



N.J.B.A. Newsletter

NJBA Volume 15, Issue 2 08/25/10
<http://njba.abana-chapter.com>

Editors Soapbox

Hi, As editor I would appreciate some help in writing up events for the newsletter. You don't have to be a gifted writer just send me something about the event as I can't make all of them or remember everything.

I want to apologize for the lateness of this newsletter. This was due to personal problems and I have tried to keep the web site current in the meantime.

We have some events coming up that are good opportunities for fellowship and to swing a hammer so come out and enjoy. Larry Brown, editor

We need some more activity from our members!

Recent events in the lives of some of our directors have made it hard for NJBA to be all it can be. We need more people to help out other than the same few doing everything. Please talk to one of the directors to find out what you can do to help!

We are also looking for members who have a pickup and would be interested in helping bring the NJBA trailer to meets. If you are interested in helping please contact one of the board members listed on page 2. Larry Brown, Editor

Upcoming events for 2008

Get your calendars out and mark these events down. Please bookmark our web site and check for updated meet information. Remember most of our meets have an "Iron in the Hat" drawing, so be sure to bring something. Meet information starts on this page and continues on page 3.

September 4th -PV Pig Iron Fest, More info pages 1 and 3

Sunday, September 12th—10:00am - 4:00pm

Red Mill Tool Swap/Picnic, More info on page 3
September 17 - 19 - Old Time Engine Show
Washington Crossing Park, NJ, More info page 3
October 3rd-Walnford Day, More information on page 4.

Peters Valley Iron Fest and Pig Roast

You don't want to miss the annual Iron Fest hosted by the Blacksmithing Studio, and Dick Sargent (Studio Department Head), at Peters Valley Craft Center on Saturday, September 4th, beginning at 11:00 am.

Blacksmithing Demonstrations - All day, throughout the day

Live Music

Tailgate Tool Sale

Live Auction

Live Auction including functional and decorative handmade art & fine crafts, anvil(s), blacksmithing tools, and much more!

(Consider donating something to the cause... just bring it with you)

Pig Roast and other food:

The event begins at 11:00 am with the pig roasted and ready to eat at approximately 1:00 pm.. There will be hot dogs, hamburgers, salads, and goodies available all day, along with the pig. Soda and water are included as well, however we do not serve alcohol (BYOB).

Peters Valley Surplus Equipment, Tools & Supplies Sale

Wow! You will find surplus equipment, tools, and supplies from ALL of our studios; Ceramics, Fibers, Fine Metals, Photography, Woodworking, Special Topics, and of course Blacksmithing.

New Jersey Blacksmiths Newsletter

The NJBA Web Site!

The NJBA Web Site is up
and running at:

<http://njba.abana-chapter.com/>

The Newsletter is at:

<http://members.bellatlantic.net/~vze25jcc/index.htm>

or use the link on the NJBA web site
for the newsletter.

Official NJBA Address

**NJBA
P.O. Box 224
Farmingdale, NJ
07727-9998**

**Rather than use room in the newsletter,
All correspondence between
ABANA and NJBA is now being posted
on the NJBA web site.
If you cannot access it there, contact me
and I will send you copies.
ABANA is communicating again so
check it out**

NJBA Board of Directors

**Directors names are not
listed on line**

New Jersey Blacksmiths Newsletter

Tickets are \$25 per person in advance (within 48 hours) by phone 973-948-5200, or purchase them online at The Peters Valley Online Store. Tickets are available at the door for \$30 per person.

KIDS UNDER 12 ARE FREE!!!

Keep in mind that the Iron Fest is happening during the workshop season. While you are at the Iron Fest, consider a self-guided tour of the other studios between 2:00 & 5:00 pm. Tour maps are available at the Peters Valley Store & Gallery which will be open that day. While at the store, explore a new exhibition upstairs in the Sally D. Francisco Gallery; Woodland Wanderings featuring the work of Liz Alpert Fay.

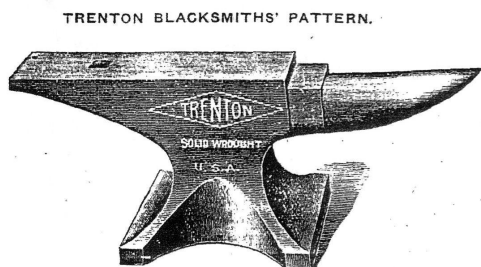
This event is rain or shine - we are under tents. More information is available on our website: www.petersvalley.org. Please share this email with your friends and family.

See you at the Iron Fest!
Kristin Muller
Peters Valley Craft Center
Executive Director

Directions to Peters Valley;
Peters Valley Craft Education Center
is located at;
19 Kuhn Road. in Layton (Sussex Co.). NJ 07851.
(Phone: 201-948-5200).

From Interstate Route 80 West:
Take Exit 34B to NJ Route 15 North. to US Route 206 North. Left onto NJ Route 560 West. Go through the blinking light in the center of Layton. onto NJ Route 640: go about 2 miles and turn right onto NJ Route 615. Go approximately one mile.

From US Route 209 (on the west bank of the Delaware River in Pennsylvania): Take PA Route 739 South across the Dingmans Ferry Bridge. Take the first right at sign to Peters Valley. Go two miles



TRENTON BLACKSMITHS' PATTERN.

BLACKSMITH HAMMER-IN & TOOL SWAP **At the Red Mill** **Museum Village**

Sunday, September 12th
10:00am - 4:00pm

Details are on page 5, come out and have some fun! This will also be an election meeting, if you want to join the NJBA board let us know!

Notice!

We could use some help running this event as Eric is going to be unavailable and he usually co ordinates it. Please contact Larry Brown if you can help!

Old Time Engine Show **September 17th, 18th, 19th**

NJBA will again be at the Delaware Valley Old Time Power and Equipment Association's "Days of the Past" Engine Show at Washington Crossing State Park, in Titusville, New Jersey. Come on out and bring the family, there are hay rides for the kids, a metal heads flea market, and a lot to see. Come on out and join the fun. For more information check out their web site <http://daysofthepast.com>

Directions:

The Engine Show is located in Washington Crossing State Park off of Rt. 29 (River Rd.) South of Lambertville and North of Trenton signs are posted to show the way.

From their web site:

33nd. Annual Antique Power
and Equipment Show
presented by the
Delaware Valley Old Time Power
and Equipment Association
Dates are September 17, 18, & 19, 2010 .

New Jersey Blacksmiths Newsletter

This is the third weekend in September.

The 2010 feature tractor, and implement line for the 32nd. annual "Days of the Past Show" will be "John Deere". In conjunction with this, we have adding the tractor games to the 2010 show. The Central Jersey chapter of the A.T.C.A will again be hosting their 8th annual truck show in conjunction with this event.

