

# Rocky Forge News

Volume 9, issue 1 – January, 2010

## January Meeting (1/9/2010)

By Ted Stout

The year 2009 is now behind us; let us work toward making 2010 an even more productive year than the last. We will start the year with a meeting in Ted's heated shop on January 9th at 9:00 AM. Coffee and doughnuts will be available after 8:30.

After Dominick's experience making nails at the October '09 Feast of the Hunters Moon and the embarrassing experience of seasoned blacksmiths at the SOFA meeting in September, **we want all our members to know how to make nail headers and nails.** That is what this January meeting is all about. If you have a nail header bring it along, even if it does not work well, we will try to fix it and show you why some headers do not work. If you have a piece of spring steel or high carbon steel, bring it along and if time permits we will make some headers. Also, bring stock for making nails that is suitable for your header. At the end of the day we hope everyone who is able will have a functional nail header and will have made some nice nails.

There will be fence post on a pedestal (like the one at right from the last issue of the Anvil's Ring) for each of you to sign a book and place a nail in the post. The post will travel to the IBA conference, or other satellite groups for individuals to place a nail in the post. We may even take to SOFA as the IBA nail post and ask others at SOFA to make additions.



Don't forget to bring iron-in-the-hat items as this is our main revenue source. If you are updating your last will and testament, please remember the Rocky Forge Blacksmith Guild.

Carol will be clerking an auction for Greg so she will not be here to cook for us. I will have a big pot of ham, bean and vegetable soup going for our lunch. It will be cooking outside so some of you will need to help keep it going. Bring whatever sounds good with soup to round the meal. We will eat in the shop.

Let's kick off the year with a fun meeting, which means a good program, lots of attendance, chocolate-coated doughnuts, hot soup and fellowship. See you all on Saturday.

## Last Meeting (12/12/09)

Our December meeting was held at Chaz Kaiser's shop in Batesville. Aubrey Williams, a well-known blacksmith from Brazil, Indiana, gave us some insight into how rifles and ammunition were made and about tools for maintaining rifled barrels in the early nineteenth century.

## Member Note: Paul Potosky

One of our Rocky (Forge) members, Paul Potosky, had his total knee replacement surgery on Dec. 8th. He was released from the hospital Dec. 11 and is trying to stay positive while doing his exercises. His friends in Rocky Forge are urged to send Paul your prayers and wishes for a speedy recovery.

## Acetylene Safety

How much energy is stored in an Acetylene bottle? This photo is a good reminder to all that the proper use, storage and transportation of such materials are of the utmost importance.

We should never use an acetylene tank that has been transported on its side for at least two hours after it has been set up vertical. Never open it more than 1/2 turn and **never set the pressure over 15 psi.** *Adherence to safety rules saves lives.*



## Rural Smiths of Mid America

By Ted Stout

The RSMA group recently voted 13 to 1 in favor of using their own insurance and to remain as a group separate from the IBA. I am sorry to hear that, but also understand their position. Perhaps the discussion will be revisited in the future. I wish them success.

## How to Teach Nail Making

By Michael Spencer, Nova Scotia, Canada  
(mspencer@tallships.ca)

The late Slim Spurling gave a demonstration at Carbondale in '76. He recounted that, at his school (Skunk Hollow Forge), the process went like this:

1. Teach a novice how to make a nail.
2. Tell the novice to make a nail and present it for inspection. When the novice (eventually) presents a well-made nail...
3. Tell the novice to make 100 nails. If he presents 100 nails some of which aren't good enough, he gets sent back to make 100 nails over again. When he submits 100 good nails...
4. Tell him to make 100 nails in an hour.

Slim opined that when the novice can make 100 good nails in an hour, he isn't a novice any more and can go on to other stuff.

Just for comparison, full-time nailers (in the days before cut or wire nails) could make 4 nails a minute. By that standard, 100/hour is just getting warmed up.

## Controlled Hand Forging Lessons

For several years ABANA has been creating and publishing a terrific series of lessons on all aspects of blacksmithing. The twenty-five lessons are well thought out and well written and are available individually in the *Hammer's Blow* and on the web ([www.abana.org/resources/education/chf.shtml](http://www.abana.org/resources/education/chf.shtml)).

Topics include safety, ergonomics and shop layout, drawing out, hot punching, drawing a round taper & bending, twisting & drawing, punching and

bending, upsetting, splitting, mortise and tenon joinery, forge welding, drawing down, forging a shoulder, cutting a bar, forging a 90-degree corner, forging an eye on the end of a bar, forging a ribbon taper, forging a square bar into a round bar, drawing out-using the peen, cutting-splitting the end of a bar, forging a fishtail, forging a square punch and drift, forging tongs, drawing out round stock to square, making a round drift, and forging right-angle bends.

## Interesting Web Sites

Lucy Sandys-Clarke

([www.lucysandysclarke.com](http://www.lucysandysclarke.com)).

The three blacksmiths of the City of Christiania in Copenhagen (<http://www.kvindesmedien.dk/>).

Kim Thomas ([www.ThomasIronWorks.com](http://www.ThomasIronWorks.com)).

## Dates to Remember

January 9, 2010: Rocky Forge meeting at Ted's on the topic of nail making.

February 13, 2010: Rocky Forge meeting at Ted's shop.

June 2-5, 2010: ABANA Conference, Memphis, Tennessee.

June 25-27, 2010: IBA Conference, Tipton.

July 16-18, 2010: Illiana Antique Power Association Show, Rainsville, IN.

September 24-26, 2010: SOFA QuadState Conference, Troy, Ohio.

October 2-3, 2010: Feast of the Hunter's Moon, at Historic Fort Ouiatenon Park near West Lafayette.

## Contacts

Forgemaster: Ted Stout ([stout8525@tds.net](mailto:stout8525@tds.net), 765-572-2467 home).

Newsletter Editor: Dominick Andrisani ([andrisan@purdue.edu](mailto:andrisan@purdue.edu), 765-463-4975 home).

Web Site: <http://www.rockyforge.org/> (previous newsletters can be found here).

