



Sofa Sounds

Southern Ohio Forge and Anvil

Newsletter

April, 1993

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: Unless otherwise noted all meetings will be held at the Studebaker Frontier Homestead on St. Rt. 202 about four miles north of I-70 and two miles south of the intersection of St. Rt. 571 and 202. Please do not park in the grass or block access to a production area. Donations of items to support the newsletter are always welcome. Finger food and cold drinks provided on a break even, honor donation basis. The forges at the homestead are available before and after the meeting for individual projects. Bring and wear safety glasses. Demonstrations are open to the public and are no charge.

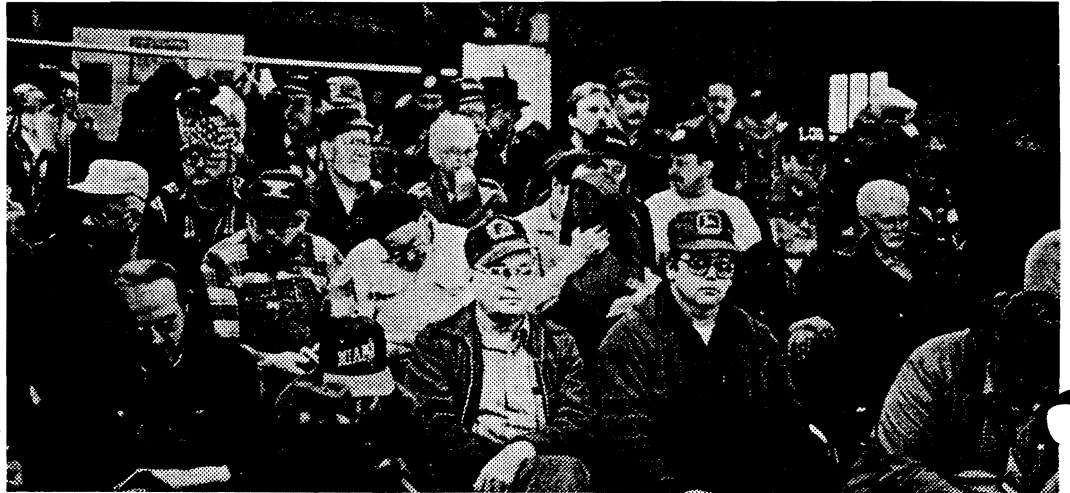
Upcoming Events:

May 1, 1993	Northwest Ohio Blacksmiths (NOB) is presenting its 7th annual at AuGlaize Village in Defiance, OH. Demonstrators are Hans Peot and Dick Franklin .
May 8, 1993 Note Date Change!	SOFA MEETING at the Studebaker Homestead. Demonstrator will be Richard Kern demonstrating forging screwdrivers and wrenches.
May 14-15, 1993	Southeastern Regional Blacksmith Conference, Madison, GA. Note: Friday & Sat. Good conference put on by nice people.
June 1, 1993	SOFA MEETING at the Studebaker Homestead. Demonstrator needed.

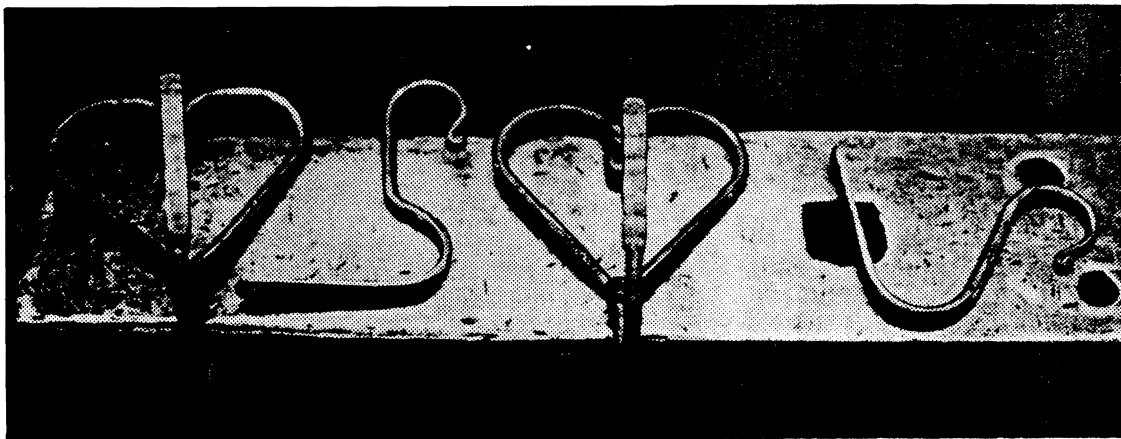
President's Note from Ron Thompson:

Hey, its that time again and this sucker has snuck up on me. I don't know how Scharabok did it all this time. Of course I'm not known for my organizational ability, I'm known for my teamwork with Ron Van Vickle in making forge fires (the kind that fills the room with dense sulfurous yellow smoke from ceiling to about knee level bringing tears of joy to the membership. Tears, anyway) and I'm known for preserving the secrets blacksmiths have used for centuries for taking perfectly good steel and making it into unusually shaped pieces of scrap.

