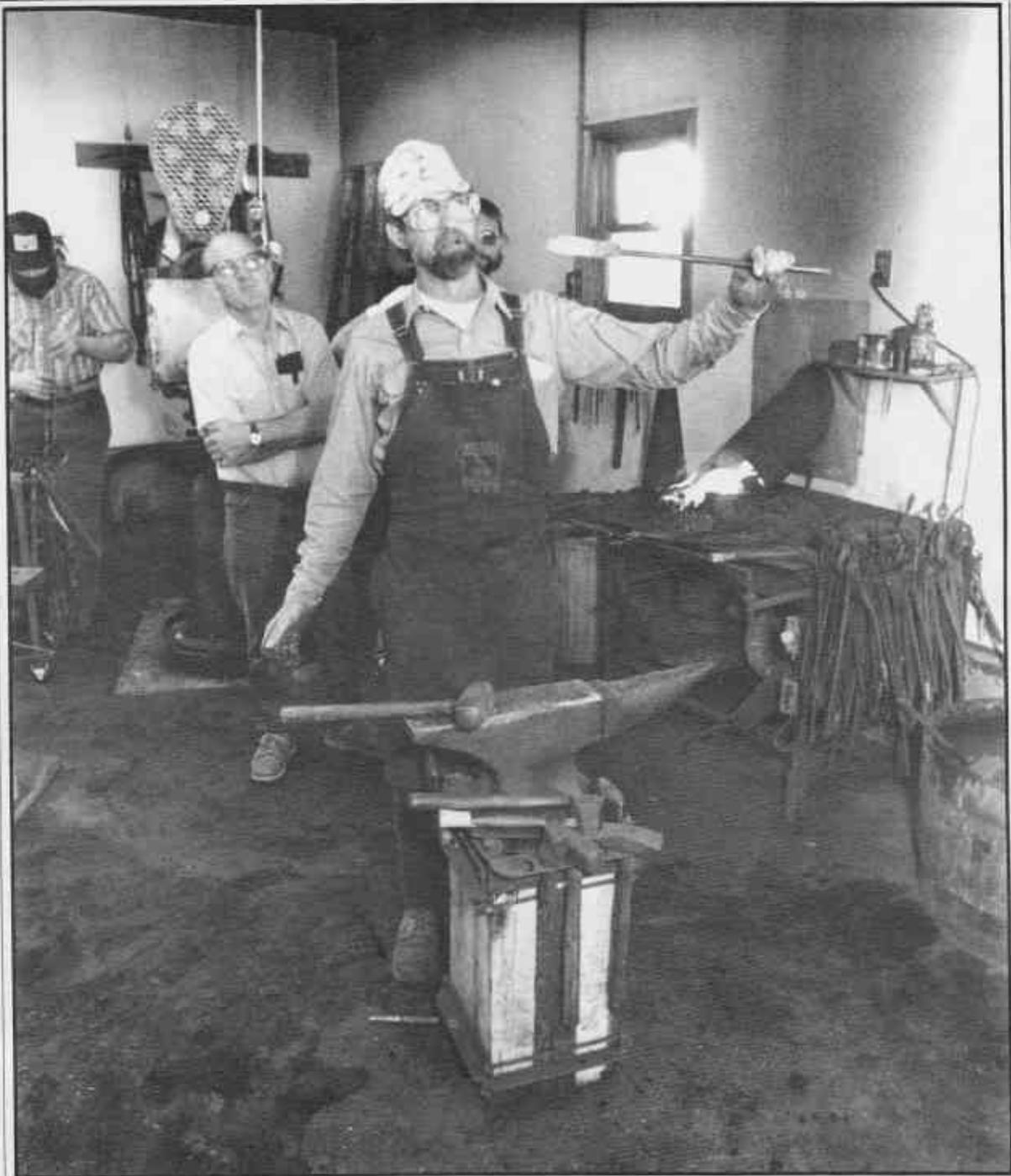


RAM

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NEWSLETTER of the BLACKSMITHS ASSOCIATION OF MISSOURI

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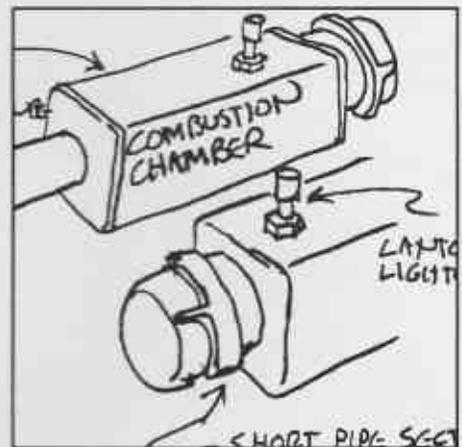
18 There's a lot going on in Missouri and elsewhere.

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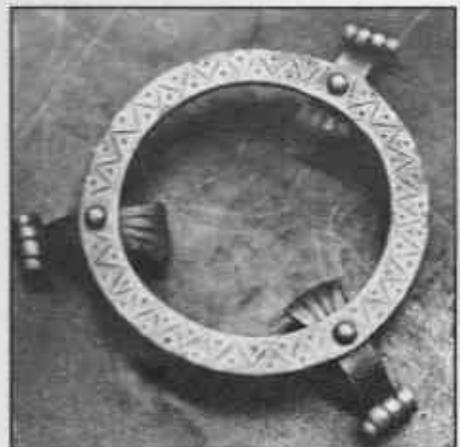
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Newsletter of the Blacksmiths Association of Missouri

Volume 10 No. 3

Our cover: Walt Hull takes a look at his progress during his demo at the May BAM meeting.

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The Newsletter of the Blacksmiths Association of Missouri is published six times a year and is mailed to members of BAM. The annual fee for regular membership is \$20/year; a portion of this amount is for a subscription to this newsletter for one year. Editorial inquiries should be addressed to: Jim McCarty, Rt. 1 Box 20, Loose Creek, MO 65054 (314-897-4111). BAM membership inquiries should be addressed to: Steve Austin, 44 N.E. Munger Rd., Claycomo, MO 64119 (816) 781-1512). Occasionally some material will be copyrighted and may not be reproduced without written consent by the author. BAM welcomes the use of any other material printed in this newsletter provided the author and this organization be given credit.

BAM Membership Application

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Phone: () _____ Zip: _____

New Member Renewal

How did you learn about BAM? _____

Memberships are for one year from receipt of dues. Dues are \$20, which includes a subscription to the bimonthly BAM newsletter. Please make checks payable to Blacksmith Association of Missouri.

