



Capital District Blacksmiths' Newsletter

November, 2003

Volume 2 Number 2

CDBA Members Take Age of Iron Award!



Age of Iron founder - Bill Senseney, presents the "Wolves of Wodan" (left to right) Rhyse Simpson, Bill Senseney, Ryan Wood, Richard Simpson, & Dale Wood with the "Most Historically Accurate Award".

With impressive efficiency, the group of Norse re-enactors known as the "Wolves of Wodan" setup a 1000CE smithy; just as if they had stepped off of their longboat.

This forge employs two bellows worked in alternation, supplying air to a charcoal fire. Designed specifically in a minimalist style, this forge and smithy would have been completely portable on a longship. A forge of this type would have been employed in the making of items needed for ship repairs, nails, knives, and perhaps weapon or armour repair, once beached. Later the bellows from this same forge could be used to smelt additional bog-iron in a cupola furnace. It would also have assisted the boot-strapping of a larger smithy into existence, such as the one at the Viking settlement in L'Anse Aux Meadows in Newfoundland, Canada.

"Award" continued on page 2

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Blacksmithing Days - Age of Iron 2003

This year's "Age of Iron" had the unique distinction of officially being a multi-association event. Four major blacksmithing groups (Berkshire Blacksmiths, CDBA, Northeast Blacksmiths Association, and New England Blacksmiths) descended on the Hancock Shaker Village, for two days of public demonstrations and exhibitions.

Despite early confusion and miscommunication (or *overcommunication* in some cases, thanks to e-mail) while trying to coordinate an event this size, most issues were finally resolved when long time organizer and event founder Bill Senseney took back the reigns one last time.

This year in the center of the grounds, the NEB hoisted two huge tents for their annual Spring Meeting and for their dozen or more demonstrators. Throughout the day on Saturday ringing anvils and calls for NEB's Iron-in-the-Hat drawings were the matter of course under the big pavilions. On Sunday it was quite different. The rains



Two of the hearty souls from NEB who stuck it out to the bitter end.

had picked up during the night and so had most of the NEB members. Over half of the NEB demonstrators had left, but a hearty 4-5 of them stuck it out until closing, late Sunday afternoon.

In the corridor near the permanent Shaker Village smithy was a phenomenal display of cooperative smithing. The Mastermyr exhibit is the result of nearly one hundred blacksmiths reproducing items from the Mastermyr archaeological discovery. While other groups from around the world have reproduced *some* items of the Mastermyr find, the goal of this project is to reproduce *all* of them.

This incredible display is available to

any blacksmithing group who wishes to see the exhibition included in their 'hammer-in'. All in all it is a tremendous statement to the smiths who volunteered for the project and the ingenuity of our ancestor blacksmithing brethren.

A first at this "Age of Iron" was the inclusion of a 'Green Coal' area. This area was hosted by the CDBA and was open to the other smiths attending, for practice and extra hammer time; as well as the general patrons of Hancock Shaker Village who were wandering by and 'just had to give it a try'.

Additional demonstrations of note were the two primitive forge setups. Both dating from the Dark Ages and using similar technology, the 400CE Irish forge employed two small bellows and a clay tuyere to channel the air to a charcoal fire. The other forge was a replica of a 'Viking Era' Norse forge from 1000CE and came complete as part of a tented smithy. Thanks to one of the Vikings, Richard Simpson (aka "Raffan"), both forges were lit using 100% traditional methods; flint, steel, char-cloth, and pine needles.



Dan Crowther demonstrates forging on his 400CE Irish forge.

In addition to the influx of new exhibits, demonstrators and organizations, many regulars there showed their latest creations and techniques.

Clive Diggins brought 2 dimensional sheet metal to exquisite 3 dimensional life with his repousse busts and faces. Robert DeLisle contrasted both Dark Age forges and 'modern' forges with his own 16th

"Days" continued on page 3

Tools and Tips

Dead Hammers – Got an old hammer lying around that's out lived its usefulness? Maybe the head is too domed or there's a chip out of the face? Let it continue working for you. Turn it into a specialty hammer; a 'dead hammer'.