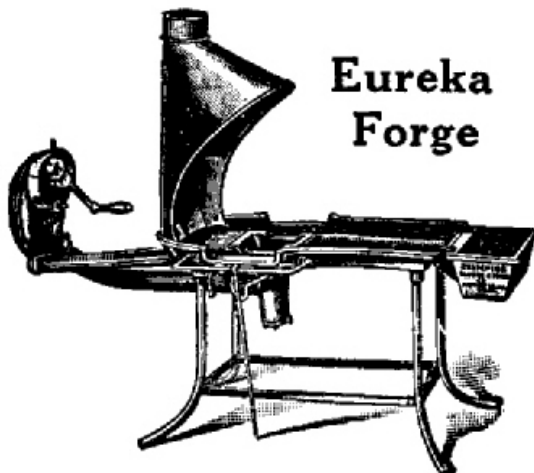
We also want to mention that the A.C.M.O.C "chapter 8 Caterpillar gang" will be back digging and making dust in grand style.

Show grounds are located off Church Road in Washington Crossing State Park, Titusville, NJ. Church Rd. runs between Rte. 29 and Rte. 579 only 4 miles north of I-95 along the Delaware River. Trucks use exit 3B off I-95 and follow signs to the park.

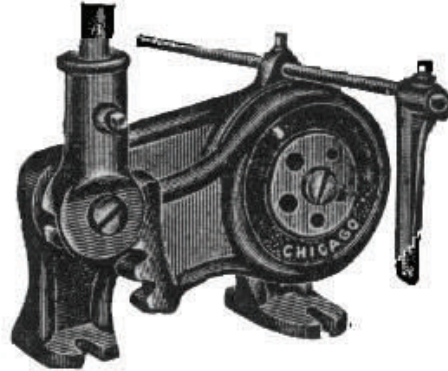
For more info:

www.DAYSOFTHEPAST.com

908 813 9904 ~ Days of show call: (609) 737-1925 Gates open at 8:00am all days Donation: Saturday or Sunday \$5 per person Kids under 12 free!



Macarco Rod Cutter



October 3rd Meet at Walnford Park

We will be demonstrating and holding a membership meeting at Walnford Park on October 3rd. Walnford is also known as Crosswicks Creek Park and is in Upper Freehold, N.J Set-up starts 10:00, the event is :00 - 5:00.

Come out and do some forging or socializing in a beautiful setting of a nice park that is not well known.

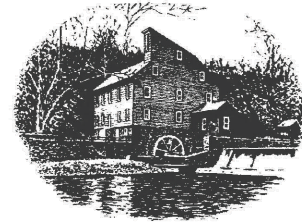
Directions

- NJ Turnpike to Exit 7A, (I-195 east). Follow I-195 to Exit 8 (Allentown, Rt. 524/539). Turn South onto Rt. 539 through Allentown (Rt. 539 requires a left turn where it splits from Rt. 524). Follow Rt. 539 to Holmes Mill Rd. Turn right. Follow to Walnford Rd. Turn right and follow 1 mile to Park.
- Rt. 9 to Freehold (West Main Street/Rt. 537 east exit). Northbound, turn left at exit; southbound, turn right at exit. Follow Rt. 537 west to Rt. 539. Turn right onto Rt. 539 west. Follow Rt. 539 west to Burlington Path. Turn left; follow to Holmes Mill Rd. Turn right; follow to Walnford Rd. Turn left and follow 1 mile to park.

New Jersey Blacksmiths Newsletter

Red Mill Museum Village

56 Main Street, Clinton, NJ 08809



PRESS RELEASE

For Information contact:
Peter Osborne, Curator of Education
908-735-4101 ext.102

RED MILL MUSEUM TO HOST ANNUAL HAMMER IN AND TOOL SWAP

CLINTON, NJ—The Red Mill Museum Village is pleased to announce its annual Hammer In and Tool Swap on Sunday, September 12th from 10-4pm. This event is hosted by the NJ Blacksmith's Association, under the direction of association trustee, Eric Cuper, and our own resident blacksmith Robert Bozzay. The New Jersey Blacksmith's Association is dedicated to the promotion of the art and craft of blacksmithing. The day's activities will center at the Museum's Blacksmith Shop where local blacksmiths and NJBA members will be on hand to demonstrate and sell their work. Tool dealers and collectors are invited to tailgate, sell and swap their smithing tools and accessories. We are currently registering blacksmiths and tool collectors. Among the items to be found will be anvils, blowers, forges, vises, hammers, and tongs. Should anyone have a "what is it" cluttering up the garage, bring it along and we will be glad to identify it for you.

Admission for the day's activities is \$8 for adults, \$6 for seniors, and \$5 for children (6-12). Free for children under 6, museum members and for NJBA members. Included in the price is admission to the Museum's historic buildings and exhibits. The Red Mill Museum Village is located at 56 Main Street in Clinton, NJ. For more information, or to register call the Museum at (908) 735-4101.

New Jersey Blacksmiths Newsletter

Marshall at the Monmouth County Fair

By Bruce Freeman

In years past NJBA had been invited to demonstrate near the Longstreet Farm exhibit, but we haven't received such a request for several years. This year Marshall, who demonstrates a few times a year at Longstreet Farm, had been asked by them to demonstrate at the fair for one day only. I helped Marshall set up and break down the forge.

On the day of his demo, I stopped by with a friend who'd never seen blacksmithing before. Marshall gave his usual super-competent demonstration and handed my friend, who was quite impressed, a keychain as a keepsake. Marshall and I both entered the crafts competition, he with a traditional, adjustable candlestick holder, I with a four-votive-candle chandelier with basket twist. Although there were lots of woodworking sections, there was no section at all for blacksmithing, so we had to enter our works in Miscellaneous/Miscellaneous! Marshall won a second place ribbon, but neither of us was impressed with the object that took first place.

I would like to encourage all NJBA members to consider entering their works in the county and state fair exhibits and competitions. (In some counties, at least, it is not necessary to be a resident of the county of the fair.) This is just another way NJBA can publicize blacksmithing to the NJ public.

Middlesex County Fair

By Bruce Freeman and David Macauley

Once again NJBA demonstrated at the Middlesex County Fair. Marshall Bienstock, Tom Majeski, David and Bruce met at Marshall's farm the Sunday before the fair opened and caravanned to the fairgrounds (Cranbury Road, and Fern St.). Marshall towed the NJBA trailer, while David brought some addi-

tional equipment in his truck where we set up the equipment. It went fairly well. We were given a location just behind where we had been in previous years – a concession to the “cleaner” crafts around us. Setup went smoothly with lots of hands to help.

