

ROCKY FORGE NEWS

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NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting of the Rocky Forge Blacksmith Guild will be the second Saturday of the month, April 12th. The meeting will be at Ted & Carol Stouts', near West Point.

Charley Helton will be our demonstrator for this meeting. Please plan to attend as Mr. Helton is one of the Indiana's most accomplished blacksmiths. We are very fortunate to have him as our demonstrator. We will all learn some new techniques and ideas from this demonstrator.

Some of the wives will prepare lunch and if you can please bring a covered dish to add to the buffet. It is always more fun if we have the pitch in lunches. Our food must be the envy of all other blacksmithing groups.

Remember iron in the hat for the next meeting. It is good to keep that project going and contribute as best we can. Our last one brought in \$66 for the new building.

Hopefully, we will have the new books from IBA available by meeting time. They will be \$11.00 each for those of you who ordered one.

See you at the meeting.

SWAGE BLOCK RAFFLE

At our last meeting Green and Mengle delivered the ordered swage blocks. Since we sold so many (27) and bought a lot of their other items, they graciously donated a block for us to raffle and raise funds for the new building. The raffle tickets will be sold at the Illiana Steam and Power Show in July. The drawing will also take place at that show. We should also try to sell as many as possible prior to the show. They will sell for \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00. This is pure profit guys so lets do all we can to sell tickets.

SOME INTERESTING COMING ATTRACTIONS

April 5th Rural Smiths of Mid America at Jim McClure's 7905 S 600 E Brownsburg.

April 12th Rocky Forge Meeting with Charlie Helton as the demonstrator.

April 19th Indiana Blacksmith Association at Chip Hunter's, Brazil.

June 6,7,8th Indiana Blacksmiths annual conference at the Tipton Fairgrounds.

July 18, 19, 20th 4th Biennial Upper Midwest regional Blacksmith Conference, Pontiac, Illinois.

July 18,19,20th Illiana Steam & Power Show

AFGHAN RAFFLE

Carol Stout has crocheted an afghan for us to raffle before and during the show as a fund raiser for the building. Not everyone would like to have a swage block and maybe some of those would like an afghan. We should have tickets for this raffle available at the April or May meeting.

FUND RAISING PROJECTS

The swage block and afghan raffle should bring in much needed funds, but how about if we have a table or two of simple items made by the blacksmiths for sale during the show in July? There are many items we could make using metal we already have in stock. We have the potential of several hundred dollars. Bring your thoughts and ideas to the April meeting.

MARCH MEETING REPORT: This month we had a great time viewing slides of a trip to Africa by one of our members. Darrel Shulze is a Soils Scientist at Purdue University, and made a trip to Niger, Africa to study their soil. During his trip he managed to meet some local blacksmiths. His slides and artifacts were fascinating. We sure appreciated his presentation. We had 16 in attendance. Greene and Mengel traveled all the way from Philadelphia, PA to deliver 27 swage blocks that we had ordered. They also had cone mandrels, other swage blocks, and other great buys. Elections were held this month. Ted Stout continues leading our group as Forge Master. Carol Stout has been elected to be the treasurer, thanks Carol. Dan Michael will be the secretary/reporter for another term. We decided to create a new position, Assistant Forge Master, and Jim Keith has been elected to fill that. We took in \$66.00 for Iron in the hat. Ted Stout demonstrated some things that he learned at his Conner Prairie class. Next month we will have Charley Helton as demonstrator. Charley is a well known demonstrator and we are very fortunate to be able to have him. Our next meeting will be on April 12. Hope to see you then. Dan Michael Secretary/Reporter

WEB SITES TO VISIT There are many web sites that can add a lot of useful information to your knowledge base. One of the best is the site for the Artists Blacksmiths Association of North America, better known as ABANA. The Indiana Blacksmiths Association (IBA) is a chapter of ABANA. The site for ABANA is abana.org. when you get in there are several other paths to follow. Investigate it and see what you can find. Other sites of interest are keenjunk.com or anvilfire.com. Actually, if you will simply go into a search engine and type in blacksmith, blacksmithing, metal work, metalworking, etc. you will not have time to work in the shop. There are so many things to learn you just cannot keep up. Some of the discussion forums will answer your questions. And don't forget EBAY.com and under search type blacksmith. This is the way to spend the grocery money, the rent, tax refund and all.

DOUG MERKEL'S PASTE WAX

Doug Merkel is a professional demonstrator at many of the state conferences, etc. He is also a respected instructor at the John C Cambell Folk School. I met him at the IBA State Conference in 2001.

Here is his paste wax finish recipe:

1 cup Johnson paste wax
1 cup Boiled Linseed oil
1 cup Turpentine
1/2 cup Beeswax
2 Tbsp. Japan Dryer

Put ingredients in a Mason jar with lid. Heat indirectly, such as place jar in a pot with hot water. When the wax has melted, shake vigorously. After cooling, it makes a soft paste that can be brushed on.

He recommends applying while metal is very warm to the touch but you can still hold the metal without being burned. When cool, buff with rags.

Japan dryer is sold wherever you find art supplies.

I have not tried this recipe so let the group know how it works.

FILE HANDLES

A wonderful handle for a medium to large file is a golf ball. Take an old golf ball, drill a 1/4" hole more than half way through the ball. This hole size will vary for smaller or larger files. Ram the tang of the file into the hole, and you've got a new handle. It's also great for hanging up the file in a rack.

(from the "Hot Iron Sparkle" newsletter of the North Carolina Chapter of ABANA)