Soft hammers fill a niche for blacksmiths that they seldom realize they had a need for. When a regular hammer is used on hardened tools such as punch or chisel, there is always a fair chance that the tool will leave marks on the hammer face. A punch or chisel is specifically designed to be harder than anything else it might encounter, so that it *can* leave marks, after all. But, marks on either the hammer or anvil face are readily transferred to soft steel. This means additional time filing or grinding out those marks. By using a separate hammer for striking tools only, you can keep your good hammers in prime condition for working hot metal.

But a "dead hammer" isn't just one that is set aside for tool striking. A "dead hammer" has been annealed so that it is "dead soft" and this provides another advantage. This allows the head of the tool to bite into the hammer face. So, should your blow be off center or less than perfect, the tool will be less likely "squirt" out of your hand and fly across the shop.

Annealing a hammer head is very simple. Cut off the existing handle and toss the hammer head in the fire. Bring the entire head up to a non-magnetic temperature (in the orange range). Place in ashes, sand, vermiculite, or some other insulating material and wait. When it's cool, trim the left over handle to fit the hole and re-attach. Whah-lah! Instant "dead hammer".



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Andrew VanSchoick
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802-375-9031 Voice
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a.vanschoick@worldnet.att.net

"Award" continued from Cover



Dale Wood (persona name "Bjorn") works the bellows on the "Wolves of Wodan" 1000CE Norse Forge.

Thanks to their comprehensive portrayal of Norse Vikings, 'The Wolves of Wodan' won the Age of Iron award for "Most Historically Accurate Setup".

First Annual CDBA Family Picnic Cancelled

For the first time ever, CDBA was to host an annual picnic at the Taconic State Park in Copake, NY.

This picnic was not only to be a typical picnic, but have included lots of forging as well as other activities for kids and spouses not bitten by the blacksmithing bug; this way *entire* families could be included.

The Taconic State Park was specifically chosen because it is on the site of the Pomeroy Foundry and has facilities for swimming, hiking, fishing, and camping, along with the spectacular Bash Bish Falls.

All in all 26 people were signed up to attend, when hurricane Isabel threatened rear her ugly head and leave copious amounts of rain in eastern NY.

Because of timing issues with the projected hurricane track and cancellation notification deadlines, the CDBA officers collectively were forced to decide to cancel the event before the final path of the hurricane was known.

Another event of this type is currently being planned, although the date is not yet known. The nominal signup fee of \$10, for 'porta-potty' rental, is promptly being returned to those who signed up.

Gathering Number 7

Just a little over a year ago, CDBA was finding its legs and looking for venues for meetings. Now, that we've been around the block and made some friends, CDBA is fortunate enough to several interesting locations for it's gatherings.

There's always something new happening at Merli Mfg. Between the restoration of railroad buildings, and the creation of early automobiles from scratch, that makes Merli's the perfect spot to hold a CDBA event that is open to the public too.

Thanks largely to the weather, the turn out of the public was not as big as expected. However, our president, Sarah Ritchie-Crowther did make an appearance on the local news. Because "Cable News 9" is a 24 hour local news station, this story ran for 2 days, once every hour. What follows is a transcript of the video story.

"There's a lot more to a blacksmith's job than shoeing a horse.

Today, more than two dozen people gathered at Merli Manufacturing in Duanesburg to learn more techniques of the trade. Three forges were going at this annual public demonstration -- two coal forges and a homemade propane forge.

One member of the Capital District Blacksmith's Association said nearly 70 members show up to these types of events.

Sarah Ritchie Crowther said, "The majority of our members are newer to the smithing trade and are just learning. And that's what our focus is -- to make it accessible to people who said, 'hey, I thought you just shoed horses,' which we don't do. That's actually a farrier."

Members said today's turnout was a bit disappointing, but they blame it on the weather."

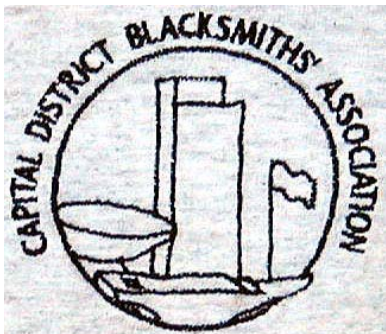
Projects created during the day's activities included a colonial flesh fork (Dan Crowther), and a "mystery project" (Jim Moran) that demonstrated the plastic and ductile properties of hot steel. Andy VanSchoick our "propane master" of a sort, simultaneously explained and demonstrated his propane forge made from an old propane bottle and cooked hot dogs on a propane grill.