We had agreed to provide demonstration on Monday, Saturday and Sunday, but the equipment was available all week for members who wanted to demonstrate. As it happened, David demonstrated every day except Tuesday and Wednesday. In addition, Tom and Bruce demonstrated on Monday and Sunday; Jose Torres on Saturday and Sunday; and Dan O'Sullivan and Larry Brown on Sunday. Both David and Dan brought their families to the Fair as well.

David brought at least 100 fliers to the fair and they were all gone by the end of the week. He says we had significantly more visitors due to our new location. He had several boy scouts who practiced blacksmithing with us starting on Friday night through Sunday. We had several other adults try it. In every case we had great big smiles and dirty hands at the end of each individual's participation, and we expect NJBA is going to pick up several new members from the event.

We had great coverage for all of the times slots -Monday 5-10, Saturday 5-10 and Sunday 11-6 for which we were contracted. A big thank you goes out to all who supported the event. NJBA earned \$300 from the event. We provided the demos during the other time slots for free, but it was a fantastic opportunity to allow the public to experience and try blacksmithing. Dan said he loved the opportunity not only to blacksmith but also to bring the family to the fair - they all had a great time. David's family now has a new Guinea Pig from the fair named "Peanut".

New Jersey Blacksmiths Newsletter

Meets Outside of NJBA and NJ

Fall Meeting of the
Northeast Blacksmiths Assoc.

Fall Hammer-In

October 1, 2 & 3

The weekend activities will begin on Friday at 2:30 with a guided tour of the Poughkeepsie Rail Road Bridge. See the tour listing for all the information. Friday evening after dinner our bridge guide, Charlie Hulsizer, will present a slide show on the building and history of the bridge, and if there is time, a few other related topics.

The demonstrator for the weekend is Brian Brazeal from Mississippi. Brian began smithing as a horseshoer over 25 years ago and eventually moved into general forging. In Europe he had the opportunity to work with Professor Alfred (Freddie) Haberman and his family, who all are excellent smiths. In the US he studied and worked with Tom Clark (Ozark School of Blacksmithing), Bob Patrick (our demonstrator from last year), Bill Bostas, Darrell Nelson, Terry Carson and Tsur Sadan (from Israel, worked with Uri Hofi).

Brian is a hand forger. He has used power hammers but does not own one so he does it all with his hand hammers, though he does use a striker when available. Brian stresses clean work and hammer control and is known for his "tools to make tools", collaring, "forged to finish" hammers and forge welded bundles to make birds, etc.

Brian enjoys teaching and sharing his practical experience, so bring your notebooks. Check out his myspace page and on youtube (search: clay tong blank) for photos and videos of his work.

Saturday evening Brian will do a presentation about his work with Alfred Habermann in Ybbsitz, Austria and will include the story of the railing he built while there.

And now for the usual reminders. Please remember to bring some examples of your work. We all enjoy seeing and learning from others, no matter what your skill level. Make a nail for the Nagel Baum. Also, it is important for the financial success of our weekend that we bring lots of useful, fun, odd/interesting items for the Iron-in- the-Hat.

Bridge Tour

The Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge, now called the Walkway Over the Hudson is a steel cantilever bridge spanning the Hudson River between Poughkeepsie and Highland, NY.

When it was completed on January 1, 1889, it was the longest bridge in the world and considered the engineering marvel of its day. It is 1.25 miles long and the deck is 212 feet above the river.

2:30pm Friday, October 1, meet at the western end of the bridge: 87 Haviland Road, Highland (Route 9W to Haviland Road, Parking along-side road)

Restrooms located at each end of the Walkway.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poughkeepsie_Bridge

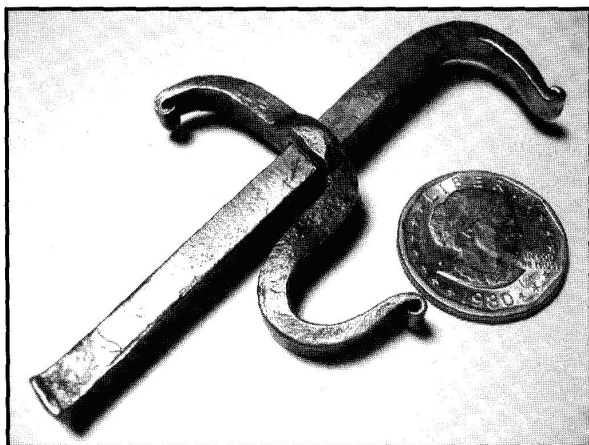
<http://www.walkway.org/>

<http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?hl=en&ie=UTF8&oe=UTF8&msa=0&msid=104853963706833944616.0004754918d3c84df27cf&ll=41.707651,-373&z=14&source=embed>

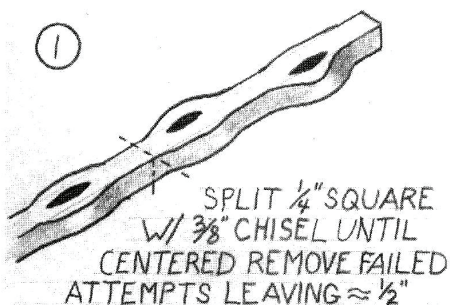
New Jersey Blacksmiths Newsletter

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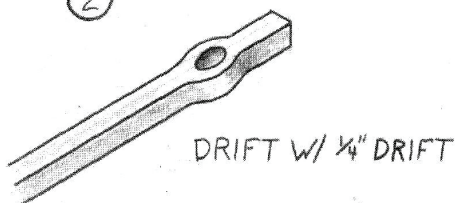
By Nate Pressel
a MABA member



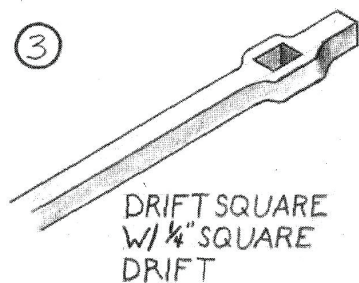
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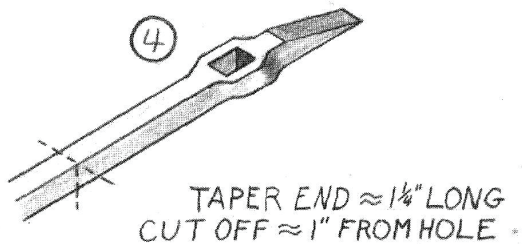
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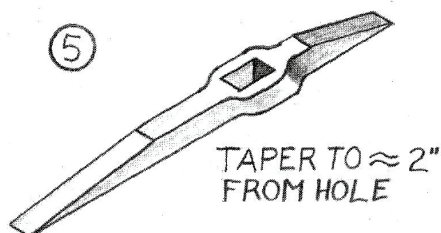
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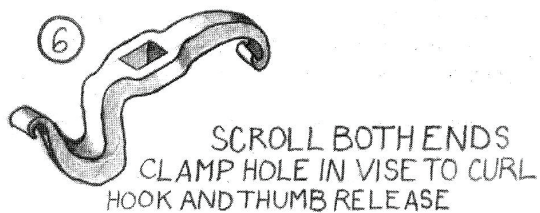
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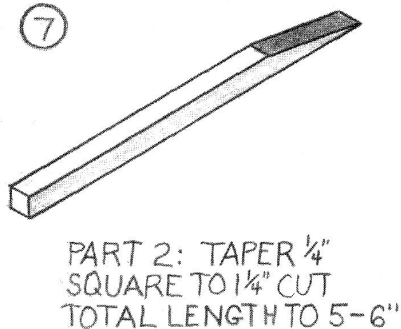
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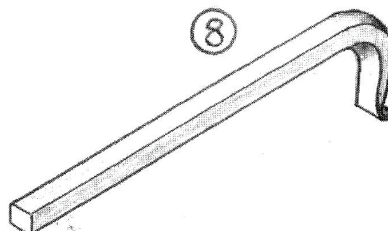
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SCROLL END AND BEND 1" OVER
PAST 90°, FILE FIT HOLE, ASSEMBLE,
PEEN END AND CURVE OF PART 2.

