



Capital District Blacksmiths' Newsletter

April, 2003
Volume 2 Number 1

Upcoming Events!

“Age of Iron”

Thanks to the years of hard work by Bill Senseney, Berkshire Blacksmiths has hosted the “Age of Iron” with the Hancock Shaker Village as the backdrop for many years.

In continuation with past the events, there will be a plethora of demonstrators at different skill levels and styles of Blacksmithing. This year will be no exception.

Please note, “Age of Iron” has been pushed up the calendar this year. It will be held May 31st and June 1st at the Hancock Shaker Village, Hancock MA.

Sarah is coordinating the CDBA participation in this event with Bill Senseney. For more information contact:

Sarah Ritchie-Crowther

P.O. Box 156

Valley Falls, NY 12185

518-753-9592

SRLadysmith@oakandacorn.com

This event is open to the public, so please spread the word to family, friends, or anyone you know with an interest in blacksmithing.

CanIron IV

CanIron IV will be held at McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. July 10-13, 2003

The CanIRON Rendezvous is a biennial gathering that is held on odd numbered years at a location in Canada. CanIRON IV in 2003 will be the biggest CanIRON yet.

“Events” Continued on page 3

This Issue's Contents

Behind the Scenes	Page 3
Contact Us	Page 6
iForge Demo	Page 4
Letter from the President	Page 2
Letters to CDBA	Page 4
Like Minds	Page 6
Local Resources	Page 6
Membership	Page 2
Mid-Winter Gathering	Cover
Other Publications	Page 6
Scrap Bin	Page 6
Tools & Tips	Page 2
Upcoming Events	Cover

Mid-Winter Gathering

On January 19th, 2003 nearly 20 blacksmiths descended on the small village of Valley Falls. All told, 18 blacksmiths showed up (including the hosts and demonstrator), which, given the weather was an excellent turnout.

Many new smiths showed up, including two people from the community who were simply “curious to know where all those anvil signs led to.”

Taught by Jim Moran, the topic of the demonstration was the lowly cold chisel. But, the making of this simple tool was the basis for discussion on basic blacksmithing techniques such as: tapering, pointing, and basic heat treatment principles. With one coal and three propane forges, the day's blacksmithing event got underway.

Unlike the demonstrations at previous events, this one was designed to allow everyone to make the item being demonstrated.

“Winter” Continued on page 2



Jim Moran hammers an edge onto a cold chisel. Photo by Thom Breitenbach.



Home made propane forge built by Andy VanSchoick from an old propane tank.



Home made propane forge built by Doug DeLurey using 1/8” box tubing and home made



Aaron Silver works a chisel in the “Whisper Mama” lent by Doug DeLurey.



Andy VanSchoick tests the chisel he just made.

Letter from the President

Greetings to all. As I write this I am sure spring is coming, but I can't prove it by looking out my window. This is a great time of the year for the blacksmithing community as we are able to start working outside (coal smoke in enclosed spaces, need I say more) as well as gearing up for the spring and summer events. The core group and officers have been very busy planning and scheduling events for the upcoming season. In June we will be having a Demonstration, open to the public at Merli's Canal Street Station in Duanesburg (final date and agenda to be determined) and, my personal project, the CDBA "1st Annual Fall Hammer-In and Family Picnic" (also more details to follow). The concept of this fall event is to include activities for the *whole* family. I am talking to all kinds of crafts people, soap makers, weavers, etc. about offering hands on demonstrations and classes for the "hammer-disinterested" (my own little term).

But, before any of that happens we have the "Age of Iron" at HSV on May 31st and June 1st. I look forward to seeing as many of you there as can make it. I will be running a "Green Coal" area and will be happy to give any assistance to as many members as I can or I can just stay out of the way.

The Core Group is now meeting at 7pm every first Monday of the even month (next meeting is Monday, June 2nd) at Professor Javas on Wolf Road in Colonie. CDBA needs to determine where we want to go, what we want to do, and how we want to do it. I would ask all members with an opinion on these important issues to share them with me, preferable in writing (email or snail mail is fine) as the short term memory is the first to go. Your visions for this growing organization are too important to risk forgetting or mis-remembering. The President of the Florida Artist Blacksmith Association, Bob Jacoby, had some wonderful questions for their members and I will pose them to you as well.