February Meeting Report:

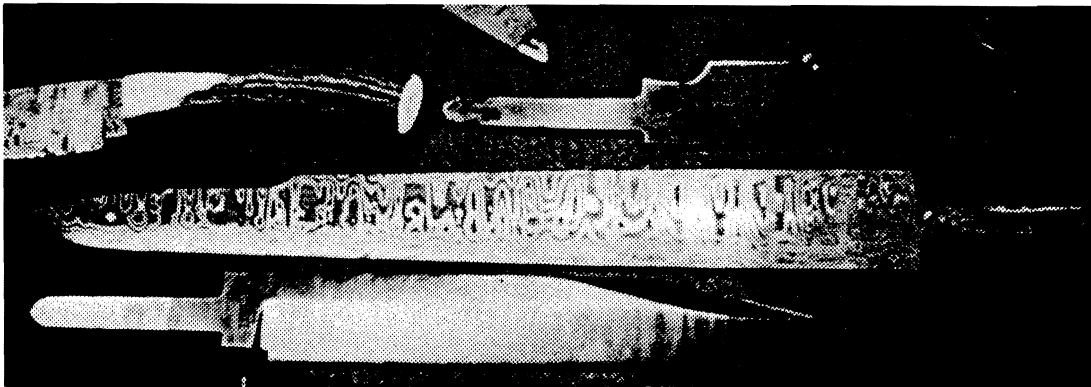


As usual we had a great turnout for the February meeting. Seems the winter months are the one when people need to get out of the house and watch a little smithing for an afternoon. We must have had about 80 people or so (see picture) for Brian Thompson's demonstration (no relation to me, Brian would want me to assure you). Brian was demonstrating the way he designed the tooling and used it to make a heart hook set. Brian uses this basic hook for a variety of items in his line of craft sales products. Good turnout and a fine job by Brian.



March Meeting Report:

As you may have heard by now, we had a switch in demonstrators for March. Richard Kern elected to demonstrate in May and Hans Peot then switched to the March meeting where he put on one of his famous "How to make pattern welded knives properly". Of course, properly is Hans' interpretation of how he does it, and does he ever do it. His knives are beautiful. Hans began with a description of the materials in the billet consisting of O1 and mild steel (A36), with two layers of O1 and three layers of A36. He grinds the surfaces into a convex shape so the weld will proceed from the center of the billet out to the edges, welds on a handle (ed. note: If you use a piece of mild steel 36" long for the center section it can act as a handle and survive the welding better than a welded on handle), and heats to a bright red. Hans likes to have the billet hot so the borax flux melts and runs. Brush vigorously with a butcher block heavy duty brush before each fluxing.



Hans did not complete the billet but stopped after a couple of welds to leave time for more discussion of patterning and knife finishing. One of the finest tips of the day was the grinder that Hans made for rough finishing. A Wilton or Bader knife grinder costs about a thousand dollars and are fine pieces of equipment. The grinding belts are usually 2" by 72" and cost about \$5.00 each. A 4" by 36" flat belt sander belt also costs about \$4 to \$5. Hans made a 9" circular sander plate for a 2HP, 3450 rpm motor and uses Sears sanding disks for about a buck apiece. He says he found that you get approximately one blade per belt or disk so his system cuts considerable cost. This is not to say you wouldn't want a Wilton or Bader but until you can afford one this is a good substitute. The key here is the motor must be big enough to hog off the material without stopping and a 1740 rpm will not remove enough stock. I know, I have one that has a small motor and slow rpm, and it won't do it. Great demo, thanks Hans.

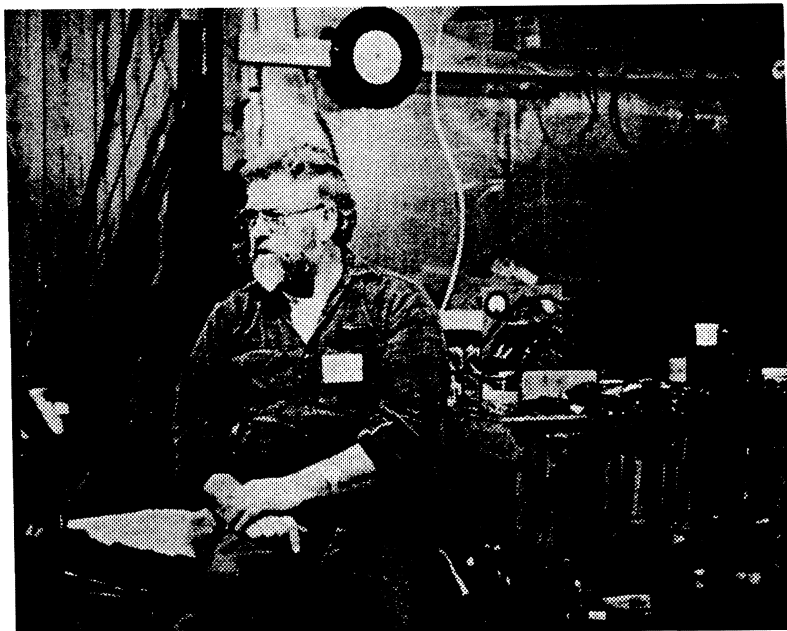
Trip Report:

