

# ROCKY FORGE NEWS

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## NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Rocky Forge Blacksmith Guild will be at **Nucor Steel**. The coordinator of this tour is **Dan Michael**. Dan says we should park and enter through the south entrance. There will be a sign guiding us to the right place. To get there simply take I-74 to the state highway 32 exit on the east side of Crawfordsville and exit toward Crawfordsville. Go about 1/4 mile toward Crawfordsville and there will be a sign point south to Nucor. Nucor is about 3 miles south.

We plan to assemble at 9:00 A.M. at Nucor. If you plan to attend please call either Ted Stout (765-572-2467) or Dan Michael (765-359-1472) before February 5th to make reservations. This is necessary as Nucor will be providing tour guides. A nice lunch will be catered in the Nucor cafeteria for \$8.00.

Remember too that anyone under 16 will not be admitted, no pacemakers and anyone who cannot walk for a long distance or up very long flights of stairs should not plan this trip.

See you at Nucor.....

## DONATION TO THE ROCKY FORGE

The meeting at Delta Welding was a success for both Rex Oteham and the Rocky Forge. Prior to our meeting in Attica, Rex had agreed to donate 1% of his total sales for the day to the Rocky Forge. As those of you who were there know we had a great turnout and everyone had a good time. Many of you went home with new machines and supplies for the shop. As a result Rex made a donation of \$41.44 to our treasury. The folks at Delta went to a lot of trouble to prepare for our day. Be sure to acknowledge a big thanks to them.

## SWAGE BLOCK PROPOSAL

Ted has a proposal that needs attentions before our next meeting. The swage block deal is a good one. Sometime in the near future we will need a swage block for own Rocky Forge shop. I would like to buy one now with funds from our our treasury so that we will have our ownswage block. Also, I would like to buy a second one for raffle at the show. If we sell 6 tickets for \$5.00 we need only sell 22 shots at \$5.00 to pay for the block. We should sell far more than 22 and probably enough to pay for our own block that we are keeping. As we go to some of the blacksmithing meets throughout the state we should be able to sell at those events as well. We all know other blacksmiths that would like to have a swage and would be willing to take a chance for \$5.00.

Let me know if you are against either of these ideas. Also, for those of you who wanted swage blocks you best get your money in because we will probably be picking them up in February.

## ROCKY FORGE WEB SITE NOW A REALITY

Look it up! Rocky Forge has a web site at [www.rockyforge.org](http://www.rockyforge.org). Jeff Rattray, who does this sort of thing for a livelihood, developed the site for us. It is the beginning and Jeff says it will improve with time. However, it will only improve as we give Jeff input to the events and other information to keep the site current. We hope to be able to publish the newsletter on the site and save postage. At some point maybe we can put some how to items, or useful information. All this information is for our benefit as well as for anyone in the world, yes the world, to access and learn from the site.

## **ROCKY FORGE BLACKSMITH GUILD NEWS January 11th Meeting**

The "Rocky Forge Blacksmith Guild" met Saturday January 11<sup>th</sup> at Delta Welding in Attica, IN. **Rex Oteham**, owner of Delta Welding gave us a great day with demonstrations of welding, cutting, grinding and sanding equipment. Several members went home with new equipment and supplies. We also discovered this site as a great source of new metal. As members came in the door they were given a packet and signed a card that was placed in a box and later the cards were drawn for prizes that Rex and his suppliers had donated. An enjoyable iron in the hat was loaded with very nice items brought in by members and items donated by the welding suppliers. This event brought in \$123. Delta Welding graciously donated 1% of their total sales for the day to the Rocky Forge treasury. Every dollar received puts us closer to the start of new blacksmith shop to be located on the grounds of the Illiana Steam and Power Association.

A large order for new swage blocks from Greene and Mengel will be made this month for members of the group. Also, we just received our second order of the book "A Blacksmiths Primer" by Randy McDaniel to be used as a text and reference. We find it very economical to buy in quantity for club members. Sam Walton found out the same thing years ago.

**Carol Stout** and **Donna Starry** served a nice lunch of tasty chili, cold meat sandwiches, cookies, brownies, iced tea and coffee. We always appreciate their efforts. Also, three dozen doughnuts plus many cookies and brownies were consumed before the meeting.

After lunch members were allowed to test drive all the tools (toys) demonstrated earlier in the day. Some of the group used the plasma cutters to make knife blanks, one 15 year old, **John Keith**, learned how to oxy-acetylene weld, a 9 year old, **Joey Stout**, learned how to wire weld. Wire welding is so easy Joey was making pretty good welds after only about 10 minutes of instruction.

## **CLUB MEMBERS WORK TO EARN MONEY FOR A NEW BUILDING**

Club members Jim Keith, Dick Fontaine and Ted Stout spent a Saturday figuring and making racks to hang saddles. Jim Keith had the basic plan and had 6 of them sold. We used 1/2" round stock and put 9 units together. They were sold for \$120 and the whole amount went into our treasury. Every dollar that goes in buys posts and trusses for a new building.

Everyone should be on the lookout for projects the group could benefit by doing. We should try to have a selection of our blacksmith made items available at the Steam and Power Show in July. We may even want to consider selling during the covered bridge. Dick Fontaine suggested we could set up out on highway 41 or put signs out to bring people into the show grounds. Think about these possibilities and we will discuss them at one of our meetings.

## **MONKEY WRENCHES FIND GOOD USE**

They used to call them knuckle busters, now they are sought after by the contemporary blacksmiths as tools of the trade.

Welding a second handle on the opposite end of a monkey wrench makes a great twisting tool. Being able to grip both handles allows better control during the twist, thus minimizing a crooked end product.

Welding an appropriate square stock on the business end of the monkey wrench makes a very useful hardy with adjustable jaws. These can be used for bending or as a third hand for welding or other anvil operations. Let your creativity prevail. The eight inch wrench works very well, but other sizes will probably work just as well.

## **TWO ASPIRING BLACKSMITHS NOW TRAINING AT CONNER PRAIRIE**

Two of our members are now being trained as blacksmiths at Conner Prairie, by the head blacksmith Nathan Allen. Dick Fontaine and Ted Stout are enrolled in a 10 week class, along with 8 other individuals, to learn more about the trade. Maybe they will pass some of their training to the members of the Rocky Forge group.