- ◆ What should CDBA look like in 2010?
- ◆ What do we want to leave as a legacy after our current generation of smiths are gone?
- ◆ How big should be become?

Please share your thoughts, as this is *your* organization and is only as great as we make it together. So far, in my humble opinion, we are fantastic! Thanks to the input of all our members. A special thanks to Bob Jacoby for the inspiration and the wonderful, thought provoking questions. I could not have dreamed of improving on them.

Happy smiting. See on May 31st and June 1st.

Tools and Tips

The making of a cold chisel was the project of the last Gathering. For those of you who were unable attend, the basics of chisel making are covered here following the same process that Jim Moran showed.

Start with some steel that has a relatively high carbon content. One of the easiest tests for carbon content is the spark test. (Outlined in greater detail in the November 2002 issue). (**Figure 1**) If the sparks are bright and split away from each other like a sparkler, the carbon is fairly high.



Figure 1 - Bright sparks indicate this is a relatively high carbon steel

The next step is to simply taper one end until it forms a curved edge. (**Figure 2**) Most cold chisels from the hardware store have a nice straight edge. As it turns out, though, this is not the best form for marking lines of any length. A curved edge is much better. Although it will mark a smaller area with each cut, it can be rocked along the line to be marked very quickly and with out leaving any "end" marks.

Once the cutting edge is hammered to a pleasing shape, grind or file it to a finish.

Heat treatment is the next step.

Although there are multiple ways to do this



Figure 2 - Rough shape, note the slightly curved cutting edge.

Jim demonstrated the "interrupted quench". Take the chisel to critical temperature. This can be checked with a magnet. When the magnet stops sticking, critical temperature has been reached. Remove from the fire and quench the over half of the chisel in water, cutting edge first, until the end held by the tongs is dark red. Quickly remove from the water and clean the surface with a sanding block. In the cleaned area, which should be relatively shiny, watch carefully for a series of colors to run from the tail to the cutting edge. When the cutting edge turns bronze *quickly* quench the *entire* chisel until cold.

"Tools" Continued on page 6

"Winter" Continued from cover.

The multiple forge styles used allowed the attendees to see and work with the multiple types and experience first hand the short falls, and strengths of each type.

With the phenomenal success of this type of gathering the CDBA Officers are quickly organizing a system that will hopefully see as many as six hands on gatherings a year.

Membership has its Privileges

Nearly five months ago (seven if you attended the Burden Gathering in August) we started collecting membership dues. As of this writing there are 84 members on our membership list but only 32 have paid dues for membership.

These membership dues are used to reimburse demonstrators, members, and other individuals who provide services and materials for our Gatherings. Additionally, they pay for the postage and mailing supplies for this newsletter and other announcements.

For a mere \$10 a year you will be receiving this newsletter quarterly (via mail or internet), four "Workshop Gatherings", and two "Demonstration Gatherings".

Please fill out and return membership form found at: <http://www.oakandacorn.com/cdblacksmiths/memberapp.pdf> or at the back of this newsletter.

After May 15th, any members who have not paid dues, will be removed from the rosters. This means no further emails notifications about events, or newsletters will be sent.

We have had a stunning amount of interest in this organization, please do not let \$10 stand in the way of continued success and enjoyment.

"Events" Continued from Cover

Demonstrators from North America and Europe are being brought together to show all facets of the Blacksmith's art. From beginning techniques to power hammer usage to traditional art deco to knife making, there will be something for all level of smiths and metalworkers to enjoy and to learn.

In addition to the demonstrations, there will be a banquet, an auction of forged work, supplier booths, tailgate sales and more.

Hamilton Ontario is across the border from Buffalo. ["Yahoo Maps" estimates it to be 365 miles or a 6 hour trip by car from the Albany, NY area. - Editor]

Behind the Scenes

As usual there has been a large amount of work going on with the Core Group. In the past four months the Core Group has met three times to discuss upcoming events and layout the frame work for long range goals. Although we're sure there are some members out there that would like to see more practical articles in the newsletter, the Core Group would like to make sure that no member is left "out of the loop" with the plans and discussions that we undertake.

January 19th, 2003

Members in Attendance: Sarah Ritchie-Crowther, Andy VanSchoick, Aaron Silver, Daniel Crowther, Kevin McGlynn, and Gretchen VanSchoick.

The day's Gathering was deemed a big success by all at the Core Group meeting.