I had the good fortune to be able to attend Jerry Gier's weekend knife and hawk conference in Harpster, OH on Feb. 18 & 19. Jerry got the idea for having the conference after attending Jim Batson's Conference in Madison, AL. On the way home Jerry was driving and Butch was doing talk-to-the-driver-to keep-him-awake duty. Jerry tried the conference last year and it was so successful, they did it again this year.

Don Witzler demonstrated pattern welded knife making and Butch Sheely demonstrated making a tomahawk from a piece of cable. Jerry has a beautiful shop, 30' x 40' with about all the tools you could imagine including a 100 lb. Little Giant. He is a full time smith and has had a successful year in 1992. From the looks of his tools and shop I'm in the wrong business.

The conference really started Friday night with Butch and Don making the billets to be used during the weekend. There was about 30 smiths there and we had a great time. Jerry uses pea-sized coke, exclusively. The three smiths have developed a routine for making billets that results in making a billet with 6 welds in less than an hour. The combination of coke, using a 4" hardy and a 8 lb. sledge to cut the billet, and welding with a 100 lb. power hammer really speeds the process.

The weekend was a real success with a finished Damascus knife and a cable hawk among the auction items. Jerry talked me into bringing my little 6" gas forge in for a demo and then we decided to see if we could forge weld a billet with it. I told Jerry that I had designed my little forge for saving propane and didn't expect it to work for welding with such a small orifice, but it was worth a try. The first few welds we tried as the forge heated up did not take, but as the refractory lining heated up the welds began to take. I took some sheet nickel and began to put it into the folds of the 1/4" by 1 1/2" O1 that Jerry had and we made a billet from scratch using the gas forge. Surprised me, but that forge produces a yellow heat and we made a good billet. We fullered a pattern in the billet and chopped it in two. We each took a piece and I have since finished mine into a beautiful blade. Using a gas forge is not a new trick but I didn't expect my baby forge to work. That kind of fun weekend is what gets me up and going to work in the morning.

