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Blacksmiths of Central Texas

President's Corner...

April 2009

Well folks, another Bluebonnet Demo has come and gone. This year, Corrina Mensoff, from Atlanta, GA, came to visit and demonstrated how to create birds from pipe and sheet-metal. Our youngest member, Hank Perske, seemed to have a great time helping forge the tail feathers of the main project, which we deemed the Tropical Texas Puffin. We had some really good BBQ catered by Artz Rib House, in Austin, and it was followed up by our big auction. Although there were fewer auction items this year, the event was still a success.

I would like to thank Lee Lanford, who volunteered his shop for the Bluebonnet Demo this year. It is a great space and he and his assistant, Bill Graham, really worked hard to get it set up and to make the tools Corrina needed. Thanks also to those who came out the week prior to the demo to help get the shop ready for the event and to John Crouchet and Scott Pyle for transporting the bleachers from and back to Marble Falls. Thank you also to those who manned the coffee pot, provided snacks, provided the projector and screen and for all the other things that made the demo possible.

Now that Spring is here, a number of groups in Central Texas have requested that we demonstrate at their events. Keep an eye on the posts in case you're free and would like to participate. Demonstrating not only educates the public about blacksmithing, but it provides the opportunity to do what we love... forge hot iron!

See you soon at a forge near you!
Sue Murray, President

MEETING DATE IS APRIL 25

SECRETARY'S REPORT

The March 2009 meeting of Balcones forge was held at Lee Lanford's shop East of Manor, Texas. Host Lee Lanford and his talented employee, Bill worked very hard to make the demonstration a success, their efforts are very much appreciated by all.

The meeting was opened with a welcome to all from Balcones Forge president Sue Murray. Jerry Achterberg added some comments and requested people step forward to be a host for one of Balcones Forge's meetings in the future.

The demonstrator at the meeting, making her second appearance in Texas, was Corrina Mensoff who holds a masters degree in fine arts.

She started the demo by showing how to make a bird out of a piece of pipe and pre-cut wings made from 16-gauge sheet metal. The bird was made using fullering dies to delineate the beak and neck and to shape the wings. The beak was then pointed and the tail flattened and spread. She then made a cattail and some leaves from copper.

Next off the anvil was a very nice calla lily made from copper. To demonstrate the fluidity of copper on the anvil she forged out a piece of copper about 5/8" X 2" into a wire 1/4" in diameter about 14 or 16" long.

After Saturday's demonstration a very fine supper was catered by Artz Rib House from Austin and then an auction of items made by members was held. Balcones Forge editor Vince Herod conducted the auction with his usual wit and professionalism making the event entertaining and profitable. Balcones Forge coffers were boosted by almost \$3000.00 at the end of the auction.

Many people had questions about patinas on copper and she said in order to make a green patina you could mix ammonia and sawdust together in a plastic bag to oatmeal consistency and submerge your work in it for 12-24 hours. To make cobalt blue, salt is sprinkled lightly on the work and then suspend it over a container of water, pour ammo-

nia in the water, cover it and the work with plastic and set it in the sun for 12-24 hours. She added that you should not breathe in the toxic ammonia fumes.

The next project that she demonstrated was a bird made from two pieces of sheet metal sunk into a bird-shaped form made from 3/8" X 1 1/2" flat bar stock. The sheet metal was screwed down to flanges welded to the outside of the form so it would stay in place while it was heated and hammered into the form. After completion the part of the sheet metal outside of the form was cut away and the two halves joined together by welding. Wing forms were made on the forging hammer out of two pieces of sheet metal for each wing, which were also welded together. The project was completed by making ocean waveforms out of bar stock and the bird was attached to the top of one of the waves.

Tom Lupton
Secretary Balcones Forge

MEETING INFO

The April 25th meeting of Balcones Forge will be held at the Wells Branch Homestead in North Austin in conjunction with their Pioneer Festival. Jim Schmidt is our host for the month and says we will have a booth where we can demonstrate blacksmithing and sell our wares. These items should be from the 1800s/Texas frontier period (or at least look "old-timey"). You can dress in period costume, but don't have to.

