

Rocky Forge News

Volume 6, issue 4 – April, 2007

Old Joke: *Doctor handed bill by plumber-“Even as the finest doctor in these parts, I can not charge that much.”*

Plumber - “Neither could I when I was a doctor”

Well, there have been several changes in my life. I am now working as an electrician again at 20% more money than I did as an engineer. But the schedule is crazy. I am trying not to let this newsletter get any later and to not stray too far from what interests you. The only way I know what interests you is if you tell me. I have included an article from “The Crucible”. I would love to see such an organization established in the Midwest and until then “The Crucible” will have my support. There is a large world out there and we should be involved with IBA, ABANA, and anything else that promotes our craft.

I am now the Vice President of the IBA Board. I think that how the IBA does things is about to change. Some of the changes are increased involvement of the IBA in State Fair activities and increased efforts to bring in more members and create more new blacksmiths. I hope that we can successfully make the changes for the better.

David Childress

Meetings:

April 2007

Rocky Forge Blacksmiths will meet on April 14th, 9:00 at Ted's shop to work on our sign project. Bring your 6" squares so we can start them, finish them, or attach them to the sign. Gene Hollingsworth informed me that he has completed the letters and their attachment to a copper backing, double sided. So now we start the assembly. Shane is going to make the two vertical posts with a dragon head. Also, Gene is bringing his TIG welder to begin attaching some of the pieces. The rest of us need to work toward getting 16 squares completed. Our plan is to have this sign ready for the IBA conference the first weekend of June.

Also, I have a surprise for you in the way of a benefactor to our library. I am excited to share that with you at the meeting.

A few minutes presenting the building plan for Illiana and its location will be done. With volunteers from Illiana and the Rocky Forge and with your vote of confidence, we can begin construction this year.

Dominick, Russ, Carol and Ted have been good about getting the doughnuts so how about someone else calling to volunteer to do this job for April?

Let's do the sack lunch thing again and I will see if Carol will fix a pot of something for all.

Bring good items for the iron-in-the-hat, as that is our only way to pay the bills. Also, it is our way to accumulate more useable treasures.

Ted

May 2007

I am suggesting that we should advertise the May meeting in community events format in the newspapers and radio in an effort to bring in new members. I am hoping to get current smiths more involved and maybe create some new smiths. I am seeking input as to what to say and where to say it.

Ted says that Iron-in-the-Hat is our only way to pay the bills and he is about right. I would like to have some other avenues for funding considered. There are many venues where hand-forged goods could be sold and provide both income and exposure for Rocky Forge. This ties in with “Earning Money Smithing” and could lead to more activities for local smiths to produce both some object and enjoyment.

4-H

John Steppe is teaching Blacksmithing Projects in both Parke and Vigo Counties. I intend to help John and learn the ins and outs of setting up such a program. It is too late for this year but arrangements need to be made for next year. This program is one of the best to get young people involved in blacksmithing and so ensure the future of our craft. 4-H blacksmithing should be active in

every county in the state. Could we get some volunteers and get something started in a few other counties?

Smoke and Noise

Items of interest

compiled by David Childress

From: ries <ries@riesniemi.com>
Date: Mar 28, 2007 6:15 PM
Subject: Re: [TheForge] Fence builders wanted

The City of Phoenix is looking for some fence builders.

They want to build a pool of potential artists and blacksmiths to do some impressive work.

The first project is \$90,000. Yep, thats real money.

I would encourage people to apply, and get your name in the hat for subsequent jobs- some may be less, some more, but even a \$40,000 fence is nothing to sneer at.
<http://phoenix.gov/arts/calltoa.html#gates>

Ries Niemi
Industrial Artist
<http://www.riesniemi.com/>

From: Ron Childers <munlaw2@hcsmail.com>
Date: Apr 2, 2007 3:23 PM
Subject: RE: [TheForge] Blacksmithing competition

There will be a forging contest at the Madison, Ga conference open to anyone who can draw out a piece of square bar. Time is 10 min - the bars are all a measured 2'. The longest bar wins. 1st prize \$50, 2nd, \$30, and 3rd, \$20.

Tom Clark won last time.