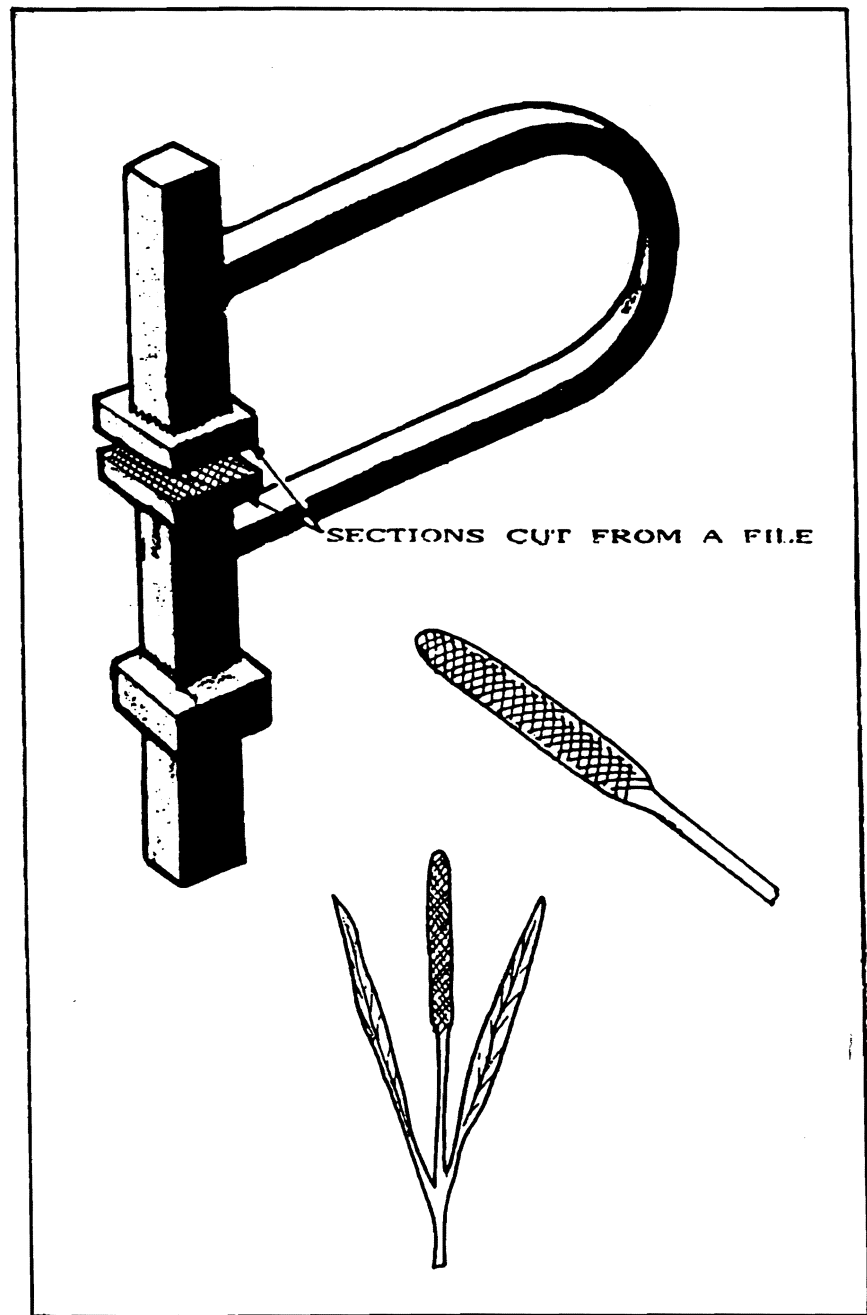


From the BRITISH BLACKSMITH

Texturing Tool

Peter King describes a useful tool which can be used for producing a texture on the forged seed heads of grasses and rushes

At a recent Forge-in I was asked how I textured the spike of grass by a very knowledgeable member. Well, if he didn't know and was interested enough to ask, I thought other members would be interested. The drawing shows the spring tool that I use, with the two sections cut from a file welded as shown - I use a stainless steel rod for this weld. The forging is done at red heat, the grass spike being rotated between the file sections as the blows are struck with the tool.





Ornamental Wrought-Iron Design

THOMAS F. GOOGERTY

If one is to be successful in designing and making ornamental iron work or any work of this character he must learn to use his head in conjunction with his hands; that is to say he must think out his own ideas and not be depending on someone else to furnish every little detail. One who continually depends on the other fellow for those things will never advance very far. He must use his own brain in trying to figure out easier and better methods to handle his work, and should also use his head in trying to invent ornaments suitable to be worked out in iron, and not be dependent on some other person's designs. Even though he does not understand the principles of design very well he should be continually working out new ideas; as by this method alone can one evolve, become strong and stand on his own feet independent of others. This is also true of the professional decorative designer; when he fails to use to the fullest extent his inventive powers his work will not improve, but on the contrary it will deteriorate.

If one understands the principle of design he can work out his conceptions with far more assurance that his work will at least be built on right lines, even though it is not the best. Any man works better and understands what he is doing with more

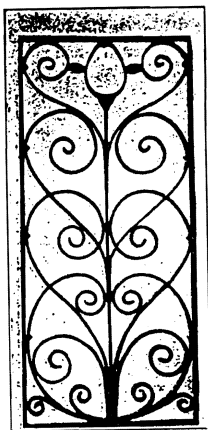


FIG. 1—YOU MUST USE YOUR OWN BRAIN

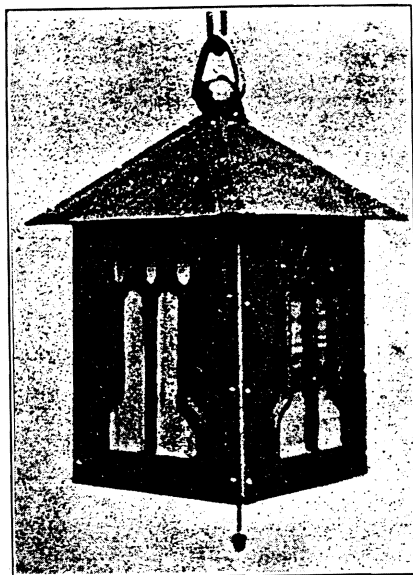


FIG. 2—THINK OUT THE IDEA THEN WORK IT

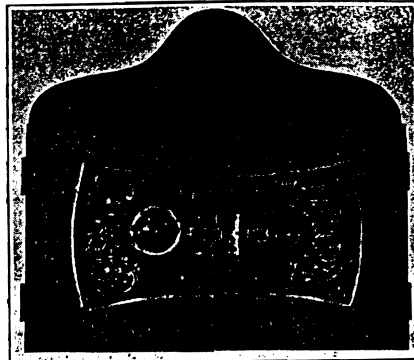


FIG. 4—THE PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD



FIG. 3—THE SUCCESSFUL ORNAMENTAL WORKER MUST USE HEAD AND HANDS

certainty after study and research; as he will then have a good idea what has been done before, both good and bad; also what difficulties to avoid which arise from conditions of today. Therefore, one who likes the artistic side of iron, and wants information on the subject, should study some good books on design.

