

ROCKY FORGE NEWS

Volume 1, Issue 4

November 2002

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Rocky Forge Blacksmith Guild will be November 9th at Ted Stouts. The meeting will be at 9:00. The meeting agenda will be as follows:

>Coffee, snacks and introduction of guests and social time

>Business meeting

>Dan Michael will demonstrate making a items for camp fires.

>Mark Brier may demonstrate forge welding a gun barrel (tentative- cannot reach him).

>Ted Stout will demonstrate the use of clay to make prototypes.

>If weather permits the outside forges, anvils and tools will be available.

Carol will be off on her own adventure so lunch will be a pot of green beans, potatoes, onions and smoked sausage stew. Feel free to bring a covered dish to share.

BLACKSMITH COAL

Ever wonder what makes good blacksmithing coal? Why is Indiana coal not used for forge work? Recently, my supply of good coal was depleted in the shop, it was raining and I just did not want to get a bucket and trot down to my coal bin (in the woods). So what I did next was a real educational experience. There was a bucket of Indiana coal left from last winters heating. That was not a good idea!!! At first I thought it would be fine, the fire started okay and formed coke as it should. I did notice a little extra smoke, but did not think it was problem. The problem occurred when the hot iron was placed on the anvil. The hydrogen sulfide (sulfur) odor was so bad it burnt my nostrils. Being a slow learner I kept bringing the metal out of the fire to the anvil. Finally enough is enough, the fire was put out and I grabbed a bucket and headed to the woods to get some quality coal.

The coal we use is a low sulfur bituminous coal from vein number 3 of the Pocahontas mine in West Virginia. . It is sized (screened) to approximately 3/8" by 3/4" and is called "metallurgical pea coal". The sulfur content is about 0.8%. Indiana coal may have up to 12% sulfur (whew!!!).

October News "Rocky Forge Blacksmith Guild"

The October 12th meeting of the "Rocky Forge Blacksmith Guild", held at Ted Stout's, was very well attended. Several guests included Ed and Nancy Perdue and Rick Keith. There were 3 young smiths under the age of 15, 3 wives and 14 blacksmiths. The weather did not want to cooperate for us to work on the 5 forges and anvils set up outside so we took advantage of the situation and discussed several topics including: the newsletter, our T-shirts and hats with the logo, first aid kit (we already have a fire blanket and fire extinguisher), and plans for a new building. The wives of the group are planning monthly events like basket weaving, ceramics painting, quilting, etc. One of the guys hoped they would plan a monthly cooking event.

Rob Durrett made an interesting report about his blacksmithing class at the John C. Cambell Folk School near Brasstown, North Carolina. Sounds like a wonderful experience. Susan Hutchinson was his instructor. While he was learning blacksmithing his wife took a class in basket weaving. Ted Stout reported about his one-day attendance at the "QUAD State Roundup" in Troy, Ohio.

Donna Starry prepared a fine lunch of chicken noodle soup and sandwiches. Several covered dishes were "carried in" making the lunch an enjoyable and social event. After lunch the rain quit so we had iron in the hat. Many nice items were on the table making the ticket drawing a fun time as we all waited patiently in hopes of getting that one item we really wanted. Iron in the hat brought in \$63.

The forges were finally fired! Our task was to continue with projects in the book "A Blacksmithing Primer". We are at the flesh fork stage. Dennis Lane started making a stake for his son Evan to use in Armour work. Jim Keith is making an Irish sword for his son. Some of he forges were still going at 5:30. We had a great day of enjoyment and fellowship. Our next meeting will be November 9th. Guests are welcome.

BLACKSMITH SHOP

Rocky Forge Blacksmith Guild is in the preliminary stages of planning a blacksmith shop that will be erected on the grounds of the Illiana Steam and Power Association show grounds near Rainsville, Indiana. The design currently being presented is a similar to the old style barns with a tall center portion and lean-to attached to each side.