The Wells Branch Homestead was built about 1853 as a small log cabin. Dog-run and sawed-board additions were added to the west, a porch on the south and a shed on the north sides of the building. Around 1890, the structure was covered with a tin-roof. It has two rock and cement fireplaces. The homestead is in its original location but the outbuildings were moved closer to the homestead when the subdivision was developed.

Since the festival runs from noon to 5 P.M., we will start a half hour later than usual; at 10 A.M.

Jim Schmidt will give us a tour of the homestead and outbuildings. Then we will set up a forge and anvils for demonstrations before the crowds start coming at noon. There will be food and drink for sale in designated food booths only. They usually have turkey legs, barbeque, hot dogs and sodas.

The address is 2106 Klattenhoff Drive, Austin, TX 78728.

For further details contact our host for the month, Jim Schmidt at 512-478-4898.

ON THE WEB

Have you checked out the links on the Balcones Forge website lately? You could learn how to make a treadle torch or, if you have the time, read 106 years of Popular Mechanics. There is also a nice list of suppliers. And be sure to check out the websites of several members.

TRADE ITEM

Jim Schmidt, our host for April, decided to pick something to represent the spring season. He chose "yard art". You can make it out of anything in the shop as long as it looks good in the yard. REMEMBER, you gotta make one to take one!

TREASURER'S REPORT

The annual Bluebonnet Workshop was once again a grand success. Make that two grand, clearing \$2,643! As usual, we never break even on the event or dinner, but the auction always helps us pull ahead. As you can see, our auctions are very important to the success of the group. So next auction, when you bid, bid high, and when you donate, donate a bunch! Thanks to all who participated and volunteered in the last one.
Rudy Billings, Treasurer

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Balcones Forge officers Sue Murray and Rudy Billings work the forge at the old train depot in Rockdale, Texas on March 7.

Photos by
Chuck Hamsa



COAL SUPPLY?

I heard a rumor that Callahan's general store is no longer carrying good coal. it might be a blessing, they were expensive. But now I am out of coal. Does anyone know of a RELIABLE source to buy coal from? Close to Austin would be nice.

Thanks,
Dan Smith

Is it time for Balcones Forge to consider ordering a load of coal? Do the members want coal? Let your officers know!

FOR SALE

Larry Stevens has the following for sale:

Henrob torch complete with video instructions.
Cost \$350 new and can be bought for \$250.

Chicago brand 110 volt flux core welder. New.
\$50.

Larry Stevens
362 Deer Creek
Boerne, TX 78006
830-331-9599

BURNS

The first one hurts... The second time still hurts, but you kind of expected it since you're playing with fire. The third time still hurts, but you've accepted it as a souvenir. The fourth time hurts less; consider it tough love.. The fifth time... yes, there will be a fifth time.

-- Lorelei Sims

DID YOU KNOW...?

Centaur Forge, Staples, Blacksmiths Depot, Grainger, and Pieh Tool are just a few of the participants in the ABANA Member-Only Discount Program. Become a member -- it pays!

www.ABANA.org

ZILKER FORGE

The folks at Zilker (City of Austin) are wanting to spruce up the pioneer village, and the blacksmith shop is part of that. They approached me for ideas at to what is needed, and what we would like to have. Tom Lupton and I brainstormed, and Tom came up with most of these good ideas.