Perhaps from the 12th to the 17th century the best ironwork was made; as some of the finest examples were produced during that time. Its forms and uses seemed to be better understood and generally more worked than later. A study of the

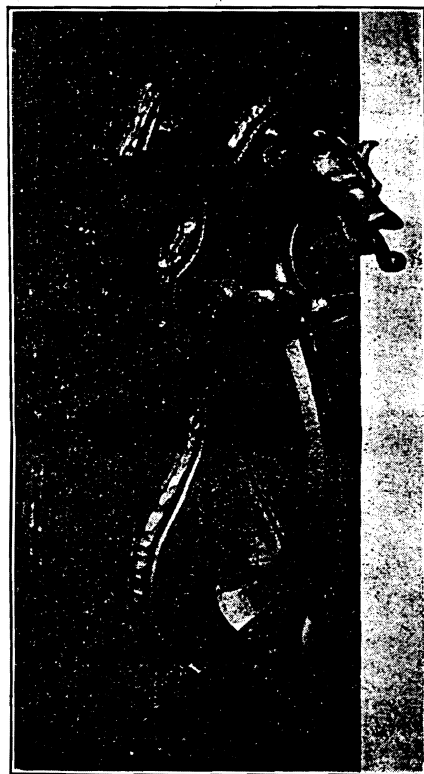


FIG. 5—WITHOUT ORIGINAL IDEAS THE WORK CANNOT IMPROVE

older forms, especially those of Mediaeval German, shows that they fashioned their iron more in keeping with its properties, and that they were imbued with the spirit of art in their work by a close following of conventional treatment of ornament.

Iron is a crude metal and should be found in its proper place, serving the purpose for which it was made, and not designed so as to be fashioned into shapes which are more suitable to be wrought from the precious metals. In designing, nature does not furnish us with readymade designs. Any attempt to reproduce natural forms in iron is a mistaken effort on the part of the designer.

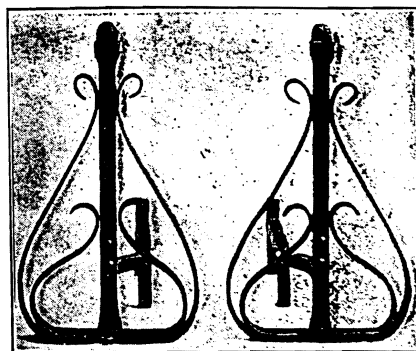


FIG. 6—THE COST OF COPYING THE DESIGNS OF OTHERS IS DETERIORATION

It is impossible to utilize things in nature in design without the play of human invention and imagination.

Realistic iron roses, lilies and other flowers are inconsistent with the material in which they are executed. They kill the strength and destroy the character of the metal. This should be learned by the workman, and if he will devote just a little time to study and research he will learn some of the virtues and characteristics of this metal.

When the ironworker of the past tried to imitate nature too closely in leaf and flower he failed as a designer and his work deteriorated. One proof of this fact may be found in what has always been acknowledged to be the better examples of ancient and modern work; for in them we find no deviation from the path of conventional ornament.

It does not matter what motive one uses in iron designs, the only question to be considered is, has the design order regarding its lines and masses? Familiar types of flowers have nothing at all to do with the design being good or poor. In any good design we find them only in a conventionalized form. We may make our designs by an arrangement of ideas based on things in nature or they may be purely abstract ones. However, we must use our inventive powers and arrange our ideas to get rhythm, balance and harmony in our designs.

Fig. 1 shows a grill design, based on the growth of a flower. The main stock or stem is running up through the center and dividing the rectangle of grill into two equal measures; terminating at the top with a shape derived from the flower. The spirals derived from leaf form spring from the sides of stem, emphasizing the



FIG. 7—INVENT AND ORIGINATE YOUR OWN DESIGNS

growth of leaf, and forming graceful curves which are distributed equally over the whole rectangle; giving the design order in its arrangement.

In making the grill a full sized drawing is made of the surface plate; each member is then measured with a cord and the stock cut. The entire grill is welded together and then formed into shape.

Fig. 2 shows an electric lantern with art glass; it is to be used in the vestibule of a residence. It may be suspended from the ceiling by a chain or hung on a side wall bracket. The sides of lamp are 7 in. by 5¼ in., and the entire lantern is made from No. 20 soft steel. The idea for decoration in the sides of lamp is derived from the flower bud, and so arranged as to give a decorative effect to the lamp.

