

Capital District Blacksmiths' Newsletter

Volume 1 Number 1

April, 2002

Next Meeting

Joe Merli has been kind enough to volunteer his shop as the site of the next meeting of the Capital District Blacksmiths. We will be meeting at "Merli Manufacturing" just outside of Guilderland in Duaneburg.

We are still working out the specifics but the meeting will be in June and we will need some volunteers to bring their forges and/or do demonstrations. If you can do either, let us know and we will be sure to keep you informed as the specifics develop.

Survey Says!

A number of ideas have come before the organizers of this fine organization. Some of which require your input to help us along.

Included on a separate sheet is a synopsis of the issues, the questions, and some potential answers. Feel free to write in answers if you see a need.

-Dan Crowther

Logo Ideas

As things seem to coalescing and this organization becomes a functioning reality, it has been suggested by numerous people that we adopt a logo or symbol. This logo will be used on letterhead, the website, the newsletter, and anywhere else we need to leave an indentifying mark.

Logo - Cont. on Page 3

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The Capital District Blacksmiths - Origin & Evolution

The Capital District Blacksmiths held their first gathering on November 4th, 2001 at the Bethlehem Elm St. Park. The notice was posted in the "Berkshire Blacksmiths News" by Jim Moran. Nearly 30 smiths were in attendance.

Jim made a brief statement that it was his desire for someone there to "...pick up the spark and let the fire grow".

John Earl looked for another place to have the next gathering. After some time had passed, Grossi Iron Works on Catherine St. in Albany (operated by Abasali Kahn) gave the nod to have our next gathering. John picked the 23rd of February as the date, rain (snow) or shine.

This time it was decided to treat the gathering as a "blacksmiths' party", open to the public. We lined up four forges and anvils along the front of a long shed, including John Olson's gas forge which he used to demonstrate. Several days earlier the "Times Union" had placed notice of the event in their "Weekend Happenings" section. The event was free and open to the public.

Origin - Cont. on page 3



Photo of the February meet from the February 4th, 2002 "Sunday Times Union"

Tools & Tips

Robb Gunter's Super Quench

- 5 gal water
- 5lb salt
- 28oz Dawn Ultra Blue dish washing detergent
- 8oz Shaklee* Basic I

Stir this mess and don't spill. The salt/soap makes a real mess.

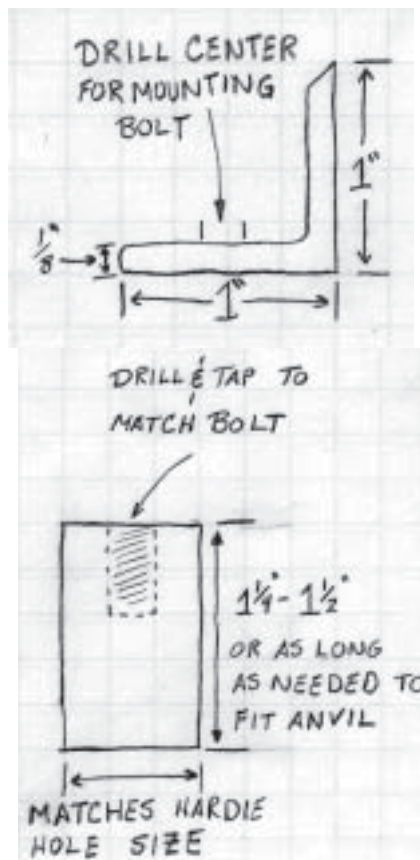
Heat the metal to yellow (nonmagnetic) and quench. It is strongly suggested that Super Quench only be used on low carbon steel (below .4%). There are reports that higher carbon steels will fracture or even explode if quenched.

*See the Local Resources section for the CD Shaklee Distributer

Angle Iron Cutoff Hardy

Carl Davidson's Quick cutoff hardy really works. It can't be any easier, use just a piece of angle iron (1"x1"x1/8" works well) with one inside edge ground down to a cutting edge.

Mount this on a length off bar stock that fits your hardy hole. Attach it with a bolt after the bar has been drilled and tapped.



Behind the Scenes

Shortly after the February 23rd meeting, a handful of members wanted to make sure that CD Blacksmiths lasted longer than just 2 meetings.

In mid March, Jim Moran, Pat Grossi, Daniel Crowther, Sarah Ritchie-Crowther, and Kevin McGlynn met to hammer out some longer range plans, and ideas.

Among these were to immediately plan for *another* meeting event and devise methods for notifying the other members of the meetings, important events, and other information.

Many items that were discussed we simply could not answer on our own and so we are asking *you* for your input, suggestions, and help. Please take time to fill out the survey, call, mail or email us with your opinions and suggestions.

