

# ROCKY FORGE NEWS

Volume 3 Issue 6

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**NEXT MEETING:** The next meeting of the Rocky Forge Blacksmith Guild will be 9:00 A. M., June 12th, at the Illiana Steam and Power Show Grounds. We will have an open forging session to make things for sale at the show in July. Bring your forge, anvil, tools and any metal you can donate for the cause. Power for your blowers, angle grinders, etc. will be available. Lunch will be a pitch in at the club house. Bring a covered dish and the club will purchase cold cuts and buns.

## **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

At the next meeting an election of officers will be on the agenda. By now you should have received a mailing from the nominating committee for suggestions on candidates. Please take it seriously and let the nominating committee know of your candidates. We need a forgemaster, assistant forgemaster, secretary/treasure and reporter to the IBA. Elections will be early in the meeting schedule so please be on time.

## **BLACKSMITH CALENDARS**

Blacksmithing calendars for 2004 are still available. There are about 6-8 more available. The old black and white photographs for each month showing the old blacksmith shops are fun to just look at or clip for framing. The calendars are a bargain at \$10.00 each. Remind Ted at the meeting if you want a calendar.

## **MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

Over the next month or so there will be some important events that you may want to attend. To broaden your skills, meet new people and find vendors for specialized items these meetings are a great resource.

**IBA Conference** at Tipton, In., June 4, 5 and 6th. Tailgate sales, vendors, demonstrations, auction, iron-in-the hat and more. Saturday is best day.

**ABANA Conference** at Eastern Kentucky University, Lexington, Ky. July 7th thru 11th. Everything imaginable for the blacksmith and then some more. A collection of the finest smiths and vendors from all over the world. Usually not this close to home.

## **ILLIANA STEAM AND POWER SHOW**

July 16, 17, 18th, Rainsville, In. A good place to demonstrate your skills or just have fun blacksmithing with the gang. Lots of other activities going on to make it interesting for the whole family. Usually very hot.

## **SOFA ANNUAL MEET**

The annual meet of the Southern Ohio Forge Assoc. will be the weekend of September 25th. This is also known as the QUAD State Roundup. (If you miss all the others, don't miss this one.)

**ANYTIME YOU SEE SOMETHING** that would be a good article for our newsletter please let me know. If you want to continue receiving the news you all need to participate by contributing articles, notes or other items that would be of interest to the Rocky Forge group. If they are originals that need to be returned I will be glad to do so. Thanks for the help.

## ALL THAT HARD WORK PAYS OFF

Several of the Rocky Forge members participated in a couple of educational programs for school kits over the past month.

Pete Rollette, Rob Durrett, Dick Fontaine and Ted Stout entertained about 60 kids and chaperons on April 29th at the Independence blacksmith shop. We all felt very good about the day and trust the kids had a good time and learned a lot about blacksmithing, Lewis and Clarke and Independence.

Then on May 7th the Illiana Steam and Power group entertained around 300 guests from the Benton County Schools. At the show grounds there were numerous stations set up to explain early life to the kids. Carol Stout, for example, showed the kids how laundry was done before washing machines. She used a wash board with galvanized tubs.

Rob Durrett, John Young and Ted Stout demonstrated blacksmithing. Rob was in his Lewis and Clark portrayal of William Bratton, blacksmith, and explained how the blacksmith played a major role in the expedition.

It was a long day, but very much worth the effort, especially after reading the response sent back from the kids.

No doubt we will be asked to do more of these kind of educational sessions. Keep that in mind for next year and be ready to volunteer.

## ANVILS HAVE REBOUND

A good anvil, it will be argued, has good rebound. The rationale for anvil rebound is that it helps do your work. Some say it makes no difference and some even say it is better to have no rebound.

Most advanced blacksmiths will say the rebound of an anvil is important and does help get the job done quicker.

To test your anvils rebound simply hold a 3 pound or less ball pein hammer, handle parallel to the center of the anvil with both tips of the fingers acting like pivots at the end of the handle the other hand supporting the head. Use the flat face of the hammer, not the pein. It should be 8 - 10 inches above the anvil surface. Then drop the

hammer head and observe how far the hammer rebounds. It should rebound about 1/3 the height dropped. On a cast anvil it will bounce about 1/10 the initial distance or less. With a hard hammer on the really hard anvil the rebound may be as much 1/2. You be the judge.