ABANA Membership Application

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Phone: () _____ Zip: _____

New Member Renewing Member

How did you learn about ABANA? _____

- Regular Member\$35 yr.
- Family Membership (One Vote).....\$40 yr.
- Senior Citizen (Age 65).....\$25 yr.
- Overseas Membership.....\$45 yr.
- Contributory\$100 yr.
- Library\$25 yr.

See reverse

Editor's Anvil

My apologies to those of you who got the last newsletter too late to make it to Walt Hull's meeting. That would be all of you. The last issue was a killer, keeping me up till the wee hours for about a week. At 28 pages, it was the largest newsletter we've ever had.

This one is shorter, not as well edited, but it's here, hopefully before the end of June runs out.

My forge has sat silent for the past couple of weeks. I've been paying my wife back for the week I took off to attend the Basic Blacksmithing class at the John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, N.C.

You'd think the trivet, candle-holder and handful of hooks I brought back for her would have done the trick, not to mention the tongs, hot cut chisel and punch I made her.

Actually I'm trying to recover from the effects of standing on my feet all day wearing steel-toed boots swinging a 3-pound hammer and breathing coal dust for about 10 hours a day. Man, that's living for a guy who earns his living pushing pencils behind a desk. It was real tough going back to work.

I have a lot more confidence in my hammer work now that I have had some uninterrupted practice with a good teacher, Don Witzler, around to ask for help. Everyone should get an opportunity to take a class at the folk school, maybe Dr. Iron's Kitchen Smithin' class. It's a great setting for a learning experience. You could learn what I did on your own or pick it up at the next 50 BAM meetings but you learn more when you can put into practice what you saw right away.

There's more on my adventures at the folk school in this issue.

Guess I'm doing a demo at the next meeting to show off what I learned and to pay you guys back for the scholarship. The most valuable skill I learned was making the chisel, so that's what you'll see if you make it to Doug's. Dr. Iron said he would have some spring steel on hand and plenty of anvils and fire to go around,



The only known photo of the editor at the forge.

so if I'm a good teacher you can give it a try.

I've been talking to a lot of interesting BAM members from all over the state. It's good to get those calls even when it's someone asking when the next newsletter is coming out. I get around the state a lot, so don't be surprised if I pay you a visit sometime.

I made it up to Darold Rhindollar's shop in Clarksville in May. Darold had a neat shop when he was in Augusta, but this one is even better with high ceilings and a spectacular view of the Mississippi River. He even has something I've never seen in a blacksmith shop — a gallery, where he can display his skills to the tourists that pass through town.

Darold got real whistful when I talked about BAM. Expect him for a demo at some winter meeting — he's

a busy man in the summer.

Once again, I'll close with a plea for more help filling these pages, even if it's just a "Dear BAM" letter. Many thanks to those of you who made the effort last month.

We have a new section that I'll fill when I have sufficient material. It's a gallery of work done by BAM members. If you've made something you are real proud of, don't keep it a secret. Take a picture of it and send it to me.

Also, don't forget that classified space is always here for you too, whether you need something or need to sell something.

—Jim McCarty

Dear BAM

Please report in your next newsletter that the First Master Blacksmith Workshop conducted by Francis Whitaker at Allison's Wells School of Arts & Crafts in Canton, on May 1, 1993, was a tremendous success. The attendance was 85 with 36 paid full-time workshop attendees. The total raised for Francis' Foundation was \$1,345. Francis was thrilled not only with the workshop and foundation support but also with his trip on Friday, April 30th to Lauren Roger's Museum of Art and the First Presbyterian Church in Laurel. He viewed the 1922 work by Samuel Yellin where Francis worked along with some 150 others at that time, furnishing the handwrought iron gates, railings and hardware throughout the museum and church.

The Allison's Wells School of Arts & Crafts is pleased to be a cooperative partner with the Mississippi Forge Council. We are making our support arrangements for their annual conference on June 19 and 20 with Master Bladesmith Jim Hrisoulas.

Also, make plans to attend the Power Hammer Rebuilding Workshop October 15, 16, and 17th at Allison's Wells School of Arts & Crafts in Canton. The workshop is by Gene Mulloy.

Conference and workshop attendees, please let us know if you need a bed here at the school. The charge is \$17.50 per night, and bring your own pillow and linens. You will be the first to sleep on these new twin beds. Call Ron Hill, or Bonnie Staffel for further information, needs, etc., at 1-800-489-2787 or 601-859-5826.

—Ron Hill, founding director, Allison's Wells School of Arts & Crafts

In mid may I had the opportunity to watch George Dixon demonstrate at the Southeast Regional Blacksmith Conference in Madison Georgia. George worked for four years in the capacity of lead smith at Samuel Yellen Metal Workers before they closed the doors earlier this year. The treadle hammer plays an important part in George's work, as does some

fairly straight-forth tooling. After our treadle hammer building workshop, my interest, understandably, has been heightened and the chance to see George work was very educational. His philosophy in dealing with the tool is very different from the only other treadle hammer user I know, Clay Spencer. To George, the tool is basically a striker that is never late for work, hungover, or complains about low wages. The following are tips and tidbits I picked up:

George's hammer is not adjustable and has no provisions to mount top tools. His bottom die (anvil) does have a 1" hardy hole to secure bottom tools when necessary. The hardy hole is deep enough to run a drift through with a hole in the side of the anvil column for the drift to drop through. The non adjustable tool works just fine for George as he makes all of his tools the right height to work within the limits of his hammer.

George uses lots of punches, butchers, and chisels under the hammer and has adapted a vice grip to firmly hold his tools. The vice grips have small pieces of angle iron welded across the jaws and function as a "V" jaw tong. The angle irons forming the "V" jaws are perpendicular to the handle allowing the tools to be held for his striker, the treadle hammer, to hit them. The tools have round shafts and can be positioned in the vice grip to the best advantage.

When George is setting up to punch a pattern, grove, or whatever, he first carefully lays it out and marks it cold. This marking makes a slight depression so that when he is working hot the tool will fall into place more easily.

If George is punching a pattern in a leaf form, or anything for that matter, he usually uses a large mark and a smaller mark. One serves as punctuation for the other and just makes it more visually rich.

If there is any single thing I picked up from watching George it's to take time to set up for whatever you are going to do. George Dixon will be one of the demonstrators at the 1994 ABANA Conference.