With out a doubt there will be other meetings "Behind the Scenes" so we can continue to bring you more events, newsletters, and pertinent information. If you wish to be involved in this level of CD Blacksmiths please contact one of the people listed above, inform them of your interest and give them your contact information. The next time we have such a meeting (right now they are on an "as needed basis") we will be sure to contact you as well.

Letter From the Editor

Well, believe it or not the newsletter is finally done. "Thank you", Daniel for all your hard work that has made this possible. My thanks also goes to Pat Grossi for prodding me to finally get this out.

Daniel and I are looking forward to your contributions to future newsletters. Although we can not promise to use every submission, we want to make this *your* newsletter. I have to request that if you include photos of yourself or others that you please provide names for the captions. Also, I must assume that if you provide the photo to us you have the permission of people in the photo to publish their picture. (Wink, wink, nudge, nudge)

We hope to have this newsletter out on a quarterly basis; we wanted to do it bimonthly but to do that we would need to give up smithing - NO WAY!

We also ask that if you have web access that you let us know so that we may remove your name from the mailing list. Because we are footing the cost of this newsletter entirely from our own pockets we ask that if you have web access you view it online and print it out at home. You

won't miss out on anything and all web address are already clickable links.

Hope to see many of you in LaCrosse WI at the ABANA conference in June.

Sincerely Yours,
 SRLadysmith
 aka Sarah Ritchie-Crowther

Letter to the Editor

This is a brief personal note to express thanks to all of you who attended the first and second Capital District Blacksmiths gathering. We intend to honor your interest and enthusiasm by staying in touch and doing everything possible to introduce and foster the art of Blacksmithing to young and old.

One of the hurdles toward accomplishing this endeavour is for us to find a location in the Capital Area to establish "our home". I would envision this venue to have blacksmithing classes taught by recognized smiths and where we can have regular blacksmithing meets to share joy and pride in the blacksmithing heritage.

I think we need to seize this opportunity now. We should recognize that blacksmithing has always been an honorable, very functional trade and one through which many have expressed exceptional talent and artistic abilities that needs to be revived and maintained. The accomplished smith imposes a standard of perfection which can be clearly recognized and indeed appreciated by all.

This note is expressed on behalf of Jim Moran, the founder of this group who hosted the 1st bold and momentous gathering of smiths on 11/04/2001 and perpetuated by John Earl who found the next location for our second gathering at Grossi Ironworks located at 120 Catherine St. in Albany, NY.

Let's continue their efforts and give ourselves a standing ovation and promise to keep up our enthusiasm and commitment.

-Patrick Grossi



Origin - Cont from page 1

This gathering was attended by a variety of people. Some 40 to 50 men, women and children drifted in the yard next



Torch Neidrauer (left) and John Earl partake of the morning coffee graciously offered

to the shop. Many enjoyed taking a turn at the forge and anvil, having lunch (which was provided), conversing with the blacksmiths, and soaking up the unseasonable warm winter sun.

On that day we knew that the Capital District Blacksmiths was a viable organization.



Jim Moran forges bodice adornments in the shape of horse heads with forge tending by Jimmy Domery

Scrap Bin

Capital District Blacksmiths Homepage

<http://www.oakandacorn.com/cdblacksmiths>

Blacksmithing Clipart

<http://www.oakandacorn.com/clipart.html>

Blacksmithing Links

<http://www.anvilfire.com/links>

- Most auto springs (coil or leaf) are made from 5160 steel.

- Most heavy duty truck springs are made from 6150

Logo - Cont from page 1

Two symbols have already been submitted, but we need some more good ideas. Please submit design ideas to us here at:

CDB Newsletter
c/o Sarah Ritchie-Crowther
P.O. Box 156
Valley Falls, NY 12185

or send as an attached file to:
cdblacksmiths@oakandacorn.com

The deadline for logo submissions is May 17th, 2002. After all submissions are received they will be compiled (without the designer's names) and voted on by the membership at the next CD Blacksmiths meeting.

