

ROCKY FORGE NEWS

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NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Rocky Forge Blacksmith Guild will be 9:00 A.M., April 10th, at the Historical, Independence Blacksmith shop.

The shop is located on the upper bank of the Wabash River. It will be easy for you to find, just follow the roads to Independence and it is on the main East West street

Pete Rollett, a member of our group, will be the host. The shop has one forge and anvil patterned after the early 1800's style. Plan on bringing your own forge, anvil and tools. But be sure to try the side draft forge used in the early days.

I would like to see us make items, such as tools, anvil tooling, hangers and other items to leave at the shop. This is our way of supporting the historical preservation of this local historical icon.

I will bring a couple extra forges and some coal.

Lunch will be available at the K&K Cafe, located just 1/2 block from the blacksmith shop. A menu is included in the newsletter. I expect there to be an audience so lets give them a good turnout. Guests are welcome.

MARCH MEETING

The March meeting was held at John Paul Jenkins Dragon Forge. John demonstrated Damascus or Pattern Welded Steel. He went through the process, step by step and prepared a billet of the pattern steel. After watching this operation it gave us a new perspective on how much time and knowledge is involved with making pattern welded steel.

John is so generous and eager to teach his trade. He brought out a beautiful Damascus knife with stag handle and silver trim. As we were all admiring the work he announced that he wanted us to draw for the knife. Needless to say we were all in awe and hoping the guy standing next to us would have to go home to even the odds on the drawing. As the day progressed we were on pins and needles waiting for the moment and each of us hoping to be the winner. The time came and the winner was Dale Houmes, one of our Illinois members. Congratulations Dale. We had 23 in attendance and the iron-in-the-hat brought in \$105. Two of us are taking John's class on making Damascus steel. Also, John has a power hammer for sale is anyone is interested in it or the class call 765-893-4955.

MARK YOUR CALENDERS

There are several dates coming up this summer that you should know about, so mark the calenders:

- April 3rd Rural Smiths at Gary Phillips
- April 10th Rocky Forge at Independence
- April 17th IBA at John Ziles
- May 1st Rural Smiths at Jim McClures
- May 8th Rocky Forge at Ted Stouts
- May 22 Rural Smiths at Ray Phelps with Les Stanley demonstrating. This is also a don't miss!
- June 5-6 IBA Conference at Tipton (Don't miss this again!)
- June 12 Rocky Forge Meeting
- June 26-27 Rural Smiths Summer Conference Kelleys Historic Village Kokomo, demonstrator Bob Becker.
- July 7-11 ABANA Conference at Richmond Ky. This is an international conference of blacksmiths, demonstrators, vendors and tailgate sales.
- July 16, 17, 18 Illiana Steam and Power Show at Rainsville site.

DUH!!!

When NASA first started sending astronauts, they quickly discovered that ball point pens would not work in zero gravity. To combat the problem, NASA scientists spent decades and \$2 billion (not million) developing a pen that writes in zero gravity, upside down, on almost any surface including: glass at temperatures that ranged from below freezing to over 300 degrees C.

The Russians used a pencil!!!

FIVE FUNCTIONS OF A BLACKSMITH

A blacksmith can do all his work by knowing how to perform five basic functions of hot metal working. The five functions are: drawing, upsetting, cutting or splitting, welding, bending and twisting. Everything that a blacksmith makes uses one or more of these methods to his or her own level of skill and vision. Look at some examples of your work or the work of others and give this idea a test.

(Skeeter Prather,
Florida Artist
Blacksmith

UNIQUE BENDING JIG

(Kris Bancroft, Florida Artist Blacksmith Association.)

I have found that I can make consistent bends with ease using a bending jig made from an old auto or truck axle. Using an axle that has either 4, 5, 6, or 8 lugs produces practically any combination of bends a blacksmith could need. The easiest method I have found to make such a jig involves cutting the axle then forging or grinding the shaft end to fit the anvil hardy hole. You can make some adapters that fit over the lugs to further improve the utility of this jig. I have some that are varies diameters that fit over the lugs or screw onto the lug bolt. Good luck and have fun.

REPORT ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF TED'S SHOP

The basic construction of the building is finished. The power is installed to the building and the inspections are completed. Hopefully, I will have lights in time for the May meeting. Things will still be in a disorganized state, but we will definitely have plenty of space in the old shop for a meeting and demonstration. There may be some things we can do in the new building by May. Perhaps some sheet metal or woodworking by the old time methods and/or new ways.

It will be awhile before the big forge is installed. The new floor will have to be cut for the power hammer and forges.

UPDATE ON RAYMOND EVANS

The last report on Raymond (he has bone cancer) was from his son Donald at the Steam and Power Club meeting March 15th. The report was that Raymond gets very weak easily. He really wants to attend some of our meetings, but is afraid of getting so weak. This would not be a time for him to be exposed to colds or flu.

During this time we must continue to support Raymond and his family with well wishes and keep them in our prayers.

GUNSMITHS

At the Independence meeting April 10th we may be privileged to have a retired gunsmith who may bring some of the old guns he has built and display them. If he does show up he is a wealth of local history as well as a wealth of information on gunsmithing. Some of his guns sold for over \$3500 during his peak time.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS and OTHER TIDBITS

Time flies when we are having fun. We should have had an election of officers at the February meeting. Sure seems to come around in a hurry. It is hard to have a business meeting when we meet at places like TMF or Dragon Forge. Our meeting at Independence will probably have numerous onlookers and maybe some folks who want to try their luck at pounding hot metal, so there again that will not be a time for election. Lets plan an election at the May meeting.

Also, plan to have an iron in the hat for the Independence meeting.