—Doug Hendrickson, Lesterville

First I would like to tell you how much I enjoy receiving the BAM newsletter. I look forward to each new issue with great anticipation.

I once met Tom Clark and Jerry Hoffmann at the Mississippi Forge Council's Conference. They are both dedicated and knowledgeable blacksmiths, and it was a pleasure to meet them.

I regret not being able to attend the recent Ozark Conference. I did enjoy reading about it in the BAM newsletter. I'll try my best to make the next one.

I am glad that Tom set up the chapter presidents' newsletter exchange. I'm sorry that more ABANA chapters and their presidents don't take advantage of this program.

Thank you for a great newsletter.

—David Mudge, president, Louisiana
Metalsmiths Association

(Editor's note: See David's ad in the classified section.)

You may recall that I am director of the Second International Conference on Contemporary Cast Iron Art to be held at Sloss Furnaces in Birmingham, Ala. April 13, 14, 15 and 16, 1994. This conference is being organized by a group of artists/founders from around the country who are actively involved in the casting of their own work and the design and operation of small cupolas. We expect in excess of 500 participants. The historical symbiotic relationship between iron casting and blacksmithing was dependent upon smiths and iron workers working together to consolidate an iron bloom into malleable iron. This relationship was so important that whenever archeologists find an iron cupola a forge is in close proximity. I mention this to remind how much iron casting and forging have in common.

Registration information can be obtained by contacting yours truly or writing to: Second International Conference on Contemporary Iron Casting, c/o Sloss Furnaces, P.O. Box 1781, Birmingham, Ala. 35222.

—David Hartman, St. Louis

Tom's Turn



Some guys who know how to make horseshoes learn to make leaves out of iron. Tom did this leaf demo at the May meeting hosted by Walt Hull in Lawrence, Kansas.

How can anything so good keep getting better? Our past meeting at Walt Hull's in Lawrence, Kansas was great. Good demonstrations, good food and the best junk yard you've ever seen was next door. Walt and Pat McCarty gave several good demos. Doug Hendrickson was good as always and trading in the tail gate department was brisk. Several new members were signed. Phil Cox showed off another version of a growing number of gas forges.

Doug and I took a trip south to the Southeast Regional Blacksmith Conference in Madison, Georgia. On our way we delivered a 25-pound Little Giant at the John C. Campbell Folk School. They have a well equipped training shop in a very comfortable mountain setting.

The Madison Conference was well planned with excellent demonstrations. Doug and I were impressed with Russell Odell from Greenville, Tennessee. He is a top full time blacksmith who also spins brass and copper. Russell has accepted our invitation to demonstrate at the 1994 Ozark Conference.

Todd Kinnikin and I attended the Illinois Valley Blacksmith Association's 13th Annual Conference in Pontiac, Illinois. Clay Spencer was

the demonstrator and even though he had cut his right hand index finger just a few days earlier (only 13 stitches) he put on a great two day demonstration with treadle hammer. Clay is very innovative with tooling and has dozens and dozens of helpful little gadgets to dazzle you with. No way could he show the use of all in only two days, but everyone got more than their money's worth and Clay made numerous items for auction.

Many of our friends in Illinois are anxious to help with the 1994 ABANA Conference. Program planning for the 1994 ABANA Conference is kicking into a higher gear. At a recent meeting many programs were fine tuned.

The Ring project has already been announced and hopes are high that not only will all chapters participate but that the project will bring the chapters closer together. Even though six of the rings will be chosen by Francis Whitaker to make the conference logo, the project is not considered a competition but rather a participation program. Everyone nationwide is reminded to start thinking about items they want to make for the auction and also for the gallery.

New forges will be made for all

stations. There will be two types, one the standard side draft shop forge and the other a smaller more portable type. This work shop could provide the chance for other BAM members who missed the earlier workshop to get in on building a forge for themselves. Keep tuned.

Elections for BAM officers will be held at Doug's July 17th meeting. Doug has a good program planned with several forge stations and as always there will be the Sunday float trip so don't miss this one.

I have had requests for another treadle hammer building workshop. If interested let me know and we will try to put another one together.

A new supply of coal has been ordered and will be warehoused at Lou Mueller's shop in Valley Park.

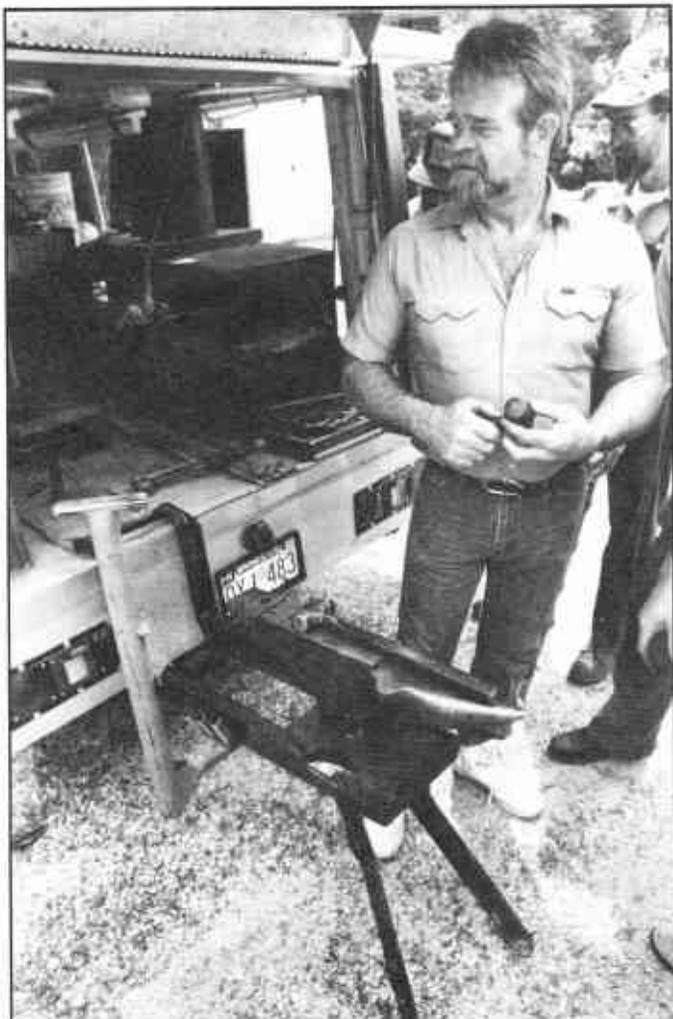
There has been some concern expressed about our past and present policy regarding BAM members paying conference fees to the Ozark Conference. Policy has always been that everyone pays including chairman, workers and demonstrators. Some now think that workers and BAM demonstrators should not pay. Problem is where do you draw the line? We'll talk about it at Doug's.