Ron C

From: Dan Tull <dantull@numail.org>
Date: Mar 23, 2007 9:21 AM
Subject: Re: [TheForge] scholarship

Blacksmith Supply is giving away a \$500 scholarship, just go to the web site and fill it out.

www.blacksmithsupply.com

dan tull, georgia
abba, afc, S.C. psba, obg,sofa

From: Dave Mudge <dave@magichammer.net>
Date: Mar 26, 2007 12:38 AM
Subject: [TheForge] Fwd: Mules Days, Columbia, TN, April 12-15 Seeks Blacksmithing Demonstrators

While it is likely too late this year could you please put this notice in your newsletter for someone who may be interested in the 2008 event.

Mules Days in Columbia, TN is likely one of the largest community events in the U.S., drawing over 200,000 attendees over the course of it. They are seeking one or more blacksmiths to demonstrate, if possible, or sell their hand-forged wares. If interested contact

Jerry Irwin at 931-486-9894 (home - evenings) or 931-381-9557 (event office - days).

Normally the event is the first weekend in April, but was moved to the second on 07 to avoid conflicting with Easter.

Thank you in advance,

Ken Scharabok

From: Lance Davis <lance@bentoaks.org>
Date: Mar 20, 2007 9:47 AM
Subject: [TheForge] Blacksmiths

Blacksmiths - We need your help!

Bent Oaks (created by JoAnn Bentley and Lance Davis) have been purveyors of fine junk for over 15 years. As members of many blacksmith guilds on the East Coast, Bent Oaks is expanding to offer the public the unique items that only a blacksmith craftsman can create.

Bent Oaks Blacksmith Shop will open its doors April 2, 2007 at 135 East Main Street in Jonesborough, TN. Dedicated to preserving the craft of the blacksmith, Bent Oaks will offer quality, hand-crafted metal products created by our local, state and regional blacksmiths.

We are actively seeking your original, creative designs to display (and sell) at our historic storefront. There are no fees or commission charges associated with this service, but we will add a percentage to cover overhead. If you are interested in publicizing your works, please contact us at <lance@bentoaks.org>

The following from 'The Crucible', Oakland, CA is meant as something to think about. Maybe we could have such a organization to offer classes and activities closer to home. If no one considers it, it can never come to be. DEC

Celebrate Spring With A Crucible Class

Light Up Your Life With Neon and EL Wire

Summer is coming and the days are getting longer. Celebrate the return of the sun by making a little light of your own. In classes offered on March 31 and April 1, you can learn to bend glass and create a neon sculpture or work with EL-wire, a decorative, flexible wire that glows very much like neon. As part of our Family Fun Weekend program, parents can take this class with a child (ages 12 to 18) and receive a discount on the child's tuition. Express yourself in light!

Check Out Our New Spring Classes

Registration is now underway for classes in April and May. Check our catalog online and you'll find new classes along with the old favorites.

Consider celebrating Earth Day by signing up for a class that shows you how to creatively reuse materials that would otherwise be discarded. You can weld furniture from scrap metal, make jewelry using art-silver clay (which is manufactured from silver reclaimed from circuit boards and photographic processing), or use kiln-firing to turn broken window glass and old bottles into sculptural pieces, tableware, and architectural elements.

Spring Break and Summer Camp for Young Artists

During Spring Break, from April 9 to 12, The Crucible is offering a camp for youth (ages 12 to 18). Youth participants can learn to weld, forge steel, work with molten glass, and make jewelry. Our classes for youth inspire creativity, build confidence, and teach responsibility. Sign up today

This summer, The Crucible will offer two weeklong summer camp sessions (June 18-22, August 6-10) and a two-day youth camp on July 10-11, in

association with our Fire Arts Festival. In addition to the classes listed above, classes offered during youth camps this summer include ceramics, mosaic making, bicycle repair, jewelry making, and more!!

On May 5 at 1PM, we're having an orientation with a tour of The Crucible and an opportunity to meet staff and students for interested parents and kids. Email Kristy@thecrucible.org for details.

Summer Camp Isn't Just for Kids!

Why should kids have all the fun? This summer, fill your vacation with art. The Crucible is offering four-day classes from August 20 to 23. Classes include blacksmithing, foundry fundamentals, jewelry making, neon sculpture, and more. Mark your calendar, set aside some time for yourself, and plan a vacation you'll never forget.