**Michigan
Artists
Blacksmiths
Association**

NATE PRESSEL 08

New Jersey Blacksmiths Newsletter

Forging with Charcoal

by Beth Holmberg San Diego, California

I needed a forging fuel that wouldn't offend my neighbors. (My lot is 40 feet wide, and I forge in the driveway.) But I don't like the noise or equipment involved with propane. I decided to go retro and try the fuel used by blacksmiths for most of our history: charcoal! I'm not talking about briquettes of compressed sawdust and who-knows-what; this is solid lump hardwood charcoal. Here in Southern California, that means mesquite charcoal. (The neighbors really don't mind the smell.) In other areas you might get oak charcoal or charcoal made from mixed hardwood lumber scraps leftover from furniture building (green charcoal?). Any of these will work. Overall, I'm pretty satisfied with charcoal as a blacksmithing fuel, but I've learned a thing or two about working with it that might be helpful.

Where do you find it? For a first try, many grocery stores carry 8- or 10-pound bags of hardwood lump charcoal. Quantity buying makes it a whole lot cheaper though, so look for better sources by looking for charcoal and firewood in the yellow pages. Also, you might try sources that provide wood and charcoal to restaurants.

Isn't it expensive? A few years ago, coal was definitely cheaper to use. But with the recent transportation cost jumps, big bags of local charcoal are starting to look downright cheap. I'm able to get 40-pound bags for \$16, which seems pretty good to me for nothing but carbon! What's weird about working with it? It isn't as dense as coal so you go through more volume than you'd expect - a bit disconcerting, but I think it's about the same weight in the end. It's not sticky like coked-up coal so the fuel pile tends to collapse a bit each time the metal goes in. A larger, slightly curved fire rake is handy for managing this. It doesn't go out on its own, even if you break up the fire. To keep sparks from escaping, I put an old

barbeque lid over the forge when I'm done at the end of the day.

What are some advantages over coal? No objectionable smell, no black, gritty soot, no clinker! Just some nice fluffy light grey ash.

It's easy to get going with only a little newspaper. It doesn't require a huge fire to work well. If I'm working on small projects, I can use the fire well with less than a pint of fuel burning. I find that it takes less effort at the blower to get forging (or welding) temperatures. The scale only forms outside the fire, indicating the fire is more reducing than a coal fire. My successful flux-free welds have all been with a charcoal fire. And at the end of the day, you can even cook dinner over the last of your fire! Holy cow! What's up with this mesquite? OK, I'll admit that mesquite charcoal can be a little weird. It often comes in log-sized chunks so my first step is always cutting it up with a hatchet to about 2" pieces (maybe you could hire a youngster to do the job).

When you burn it, it spits and sparks enough to be scary! The resin that makes it smell so great also causes this bad behavior. The best solution I've found is similar to the old tradition for coal: soak it in water. An overnight soak makes it much better behaved and also makes it easier to break up the logs to useful sizes. I treat fresh, wet mesquite charcoal like green coal, packing it around the outside of the fire, and pulling it after it has cooked a bit to drive off the resin. Two other anti-sparking hints: keep a spray bottle of water around to keep things controlled, and if you're still getting lots of sparks, you are probably overblowing the fuel - back off on the cranking!

What about making charcoal? Go for it! I don't have the space for it, so I can't offer specific advice. Plans for small collier setups made from things like 55-gallon drums can be found in cyberspace. Maybe someone else can share their charcoal-making secrets.

March/April 2008 California Blacksmith

New Jersey Blacksmiths Newsletter

Chain Saw Damascus

Carson Sams

Central Virginia Blacksmith Guild

Several people at the Pasture Party asked me about forging chain saw chain and how it is done. So I have put together a few steps. I hope this helps and does not confuse anyone.

1. I cut the chain saw chain into 4-inch pieces
2. I stack four 4-inch pieces on top of each other and electric weld the ends and spot weld in the middle to keep the chain from moving. I now call this a bar.
3. I weld a handle onto the bar, I use rebar.
4. I place the bar in warm Muriatic acid for about 20 minutes.
5. Caution when using the Muriatic acid, it is very dangerous. Make sure to read the instructions in case of a spill or getting the acid on you. Make sure you have plenty of baking soda around for neutralizing and you wear the proper safety equipment: gloves, apron and goggles are a must.
6. I warm the acid by placing a piece of hot steel into the acid, before I place the bar into it. Warmer acid works faster than cold acid.
7. Take the bar out of the acid and into the quench tank. I use a fine stainless steel brush. One like you would use for stripping paint, not the big stiff scale brushes to clean the bar with water. The water will flush out the remaining pieces of scale and dirty and derby from the chain.
8. At this point, the forge must be ready to go. The bar will rust quickly.
9. I use coke or charcoal for my fuel, green

coal will not work.

10. Place the bar on top of the coke and rake coke onto the bar. With a slow heat, bring the bar up to a black heat, right to cherry.
11. Pull the bar and flux. I use anhydrous borax flux, I buy it off Ebay, from the Wagonman. If you flux too soon the flux will not stick; if you flux too late scale will have started to form.
12. Put the bar back into the fire and bring the bar up to a good orange heat. Pull from the fire and clean the bar with your brush and re-flux. Some people think this is a wasteful step, but it is very important to make sure the chain is clean. There are a lot of crevices in the chain, the flux will help clean them.
13. Put the bar back into the fire and bring up to a welding heat.
14. In the meantime, I put water on my anvil. Yes, water, when the hot steel touches the water, the water turns to steam. Steam expands very quickly and with a lot of force. If you trap this energy it will explode and taking with it any scale on your bar. This is called Spit Fire.
15. When the bar starts to spark, quickly pull it from the fire and hammer the first two inches or so. I'm hammering the flat of the chain, not the tooth part. I also do not try to hammer all four inches at one time. There is a lot going on in the chain links and the last thing you want is a cold shute or bluster to show up.
16. Clean the bar with your wire brush and re-flux. The bar should still be at a dull orange heat, do not let the bar get too cold.
17. Place the bar back into the fire and bring the rest of the bar back up to a welding heat.