—Tom Clark

BAM

May MEETING

Below: Larry Murray showed off his rig, which was promptly dubbed the "Swiss Army Truck" for its many built in gadgets like a swing-out anvil, Larry was one of several Kansas farriers on hand for the meeting.



by Jim McCarty

Now we know what Walt Hull goes through every time he heads to a BAM meeting on the St. Louis side of the state. It's a long haul to Lawrence Kansas but the 30 or so smiths that made the trip for BAM's May meeting will all tell you it was worth the drive.

Walt has a small but well-equipped shop that sports a strange but effective forge, a nice power hammer, and three anvils including a 300-pounder.

I rode up with brother Pat and J.K. Reynolds. Pat managed to get us real lost in downtown K.C. looking for the world's largest flea market in a Montgomery Wards building. He promised it would be full of S20 anvils but we'll have to wait to find out — not open on Fridays.

We made it to Lawrence in time to stop by Walt's Friday night. Walt was putting the finishing touches on a real nice coffee table that showed some classy joinery and four different heads for feet.

The animal heads would be Walt's demo the next day. He works with some pretty big stock. Pat showed us how to make snakes using square stock hammered on the diamond to give a nice snakey oval shape to the finished product. Dr. Iron had a new twist to show off, so we made him demonstrate. Tom Clark also picked up the hammer to forge a leaf.

The demos were great but the highlight of the meeting had to be the junk yard next door. I think everyone went home with something neat. I found a nice pair of tongs and an anvil bick for \$5. J.K. found some

tongs and Tom latched on to a nice hammer head. Larry Murray, a Kansas farrier, was trying to talk him out of it. We think Walt must have salted the place with his old tools but I guess we'll never know. There was a lot of good tool steel laying around but who could haul something a foot in diameter?

There were a few tailgate items on hand as usual and as usual Tom bought all of them. He didn't really buy another anvil Thelma. He bought a cone and traded the cone for the anvil. That's OK isn't it?

It's funny how quick the word that someone has a Hay-Buden for sale spreads. It darn near emptied the place. Next time I want to get closer to the demo's I know what to do.

There were a number of farriers from the Kansas group on hand and they proved to be a pleasant lot. We shared commonalities and Pat and I talked Larry and Stan Tracz out of all the rasps and old horseshoes they had on hand.

Everyone got a kick out of the Swiss Army Truck, Larry's rig that featured a swing-out anvil, forge and lots of other gadgets.

We signed up some new members and I hope to see these guys again. Best of all, they had a check for us to repay BAM for the demo Walt and others did at one of their meetings. Walt made a hammer for them and they polished it and raffled it and gave us the money! Maybe we can return the favor some time.

Walt had quite a spread for lunch and we washed it down from a keg full of locally brewed beer. Thanks Walt for making all those long trips. We'll return the favor soon.

On the way back Pat and J.K. were talking about forging their own grave markers reasoning that if they didn't they would end up with stones.

Pat doesn't realize it, but he won't need a marker. I'm going to have him cremated and placed in a drywall bucket so we can use him to anneal tools.

That's the vice-president's job, you know.



Above: Doug Hendrickson (left) and John Murray team up as Doug shows off his chop saw twist. We discussed a number of possible variations on Doug's theme.

May Minutes

BAM's May 23rd meeting was held at Walt Hull's shop in Lawrence Kansas. President Clark called the meeting to order, the last meeting minutes were not read but have been published in the newsletter. The treasurer was not present to make his report.

Old Business:

Tom Clark reported on the Ozark Conference and discussed ideas for next year. Seven of the 40 scholarships given to ABANA Chapters were cashed in.

The bulk purchase of binders to hold back issues of "Anvils Rings" was further discussed. No action taken.

New Business:

BAM received a scholarship to the Illinois Valley Blacksmith Association Conference and it was awarded to Tom Clark. Clay Spencer will be the demonstrator, June 12 and 13.

Alabama Forge Council offered BAM one scholarship to their conference at Tannehill, Alabama September 10-12. No action taken. Contact Tom Clark if you are interested.

The September Meeting at John Murray's has been changed from September 18 to the 25th, John will demonstrate anvil rebuilding.

Announcements:

600 bags of coal have been ordered and should be at Lou Mueller's late this summer.

The Alexander Majors Historical Museum holds a hammer-in the first Sunday of every month from noon to ? Bring tools and equipment. The museum is at 8201 State Line Road, Kansas City, Missouri 64114.

The first Sunday of each month Tom Clark also opens his shop to all comers.

*—Respectfully submitted,
Doug Hendrickson*

President's Message June, 1993

Dear ABANA Chapters,

We are in for a busy summer! We have never had as much going on in ABANA as we have this year. Consider the ABANA/NOMM Invitational Exhibit — this is a first for us. This exhibit will pair the work of ABANA members with those individuals who have been their main influence. We very much appreciate the financial help we are getting from the members and chapters to support this very worthwhile undertaking. We are still not where we need to be financially to cover the expenses, such as shipping, photography and insurance, but we are making progress. Hopefully, we can establish ABANA member exclusive exhibits around the country as an ABANA tradition! You can contact ABANA Board members Joe Harris or Elizabeth Brim through the ABANA Office for more information.

Okay, even the best laid plans can go awry. Our regular ABANA billing was changed to reflect a special offer in connection with Centaur Forge, Ltd. Unfortunately, the billing is apparently being mistaken for commercial advertisement and being thrown away! This became obvious by the extraordinarily high number of members that made it to the "Drop List." We will make sure that all those who may have missed the billing for that reason have the opportunity to rejoin with no interruption in service. In the meantime, better take a second look at that postcard before you toss it aside — it just might be us!

Would you know what to do if one of your members suddenly needed CPR? Does one of your members have a medical condition you should know about? What if someone got cut or burned? Lonnie Stafford, president of the North Carolina Chapter of ABANA, recently suggested that it would be a good idea if you encouraged members of your chapter to take a first aid class. These classes are available almost everywhere by the Red Cross or your local fire department, often for no cost. A first aid kit can be assembled as a collective effort from your membership, or purchased from a local safety supply store. Being properly prepared for emergencies requires very little, and can mean the difference between tragedy and a minor pause in the program. Thanks, Lonnie.