T-Shirts Now Available!

Thanks to Andy VanSchoick for fronting the capitol that made the CDBA T-Shirts possible.

Unlike many organizational T-Shirts, CDBA T-Shirts are *embroidered* with our logo not silk screened, so they will have the durability needed after exposure to heat and repeated washings. The member prices are as follows:

•Large & X-Large	\$15
•XX-Large	\$18
•Sweatshirt (special order)	\$30
•Hat (special order)	\$15



Non-member prices are: \$18, \$20, \$35, and \$18 respectively.

T-Shirts will be available at most CDBA events or can be purchased by contacting Andy directly at:

Andrew VanSchoick
1337 Chunk's Brook Rd.
Sandgate, VT 05250
802-375-9031 Voice
518-466-0040 Voice
a.vanschoick@worldnet.att.net

More Exposure?

The CDBA Newsletter already includes local businesses that sell pertinent blacksmithing supplies, tools, or services for our members. But did you know that the CDBA Newsletter also accepts paid advertisements?

The CDBA Newsletter's primary distribution area is, of course, the CDBA's 70+ members. But through newsletter exchange agreements with other blacksmithing your advertisement could be seen throughout the New England blacksmithing community and as far away as Florida.

For as little as \$10 a year you can place an advertisement of your own design in the CDBA Newsletter.

Letter from the President

Well, Happy Holidays!

I must start by falling on my sword and give two apologies. First, the officers regret having to cancel the "CDBA Hammer-In and Family Fun Picnic", but we collectively decided that the risk of bad weather was too great. But of course, when you carry an umbrella it does not rain. Second, this newsletter is very late and I must take responsibility for that. Daniel has been waiting for me to complete a number of things to get this to press. Now that I have done this you have your newsletter. Now, if Daniel would pull the sword out of my gut we can continue.

I am looking forward to the New Year. I believe 2004 is going to be a great year for CDBA. We are off to a great start with myself and Andy VanSchoick, holding the rose-making workshop in January. We also an event in works at the Maybe Farm in the spring, and we are going to continue with our established events at Merli Mfg. and Burden Ironworks. We are going to be busy, busy, busy - I love it!

With all that we already have in the works we still want more; we want to know what you want out of the organization. The officers meet at Professor Java's - (217 Wolf Rd, Colonie) on the 1st Monday of every even month at 7:00pm. Please come and share, tell us if we are doing good or bad. We can only serve your needs if we know what they are.

HAVE A GREAT HOLIDAY SEASON!

"Days" continued from Cover

Century forge. Walt Scadden showed just how little fire was needed to blacksmith, with his propane-torch-in-can setup. Bill Senseney displayed his oak leaf wreath made from pure iron. William Scheer showed his skill reproducing harpoons and other artifacts from the early 19th Century whaling and maritime industries. And the list of smiths and their hard work goes on and on.

Sadly, at the end of the event, Bill Senseney indicated that this would be his last year organizing "Age of Iron" and he would also be resigning as leader of Berkshire Blacksmiths.

At the time of publication, it was unknown when and where future Age of Iron events would be taking place.

CDBA Hammer-In Announced!

The next CDBA Hammer-In is tentively scheduled for January 18th, pending the successful setup and testing of the equipment at the demonstration site. It will be held at The Forge (home of Oak & Acorn Ancient Metalcrafts and Lobo Forge) on 71 Lawrence St, Glens Falls, NY.

This Hammer-In will be taking place in two parts. The first half will be the demonstration of a plasma cutter. This helpful tool works wonders cutting sheet and plate metals. The primary subject of this particular demonstration, however, will be rose petal blanks. Which leads us to the second half of the Hammer-In.

The second portion will focus on the forging of the rose stem and texturing of the rose petals.

As always these Hammer-In's are designed to be hands on for the participants. So, if possible, we would like to request that participants bring a favorite hammer, and typical safety gear (gloves, and eye protection).

Pre-registration and a fee of approximately \$15 is required so we can provide adequate supplies and forge space.

Look for the *finalized* information to become available in mid-December. It will be sent out with the registration form.