New Jersey Blacksmiths Newsletter

18. Remember to clean and re-wet the anvil after every heat. The anvil must stay clean, scale is your enemy.

19. Once again, when the bar starts to spark pull the bar and weld the rest of it.

20. Now I concentrate on making the bar as evenly flat as possible. I'm not trying to turn the bar into a sheet of paper, I just want it smooth and flat.

21. Flux and heat to an orange, pull the bar and with a hot cutter or the edge of the anvil, cut a groove across the bar half way down. At first, it is hard to judge the distance, but it gets easier with time. Fold the bar until the two halves almost touch. Flux and put back into the fire.

22. Bring the bar back up to a welding heat, pull from the fire and re-weld, starting from the top and working your way down. If you did not weld the entire bar in one heat, just re-flux and try again.

23. At this point the bar is nice and flat and even. The side edges have not been addressed. Now, the moment of truth comes into play. Re-flux, put the bar back into fire and once again bring up to a welding heat.

24. Pull from fire and square up the edges. If the welds are strong this will not be a problem. If not, you will see cracks in the layers and separations or you will see blisters in the middle of the bar. The world has not come to an end, these problems can be fixed.

25. Bring the bar back up to heat one more time, just for smoothing out the bar. Make sure it is even and square. Place the bar in some powdered lime and leave it to cool slowly,.

26. All right, that's bar number one. You will need four to five bars to make a 4-5 inch hunting knife. With a little practice, you can make a bar in about 20 minutes.

27. Cut all the bars off their handles and grind the flats smooth with a grinder or belt sander and back into the Muriatic acid they go.

28. Just like last time, stack the bars on top of each other and electric weld ends together and weld a handle on.

29. Now repeat steps 7-20. At this point there is a decision to be made. How many layers do I want? If you have been following the math:

a. 4 layers of chain folded once equals 8 layers equals one bar

b. One bar stacked four high equals 32 layers

c. Folded once again equals 64 layers

30. Most of the time I am after 512 layers ($64 \times 2 = 128 \times 2 = 256 \times 2 = 512 = 1$ billet)

This is where your creativity steps in. At this point, you can do endless things with your billet. You can twist the billet and make a slow twist pattern. You can grind grooves across the billet and make the ladder pattern. You can roll the billet up and make the jelly roll pattern, the possibilities are endless.

I hope this helps, if you have any questions or comments give me a call or email me.

Thanks, Carson Sams
Central Virginia Blacksmith Guild
March-April 2009

New Jersey Blacksmiths Newsletter

How I Demonstrate to the Public

by Pete Stanaitis

I prefer to demonstrate "traditional blacksmithing" when I am before the public. It's the image that most people have and want to perpetuate in their minds. And, since your demonstration opportunities are most often related to historical things and craft events, this approach fits right in. This means, among other things, that I avoid using "modern" tools like an electric/ cordless drill. Save the plasma cutter and the Nazel demo for events when you are demoing to other blacksmiths.

Dress the part if you can. Sneakers are out. You probably shouldn't be wearing shorts anyway. I prefer to dress in the 1870s period, but at least look like a blue collar worker from the period you want to represent. There are several catalogs that have period clothing and patterns for sale. "Smoke and Fire" is one of them.

You may choose to stay totally within a character of the period you are representing or you might choose to jump in and out of character from time to time to make connections between the past and the present.

Staying in character:

For example, if someone mentions some modern item, you just (politely) appear to have NO knowledge of it.

Jumping in and out of character:

For example, you might be demonstrating a punched hole in a hinge. You might mention that "this is the way holes were made before the invention of twist drill". Or you might say something like "Hmmm, I need a hole here, but since the drill hasn't been invented yet, what shall I do?"

Position yourself so the people can see what you are doing. If you have to put your back to the audience, talk them through what's

going on. They didn't come there to see butt cracks.

Personally, I think I am "teaching" blacksmithing when I demo to the public I am constantly trying to make eye contact and to find the people who are most interested, but I want everybody there to get something out of their visit. I get a big kick out of seeing how long I can hold a crowd.

Do your demonstrating in "sets". That is, have a plan, demonstrate it for a hour or two or whatever makes sense, then take a break. You can use this break time to talk with any REALLY interested folks who may want to take up blacksmithing or hire you to do work

My basic demo "set" consists of starting with something very simple and quick, relating to the basic processes of blacksmithing as I go, explaining each step, and adding more of the basic processes with slightly more complex projects as the "set" continues.

I often have a chalkboard on which each project is listed, in the order I will do it.

Comment on the old blacksmith sayings and explain their sources

-strike while the iron is hot

-dead as a door nail

-etc.

These comments fit in well while you are reheating your work or doing repetitive work at the anvil.

Do simple things, since peoples' attention spans are relatively short. There may be settings where you are doing "industrial" blacksmithing; -making big things that take a long time to produce, but that doesn't match the image that most people have of the "village blacksmith" If you do have to do something lengthy, encourage people to "stop back from time to time to check on the progress". Or, you can simply do one process on the big job at a time, then go back to the quick projects

New Jersey Blacksmiths Newsletter

Play to the kids:

When playing to the kids, watch the parents for clues about whether you are going somewhere that they wouldn't want you to go.

This probably goes without saying, but: This is NO place for foul language.

Don't short-change the women who stop by to watch.

So what if you have had to answer the same question for the hundredth time today? Even if the same person asks the same question several times, be polite in your answer. This is not the place to give wise-crack answers. You want people to enjoy what they saw and become friendly to the idea of blacksmithing as a worthwhile endeavor. You don't want to leave them with a "bad taste in their mouth" because you talked down to them.

If you are going to joke, let the jokes be about yourself. A favorite of mine is to tell

them how, if I make a "fatal" error, I simply put the part back into the fire and crank like mad while I talk to them until the part burns up so they never see the mistake. I tell them that I can then blame the problem on THEM. ----So they are going to have to look real close if they are ever going to catch me making a mistake. Always gets a big laugh and NOBODY in the crowd is affronted.

Always be prepared with some brochures for your club. I used to lay my literature out on the table in front of me, but everybody seems to "take one": Most just toss them into the next garbage can. So now, I keep them hidden from view and offer one to anybody who expresses a genuine interest.

In closing, the idea is to provide a pleasant experience for your audience. And in so doing, you will improve both your presentation skills and your blacksmithing skills.