Fig. 3 shows a number of drawer pulls, hinges, conventionalized leaves, flowers and other ornamental forgings. Figs. 4, 5, 6 and 7 show a latch for a double door, a knocker for a door, a set of andirons and a copper ink well.

Interior ironwork should not be painted or electroplated. It should be allowed to be seen and recognized as just iron. A good finish to use on this kind of work is to heat the metal a little and rub on linseed oil with a cloth. The surplus oil is then rubbed off. This kind of a finish does not destroy the texture of the metal and will prevent it from rusting.

The illustrations shown are from work executed by boys and their instructor in the Illinois State Reformatory forge shop.

FIRE AND STEEL (Prestige of a different kind):

My dad was a blacksmith. I doubt if he ever once thought about prestige or status, although they are much discussed criteria of a man's career today. But Dad's skill with fire and steel was in demand, and the cheery, prideful way he went about his work gave it the beauty and dignity inherent in all honest labor.

We eight kids honored and adored every inch of our 6-foot 2-inch dad with his steel gray twinkling eyes in the engaging sun-and-fire-tanned face. If we had ever heard of prestigious positions and places, we'd have thought they referred to our dad and his squatty little shop.

Six of us were girls. I guess Dad would have preferred it the other way around, for the boys spent all their out-of-school hours at The Shop. We girls had to vie with each other to "go to The Shop and give your daddy this list" when Mama's pantry supply ran low. Two of us always went, together, and it was a happy time for me when I was one of those chosen. I especially liked it when Mama added, "If your daddy's not too busy you can get him to explain things to you." I don't know why I, unfit by sex, brain or brawn to deal with my dad's tools of fire and steel, found his ugly little box of a building, frosted inside and out with puffy black soot, so appealing. But I loved that shop!

It stood to the right and behind the big general store that made up one side of the Amity, Ark., town square. Two big double-doors, wide enough to drive a team of horses and wagon clear through, faced dirt roads that brought the farmers in from their Caddo river-bottom corn and cotton fields. They were Dad's chief customers.

Inside was the brick forge, along the north wall. It was a platform about 5 feet square, raised so high from the floor I had to tiptoe, at first, to see the bed of smoldering coals glow coppery and gold and spurt little blue flames when the big leather bellows beside the forge was pumped.

Metal filings carpeted the heavy rough-plank platforms in front of the forge and benches on which my dad stood to work. The rest of the floor was dirt, black with the forge soot but cool to the bare feet of little girls who found the metal filings hot and sharp as they flew under Dad's hammer. Occasionally, if Dad's work was slow and we were not in the way, we were allowed to sweep up the filings and sort out odd-shaped and pretty curlicues to take home. The dirt floor also held long rows of heat-blackened plow shares, marked in chalk with the owner's name, and old horseshoes often used by waiting customers in a rousing game of pitching horseshoes where Dad had fixed up some dandy stakes.

Along the south wall stood a long workbench holding a half dozen or so iron vises. Above the bench were tool racks for hammers - tiny ones and great sledge hammers that even Dad took both hands to wield. Gimlets and chisels were there, and shiny draw knives that shaved the most perfect curls. That is, if you were a boy or a man you could make the curls. Every time I went to The Shop, though, I'd pick up curls and take them to my treasure box of metal curlicues.

Sometimes I'd take a few nails from the pull-out bin under the workbench. Smallest of all the nails - not much thicker than a pin - were kept in a compartment with lace, thinnest nansook, muslin, and some shiny satin ribbon, all secure from the dirt and grime the blacksmith shop with heavy wrapping paper and string.

These fancy items were the trimmings for coffins which Dad made of green pine. It must have been that coffins for adults were available elsewhere, because always my dad made the coffins for little ones, and always he wiped away a tear with his sooty red bandanna as his big calloused hands tacked those tiny nails into lace borders for pillows that would cradle infant heads.

When I could help Dad "trim a casket," I was allowed to take home the leftover materials to trim a garment for myself or my dolls. That, and being able to "work with your father" was, I suppose, enough pleasure to allay any grief I might have felt for the dead, but I recall a secret pride in my dad's helping out and not being ashamed to cry at human sorrow. I had heard that "mean men" never cried, even when their own children died. Here was my dad crying a little when he made a casket for a child he didn't know.

I was allowed to help Dad shape the rim of a wagon wheel once. I touched his arm as he firmly grasped the tongs and held the metal to the forge, turning it slightly as it glowed red, yellow and ice-blue. Then he'd hammer and shape it precisely. He assured me I was a big help, and, oh, how the sparks scattered.

"The sparks are as pretty as falling stars," I said. "Prettier," he said, "because sparks look upward and stars fall downward. Up is better." Then he pinched my arm and grinned, a little embarrassed, I think, because Dad usually left all teaching to Mama.