Here's hoping you have a great summer!

Warm Regards,



Clayton Carr
ABANA President

ABANA Liaison

Russian Experience

Bob Jacoby (Florida Newsletter Editor) his wife and 2 children are taking a year to work in Russia for a group called The Citizen's Democracy Corps. He will be assigned to the Business Entrepreneur Program helping small industries convert from government to private ownership. We wish him luck in this endeavor and when he returns possibly we can persuade him to do an article about the Russian Blacksmiths he will visit over there

ABANA Newsletter

The first issue of the newsletter has been sent out to all ABANA members. This is going to be a great resource for blacksmiths and I urge you to get involved by joining ABANA. Not only will there be how-to articles but also event notices, a classifieds section and helpful information to keep you in touch. You must be an ABANA member to receive a copy so if you're not a member yet call today!

Blacksmith School Reopens

Rob Gunter has reopened his Blacksmithing School at a new facility and location. For information and class schedules call or write: The Forgery, 13 Imnaha Road, Tijeras, New Mexico 87059 Phone: (505) 281-8080.

Boy Scouts

There has been interest shown by some Chapters in trying to get the Blacksmith Merit Badge reinstated. Anyone that would be interested in working on this project and coordinating the effort through the chapters should contact the Liaison Committee. This would be a great opportunity to help educate today's youth about our craft and guarantee its existence into the 21st Century.

Bullseye Ryan

Tim Ryan (auctioneer, ABANA Board member and Anvil shooter extraordinaire) issued a challenge to anyone interested in an anvil shoot competition to contact him. If you have never had the opportunity to witness one of these events you are really missing a treat. Tim does stress safety and if you contact him he will be happy to give you pointers on how it is done. Please don't try this until you have all the proper information. Contact Tim by writing or calling him at: Rt. 1 Box 83, Gordonsville, Tennessee 38563 (615) 683-8325.

Newsletter Editor Month

The Chapter Liaison Committee would like to designate June as Newsletter Editor Month. Take the time to call, write or visit with your Chapter Newsletter Editor and let them know how much you appreciate the effort they are taking to keep the lines of communication open within your Chapter. The editor's job can be very demanding and takes a lot of dedication. Most likely you will be asked to contribute something to the newsletter and if you do you will find it can be very rewarding and enjoyable. An ABANA thanks goes out to the Chapter Editors — you are doing a great job!

Logo Contest

The North Carolina Chapter of ABANA has decided their group needs a logo. The entire membership has been asked to submit an entry to vote on the best one at their July meeting. The winning entry will receive a prize. This is a great way to develop a logo and give everyone a chance to participate in a Chapter event.

Move over Mambo

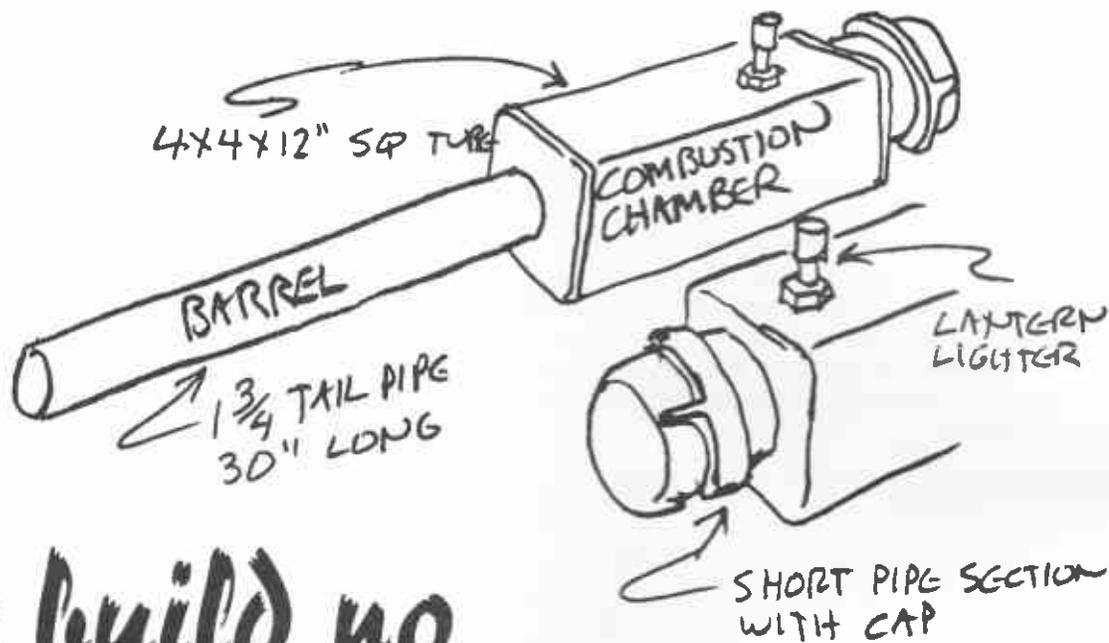
Word has come down that Butch Sheely (Northwest Ohio Blacksmiths) has perfected a new dance called Dance With Anvils. So far only a select few members have been privileged to see it performed. We expect this to be the dance fad for '93.

ABANA Rings Project

The Ring Project has been formally announced for the '91 Conference and it looks like it will be a good one. We hope to see 100 percent participation by the Chapters with this and look forward to seeing the entries. Anyone that wants to make a project for the Conference Auction is encouraged to do so. This will help ABANA and allow us to do more to promote blacksmithing in the future.

— Ron Porter, Chapter Liaison Committee Chairman

Editor's note: Now we know what Doug has been doing with all that hair spray. It's hard to go anywhere without hearing someone mention spud guns. They are so popular in Jeff City that you can't buy a Coleman ignitor in a three-county radius. Some folks have adapted Piezo ignitors from gas grills with good results. If you make one please heed Doug's warning to be careful — I know a guy with a very sore foot caused by a flying potato.