Volume 32, No. 3, September 2008

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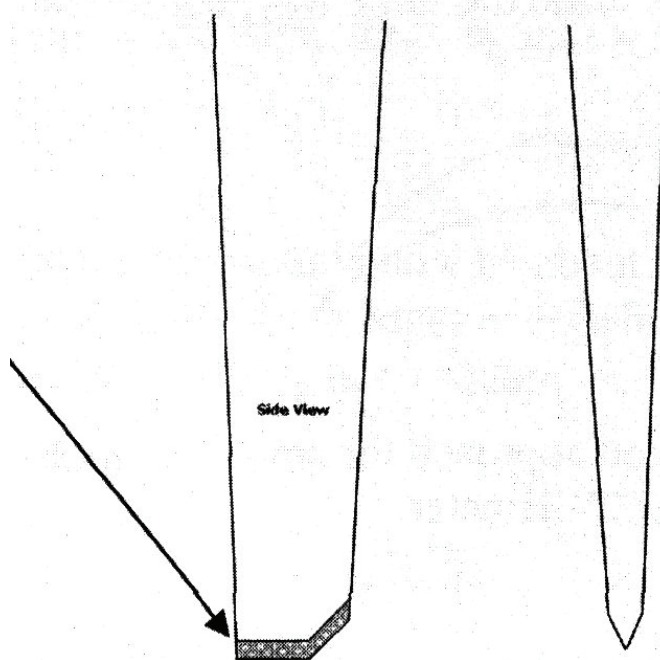
Cold chisel for cutting curves in sheet material

This chisel doesn't look like much, but it's the cat's meow

once you try it out. Forge a bluntly pointed chisel blank.

Taper and flatten, ending up with perhaps a 3/16" x 1/16" tip. File the tip to the shapes below. Do NOT round the corner between the 45 degree and flat portions of the edge (side view). To use it, tip the chisel to the left (side view) and cut towards the right. Sounds strange, but it works very nicely. This tool should be made of high carbon steel, hardened and tempered.

Steve Smith, ME Rep.



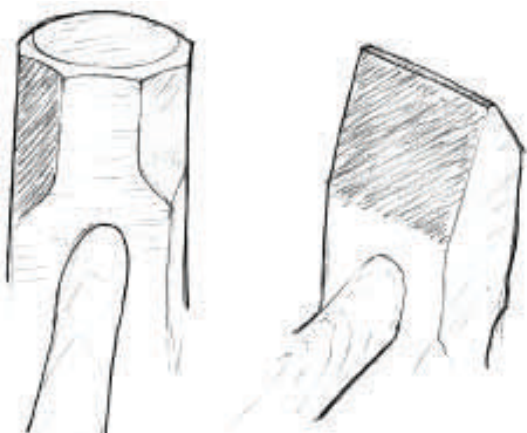
New Jersey Blacksmiths Newsletter

APPRENTICE NOTEBOOK

Dressing A Hammer By Brian Gilbert

One of the first things that every blacksmith should learn is how to dress tools. It's almost impossible to do good work without properly dressed tools, especially your hammers. The hammer is one of the most important and basic tools in the shop, and most are not ready to use as soon as they're bought. New hammers are almost always crudely ground and too sharp, and used hammers are more often abused and/or rusted.

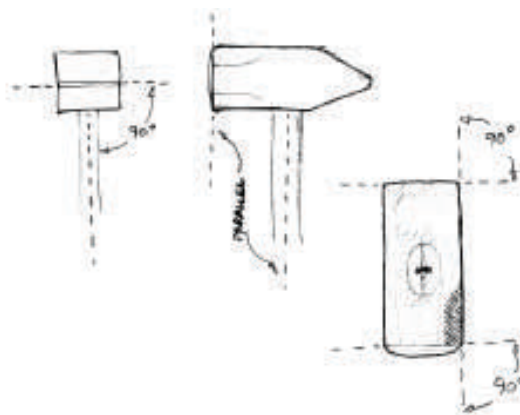
Many blacksmiths have developed their own personal preferences for dressing their tools, and that's the way it should be... they should be dressed in a way that works best for you. I'm going to explain the way I like my tools. Use this as a starting point and develop your own style. A cross peen often starts out looking like this.



A cross peen often starts out looking like this

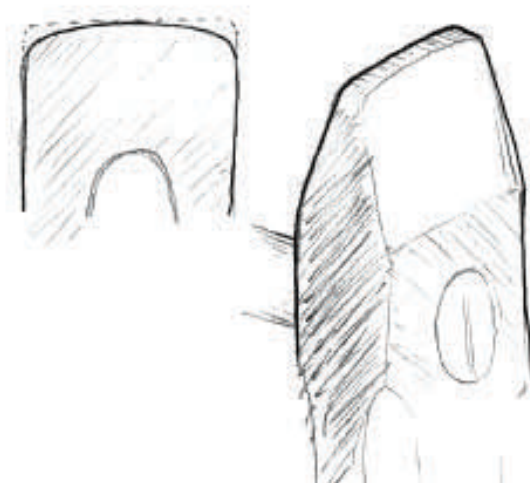
As an example, I recently dressed a two pound cross peen hammer... one of the cheap Chinese variety. Not my first choice for tools, but until I make my first million by blacksmithing, they'll do. It's a fairly low quality tool, but perfectly serviceable with a little attention. The price is right... around four bucks from Harbor Freight Tools. If you look carefully at a new hammer, you'll notice a couple of things. The peen end is often ground sharp and square, and the hammer face is usually flat or slightly crowned, with a sharp 45 degree bevel ground around the edge. You may have heard me say this before, but in blacksmithing there

should be NO SHARP EDGES. Except maybe on your chisels, hardies, punches, and your pocket-knife, but that's about it. Everything else should have some kind of radius ground or sanded into its edge, even if only a slight one. Even a set hammer (which is not really a hammer at all, but a square block of steel punched for a handle used to set shoulders) should have a very small radius ground into the corners.



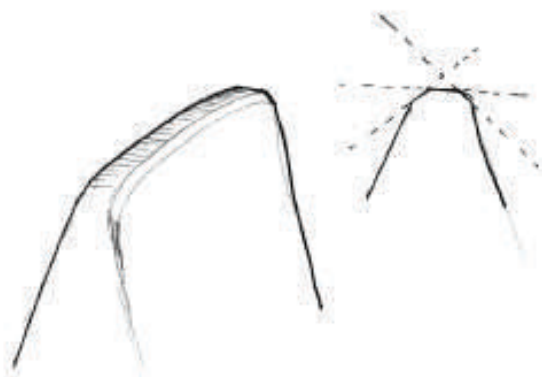
Check the angles with the handle in before you start

Check the angles with the handle in before you start. If the hammer you're planning to dress still has the handle in it, take a moment to look at the working surfaces in relation to the handle. The peen should be perpendicular to the handle, and the face should be parallel. If either of these surfaces



Grinding the profile of the peen

New Jersey Blacksmiths Newsletter



Soften the edge of the peen with a secondary grind

are out, it'll be easier to correctly grind the hammer with the handle in place, but otherwise I like to remove the handle. OK, back to our Chinese two-pounder. First we need to decide what this tool will be used for. I usually grind hammers one of two ways, either for roughing or for finishing.