Recycling Is Fashionable At The Crucible

Industrial Chic Fashion Show - April 13

On April 13, from 7 to 10PM, The Crucible presents the hottest of haute couture in Industrial Chic, a fashion show of wearable art made from repurposed materials.

The evening's entertainment will include a fabulous art show, a preview of The Crucible's Rusty Elephant Sale (an unparalleled source of donated industrial surplus), and, of course, fire performance.

Tickets are \$15 per person, but admission is free for Crucible members. Each member can bring a friend for free. Just be sure to let us know that you are coming by sending a message to memberRSVP@thecrucible.org. If you've been looking for an excuse to join The Crucible, here's your chance!

Spring Open House and Rusty Elephant Sale

Get a head start on Earth Day at The Crucible's Spring Open House and Rusty Elephant Sale, on April 14 and 15 from 10AM to 4PM. If you're interested in taking industrial cast-offs and making something new, the Rusty Elephant Sale provides

material for repurposing and Crucible classes provide the know-how.

At The Crucible's Spring Open House, you can view art from repurposed materials created by Crucible students and faculty and watch demonstrations of welding, blacksmithing, and other industrial arts. There will be special activities for children and a sale of bicycles that have been refurbished by members of our youth program. Admission is free.

Buy Raffle Tickets Online And Win Fabulous Prizes

If you can't make it to our Spring Open House, but you'd like to support The Crucible, buy a raffle ticket online.

Winners will be drawn on April 15. You don't have to be present to win. Here are some of the great prizes you can win:

- Two VIP tickets to The Crucible's Fire Arts Festival (Saturday July 14)
- Two VIP tickets to The Crucible 's Fire Arts Festival (Wednesday July 11)
- Two VIP tickets to The Crucible's Anniversary Performance (January 2008)
- Private welding instruction from Crucible welding instructor Paul Goodman
- An hour and a half of private fire dancing instruction from Mystress Fyre (aka Belva Stone)

and much more!

The Crucible Needs You! Artists Wanted for The Crucible's Spring Open House

The Crucible is curating an art exhibition to showcase the works of our students and faculty members at our Spring Open House, April 14 & 15. We are currently seeking art submissions in all genres related to the disciplines and practices that The Crucible has to offer. The curators from the Oakland Museum and Pro Arts Gallery will be attending and perusing the art for two upcoming shows. Online and downloadable Art Submission

Forms are available here. The deadline for applications is Thursday, April 5th.

The Crucible's Fire Arts Festival Needs Performers and Artists

The Crucible is now accepting applications from artists who would like to be involved in what is guaranteed to be the hottest event of the summer: The Crucible's Seventh Fire Arts Festival. This amazing open-air exhibition of fire performance, fire sculpture, and interactive fire art will be held in West Oakland from July 11 to 14. In addition to stunning fire performance, amazing installations of fire sculpture, and interactive fire art, this year's Festival will include a spectacular theatrical production. The Fire Odyssey. The Crucible's interpretation of Homer's epic poem will be the centerpiece of the Fire Arts Festival, with performances each evening.

We are seeking musicians, individual performers, and performance groups to present their work before and after The Fire Odyssey. We are also seeking installation artists to display their pieces in the Fire Arts Arena, all around the stage. We invite fire performers, dancers, installation artists, musicians, aerialists, fire artists, water artists, light artists, and kinetic artists to apply. (Aerialists: the set will include multiple rigging points.) If you are interested in being considered for The Fire Odyssey, please indicate that in your application and be sure to apply as soon as possible.

This will be a juried selection process and spaces are limited, so please apply as soon as you can. For more info on this event and to access our online submission, please visit our website.

Volunteer and Be a Part of Our Special Events

Our special events wouldn't be so special if we didn't have the help of many volunteers. You can join our special event volunteers and have a great time while helping out. No experience or special skills needed. We are currently seeking event volunteers for our Industrial Chic Fashion show & Spring Open House April 13, 14 & 15, and for the Fire Arts Festival July 11-14. To volunteer for an event or for information on the many ways to

volunteer, visit our website or contact
volunteer@thecrucible.org

The Crucible, 1260 7th, Oakland, CA 94607
510.444.0919 or go to www.thecrucible.org
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Continuing ABANA Saga

While I may never attend an ABANA Conference I think that the debate about how to make these conferences work brings up many points that are of interest to blacksmiths everywhere. The IBA conference has many of the same problems and debates - DEC

Letter Posting - Sat 24 Mar 2007 10:01:58 #0
BAM, ABANA & 2008

To the ABANA board, and other interested parties,
Kirk Sullens, aka El Presidente Raoul
BAM President

After seeing some of the email fallout on this issue, I realize I made a mistake in not writing sooner. Doing so might have eased some of the tensions in these interchanges. My apologies to all.