Approximately 18 people were in attendance at the Gathering.

Two people from the general public showed up simply by following the Anvil Signs to their destination.

Dan pointed out an interesting statistic: all but one participant was on the email list. Only one newsletter recipient attended.

Kevin notified the webmaster of redundant links and the organization's old name still on some of the Site's masthead.

A book "Shop Drawings of Shaker Iron & Tinware" was donated to CDBA by the Shaker Heritage Society.

Gretchen suggested video taping any future Gatherings/Demos for the creation of a video "How-To" library.

Earlier at the Gathering, Doug DeLurey offered to arrange space for future Gatherings, and tour at his employment; Stephen Bader Co.

Andy offered to host a propane forge construction Gathering at his shop if the group is small.

Sarah stated that a "Thank You" note needed to be send to Jim Moran from the president for doing the demo.

Following the offer from NYSDB to become a chapter Dan started researching other large groups that may also be of assistance, but still allow autonomy.

Dan outlined the requirements and benefits of becoming an ABANA affiliate

- ◆ Required – address of President and Newsletter Editor sent to ABANA
- ◆ Benefit - \$\$ Grants to bring in demonstrators, and assist with other blacksmithing education projects
- ◆ Benefit – No ABANA membership requirement placed upon CDBA members

Andy wanted to file for affiliate status immediately, since there were no negatives to doing so.

Core group decided that the final decision to become a ABANA affiliate will be placed before the complete Core Group at the next meeting.

Dan posed questions regarding membership that has not paid yet. "When is the membership deadline?" "What will be the result of nonpayment of membership fee?"

Core group decided that:

- ◆ One more newsletter will be sent before the members removal from the mailing list (for those not on the email list)
- ◆ One more email notification of updates and new newsletter posting (for those not on the mailing list)
- ◆ After last newsletter or notification the member's names will be removed from roster.

April will be the release date for the next newsletter

Sarah suggested that any further Gathering be alternately "open to the Public" and CDBA "members only" hands on demonstrations. This will allow existing members to update their skills, and alternately attract new members who may be unaware of our presence.

- Core group agreed

Topics for next Core Group Meeting.

- ◆ ABANA Affiliate status
- ◆ Next Meeting Location (Albany side of Hudson)
- ◆ Next Gathering Topic

Treasurer's report available upon request.

March 17th, 2003

Members in attendance: Daniel Crowther, Sarah Ritchie-Crowther, Jack Connell, Gretchen VanSchoick, and Andy VanSchoick.

Sarah outlined the current status of HSV "Age of Iron" participation

- ◆ They are all set for demonstrators
- ◆ We will setup 3 forges for our members to use
- ◆ Entrance fee is \$9.00 (Demonstrators are free but unknown fee for other member volunteers)
- ◆ We need to designate "Forge Masters" to over see the demonstrators in our area
- ◆ Volunteers needed to watch gates

Discussion digressed to responsibilities of officers:

- ◆ When an officer can't attend they should leave a status report with a person who is going.
- ◆ Aaron might want to be added to the check signing list because he is an alternate treasurer and that allows more flexibility
- ◆ Must have an attendance requirement for meetings (excused with Dr.'s excuse or death certificate)

Secretary's Summary Report

- ◆ 01/08/03; Paula Banks; Request for CanIron Ad in Newsletter
- ◆ 01/14/03; NEB; Newsletter
- ◆ 01/22/03; Thom Breitenbach; Thanks for Gathering, w/2 photo attachments
- ◆ 02/05/03; Bob Davignon; Next Meeting Date??
- ◆ 02/18/03; NYSDB; Newsletter
- ◆ 03/02/03; Patty Draper; Request for FABAs – CDBA newsletter exchange
- ◆ 03/04/03; Patty Draper; Authorizing article use in CDBA Newsletter
- ◆ 03/13/03; Pat Grossi; Fwd: Letter describing CDBA to new member (potential)

Next "Hammer-In" (after Age of Iron, before CanIron) at Joe Merli's

- ◆ Sarah will contact Joe
- ◆ (hands on) "Tongs" topic offered by Dan (Alternate "Plasma Table" topic offered by Gretchen)
- ◆ Date delayed until next Core meeting

Andy suggested the general membership at least be notified of upcoming Core

"Scenes" Continued on page 4

“Scenes” Continued from page 3 meetings.

