

ROCKY FORGE NEWS

Volume 2, Issue 10

October 2003

NEXT MEETING (Note change of date.)

The next meeting of the Rocky Forge Blacksmith Guild will be October 4th, 9:00 A. M., at Shane and Karen Stegmeir's. Shane and Karen will be hosting the Rocky Forge group and the Medieval Reinactors group.

If possible bring a forge, anvil, coal, tools and metal. If not possible don't worry about it and come anyway. Bring lawn chairs if you want a place to sit down. A camera might also be good thing to have along.

Bring a covered dish to share and if need to be refrigerated bring a cooler with ice. Your own table service may also be useful. The Rocky Forge will buy a ham and Carol will bake it.

While we Rocky Forge guys play (I mean blacksmith) at this meeting, the ladies will have things to do, one of which is felting.

This whole event sounds like a lot of fun so plan to come for the day for fun, food and comradely with our friends. (Note the meeting date change, there will be no meeting on the second Saturday.)

Any questions call Ted or Shane.

LAST MEETING REPORT

The last meeting was held at Ted and Carol Stouts on September 13th. There were around 20 members present, We were pleased to have Jerry Eitnier, a guest from Hillsboro, IN. Jerry is a gunmaker and interested in blacksmithing. It was also nice to see a couple of our members who have been unable to make recent meetings.

The meeting time was short and to the point, mostly to discuss the upcoming event at Shane and Karen Stegmier's and our participation in the Pumpkin Festival near Zionsville. (See

attached flyer for location, time and other details.)

We will try to make as many things as possible for the festival. Two work stations with two forges and anvils will be set up. Jim Keith is handling the details and schedule of workers. Please be sure to let Jim know if you can work or supply items for sale.

At the last meeting the day was spent forging whatever we wanted. Dan Michael made a real nice fire pit hook for sale at the Pumpkin Festival. Gene Hollingsworth is making letter openers with glass marbles in the handle. Lots of other work was going on throughout the day. Ted made 7 or 8 nail headers after Doug Merkels pattern. All in all we had a great day. The weather was in our favor all day.

Our iron in the hat brought in \$87, we also sold coke, lubricant and made \$30 commission on an anvil sale.

The lunch was also really nice as was the friendship we shared during this time.

It was nice to see John Young and Dennis Lane at the meeting. Those of you who have been absent we would like to see you all again or drop us line.

FORGE AND ANVIL

If the anvil is king then the forge is the alchemist, for the forge contains the transforming fire. The fire transforms the metal into a plastic medium, making is easy to work and form. The fire also changes the crystalline structure of the metal, causing changes in its physical properties.

by Jack Andrews author of "Edge of the Anvil"

LEARNING TO BLACKSMITH

A work session at the drawing board is as important today as it was at the turn of the century, when the following was written:

The person who thinks of learning the blacksmiths trade should first learn whether he is physically fitted for the peculiar labor. If satisfied on that point, he should immediately begin a course of study with special reference to the working of metals. He should also study freehand drawing. Every hour spent at the drawing board is an hour spent shaping irons, as he is training the hand to perform the work and the eye to see that it is true. And at no time should he drop the pencil. he should keep in mind the fact that the most skilful are the most successful. We do not mean skilled in one line only, but in all. The man who can direct , as well as execute, is the one who will make the greatest advancement, and to direct it is necessary to know why a thing should be done as well as how. (M. T. Richardson, author of “Practical Blacksmithing”, Vol. 111, 1890.)

WHERE DOES ROCKY FORGE FIT INTO THE BIG PICTURE

As a reminder to you old timer members and to give the new guys an idea of the organizational structure the following is offered:

The “Rocky Forge Blacksmith Guild” is a satellite organization of the “Indiana Blacksmith Association” or IBA for short. The IBA is a subgroup of a much larger organization called ABANA or “Artist Blacksmiths of North America”.

ABANA is comprised of over 5,000 members and is affiliated with over 60 similar groups all over the world. ABANA depends on the affiliates to professionally promote the art and craft of blacksmithing on both the regional and local level.

items that are available to the members. They have libraries that offer books on blacksmithing and related subjects, tapes of demonstrations, and plans for building forges, treadle hammers etc. They also offer t-shirts, hats, pins, etc. with their respective logos.

Most organizations on the state level have an annual conference. IBA has an annual conference at Tipton during June. The ABANA conference occurs every two years. The 2004 ABANA conference will be July 7-11, at Richmond, KY.

To my knowledge non of the satellite groups have an annual conference. If we get our building on the grounds of the Illiana Steam and Power Association, we will be in a position to host a conference. At such a conference we could expect to have a tailgating area where people are selling or trading blacksmithing equipment. We would have several vendors of blacksmithing equipment and supplies. We would line up 3-5 professional demonstrators. I could also envision having a lot of the old tractors and machinery of the Illiana group on display. Such a conference would be done with the Illiana group as co-hosts. With proper advertising we should attract several hundred attendees.

Maybe its just a dream, but I’ll bet someday we will see it happen! We have a great opportunity

**This space is dedicated to those
of you who will contribute to the
next issues of the Newsletter.**

Your help will be greatly appreciated.