A number of anvils were tested using a 1/2" steel ball at 10" from the face. A hard anvil will give a rebound of 75 to 90%.

Peddinghaus 165 lb.	93%
KOLSWA 325lb.	85%
Haybudden	85%
Peter Wright	80%
Railroad rail	50%
Ductile Iron Swage Block	25%
Red Oak Log (endgrain)	5%

## ITEMS FOR SALE, WANTED OR WILL TRADE

This newsletter has a circulation of about 40 mailings. All those who receive it are blacksmiths like yourself who are always on the lookout for new tools, metal stock or books. Let the newsletter editor know if you have anything to put on the list, wanted, buy, sell or trade.

### For Sale:

50# little giant power hammer, running condition. Large cast forge, floor mounted grinder and other blacksmithing items. Call John Pual Jenkins at the Dragon Forge, 765-893-4955.

### For Sale:

Anvils, old iron stuff, etc., call Don Creason 217-582-2158. Located about 15 miles west of Danville, Ill. (This is the gentleman Terry Evans mentioned at our last meeting. After I left he had about 8-10 more anvils.)

### For Sale:

2004 Blacksmith calendars with a different blacksmithing picture from years ago for each month. Priced at \$10 each. The pictures are framing quality. Call Ted at 572-2467.

### For Sale:

If you have items to sell or trade, bring them to our meetings and we will provide a space for display. Kind of like a mini tailgating.

### Wanted:

Looking for some nickel, titanium, brass and copper stock. Call Ted at 572-2467

## WHY A SWAGE BLOCK

You see these big, heavy blocks of cast iron or cast steel and wonder, how is that thing used? The swage block comes in various sizes with different surface indentations and holes. Some are cast iron, especially the older ones and some of the newer ones are cast steel. There were commercial companies that made the swage blocks, although not much has been written on the subject. Many times a local smith would make a wood pattern and take it to the local founder and have his block made. Some of these blocks are one of a kind or very few were manufactured.

The weight may vary from a few pounds to several hundred. Ted has one that is around 800 pounds.

The use of a swage block must be limited to light pounding, they are not made to be used as an anvil, particularly the cast iron ones. Use them with hot metal that is at an easy forging temperature.

Most blocks have a series of half round or half square indentations around the sides. These are for rounding or squaring stock with a top swage. They take the place of a bottom swage in the anvil. These same indentations are useful for making half round stock or triangular stock. Forge welding of round or square stock, when it is important to keep the shape is best done in the swage.

Some of the blocks have a swail or curved side for bending stock. A complete circle can be accomplished using a long piece of stock and continual pounding and movement of the length through this curved area. Some smiths made their wagon wheel rims that way.

The top and bottom of the blocks were dotted with round, square and rectangular holes. These are to make large tenons, or to use as a bolster. They can also be used for bending jigs, or as a curved side make lips or leaves on hot metal. I saw one used to finish a gun barrel weld.

Some blocks also have dished sides for making ladles, spoons and beauty lamps.

The use of a swage block is as good as the creative nature of the one using it. Don't let it set in the corner gathering dust, be creative and find ways to put it to use.

Ted

## INDIANA BLACKSMITH ASSOCIATION IBA

It is important that all of our Rocky Forge members become members of the IBA. For us to be covered by insurance you must be a member. Nonmembers are covered for only two meetings, then they must become members.

It is only fair to those who host our meetings that we be covered by the liability insurance offered by the Indiana Blacksmith Assoc.

An application form is enclosed with this issue of the newsletter, please fill it out and send it in for membership.

## “JUST AND IDEA”

a book by Les Stanley

Les Stanley's book is a collection of more than 500 tips of the Blacksmith's trade, for the novice and experienced smiths. Here are some ideas from his book:

To make splitting easier and more accurate, mark the slot with a cold chisel first, then heat to a yellow heat and cut in the groove.

To keep a nice finish on the iron, always wire brush before and after forging. This will keep the scale from being forged into the metal or from falling into the fire and will slow down the formation of a clinker.

You can use an acetylene or propane torch to temper as well as the forge. Tempering to a straw color will give a serviceable tool.

Make a cross on the pritchel hole with chalk to make it easier to find the hole fast when punching.

A punched hole is stronger than a drilled hole because less material is removed and the side walls are packed more densely.

Any shape of hole can be punched cleanly through steel as long as you line up the backside.

If steel or iron is burned, it is rendered useless. Overheated carbon steel is no good.