Classes

Brookfield Craft Center -

Brookfield Campus
P.O. Box 122 Route 25
Brookfield, CT 06804
203-775-4526
www.brookfieldcraftcenter.org

- | | |
|-------------|----------------------|
| April 20 | Hand Forged Blades |
| April 22-26 | Pattern Welded Steel |
| April 27-28 | Blacksmithing II |
| May 11-12 | Colonial Hardware |
| June 15-16 | Garden Gates |

Hancock Shaker Village -

P.O. Box 927
Route 20 & 41
Pittsfield, MA 01201
1-800-817-1137
www.hancockshakervillage.org

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| May 25-26 | Blacksmithing II |
| June 22-23 | Blacksmithing I |
| July 6-7 | Blacksmithing II |
| August 3-4 | Young People's Workshop |
| August 16-19 | Knife & Chisel Making |
| September 14-15 | Shaker Ironwork |

Heldeberg Workshop -

P.O. Box 323
Voorheesville, NY 12186
518-765-2777
www.heldebergworkshop.org
(Note all Heldeberg blacksmithing classes are for children grades 6-9)

- | | |
|------------|--------------------|
| July 15-19 | Beg. Blacksmithing |
| August 5-9 | Beg. Blacksmithing |

Wanted!

Have items you are desperately in need of? This will be the place to put them. Just drop us a note and we'll place your request in the next newsletter, which of course also gets posted on web (so be sure to include all methods of contact).

For Sale

Of course, what newsletter would be complete without a sales section? Just like the "Wanted!" area, this column will be reposted on the web so remember to include all of the ways you can be contacted.

We are happy to reprint pictures of the item if you have one to submit. We can handle nearly any digital picture format (although .jpg or .gif are easiest), or we can reprint from an actual photograph.

Gatherings

New England Blacksmiths

May 3-5
NEB Facility
Brentwood Community Center
Brentwood, NH

Demonstrator: Peter Ross from Colonial Williamsburg
Contact: Bob Menard @ 207-878-2217 or ballandchainforge@yahoo.com

Northeast Blacksmiths Association

May 3-5
Ashokan Field Campus
447 Beaverkill Rd.
Olivebridge, N.Y. 12461
914-657-8333
Demonstrators: Alice James, and Japheth Howard

"Age of Iron Weekend"

July 27-28
Hancock Shaker Village
Rte 20 & 41
Pittsfield, MA 01201

Wanted!: Demonstrators, Dealers, Suppliers, Exhibitors, Lecturers, and Tailgate/ Swappers.
Contact Bill Senseney @ 413-458-5641



iForge - Fire Poker by Bill Epps



Originally appeared on www.anvilfire.com January 31, 2001. Reprinted with the permission of anvilfire.com.

Because anvilfire.com demos are done in a "chat" format this version has been modified to fit the format of a newsletter.

Tonight's demo is a fireplace poker and head. I just showed the poker head and handle that I put on it.



Figure 1 **Figure 2** **Figure 3**

I started with a piece of 1/2" square about 30" long. However, any size stock will do. I taper the end for a scarf. [Figures 1-3]



Figure 4 **Figure 5** **Figure 6**

I go to the anvil and fold over about 5". First down at a 90 deg. Then come over the horn, fold it down on top of itself. By going over the horn, it brings it back to center. [Figures 4-6]



Figure 7 **Figure 8** **Figure 9**

As in Fig. 8 you see how going over the horn, you are able to bring it back to center, then I weld it on each side and across the bottom. Put it back in the forge, heat the welded section up, and applied flux.



Figure 10 **Figure 11** **Figure 12**

Then I stick it back in the forge and bring it back up to a welding heat. Hammer the welding bead down at a welding heat. (Whalla, an easy FORGE WELD). After you clean the weld up w/the hammer, I cut one side into as shown in Fig. 10-11.



Figure 13 **Figure 14** **Figure 15**

In Fig. 12-15, I go to the horn of the anvil and straighten the loop out straight, and draw the long side down to a longer, sloping taper.



Figure 16 **Figure 17** **Figure 18**

Now, I do the same thing on the short side drawing it to a longer, sloping taper, and I take this to the horn of the anvil to form this back to form the hook. [Figures 17-18]



Figure 19 **Figure 20** **Figure 21**

Now I form a sweeping push end on the longer end, so that you have a hook for pulling and an end for pushing the logs. [Figures 19-20] In Image 22, I start hammer the shank of the poker, pulling a long sweeping taper from the poker head to the handle. Tapering the whole tool gives it a refined, hand forged look, not to mention a lot better balance than leaving sharp edges of the square stock. Even if I was using round stock, I would still give it a taper again to enhance the piece so as to make it look forged, not



Figure 22

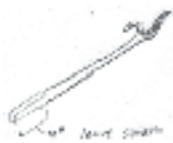


Figure 23

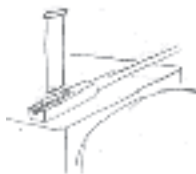


Figure 24

I do the hammered taper up to where I am going to do the handle. [Figure 23] On this piece I am doing a split handle (there are 100's of ways of making a poker handle). However, this one here I am just doing a split handle on. I leave about 4" of square stock, and I take a good heat in that part and split it back about 4". I do 1/4 from one side and 1/2 from the other. [Figures 24-25]