Jack suggested standardizing Core meetings to “every other month” and add more as needed.

Group decided Core meetings will be first Wednesday of every even numbered month.

Next “Public Demonstration” at Burden in June

◆ Sarah will contact Mr. Carol

Sarah suggested (as a longer range goal) set up 4 “Workshops”, 2 “Hammer-Ins” and 2 “Demonstrations”

Next meeting April 2nd – 7:00pm

◆ Logos will be voted on

March 31st, 2003

Attending: Andy VanSchoick, Pat Grossi, Kevin McGlynn, Sarah Ritchie-Crowther, Jack Connell and Aaron Silver.

Aaron Silver acting Secretary

Sarah proposed that we vote among several candidates for a logo for the CDBA. The final logo decision was for logo 1, with approval for Sarah to make some minor modifications.

Next Age of Iron was discussed.

◆ Due to a change in organization we no longer have the requirement of providing volunteers to man the gates.

◆ The back gate entrance will be for demonstrators only.

◆ Sarah has been asked to have the CDBA area run a “Green Coal” area for interested persons to try their hand at working hot metal.

◆ Andy and Aaron were asked to bring their forges so people can see that it doesn't require store-bought equipment to start out.

◆ Aaron's friend Philp has offered to baby-sit the “Green Coal” area. She has also offered to bring her 20'x10' portable garage.

◆ Pat was requested to bring his Easy-Up pavilion to provide more shade.

Upcoming CDBA Events

◆ Joe Merli wants to host another meeting, and a Public Meet was suggested for June 21, with a possible alternate date of June 28.

◆ Pat was requested to help publicize that event since it would be open to the public.

◆ Sarah also suggested that we have a Hammer-In and combine it with a family picnic. Copake Iron Works was suggested as the location, and September as the time-frame. No specific date was discussed.

Andy proposed that we have T-Shirts, Sweat-shirts and possibly caps made with the CDBA logo. Andy will get more

information regarding cost. It was pointed out that providing the CDBA demonstrators with matching shirts at Age of Iron would be desirable.

There was no report from the Secretary [Secretary did not attend due to illness - Ed].

ABANA Affiliate Status - Sarah and Daniel have investigated the pros and cons of Affiliate status with ABANA. There is no minimum membership requirement for Affiliate status, no fees, or other requirements. As affiliates we can get some exposure and access to ABANA's resources. It was unanimously voted that CDBA join ABANA as an Affiliate.

Treasurer's report available upon request.

Letters to CDBA

I think the meeting went very well. Lots of people made stuff and learned from mistakes. You were great hosts. How many signed in? Lots of new faces at least to me. - Jim Moran [There were a total of 18 people in attendance. Nearly half of which were new. - Ed]

Thanks for hosting the blacksmith meeting this past Sunday. It was nice to see your shop. I attach a good digital photo of Jim's demo, and another picture. You are welcome to use them in the next newsletter, although it appeared that you were taking

quite a lot of photos yourself.

I would like to offer my own shop as a future site for a CDB meeting.

It's out in Altamont, NY. When the snow melts and I can get out to the shop, I'll send you a couple digital photos of it. It is well equipped. There are a number of anvils and both a coal and gas forge. There's not a lot of standing room inside, but two large doors slide open and everyone can sit just outside to watch any demonstrations. The mud doesn't dry out until at least late May.

Sincerely, Thom Breitenbach

[We would like to thank you, Thom, for both the photos (one of which made the cover) and the kind offer for a meeting place. We have received a tremendous outpouring of support with offers of shop tours, meeting space, and newsletter articles.

We wish to make it known to all who have offered such fantastic support that if you do not immediately hear from us or see your article in the newsletter we have **not** forgotten you or discounted your offer. We are grateful for your support and will take advantage of the various offers as circumstances allow. -Ed]



Group shot of the CDBA officers. Left to right - Dan Crowther (Secretary), Aaron Silver (Assistant Treasurer), Sarah Ritchie-Crowther (President) and Kevin McGlynn (Treasurer). (Pat Grossi absent)

iForge - "Easy" Tongs

by Sean Conner

Originally appeared on www.anvilfire.com April 24, 2002.
Reprinted with the permission of [anvilfire.com](http://www.anvilfire.com).