New features and assistance

CDBA now has a new home and new name on the World Wide Web. Instead of the cumbersome address that included 'slashes', our new address is now simply: <http://www.cdblacksmiths.org>

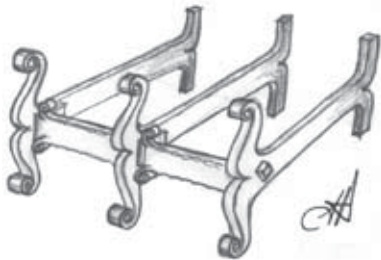
Along with our new address comes many new web features, one of which has gained instant popularity. CDBA is now host to a general blacksmithing forum open to all.

Known as "WebForge" this forum is unique in that it offers divisions for not only for the Beginners, Intermediate and Advanced smiths, but it also has special areas focusing in on modern technologically assisted blacksmithing, Colonial American reproductions/techniques, and "Early Iron Age - 17th Century Forging" to name a few.

The WebForge also offers an area for CDBA event announcements and another one for nation-wide blacksmithing events.

iForge - Fireplace Grate

by Jock Dempsey



© 1976 Jock Dempsey

This is one of the first things I made when I started blacksmithing. It is an original design that has many possibilities. It was made from straightened wagon tire steel using very simple tools. The basic design can be used for various styles with simple changes.

It has the advantage of being bolted together so that it can be shipped broken down in a flat box.

This design can be scaled to fit any size fireplace so I am not going to be giving very detailed dimensions. The original was made as shown with three support bars as shown but could be made with four or five as needed.

A small grate would be made using 3/8" x 2" bar and a larger one of 1/2" by 2 or 2-1/2" flat bar. Length would be 24" to 30". The spacer bars are cut 3-1/2" to 4" longer than the spacing. **(Figure 1)**

The ends of the long bars are split about 6". Splitting can be done hot on a hardy (the way I did it) or with a hot chisel. It could also be done with a torch if you can cut a straight line or sawed on a bans saw. **(Figure 2)**

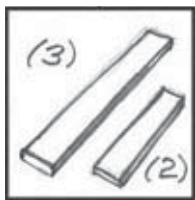


Figure 1

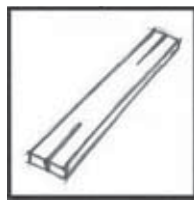


Figure 2

After splitting both ends open up the end that will be the front. This gets forged first and opening the other ends will get in the way. **(Figure 3)**

Draw the ends out into a smooth taper according to your style. When done you may want to dress the bend radius on the horn. **(Figure 4)**



Figure 3



Figure 4

Scroll up the ends as shown and adjust into a smooth "S" curve. **(Figure 5)**

After finishing the front bend the back legs and adjust until the center is level. The bolt hole shown can be punched or drilled. **(Figure 6)**



Figure 5



Figure 6

The spacer bars are split as shown. This can be done hot with a chisel or cold with a hacksaw. The holes are easier to drill while the part is flat. **(Figure 7)**

Scroll up the tapered pieces as shown. After making this drawing I realized it would be easier to bend the bolt tab back FIRST then do the scrolls. Seems I made the same mistake when I made this **(Figure 8)**

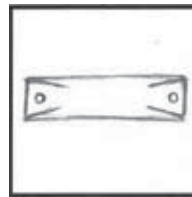


Figure 7

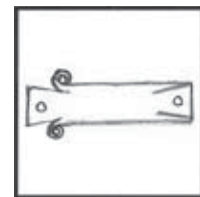


Figure 8

When finished the spacer bars should look like this. Here I've shown the corners textured. There are many ways to treat this part according to your taste or design. **(Figure 9)**

To assemble the spacer bars are bolted in as shown in this top view. You could also rivet the joints but the bolts are mostly hidden and they allow the grate to be maintained or disassembled. **(Figure 10)**

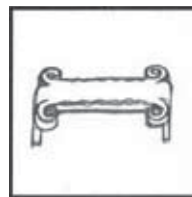


Figure 9

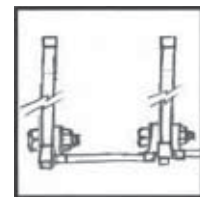


Figure 10

That is the finished grate the way I made it 25 years ago. It is sort of a combination device replacing andirons but not as heavy.

Variations on the Theme:

There are many modifications you could make to my original design. A few follow.