Maybe blacksmithing was not prestigious and being a smithy no status symbol, But in my dad's shop I found pride in workmanship and respect for labor that provides human needs. I learned there to treasure the cheerful performance of duty. All these lessons have served me well. I still consider it my blessing to see Dad at work and to discover my heritage of "fire and steel."

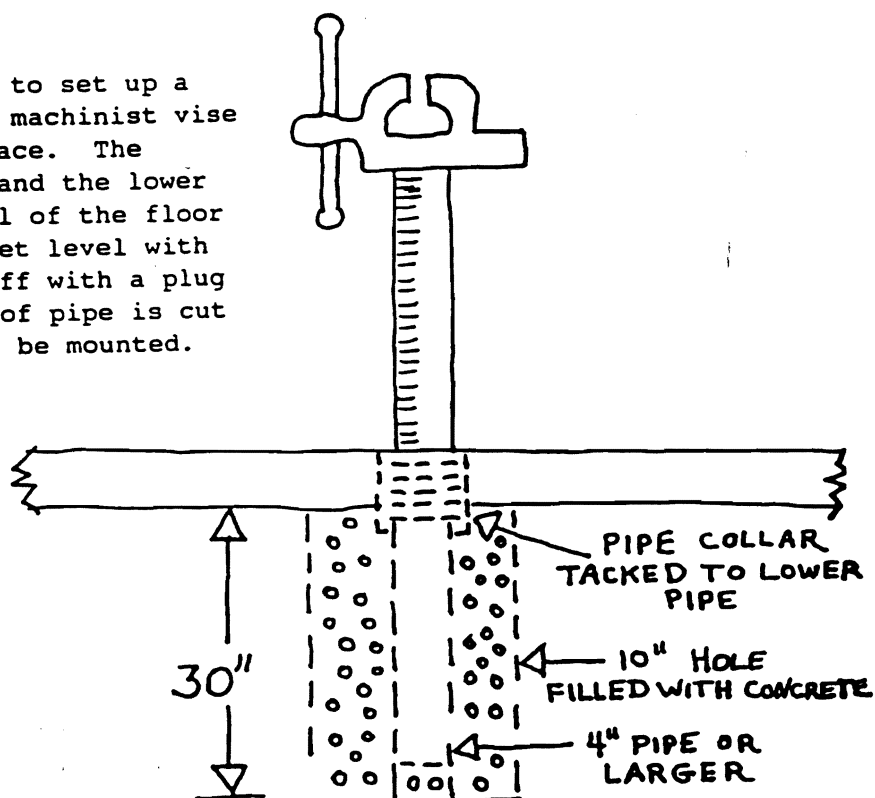
Nell Womack Evans
Colorado Springs, Colorado

Editor's Note: The preceding article was published in the "On My Mind" column of the The Denver Post. I have chosen to include it because I think it speaks to that magic which has drawn so many of us together in the bond of "fire and steel".

WISE MOUNT

The sketch illustrates a method to set up a solid removable base for a leg vise, machinist vise or heavy impact tool in a limited space. The vertical pipe should be 4" or large and the lower section should be set below the level of the floor by 30". The pipe collar should be set level with the finish floor and can be closed off with a plug when not in use. The upper section of pipe is cut to a length suitable for the tool to be mounted.

Jerry Jamison
Fort Lupton, Colorado



We publish these letters to keep our members aware of the National Association of which SOFA is a chapter organization. Through your individual support and our support as one of the leading chapter organizations, ABANA will continue to grow and serve blacksmithing at all levels nationwide.



ABANA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
March, 1993

Dear ABANA Chapters,

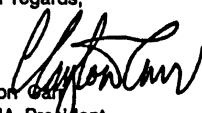
As you know, the forms to sign up for the *Blacksmith Registry* appeared at the 1992 ABANA Conference in San Luis Obispo, California as well as in the *Anvil's Ring*. We received a great response from the membership for the register, and the ABANA Office did a super job of putting the information together. The register will be used to refer calls that the ABANA Office routinely receives inquiring about commissioned blacksmith work. Thanks to all of those who requested to be in the register. It will help the ABANA Office immeasurably, and will help those seeking the services of blacksmiths qualified to help them out. As with all services of this nature, the information in the *Blacksmith Registry* will get outdated in time. If you have additions, or corrections to an original entry you sent us, simply send them to the ABANA Office so that they may be included with the next update.

We have another directory in the ABANA Office called the *Supplier List*. It contains the suppliers of various tools and materials around the country. If you are looking for something in particular and are having a rough time finding it, or need a few alternative sources, why not give the ABANA Office a call? They will be glad to direct you to some of the suppliers on that list. Likewise, if you have found a source for something that others in our community of friends might like to know about, please give us a call so that source may be added to our directory. It will help us all in the long run.