The blacksmith and other shops could be located in the lean-to leaving the center area open for meeting space, working on large projects and a walk space for guests at the annual Steam and Power Show.

The shop area will be tall enough to accomodate a line shaft for powering equipment such as grinder, power hammers, forge blower, table saw, lathe, etc. etc. There may actually be more than one line shaft. The power will be from electric motors and a vertical free standing steam engine located in a small attached room.

There are a lot details that need to be worked out with the building design, site selection, equipment layout and many other questions that will need addressing.

Obviously, this is all going to require funds to support.

Over the course of the next year or two we will be trying to raise funds by donation, selling our blacksmith made items, coal sales or by anyother means. The Illiana Steam and Power group will assist us in any way they can, both finacially and by labor and materials.

If any of you have any ideas on how we might pursue our dream shop please let us know. Personal donations, Corporate sponsors, grants etc. are all ways to meet our goal.

Because of our building site location, once built, I can vision hosting Indiana Blacksmith groups and very likely other state groups.

Regionally, the future of blacksmithing may be in our hands, lets do all we can to play the hand best to serve interest in this nearly forgotten trade.

NOTICE DECEMBER MEETING

TAKE NOTE AND PLAN ACCORDINGLY

Hunter Spoon a metallurgist will be here to give a presentation, demonstration and hands on of metallurgy, heat treating and introduce his own manufactured mini gas forge.

Hunter is known in the blacksmithing world as a real expert and excellent presenter. He is known in the professional world for his expertise in cryogenic metallurgy.

Hunter says if we have some knife blades blanked out and ready to heat treat he will show us how. He likes to use lawnmower blades and cut the basic shape with a torch and grind to shape then heat treat.

He may bring up to four small gas forges that we can use, with his instruction, to heat treat. He will also tell how to use the oven and freezer for heat treatment.

This should prove to be a very educational and interesting meeting to be enjoyed by all. The time is 9:00 A.M. on December 14th. at Ted Stout's in the basement till after lunch then adjourn to the shop.

NEWSLETTER

At the October meeting the group was asked whether we should continue with the newsletter. The answer was a definite yes. I enjoy doing the newsletter and trust that it serves as a reminder of the the upcoming meetings, and serves as a voice for items to help promote the hobby. As you might expect it costs our group to publish, print, package and mail the newsletter. This subject was discussed at the last meeting and we decided to just send to those who have expressed interest enough to attend some meetings. However, our list of interest goes beyond those who attend. Therefore, if you would like to receive the newletter a small donation would be appreciated to offset our costs. For this and the next issue our complete list of active and potential members will be included in the mailing. If we have not received any evidence of your continued interest, starting in January the newsletter will only be mailed to those active members or those who have made a donation. If you have any questions or comment please call Ted Stout at 765-572-2467.

To make a donation mail to:

Rocky Forge Blacksmith Guild
Ted Stout
8525 West 700 South
West Point, Indiana 47992

MAKING RINGS

To make a lot of rings, whether from wire or heavier, simply wrap the metal around a shaft and cut with hacksaw in the direction of the shaft. Once cut you will have a number of unwelded rings. To complete them simply weld the ends together with oxyacetylene, arc, or forge welding. Another way to visulize this is to imagine a spring and lay it on the bench and cut lengthwise through each turn of the spring. You can actually do this to a spring if you first anneal it to make it soft enough to cut with a hacksaw.

I learned this technique of ring making during my jewelry making days. Rather than buy silver jump rings, used to attach pieces of jewelry, we simply wound a piece of silver wire around a rod of the desired diameter, then cut with a jewelers saw to produce a lot of rings.

Try it with some bailing wire around a 1/2" shaft and see how easy it is, then when the day comes that you need rings, whamo you know how.....

FOR SALE, TRADE OR WANTED

This space is reserved for items you may have for sale or trade, let me know if want an ad placed.

*Blacksmith coal for sale from the Rocky Forge, 15 cents for members and 20 cents for nonmembers.