Because [anvilfire.com](http://www.anvilfire.com) demos are done in a "chat" format this version has been modified to fit the format of a newsletter.

Sean is 10 years old and this is his second demo. Demo #112 was his first demo on anvilfire, at age 9. :)

His father is a professional photographer and a part time blacksmith. Sean insists on doing his on-line demos without his father's help other than the photos!

Tonight I am going to show how to make a pair of light weight tongs, the easy way (Figure 1). Start with 2 pieces of 1/4" x 3/4" x 20" long flat bar. Drill, or heat and drift, a 1/4" hole, 3 inches from one end, and in the center of the bar (Figure 2). To be sure both pieces match, clamp the bars together and make the hole in both bars at the same time if you use the drilling method.



Figure 1



Figure 2

Insert a piece of 1/4" round rod into the hole. Put a vise grip on the handle end to hold the two pieces together.

Heat the tong end to orange in the forge.

Place the tong end in a vise. Put a crescent wrench just under the piece of 1/4" round rod and adjust the vise so there is about 1 inch of space between the bottom of the wrench and the top of the vise. (Figure 3)



Figure 3



Figure 4

Turn the wrench 90 degrees or 1/4 turn. You are turning BOTH pieces of bar stock at the same time, and in the same direction. (Figure 4)

This shows how it looks from the top and the side. (Figure 5 & Figure 6)



Figure 5



Figure 6

Remove the rod. Heat the tong end in the forge and then shape it for what you want it to do. This set of tongs was being built to hold 1/4" round stock. (Figure 7&8) The tongs can be taken apart and worked easily in the forge. When you want to see how you did, put them back together with the rod. (Figure 9)



Figure 7



Figure 8

When you have the tongs shaped the way you want, heat the end of the 1/4" round rod and put it in the hole in the tongs. Clamp it in the vise and peen the end of the rod to form a rivet head. (Figure 10)



Figure 9



Figure 10

Once you have made a rivet head from the end of the rod, cut the other end of the rod off, leaving enough rod to make a rivet head on that side too. Put the whole thing in the fire and get just the end of the rivet hot. You can make the rivet head with the rod cold, but a little bit of heat makes it work a lot better. (Figure 11)

Put it on the anvil and peen the end over to form a rivet head. Be careful not to get it too tight. You can always make it tighter later, just peen it again, but you can't make it loosen up by hitting it with the hammer.



Figure 11



Figure 12- Completed rivet

Note: For the rivet, leave about 1-1/2 times the diameter of the rod to make the rivet head.

These tongs have just about the right space at the end of the handle to work for me. You can heat and bend the handles to adjust the space to fit your hands. (Figure 13)

These are not heavy tongs, and will not do the work of heavy tongs, but they will do a lot of work and are quick and easy to make.



Figure 13



Figure 14 - Completed tongs

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>

Safety Products

North River Supply
John Earl
412 Cedar Lane
Greenville, NY 12083
jwkearl@cs.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
Clifton Park, NY 12065
518-371-6453

Blacksmithing & Metalworking Tools

Carl Davison
carlrd@worldnet.att.net

Computer Guided Plasma Cutting

Evolution Ironworks
Contact for pricing & specifics
Andrew VanSchoick
Albany, NY 12209
518-433-0527
avansch1@nycap.rr.com

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>

“Tools” Continued from page 2



Figure 3 - This chisel shows the range of temper colors; light yellows right down to blues, and purples (Figure 3)

Finally, test the chisel. If the cutting edge holds, you've gotten the temper correct. If it deforms or dulls easily, it's too soft, and the temper needs to be stopped sooner (at a lighter color). If the cutting edge chips, it's too hard and the temper should have been stopped later (at a darker color). If the temper didn't work right, simply repeat the heat treatment section.

“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
joned@earthlink.net

Berkshire Blacksmiths Association

William Senseney
30 Frenier Dr.
Williamstown, MA 01267
413-458-5641
bmre@mediaone.net

Contact Us

You can get in touch with us for submissions, requests and information by a variety of means:

CDBA Newsletter

c/o Sarah Ritchie-Crowther
P.O. Box 156
Valley Falls, NY 12185
518-753-6910
srladysmith@oakandacorn.com

CDBA Webmaster

c/o Daniel Crowther
P.O. Box 156
Valley Falls, NY 12185
518-753-6910
cdblacksmiths@oakandacorn.com

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>