I first started thinking about persuading BAM to host another ABANA conference about a year before the Seattle conference, but only discussed it with a few people. I began pursuing the matter in earnest at the Seattle conference, hoping my fellow BAMers would be interested in doing the 2010. The feedback I got from my friends at the conference was very positive, and I introduced the subject to more and more people as the year progressed.

When Tom asked me to step up the pace to try to resolve some of the troubles the NY venue presented, it scared me, but I knew BAM could do it because of all the conference experience we have in this group. I put the word out to as many as possible, and we had a meeting at Pat McCarty's New Year's Day Hammer-in. While one person said no, he wouldn't be involved again after working so hard on the '94 conference, and another expressed some misgivings but not an unwillingness to help, the overall response was overwhelmingly positive, enough so that they voted to volunteer to step in for 2008 if that was what ABANA needed from us.

Right after that meeting, I had a very positive conversation with Dorothy, where we decided together that BAM would wait and give a proposal for the 2010 conference for the following reasons:

1. It WOULD have been a slap in the NY groups face to have the conference yanked out from under them and handed to BAM, and neither ABANA nor BAM nor I would want that.
2. It gave BAM a longer time to prepare a proposal, plan and budget.

ABANA never got a plan or budget proposal for the 2008 conference from BAM because there was no reason to make one up under these circumstances. I believe this was probably discussed when Dorothy reported the results of our conversation to the conference committee and the board. Since I thought my involvement with a 2008 conference ended with my conversation with Dorothy (except to be an observer of the NY conference) I saw no reason to make further contact with the board.

I do want to say that BAM's response has been far from lukewarm. I've gotten enthusiastic pledges of support from all directions, within BAM and from outside, and continue to do so. As for a chairperson, I would never volunteer someone else for something I wouldn't do myself, so I was volunteering to fill that role.

Why would I do such a foolish thing, especially in the midst of all this politicking? Because, though we may not love each other, we ALL love the craft! In the end, whether you're a traditionalist or a cutting edge artist, it's the craft that keeps us all going, that inspires us, that puts the fire in our hearts! I'm on fire, guys! I hate my job, but I love my work. ABANA conferences, especially my first one where I met many of you, are pivotal experiences for me, and I want others to have the same opportunity.

ABANA cancelled the '08 conference, and I'm sure they had good reason to do so. We elected them to the board because we trusted them, so I have to trust that they made the best decision they could with the information available to them. Where do we go from here? BAM is considering putting on an international conference in '08, not to replace the ABANA conference, but to keep the rhythm of the

biennial conferences until ABANA is ready to go again in 2010. I want to do it on Tom Clark's plan of a scaled-back, less costly conference within the means of a greater percentage of ABANA's membership than has previously been possible.

Notice the time-frame of the decline in attendance. It began in '02, and we haven't managed better than 14 % in the three conferences since. The conference fees have been high, but that's not the only reason attendance has been down. The disastrous effects of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks are still being felt in the form of high gas prices and reduced domestic travel. Economic factors hit us in more ways than just high conference fees. That's another reason those fees need to come down. Otherwise, travel costs are deal killers for many of us.

In talking with Clare and Eric Ryser, I've gotten pledges of support from them personally, and suggestions that ABANA would support us by sponsoring an international demonstrator, and possibly helping with seed money. BAM would welcome that support. This would not be an ABANA conference, or even a BAM conference, though BAM would host it. This conference would be For Love of the Craft. BAM will decide officially at our general meeting at the Ozark Conference, the first weekend of May, whether we'll undertake this project or not. I'd welcome support from all of you. I'm not interested in your politics. I just want to make stuff.

For Love of the Craft,
Kirk Sullens,
aka El Presidente Raoul
BAM President

Letter Posting - Sat 24 Mar 2007 18:57:36 #0
BAM, ABANA & 2008

Chris Winterstein

What I don't see why BAM will go to all the work of a large conference but not an ABANA conference. With an ABANA conference they could draw from a larger pool of people, etc.