Don't build no wimpy tater gun

by Doug Hendrickson

Teenagers, I'll never understand them. I saw a couple of them down by the river several weeks back with a glued up contraption they called a potato gun. They would stuff a spud down a tube, spray hair spray in the other end, hit an ignitor and BLAM!! The Tater would launch. This thing, while way cool conceptually, was way bad aesthetically. White P.V.C. plumbing with blue glue dripping from the joints is not the way to do it I felt. The whole idea screamed for refinement and the aesthetic considerations that a mature man of 54, with a complete metal working facility could bring to it. As it turned out I was that man, so I did it. The result of my effort is a heck of a spud missile launcher complete with a complement of Gee Gaws, twists and spaghetti from the scrap pile under my forge. The next one will look better, I promise.

What do you do when you make something neat? Right, you show it off, so in late April at the Ozark Conference and again in May at Madison

Georgia, I Demonstrated my marvelous weapon. To this date I have demonstrated my spud gun to over 500 smiths. Their response was just like mine, cool idea, I'll bet I can do it better. What are the specs? What you need is a combustion chamber, a barrel, a way to induce the fuel and an ignition system. The following drawing is how I solved the technical aspects of the tater shooter, the aesthetics are up to you. Rumor has it Daryl Meier is working on a double barrel Damascus gun that says Aroostok in the pattern. Fred Caylor has already reported in that his gun does shoot. Doug Wilson has an idea for a new potato pistol.

1. Weld the tailpipe to a plate and weld the plate to one end of the 4X4 square tube. Be sure to weld a 1/4" rod across the end of the tailpipe at the square tube end to prevent the potato from being pushed into the combustion chamber.

2. Drill the combustion chamber to accept the ignition device (lantern lighter made by coghlan part no. 503A). The ignitor should be mount-

ed so that it can be serviced from time to time. The lantern lighter came from Wal-Mart.

3. Attach a plate to a large cross-section (short) pipe and install it on the breach end of the combustion chamber. Cap the pipe. I attached the plate with bolts so I could get inside to deal with the flint.

4. The gun is functionally finished and it's time for fun, sights, mount, ramrod, etc. I personally tried to make my gun look like a cross between Conan and Capt. Kirk.

A. Ram a potato down the barrel. Choose a spud bigger than the barrel so it trims it to size as you push it home.

B. A squirt of Pam down the barrel after loading helps the missile shoot out faster.

C. Unscrew the breach cap and spray a quick shot of hair spray into the chamber. Just a dab will do you. Don't spray the flint.

D. Recap it quickly and touch it off.

E. This gun could cause great bodily harm, please be careful!

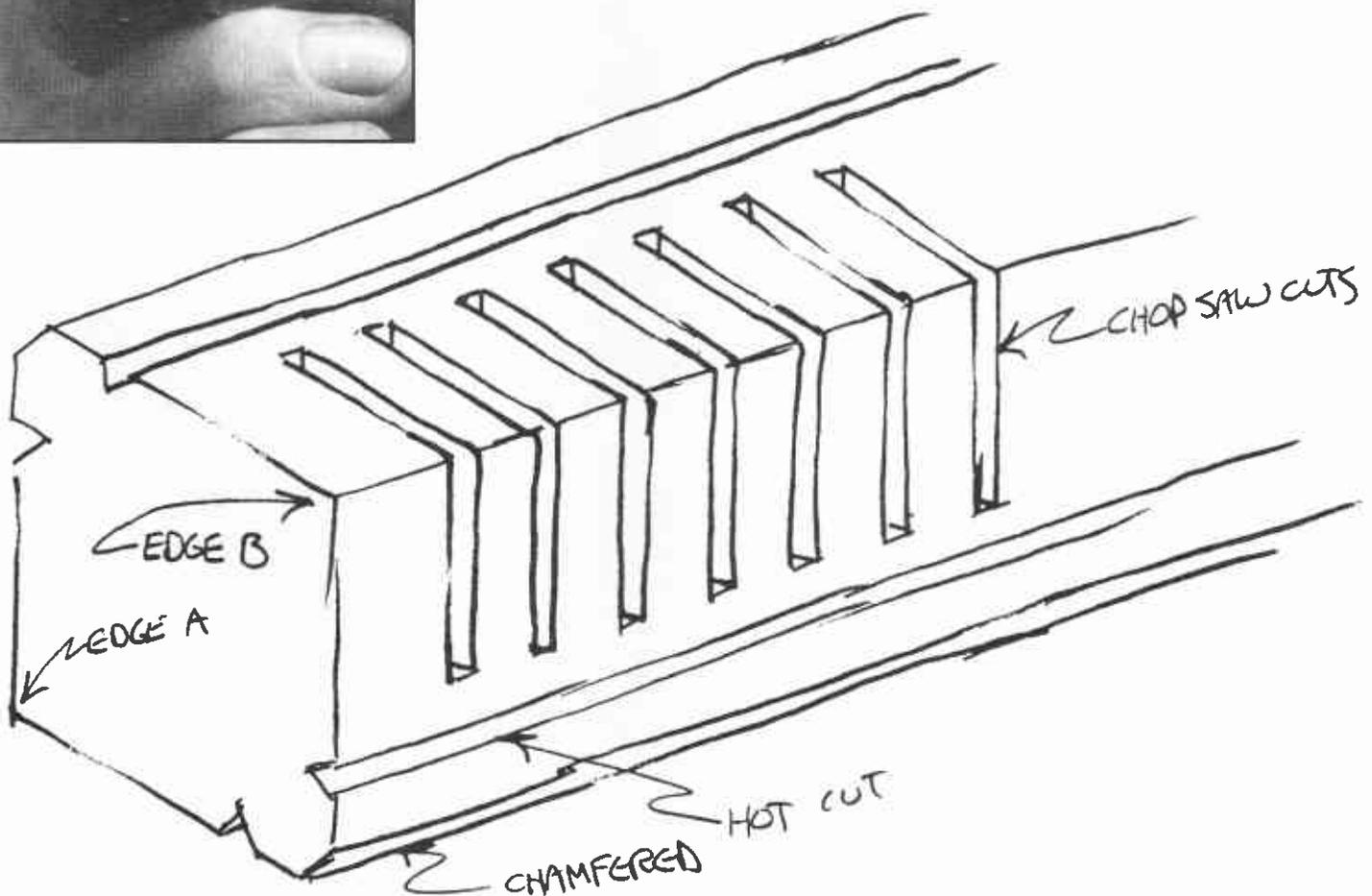


Chop saw twist

Dr. Iron's got a brand new kink

1. Hot cut grooves as illustrated
2. Chamfer edges defined by hot cuts
3. Chop saw (hacksaw-bandsaw) a series of cuts on edges A and B as illustrated
4. Heat it and twist to taste
5. Experiment with placement of hot cuts as well as the depth and frequency of the chopsaw cuts

— Doug Hendrickson



Forging at the Folk School

by Jim McCarty

For over a year I have been looking forward to a trip to the John C. Campbell Folk School thanks to a Clay Spencer scholarship given to me by BAM. I wanted to go last fall so that I could see the mountains in color, but first I had to see a new baby into the world. Daniel is 7 months old now so I picked Memorial Day weekend as the date for my adventure.

