

Many people in Springfield, Mass. apparently had never seen a silver dollar and a couple even refused to take them.

No goats were involved, unless I was the goat for not putting them in a piggy bank and keeping them for 20 years until the Hunt brothers did their thing.

- Mike

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From: Franklin Police

Date: Sep 1

Subject: RE: [TheForge] Re: OT Goats [was: Beware the quiet welder]

I have the same problem with people taking \$2 bill from me

1/3 don't like them because they don't have a slot in the register

1/3 don't care

1/3 don't think they are real money

Of course it doesn't help I say I make them at work but doesn't everyone make their money at work?

Don Neuenswander, IN coppersmith, used to get a stack of them and go to office supply and get material to stick them together on the end like note pads. He would pull out the stack and peel off the bills.

Roger R Degner

*This sounds like something Don would do and enjoy-DEC*

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### Rust Removal

Last month I included several pieces about Evaporust and rust removal. One of the things mentioned was using a molasses bath for rust removal, takes a couple of weeks. I tried it and it works. An added benefit seems to be that with no further treatment the iron does not seem to begin to rust again immediately, as it does with many rust removal methods.

10% molasses in water and let it sit for a couple of weeks. Remove the rust-free object and you are left with a really disgusting looking solution that I am still trying to figure out what to do with. It may be reusable? I do not know yet. Maybe I will end up with iron fortified eggs. I got molasses at the feed mill, five gallons for \$25. It is meant as a feed mineral supplement. By the way you can get Evaporust at Harbour Freight now. (\$20 for a gallon) Evaporust works by the same theory as molasses but much, much more quickly.

The following is a different surface finish that appeared on the same thread later that I thought might be of interest, especially to those making new "antiques". DEC

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From: Peter Hirst  
Date: Jun 26  
Subject: re: coal or charcoal morph to Evaporust

Sounds like finishing hell to me, but I'm not all that adventurous. On the other hand, I did discover one neat trick that results in an interesting texturing. Put the workpiece on the negative clip for a day or two, and you get a huge, fast and unevenly distributed rust build up. Then reverse the polarity back to normal, popping the new rust off and you get texturing that raises pitting to an art form: more like cratering. But since the rust happens so fast, its not evenly distributed like it is if you leave a piece of

iron where it can rust slowly and evenly. Instead, you get a deep rich texture which when cleaned up bright gives a real organic look, something you could never do with a tool, and very different from the tell-tale pitting of the merely neglected or abused piece. I discovered this when I was setting up electrolysis on a piece that has been kicking around my shop for a couple of years and built up a nice even pitting from a couple of rust/wire wheel cycles. It just looked like a piece that had been rusted and brushed bright, so I decided to see what would happen if I exaggerated the effect by deliberately rusting it one more time. Pretty cool result.

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From: "Peter Fels & Phoebe Palmer"  
Date: Thursday, June 26, 2008 12:00 AM  
To: "Blacksmithing List Sponsored by ABANA"

Saint Phlip

Sun, Aug 17, 2008 at 2:42 PM

So, I'm back from Pennsic. Usually takes me about a week to recover sufficiently to converse coherently. Had some right interesting doings, that I'll share with you ;-)

First, my student, Ben. Last year, he had never been on a forge at all. In the intervening year, he has acquired equipment, and started playing, and he's doing quite well. I'm very pleased - I think any of you would be proud to have him for a student. I'm really looking forward to seeing the trellis he's making as a gift for some friends who are getting married. As soon as I get pictures, I'll share them ;-)

One of the things we've been doing every Pennsic, is having a cook-in, basically experimenting with period style pottery, cooking period-style foods over an open fire. I'll send you guys a URL as soon as I get one- I think you'll be interested ;-)

One of the participants is a professor of archaeology, who recently went on a dig over in Russia. While there, he acquired a book, in Russian, showing a number of artifacts they'd found, and we spent a fair amount of time looking them over and discussing them - I was able to tell him what several items were in reality, as opposed to what academics ignorant of practical matters had chosen to identify them as-

always amusing ;-)) I now have a copy of these pages- only the 3rd or 4th copy in the US ;-)

But, as we cook, I usually have someone working on my forge. In this case, Ben was making the professor a trivet, to use under a particular pot that he wanted to cook out of. The trivet was the simple "V" type, with a leg at the bend, and legs at the ends of the bars.

When he saw it, the prof got very excited. It seems that there is a whole slew of metal artifacts out there, that had been tentatively identified as some sort of staple, to hold wood together, although there was some question as to why they tended to be found amongst cooking gear. As it happens, with this trivet, if it were to break at the point of the V, it would produce two "staples" exactly like the ones that there had been the many discussions about. It seems we're making history, one trivet at a time ;-)

And, aside from the tremendous fun that I have at Pennsic, I, too, had what I feel is a great personal triumph ;-)) As some of you know, I have a strong interest in disabled folks, it being my belief that able-bodied people too often sell them short, in terms of what we believe they can do. I had always been willing to teach anyone to smith, having met crippled smiths, deaf smiths, one VERY fine smith who only had one arm to use, etc, but in all my thinking, I had not been able to figure out how to teach a blind person to smith - I mean, really, Braille and Red Hot (or even black hot) metal do not seem to go together safely.