BAM is looking at going to all the work of an international conference, but not an ABANA conference, because we were told categorically that

we would not be given an ABANA conference in 2008, that there would be NO ABANA conference in 2008, and that was that. I'll be drawing from the same pool of helpers, regardless. Wanna help?

The reason given for not having an ABANA conference, offending the Northeast group, is lame.

I think the reason given of not wanting to offend the Northeast group is KIND OF lame, but I still understand why that reason was given, and we DON'T want to step on the Northeast groups toes. Once the conference was cancelled, this point became moot, as did hosting an ABANA conference.

I think that finances are the main reason BAM wants a international conference and not an ABANA conference. If anyone is interested, I'll go into details.

Nobody asked ME why I want BAM to host an international conference. Even though Tom Clark is who you've had the most contact with, because he's a "go-getter", this idea is my baby and not his.

Kirk (and Raoul, a name I was dubbed with by Doug Hendrickson at my first ABANA conference in 1994. Many people know me by that name).

If blacksmithing is being promoted (which I agree it is) then what mission does ABANA have left to do?

If it's up to the local groups to decide the future of blacksmithing, why do we need ABANA at all? Most of the chapters are strong enough now to support themselves. If ABANA wants to continue in a leadership role, then it's up to the board to find out what the chapters want.

How do we support the international conference? Support many times means money, how does ABANA do this with a debt load and declining membership (less money)? If you mean by verbal and volunteer support, ABANA is not needed for that.

How can you support a non-ABANA international conference? Sometimes it is with money, and we would welcome ABANA sponsorship of an international demonstrator as was suggested by Clare and by Eric Ryser. We might welcome

support in the form of seed money, as was suggested by Clare, but I hope BAM won't need support in that form to put this conference on.

How else could ABANA help? How would you support a BABA conference, or the World Congress of Smiths? By attending! By not talking us down at every turn. Look what happened in Seattle when a group decided to vocally detract from a conference.

| You are politicizing.

I suppose I am. If that's the case, what form of exchange of opposing ideas is NOT politicizing? I'm trying to make a positive experience for ABANA, for BAM, and for American blacksmithing in general by promoting this. I'd like your help. Not just the membership's help. Not just the help of people on this email list. Your help, Will. Your help specifically. And I'll thank you if you give it.

Kirk Sullens
aka El Presidente Raoul
president of BAM

From: Jerry Frost <frosty@customcpu.com>
Date: Mar 20, 2007 2:26 PM
Subject: [TheForge] Making things better

If it's a large enough event to have something for everyone it'll cost us more in subsidies? How's that? I think you missed my point or got it reversed. My idea is to make it appealing enough to enough people so events will support themselves. Hopefully they'll grow rather than shrinking as with the current model. I'm not advocating throwing everything wide open to anybody who shows. I'm advocating not closing the door on anybody. There is a huge difference.

As to the marketing aspects of letting spectators in for a reasonable price. Your point about a small percentage actually buying hand forged is correct. I don't know the numbers but I do know it's pretty small, probably on the order of a fraction of a %. So what? Are you saying that if only one in a thousand spectators will actually pony up for hand made we shouldn't let anybody in at all?

You can't lead a horse to water to find out if he's thirsty if you bar the gate in the first place. No?

I hate to make the comparison but take a look at spammers. The last stats I saw said about 1 in 10,000 people respond. Their answer to such poor returns is send more spam because if you send 1,000,000 spams a day you might get 100 sales. Even if it only pays \$1.00 each, \$100.00 a day is \$36,500/year. (<Hack GAG> I'll be back after I shower!)

Agreed, up front advertising is necessary and moving the conferences around makes it more difficult as does having it every other year. It means every conference is in a fresh market without past exposure to build on. I don't have a good answer for affordable advertising, I don't think there is one. I don't know about where you live but a minimal classified ad in our local paper for one week will cost you more than \$50. The laughably small size of the classified section illustrates the situation perfectly. It's reminiscent of how charging more than the market will bear is whittling down the ABANA conferences isn't it?

I don't know how to fix things for ABANA, I'm just brainstorming ideas and trying to patch holes punched in them. It's how I solve problems in unknown territory. The rare thing is finding others who'll punch thoughtful holes, it's what makes brainstorming work.