Have you ever heard that old saying "Well, that's the last thing I ever thought I'd see!"? It occurred to me after looking at the condition of a few chisels and hammers recently, that if someone tried to use them, it might just be the last thing they'd see! The tools we routinely use all require regular maintenance to stay in good shape. Any tools designed to be struck can become "mushroomed," which can send little pieces flying off the tool when you least expect it. Hammer handles start loosening up as soon as they're installed. Some folks soak their handles in various fluids to counteract that problem. Now that Spring is upon us, it may be a good idea to inspect your tools for signs of wear and tear. For that matter, take a look at your favorite pair of safety glasses -- are they looking a little tired? A pleasant Spring day spent getting your tools in shape might just prevent you from saying someday, "That's the last thing I saw..."

Farewell to the last signs of winter!

Warm regards,


Clayton
ABANA President



CHAPTER LIAISON NEWSLETTER
March 1993

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY - ABANA is celebrating its 20th Anniversary in 1993. *We've come a long way baby!* Look for exciting things to happen this year as we prepare for the '94 Conference in St. Louis, Missouri.

LET YOUR WOMAN DO THE WALKING - Members of the Inland Northwest Blacksmith Association (INBA) have found a way to spend more time in the shop and still find those hard to get tools they need. They draw sketches of special tools they need so their wives or girl friends can look for them when going to the flea markets and antique shops.

NO JOKING - Do you have any poems, riddles, one liners, jokes, or cartoons about blacksmithing? Send them to the Chapter Liaison Committee (address below) and we will compile them into a collection for everyone on the chapter list to enjoy.

MORE BANG FOR YOUR BUCK - Jim Ryan of Dubuque, Iowa has taken the editorship of the ABANA newsletter to be published between issues of the *Anvil's Ring*. This newsletter will be filled with tips, techniques and updates of interest to the blacksmithing community. This along with many new services to our members is a great reason to join ABANA. Look for an application in the back of your Chapter Newsletter or contact the ABANA Office for more information.

WHITAKER RECOGNIZED - This summer there will be a Francis Whitaker Show at the Smithsonian Institute. More information on this will be given as it becomes available. Plan to attend. The John C. Campbell Folk School has renamed their blacksmith shop to the Francis Whitaker Blacksmith Shop to honor Francis' efforts on behalf of blacksmithing.

FLOATING BLACKSMITH SHOP - The National Rivers Hall of Fame in Dubuque, Iowa invites blacksmiths to be guest on the "William Black" (sand dredge) moored in the Dubuque Ice Harbor. Supplies furnished free, just bring your favorite hammer. You can sell your wares to the public. To reserve a date, contact Bob Drury, P.O. Box 309, Dubuque, Iowa 52004 or phone (319) 557-9545.

THE YEAR OF AMERICAN CRAFT - The U.S. Senate passed resolution 218, designating 1993 as the Year of American Craft. Already slated for demonstration; "Saddle Making in Wyoming", "Glass Weekend", and "Caribbean Basket Adventure". The question was asked, "When will the blacksmiths get their turn?"

BEALER FORGE - Twenty years ago at Westville, Lumpkin, Georgia a group of blacksmiths gathered and ABANA was born. Today the forge is in need of repair. Any chapter or member of ABANA wishing to make a contribution to help rebuild the Bealer Forge at Westville should contact: Dave Fink, P.O. Box 805, Lumpkin, GA 31815. What a wonderful tribute to the man (Alex Bealer) that helped get it all started.

THANKS - ABANA appreciates the Chapters that send us their newsletters and updates so that we can help keep the lines of communication open. Submit your information to the ABANA Office and it will get out in the next monthly mailing.

Please send all Chapter President and Editor changes to the ABANA Office or the Chapter Liaison Committee so we can keep our files updated.

Ron Porter
Chapter Liaison Committee Chairman
RR 1 Box 64, Bunker Hill, Indiana 46914



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Ron Porter

*Chapter Liaison Committee Chairman
RR 1 Box 64, Bunker Hill, Indiana 46914*

If you want to make a finial for the fence, here are the specs:

1. The verticals of the fence are 3/8" round stock.
2. Each vertical rod has been threaded with 3/8-16 Standard thread for approximatley 3/8".
3. Please attach a 3/8-16 hex nut to your finial or tap same to recieve the threaded rod.
4. The desired design space, not absolute, is a 2 1/2" cube or a 3" sphere centered about 1 1/2" from the top of the rod.
5. The design ideas are not limited, but keep in mind the statue and the log homestead motif of the area.
6. The finish on the fence is a high gloss epoxy. Feel free to apply your own special finish, if desired.
7. If you have any questions call Larry Gindlesperger at 513-237-2200

Name _____ ☐ New Member ☐ Renewal
Address _____ Phone _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
☐ Regular Membership...\$35 ☐ Family Membership.....\$40 ☐ Senior Citizen\$25
☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ Check/Money Order
Card Number

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