Figure 25



Figure 26



Figure 27

Just before it splits all the way through, on the second side, I put my splitting plate on the anvil and go all the way through. (I use a 3/4" aluminum plate as a splitting plate). [Figure 26] Then I take another good heat, and I go to the vice use a "Blunt Nosed Punch" at the bottom of the split to get away from a sharp cut, and put a nice smooth radius at the bottom of the split. [Figure 27]



Figure 28



Figure 29



Figure 30

Now I use a 1/2 Round Bottom Swage [Figure 28] to round up the square corners, and actually make the split part 1/2 round on the outside that will be showing on the handle. [Figure 29] [A bottom swage is nice but it can be done with a hammer alone. - Ed]



Figure 31

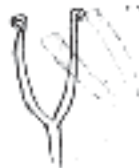


Figure 32



Figure 33

Then I flatten about 1/2" of the ends [Figure 31], and curl it back just a little [Figure 32] and make a wishbone shape out of the two parts. [Figure 33]



Figure 34



Figure 35



Figure 36

Now I close the ends together, and prepare it for the wrap. [Figure 34]

Clamp this in the vice. I take a piece of 3/16" round, 4 1/2" long, I taper each end and put a little curly cue on it. To start the wrap, I hold it w/a pair of vice grip pliers and use a torch to keep it hot as I wrap it around. On this particular piece, I wrapped it w/the 3/16" rod rather than a collar, but a collar looks nice too.

[If you do not have a torch: heat a longer section of the 3/16" rod, vice grip it in place (as above), and wrap as far as possible. Make sure you can get at least 1/4 to 1/2 wraps in place or it will fall off during the reheat. Remove vise grips and reheat another long section in the forge. Continue wrapping and reheating until complete. Be careful on the reheats that handle remains straight. - Ed]

I heat the rod in the forge, and use the torch to keep it hot. After I complete the wrap, I quench it, and this draws it down good and tight.

The poker ends up looking something similar to this, and comes out about 29" to 32" long. [Figure 36] This seems like a good length for fire tools to me.

This hole could be filled with an article or picture from you instead of boring clipart.



Local Resources

Coal

Garnsey Coal & Trucking
952 Route 4 South
Schuylerville, NY 12871
518-695-3346.

JP's North
Route 32 Box 11
Greenville, NY 12083
1-800-237-4488
<http://www.jpnorth.com>

Morrell Metalsmiths
C. Leigh Morrell
446 Marlboro Rd. (VT Route 9)
Brattleboro, VT 05303
1-800-371-1146
<http://www.morrellmetalsmiths.com>

Steel

Albany Steel
566 Broadway
Menands, NY 12204
518-436-4851

Kivort Steel
380 Hudson River Rd
Waterford, NY 12188
518-590-7233
<http://www.kivortsteel.com>

Welding & Abrasives

Northeast Gas Technologies
84 Karner Rd
Albany, NY 12205
1-800-248-1215
<http://www.newelders.com/>

Local Shaklee Distributer

Rooney Health Associates

Other Publications

ANVIL Magazine

Rob Edwards
P.O. Box 1810
Georgetown CA 95634
<http://www.anvilmag.com>

Anvil's Ring & Hammer's Blow

ABANA CENTRAL OFFICE
PO Box 816
Farmington, GA 30638-0816
<http://www.abana.org>

Blacksmith's Gazette

P. O. Box 2168
Snohomish, WA 98291-2168
<http://www.fholder.com/Blacksmithing/default.htm>

Blacksmith's Journal

PO Box 1699
Washington, MO 63090 USA
<http://www.blacksmithsjournal.com>

Irony

Stephen McGehee
PO Box 925
Corydon IN 47112
irony@epowerc.net

The Traditional Metalsmith

George Dixon
1229 Bee Tree Lake Road
Swannanoa NC 28778
<http://www.traditionalmetalsmith.com>

Like Minds - Other Organizations of Interest

ABANA - Artist-Blacksmith's Association of North America

ABANA CENTRAL OFFICE
PO Box 816
Farmington, GA 30638-0816
<http://www.abana.org>

New York State Designer-Blacksmiths

Pres: Bill Banker
P.O. Box 174
Almond, NY 14804-0174
607-276-6956
<http://www.nysdb.abana-chapter.com/>

Northeast Blacksmiths Association

Pres: Jonathan Nedbor
496 Tow Path
High Falls, NY 12440
845-687-7130
jonned@earthlink.net

Berkshire Blacksmiths Association

William Senseney
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bmre@mediaone.net

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