So, this Pennsic, I met a blind gentleman, who was motivated to learn - and I managed to teach him, with the help of some very good students I had the privilege of working with. Not only did he learn and help my other students in cutting off lengths from my bar stock, but he was able to learn how to place the metal in the heart of the (charcoal) fire, draw a point, and bend a circle, in order to make himself a simple portable hole. Yes, he did all the hammering himself.

Now, I don't think he'll ever be able to smith safely and artistically without a sighted person to help him adjust angles and the like, but I'm pretty sure that, with a few more lessons, he will be able to teach a

sighted, but smithing-ignorant person to assist him. I'm very proud of him ;-)

So, guys, how was YOUR summer?

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Saint Philip

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From: Eric Klaus

Date: Mon, Aug 18, 2008 at 9:28 AM

Harlan Krueger, a member of the PBA (Prairie Blacksmith Association) is the primary blacksmith at Rock Creek Station in Nebraska. He said one of his biggest thrills was when a group of blind children came to visit ... ages ranged from 10 to 16. He talked their leaders into letting them pound some steel. Once he got them positioned, he said they could repeatedly hit the same mark that he would first tap with his hammer. Every one of them got the chance, and at the end of the session, they had 2 foot piece of steel to take back that they had all pounded on. He received a thank-you note from the leaders that brings tears to your eyes. The kids pass that piece of steel around their story circle and tell about the day they all got to be blacksmiths. The leaders of that group now schedule with him yearly to come down and spend time at the shop.

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From: Cindy and James

Date: Sat, Aug 16, 2008 at 8:29 AM

Subject: railing in country home

Jonathan,

Regardless of the style, etc. be sure your finished project adheres to the current building code for the applicable locale, city, etc. Failure to do so could cause you problems later. Generally, this is referred to as the "4 inch rule" or "baby-head rule" but that can vary depending on location, it might be less and also covers the tread space at the bottom of each step (there is a name for that but I can't recall what it is) which may be 6". I recently had a client who wanted a railing in a building but they did not want side panels, just the top rail (the bldg was built in the late 1800's). Our jurisdiction uses the 1993 or 94 code, which is 4" w/ 6" allowable at the bottom. A copy will normally be available from the inspector, the local library or local bookstores, but be sure you know which one is applicable as a new one is published every year. I have been "told" that

one can obtain permission from the local building code dept, inspector, whatever, for "allowances or exceptions" to the code. Anything like that, in my opinion would need to be in writing and signed by a LOT of people in power... rules and thought processes in government can change and change quickly.

There are also considerations which may or may not apply such as: Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): The Americans with Disabilities Act adopted by Congress in 1992 required handrails to be 1 1/4" minimum and 1 1/2" maximum. However, the ADAAG Manual, July 1998, published by US Architecture and Transportation Barriers Compliance Accessibility Guidelines, has now clarified the intent of the dimensional requirements to be 1 1/4" minimum to a nominal 2" maximum. It is important to note that Section 4.26.2 Size and Spacing of Grab Bars and Handrails of the ADAAG Manual states in part, "Standard IPS pipe designated by 1 1/4" to 1 1/2" is acceptable." ADAAG also allows handrails which provide an equivalent gripping surface. ANSI 117.1-98 defines this alternative: equivalent gripping surfaces are permitted provided they have a perimeter dimension of 4" (100mm) minimum and 6 1/4" (16mm) maximum and provided their largest cross-section dimension is 2 1/4" (57mm) maximum.

Yes, Ries is correct, Dover is a wonderful source. My designer uses them daily and we have an extensive collection of their books. Plus, the King Arch. Co. publishes the Koenig Eisen design elements book which is either free or nominal in cost. Julius Blum offers catalogs, downloads, drawings, etc. free.

I am a rank beginner in this business... having only built 2 stair rail projects, both by hand. There is LOTS to learn and so far I have done most of my learning the HARD WAY! For me, the hard part is the design, get the steel hot enough and it will bend the way you want it!

My 2 cents.

James Allcorn

Paris, TX

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## Comments

I know that we are a little short this month but my life is even crazier than usual. I want to thank all those who demonstrated at the State Fair. The Fair Board thought that we did well. For the first time we frequently had more bodies than we had room for. - DEC

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## Announcements

The Rocky Forge News is available by E-mail and on our website (<http://www.rockyforge.org/>). If you wish to receive the newsletter via E-mail sent Dave Childress a note at [trollkeep@gmail.com](mailto:trollkeep@gmail.com), or e-mail directly to [rocky@rockyforge.org](mailto:rocky@rockyforge.org).