A roughing hammer is more rounded... it's radiused surfaces are designed to penetrate deeply into the steel and move as much metal as possible. It tends to leave a lot of hammer marks, though. To get rid of the marks left by a roughing hammer, I'll switch to a smoothing or finishing hammer. All the edges are radiused like a roughing hammer, but the curves on the face and the peen are generally flatter.

As always there are a few exceptions. I have one cross peen that I use just for veining leaves. It has a peen that's too sharp for anything else. An-



The sanded peen before polishing

other would be a hammer that's reserved just for striking chisels and other tools. Once you've put the time in polishing your hammer faces, you won't want to mark them up by bashing on a cold chisel.

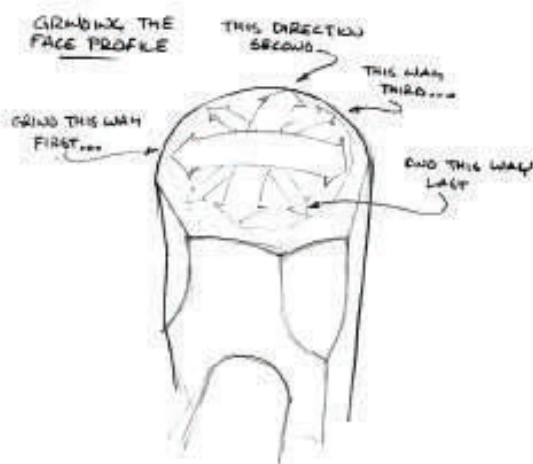
Since our hammer only weighs two pounds, I'll dress this as a roughing hammer. I start with the peen end and grind the outline of the profile I want. I'm looking for a gentle curve, with nice rounded corners, perpendicular to the body of the hammer head. It's easier to grind the head if the handle is removed, but this isn't absolutely necessary. The handles that come with these hammers are usually low quality and poorly fitted anyway.

Next I'll make a secondary grind to soften the peen. It helps to see this grind by changing the direction of the scratch marks. I try to make the secondary grind at about 45 degrees to the first grind. After these two grinds are made, I'll switch to a belt grinder to finish, blending the grinds together until smooth.

This is tough to do if you don't have a belt grinder. Neither do I, but you can do a passable job with a flap sanding disc on a disc grinder. Compared to a belt grinder, a flap wheel is somewhat stiff and doesn't blend the grinds as well... it tends to make new bevels. Just take it slow and lightly stroke the piece until everything looks smooth. Now switch back to the grinding wheel to profile the face of the hammer. Look carefully at the face... most new hammers have a sharp ring near the edge, where the hammer was ground at the factory. That edge has to go. I grind the profile first on axis with the eye, then perpendicular to the eye, and then at 45 degrees. The profile curve of the hammer's face needs to be carefully ground... it should have the same curve all around, as even as possible. After the profile looks good from all these angles, I switch to the flap wheel and blend them together.

Now take one last look at the head, and examine it closely for any sharp edges or facets left over from the grinding and flap sanding. Hopefully there won't be any, but if there are blend them in. A roughing hammer is useable at this point, but I like to take the extra step of polishing the head. It doesn't take long. I use a sewn cotton buffing

New Jersey Blacksmiths Newsletter



Grinding the face profile

wheel mounted to 6" 1750 rpm grinder. Charge the wheel with a little bit of grey or red rouge buffing compound. I've found compound available in three colors, grey, red, or white. The coarsest is the grey and cuts fairly fast, the red is finer and removes the scratches from the grey, and white compound is finest of all. It works slowly and leaves a bright mirror finish. You should use a separate buffing wheel for each color. I usually buff a hammer head with a red or grey to shine it up and leave it at that.

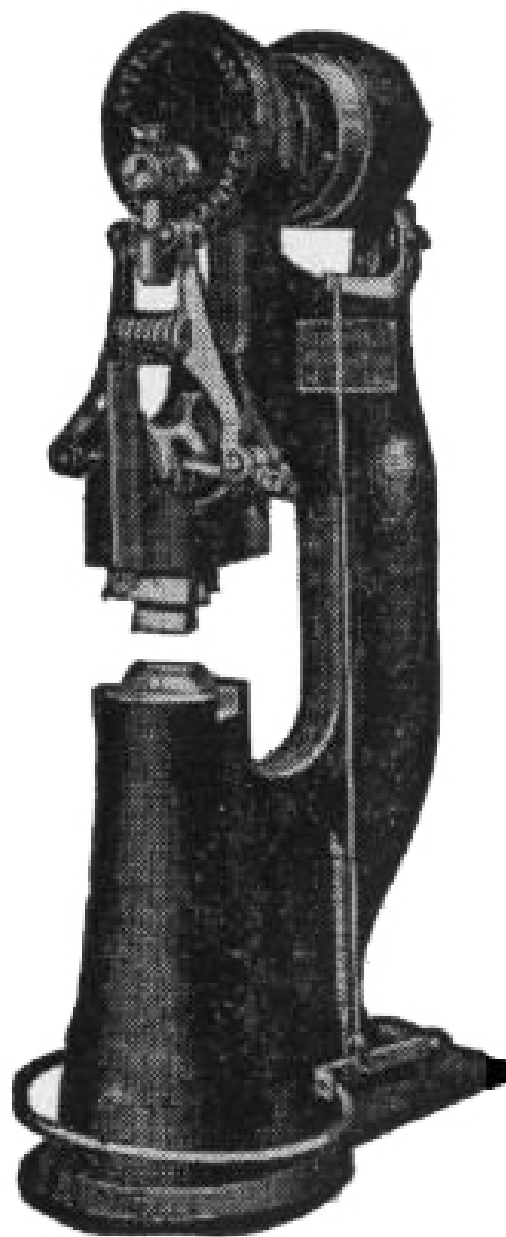
There's a good bit more to buffing than I've described... I've got an entire book on the subject... but I don't get too crazy when buffing hammers. Just a little polishing is all you need.

Now turn your attention to the handle. They always come varnished... I imagine that this is to keep them from warping. The varnish makes the handles slippery when using gloves, and kind of sticky when I'm using bare, sweaty hands. I don't usually get blisters from varnished handles, but it seems to irritate and redden my palms. I have small hands, so almost all the handles I find are too fat. I also forge with gloves, which makes the handles seem fatter still. So for all these reasons, I take the time to dress the handles of my hammers.