I had a few preconceived notions about the place. I figured classes would number in the 25-30 range and I guessed we would share time at the forge, there to hammer out practice pieces like a square corner, a forge weld or the like.

Wrong on both counts.

My basic blacksmithing class had just 6 people in it — and that is typical of all classes not taught by Francis Whitaker. And as it turned out Don Witzler, the instructor, believes you should end up with something when you learn new skills.

For this reason I returned home with a boat load of finished projects and the knowledge to repeat this effort. I don't know where else you could get this kind of training. I learned more in a week than I have all year long working on my own.

Don Witzler turned out to be quite an instructor. A member of the Northwest Ohio Blacksmiths, Don attended Jim Batson's weekend of wizards and Damascus class at the folk school a few years ago. He is a fine knife maker, usually working a Batson-style wizard onto the handle. He is also accomplished at silver and copper smithing.

Besides being a knifeman, Don is also a black powder type and his bearded, pipe smoking face and no-words-wasted speech fit the part. To him lay a daunting task — only two of the six had any forging experience.

It turned out to be an ambitious group, and I think Don will tell you he enjoyed the week. Before our time was up we made a few required projects: A set of three hooks, a back

scratcher that started as 6 inches of 3/8 round and ended up 24 inches long, and a pair of tongs. We also made our own chisel and punch from a piece of coil spring.

The back scratcher was a real challenge. We did it the hard way, drawing out the stock in this manner — square, then octagon, then round. Don left me with this piece of advise — pretend you are a power hammer. It always hits in the same place every time. Hammer control is the key he stressed time after time.

When we moved into the tongs, Don had mercy on our poor souls and let us use the 25 pound Little Giant. That was my first experience and it made a believer out of me.

I was there for a reason, and so I spent every moment I could in the shop. This meant getting up early and coming back after the regular session ended to work until 10 or 11 p.m. Don was always happy to oblige.

Besides the required project, I made a pair of prairie candleholders from the new ABANA newsletter. This gave me a chance to try out the spring fuller for the candle cups. The spring fuller works well once you master it. You have to keep the pipe hot or it will split and you have to keep turning it and hitting it with light blows until it gets pretty small.

I also made a trivet and my first forge weld, which went together the first time I hit it. Those deep fires make a big difference.

I also made a fireplace shovel and tried to put Doug's chop saw twist on the handle from memory. It wasn't quite right but it's different.

There were some ambitious projects attempted and completed by my classmates. Chuck Patrick, a well-known bladesmith from the Brasstown area, stopped by several times to see what we were up to. Chuck says he gets a lot of ideas from the basic class because they come with fresh ideas.

The folk school has excellent facilities — electric forges, Swedish anvils, and a full slate of tools. Many of the tools carry Francis Whitaker's



F in a diamond touchmark. Some things are showing wear — the grinder, for example, needs a switch and the wire wheel is about gone.

But for the most part the tools are all there, save for a few you probably need to make yourself.

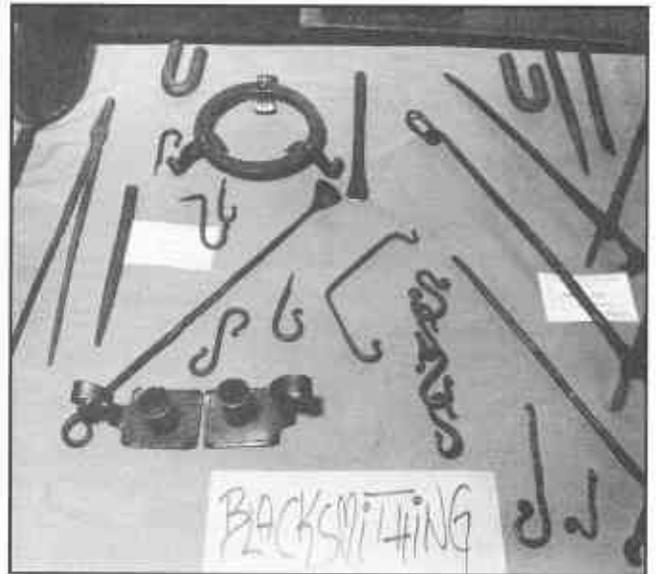
The food is excellent and the atmosphere at the place is perfect for learning a lost art like blacksmithing. You can't help but emerge a better person after a stay there.

I picked a good time to go — it was Appalachian Music Week, and everywhere you looked there were little clusters of musicians jamming with banjos, fiddles, guitars and dulcimers. At night there are presentations by the instructors — Don did a demo on his wizard knives that really wowed them. On the last night we put everything we made on display.

It's my hope that BAM will offer at least one scholarship a year to the school to a newcomer. The cost is steep to do it on your own — \$250 for tuition and \$190 for lodging (only about \$30 per day — you can't get a motel for that!). You also have to pay for coal (\$20) and your materials, which cost me just \$10.

We'll all benefit by sending someone there since the returning scholar can pass on what they know at the next meeting.

My thanks to Clay Spencer for his generosity and to Don Witzler for his time. What a week!



Left page: Don Witzler, of the Northwest Ohio Blacksmiths, was the instructor for the class. Don is carving a wizard on the end of a knife. Top: The most unlikely group of blacksmiths ever assembled turned out to be pretty good. I think most of these guys will try it again. Left: Don was everywhere sharing his knowledge of the craft. Above: We turned out a lot of projects in a short time. This stuff was on display at the end of the week. Bottom Left: Clay's Corner in downtown Brasstown is the possum capital of the world and along with the folk school the cultural center of the area.

BAM

GALLERY

A showcase of work by BAM members. Got a project you are especially proud of? Send a photo of it to the newsletter editor. Be sure to include your name and tell us a little about how you made it.



Above: Coffee table made by Lou Mueller was on display at the forge building workshop in February. **Right:** Knife from the forge of Bob Miller. **Below:** Trivet made at John C. Campbell Folk School was first forge weld for the editor.