Better lighting and a timer to illuminate the shop during visitor hours
Better electrical service -- outlets at the bench; possibly 220v outlet for welding equipment
Access to water
Another anvil
Another post vise
More tools (tongs, hammers, etc.)
Lockable tool cabinet
Oxy-Acetylene Torch
Bench Grinder

Fix drainage
Repair rotten wood and reinforce the beam across the middle of the shop
Repair doors

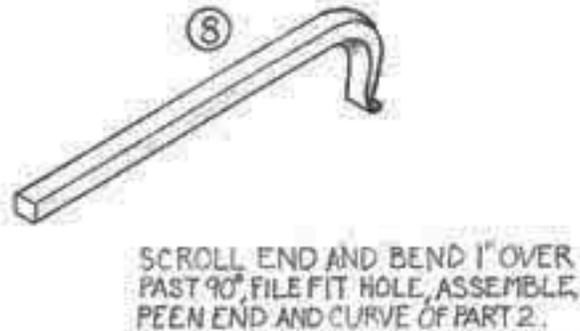
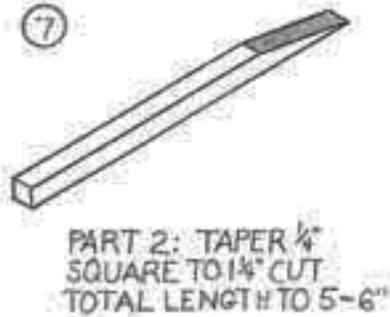
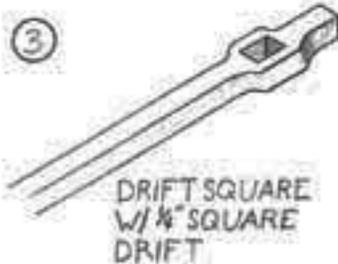
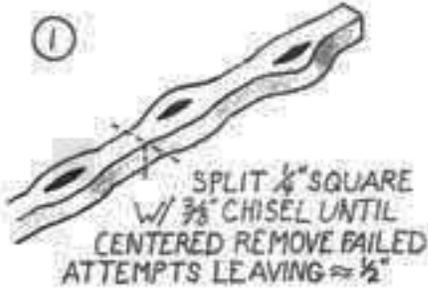
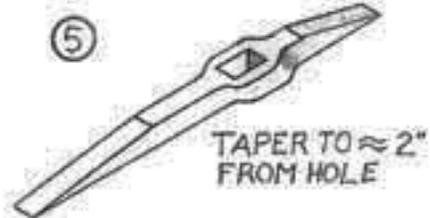
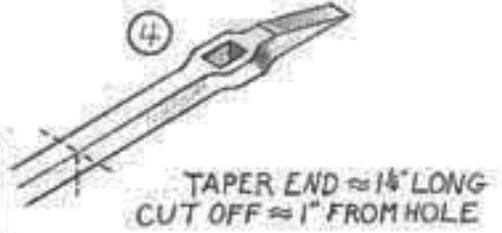
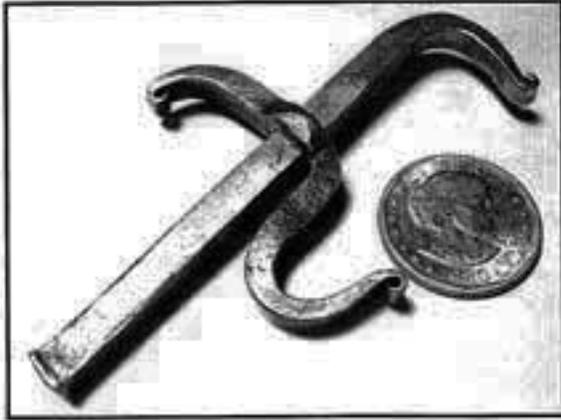
A project BF could take on would be to take the bellows that were there and find a way to display them so people could see the predecessor to the blower.

What would you like to see? It's your turn to chime in and help us get a top-notch facility to use for fun and good.

Rudy

Adjustable Tong Clip

By Nate Pressel
a MABA member



NATE PRESSEL 08

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Scenes from the Bluebonnet Demo and Auction.

Photos by Vince Herod





WWW.BALCONESFORGE.ORG



Meeting Address: 2106 Klattenhoff Drive, Austin, TX 78728. Meeting starts at 10 am.

Return Service Requested

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