The shape of your handles is a matter of personal preference. Some like handles that keep the factory oval shape. Jerry Darnell likes handles that are short, and cuts off his ends. Uri Hofi's hammer handles have two flats parallel to the head. This is

to prevent the hammer from rotating in your hand, and to give you a tactile clue about the orientation of your hammer head. Donald Streeter suggested placing the thumb on top of the hammer handle for straight blows, and some folks like to put a single flat along the top of the handle for this reason.

So there are lots of variations in handle dressing for you to choose from. It's like the old joke... ask five blacksmiths the best way to dress hammer



New Jersey Blacksmiths Newsletter

handles, and you'll come up with six different answers.

Try them all, and go with what you like best. My personal favorite is octagonal handles, cut thin for flexibility and to compensate for the gloves, finished with linseed oil. Robb Gunter says that hammer handles should fill your hand... if your fingers touch when holding the hammer, the handle is too small. Linseed oil leaves a nice, satiny finish that grips reasonably well under gloves or bare skin, and it wears well under use.

I start off by scraping the handle. I use an old knife, but a real scraper blade would work better. You'll be tempted to sand the varnish off with your flap wheel, but don't give in to temptation! The varnish will melt and hopelessly clog your flap wheel. Scrape the varnish off of eight sides, then hand sand the rest until the handle is about the shape that you want. If the handle is really thick, or you want to do some drastic thinning, you can use

a spokeshave to shave things down a bit. The spokeshave will leave an irregular surface, but you can sand this out.

Finish the handle with a couple of coats of linseed oil. Thin the first coat a bit with thinner, to help the oil penetrate deeply, then finish off with a full strength coat. You'll need to give the handle a coat every six months or so, especially if you don't use the hammer much.

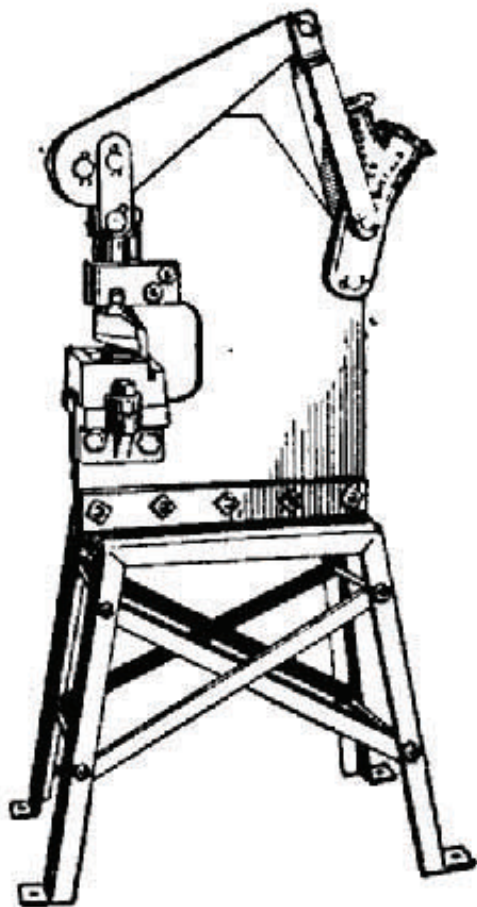
Take care when fitting the handle to the head... a loose hammer head is dangerous. I like to replace the handles with new ones, especially if the tool will see a lot of use. A new handle is only a couple bucks, so treat yourself. Fit the handle by coating the inside bottom of the eye with ink, then set the hammer down on the handle. Remove it, and carve away the marks left by the ink. Repeat this until the handle goes deeply into the head, and sticks out about a half inch on the top. Leave room for the wedge... if the head compresses and closes the wedge slot, then you won't get a good fit. When you set the head for the final fit, make sure you can't see the cut for the wedge at the bottom of the hammer head... this area should be solid wood.

Drive the wood wedge in first, then follow up with one or two steel wedges across the wood. Some folks like to cap the whole thing off with epoxy to seal the handle, but I've never tried it. If your head does become loose, an old trick is to soak your handle in water. The water swells the wood, tightening the head. It works, but the drawback is that once you do this, you need to keep the hammer in water. If it dries out, the head will be looser than before. I've heard that soaking in anti-freeze swells the handle without drying out the wood, but I haven't tried it. Antifreeze does work as a wood preservative, though.

That's one way to dress a cross peen hammer. A straight peen or ball peen is dressed pretty much the same way. Even if you use different techniques than these, take the time to dress your hammers.

Your forging will be cleaner and easier with dressed tools, and folks won't think you a beginner if your toolbox is full of nicely polished, rounded hammer heads. There is another option to dressing up cheap, used hammers, and that is to make your own from scratch.

Hammers Blow 8 3 SUMMER 2000



New Jersey Blacksmiths Newsletter

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Open Forges

If any members have a forge at home and work in the evenings or weekends and want to open it up to help a few local guys, let me know, Larry Brown, editor, as we get requests from members who have a hard time traveling to some of the open forge locations.

Please contact, Larry Brown, Editor.
We want to encourage all to join us at:

Monday Night Open Forge in N.J.

Marshall Bienstock is hosting an open forge in his shop at 7 pm almost every Monday night (Please call ahead on holidays to make sure , (732)780-0871)

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jay@archirondesign.com

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Join ABANA or Check out other area chapters!

Northeast Blacksmiths Association

Northeast Blacksmiths holds its meets
 twice a year at the Ashokan Field Campus
 in New York State.

The Ashokan campus is located in
 Olivebridge, N.Y., several miles west of
 Kingston, N.Y. The meets are held the
 first weekend in May and in the first
 weekend in October every year. The main
 demonstration is in the blacksmith shop
 and there is a "Hands On" workshop for
 beginners. A main demonstrator is
 brought in for each meet, food and bunk-
 house style lodging are provided as part of
 the cost of the weekend long meet.

Contact : Tim Neu

to register for hammer-ins

or subscribe to the newsletter;

Tim Neu, The Ashokan Center,

447 Beaverkill Rd.

Olivebridge, N.Y. 12461 [914]657-8333

For more information check out the web
 site; <<http://nba.abana-chapter.com/>>

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Index For NJBA
Volume 15, #2
08/25/10
Meets and Reports
Pages 1-7;
Tong clip—8 ;
Charcoal—9:
Chain Saw Damascus
10-11;
Demonstrating 12—13;
Hammer facing 13—17;
Ad Page 18

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Please include payment with the information listed below. You will receive a postcard confirmation of your membership, and will receive a newsletter within a month.

NJBA's "year" runs from June to June. If you join mid-year, the postcard will offer a prorated dues option which will then allow you to extend your membership till the following June. The following information will be listed in a roster available to other members.

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