The spacer bars could be slit and drifted as shown, the outer corners dressed to points matching the drifted hole. **(Figure 11)**

Here is another idea. The bars are slit twice and opened up with an "eye" shaped drift. The center dressed as shown and front incised. Both of these are basic forging methods that produce nice results. **(Figure 12)**

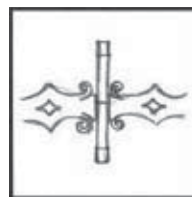


Figure 11

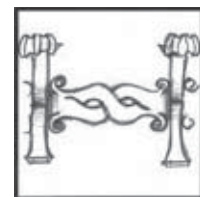


Figure 12

Instead of a plain scroll a fish tail scroll would dress it up a little. Here two grooves have been fullered to produce texture and widen the end of the scroll. (Figure 13)

Splitting with a chisel could also add some decorative features. (Figure 14)



Figure 13



Figure 14

The tops could be forged into dragon or animal heads, spit from the front and made in hearts. . . anything you can think of. (Figure 15)

An option at the back is to split at an angle as shown and draw out the extra material in the bottom leg as shown. (Figure 16)



Figure 15

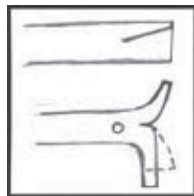


Figure 16

IF you want to increase the rigidity you can drill holes at the back and use spacers cut from 1/2" pipe and a piece of threaded rod to hold the parts together. If the grate is to be used in a large fireplace with heavy logs this might be a good idea. (Figure 17)

One last idea, the top scrolls made to fit a cross bar. The spacers made of round stock to match. There are hundreds of possibilities starting with this basic design. Fancy up both ends and you have a matching log holder (Figure 18)

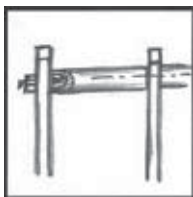


Figure 17

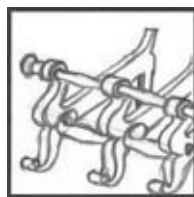


Figure 18



For Sale

Blacksmithing & Metalworking Tools-

Carl Davison
carlrd@worldnet.att.net

Complete Forge & Tools-

Anvil - Peter Wright, 184# good shape, \$250. Blower - Champion 400 w/stand, good shape, \$125. Forge - Buffalo large, 2 blowers (1 electric, 1 attached), \$200. Coal - 9 bags, \$55. Leg Vice - 4" Jaws, good shape, good spring, \$100. Post Drill - Big, good shape, \$100. Contact: Joe Duclos, Delmar, NY 12054, 518-475-1880, duclos@localnet.com

Tongs & Vices-

Vices - Tiny, Medium (missing bench top bracket), Monster (7" jaws). Any size \$65 each; Tongs - Type varies, but all large. Contact: Jack Klix, PO Box 315, Clintondale, NY 12515, 845-883-7651

Tong & Vices-

Vice - Approx. 5" Jaws, New \$50; Vice - Approx. 5" Jaws, Good \$40; Tongs - Type & size vary, \$4-\$7. Contact: Win Bigelow, Glenville, N.Y. 12302, 518-399-4742

Swage Block-

15"x15"x4", 190#, \$400. Amsterdam, NY 12010, 518-842-2001

Previous Gathering Photos

7th CDDBA Gathering - Merli Manufacturing, Duanesburg



Pat Grossi, Andy VanSchoick, Samantha, and ??, chatting and casually waiting for forging temp.



Jim Moran demonstrating.

6th CDDBA Gathering - Age of Iron, Hancock MA



Jessica Schuster works on a project in the CDDBA sponsored "Green Coal" area.



Andy VanSchoick forms an anvil 'hold-down' around and for the base of his anvil.

Local Resources

Coal

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

Greene County Horseshoe Supply
Route 32 P.O. Box 176
Greenville, NY 12083
1-866-966-5549
gchs@mail.albany.net

Morrell Metalsmiths
C. Leigh Morrell
207 Greenfield Rd
Colrain, MA 01340
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>

Metal Supermarket
88 Railroad Ave
Albany, NY 12205
518-435-0024
<http://www.lebanonvalley.com/03Press/metal%20supermarket.htm>

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
(Source of "Basic-I" used in "Super Quench")

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>

Scrap Bin

Capital District Blacksmiths Homepage

<http://www.cdblacksmiths.org>

Blacksmithing Clipart

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

Blacksmithing Links

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



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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