What I do know is if ABANA (WE) can't come up with a conference model that will pay its own way there will be no more ABANA conferences.

Frosty

If it ain't forged
it ain't real.

Wrought iron is.
The FrostWorks

From: "Grover Richardson"
<grover.richardson@gtri.gatech.edu>

Hey Frosty. Large grins right back at you.

Well, yes. Still...

If there is a large enough event for things to be there for everybody, then once again we are subsidizing the entire event, paying a lot for a lot of things that we don't have interest in, or don't have the time to see.<G> I think that this is what started this line of discussion originally<G>. >Now I am not throwing stones at anyone who has stood up and tried. I've been there. For one person that stands up and tries, there are 100 throwing stones at them because they aren't doing it right<G>.

Hmm. It sounds like Religion. The religion of the singing anvil<G>. We've got everything here except the Good Book <G>. (humor folks!!)

The biggest problem with marketing is that marketing really needs to be done up front when there is the least amount of \$\$\$ available to do it.

Hmmm. We need volunteers that are knowledgeable and have lots of free time<G>.

I speak here in generic terms, and speaking generic will get my butt whooped a lot, but still it has applications. The general public will talk with its mouth, but then turn right around and vote with its pocketbook.

So, the bottom line is that we can educate the public, but I suspect that except for a piddling few, they will continue to buy from wallymart. It's the way of the world. You can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink. You can show the public that hand wrought is better, but they will buy Chinese because it gives them more money for that ski trip to Vale or that pitcher of Miller. I don't blame them, I do the same upon occasion. I go to the back 40 sales area. I walk through once looking to see what is there. Then I go back and buy those things that I can't live without. Oh yes, there are other delimiters as well. Those things have to fit the amount of \$\$\$ that is in my pocket. So I have to figure out what number of X, Y, and Z will add up to the amount available? Which of those things do I really need right now for an upcoming project?

But recognizing this as a reality and knowing how to work with the situation is part of what makes someone in business successful or not<G>.

The general public will never buy blacksmith made stuff. It's not modern and it's not hip. But there are certain sectors of the buying public that does appreciate hand forged. They have their own reasons, many<G>. I have a small clientele who buy from me regularly, though not enough for me to be a professional with a full time shop. Still, I do enjoy the work, I do enjoy their appreciation of the work, and I REALLY do enjoy being able to pay for dinner on the way home<G>.

That is the big difference between the two groups that is often ignored or misunderstood. Hobbyists do it because they like to do it, IE it's fun. Professionals do it because it pays the bills. Certainly there are professionals that enjoy the work, but at some time in their lives it becomes a real job, and the reason for getting up every day to stoke up the forge is less and less fun; and more and more "I have to pay the bills this month or the wife will go hungry<G>." Until someone has done BOTH types of work and lifestyles, there may be little understanding of the "other side of things." The bottom line is that what motivates one group is not at all appealing to the other. My best example is the difference in an "art" blacksmith and a ferrier<G>. Both are black-faced coal-breathing hard-muscled artisans, but they are indeed horses driven by different demons<G>.

In this matter it is extremely difficult to feed all fires at the same time. So it appears IMHO that why not have a rotating schedule of specialities.

2007 is the art of the blacksmith.

09 is architectural blacksmith applications.

11 is ancient techniques.

You see the direction.

Yes, not everyone will want to go every year. Then again, not everyone eats steak every night of the week either. But there will be some crossover.

Back on subject... So, the bottom line is, allow some of the public in, you will do a little good, but not much in the long term. Still, it is well worth the effort to let in certain groups (like the scouts and

metal classes from school), because we will probably see some benefit from those actions.

In a perfect world where everyone cares about the situation, where there is infinite money to spend, and infinite time to make things right, all will be well. But with the product mix that we have, and the way that things always go, we run with the money available, the time available, and the situation as it sits today. To do otherwise will waste effort, time, and make our kitties scratch us because their food bowls are empty.

Woof

Announcements

The Rocky Forge News is available by E-mail and on our website (<http://www.rockyforge.org/>). If you wish to receive the newsletter via E-mail sent Dave Childress a note at trollkeep@gmail.com, or e-mail directly to rocky@rockyforge.org.