Far Left: Knife by V.J. McCrackin is 3 bar twist damascus, 203E and 1095, blade is 7 inch long sheep horn handle, nickle silver pins. **Left:** Railroad spike knife by Kevin McCrackin inspired by Jerry Hoffmann demo at January meeting. Handle is split four ways and then twisted. Photos by Kevin McCrackin.



Above: A penney shows the scale of this miniature twist Damascus camp knife by V.J. McCrackin, made with 364 layers of O1 and 1018, pink mother of pearl handles n/s pins. V.J. made it for his first daughter Brittany Taylor DuLany. Photo by Kevin McCrackin.



Above: Frying pan with pie crust edge made by Doug Hendrickson. **Right:** Wizard head fork made by Carl Buck was a trade item at the January meeting. It features a lot of tedious file work on the tines.



BAM NEWS

Happenings

Blacksmithing & Metallurgy

The Sumner County Museum and Board Vice Chairman Billy Green invite you to attend the 2nd annual Blacksmith & Metallurgy Convention and Trade Festival, a gathering of the Appalachian Area Chapter of ABANA on Saturday, July 24 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The event will be held on the grounds of the Sumner County Museum, 183 W. Main St. in Gallatin, Tenn.

The purpose of the event is to provide a better understanding of the past through demonstrations and displays of finished products and sale items. In addition to the anvils, bellows forges and hammers, the museum has added a Trade Festival to the event. On hand will be soap makers, glass blowers, jewelry makers, basketmakers, woodworkers and more.

If you would like to demonstrate or display, booth space is available at no charge. Contact Billy Green, event coordinator, Village Green Blacksmith Shop, P.O. Box 22, Gallatin, Tenn. 37066, or call (615) 452-1631. Registration deadline is July 16.

Quad State Roundup

The much anticipated, "Mother of all blacksmithing conferences", the Quad-State Round-up will be held on Sept. 18-19 at the Stude-

backer Frontier Homestead near Tipp City, Ohio. Rumor has it this will be the last year the event will be held at the Studebaker home, so don't miss this one. This event has grown to be the largest regional gathering of blacksmiths in the world today. There will be six demonstration sites going for both days — and one of them will be by Francis Whitaker. Free camping will be available in an adjoining field and tailgate selling of blacksmithing-related equipment is strongly encouraged. The campground will be open on Thursday night for those who want the first crack at the tailgaters. A registration package will go out to anyone who has attended one of the two events in mid-summer. Those interested in attending for the first time should call to be put on the mailing list. For additional information contact Ken Scharabok at (513) 427-2447. BAM members please note: Our September meeting date has been changed so you can make our meeting and go the the Quad-State Round-Up.

Classifieds

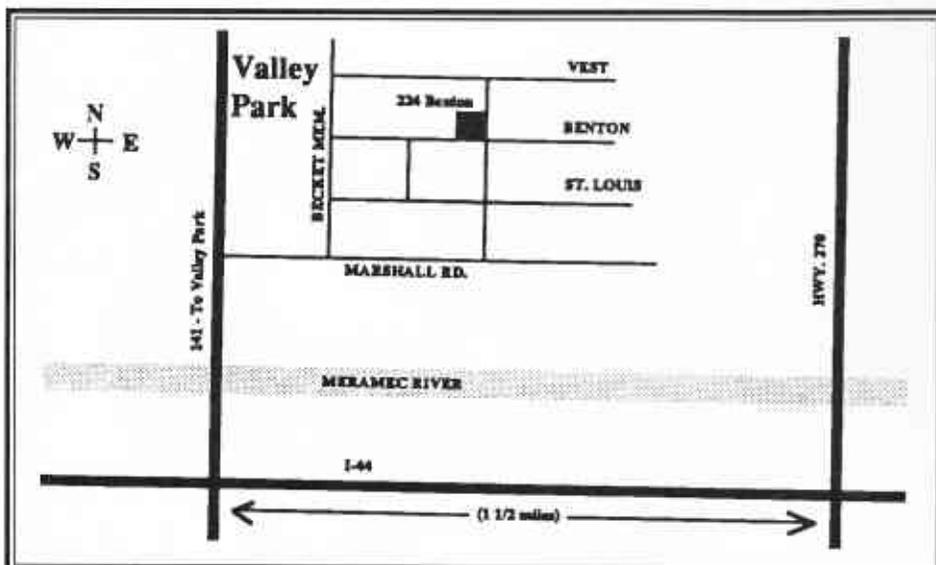
Drafting arm, Dietzgen, with 2 scales one plastic, one metal. Features 360 degree rotation. Will trade for a large vise or for partial payment on a 250-pound (or larger) anvil. Bill Goodman, 950 S. Fremont, Springfield, Mo. 65804; (417) 866-1492.

For sale: Champion hand crank blower, \$100, Mark Boyd, Rt. 1 Box 1179, Bois D'arc, Mo. 65612. (417) 672-2708.

For sale: 250 pound Moloch Power Hammer, Model E-72, complete with flat dies, old leather belt, and a 5 HP 3-Phase motor. Hammer is in fair to good condition. \$2,500 firm. I also have a very limited amount of 4"X4", 4340 die stock, \$40 per foot. Remember, this hammer weighs nearly 7,000 pounds. Be sure you can haul it. Moloch is nearly the same as Meyer or Murray. David Mudge, Magic Hammer Forge, 15227 Mansfield Rd., Bogalusa, La. 70427.

Coal on sale

New members take note: BAM just got a new shipment of coal for sale to members only. The coal comes in 50-pound bags and burns real clean. If you need some, it is stockpiled at Lou Mueller's shop in Valley Park (see map below). Usually someone will bring a few bags to the meetings and you can also get it from Tom Clark and from other members who buy it in large quantities. BAM buys the coal by the truckload to keep our costs down. It's just another benefit of being a member.



Next Meeting: July 17 at Doug Hendrickson's

July is always BAM's month to play in the sun, and this year will be no exception. We head to Doug and Bonnie Hendrickson's this time around for some high-calibre forging on Saturday and then a chance to cool off in the Black River on Sunday.

Please note the date change — this meeting was originally scheduled for July 10.

Lesterville is a long ways from everywhere so plan on camping Saturday night. The Riversedge Campground is a half mile from Doug's. Give them a call at (314) 637-2422 and they will reserve a camp site (\$4.75) and a canoe (\$19) for you. If you prefer softer beds call the Black River Family Restaurant and Motel at (314) 637-2600.

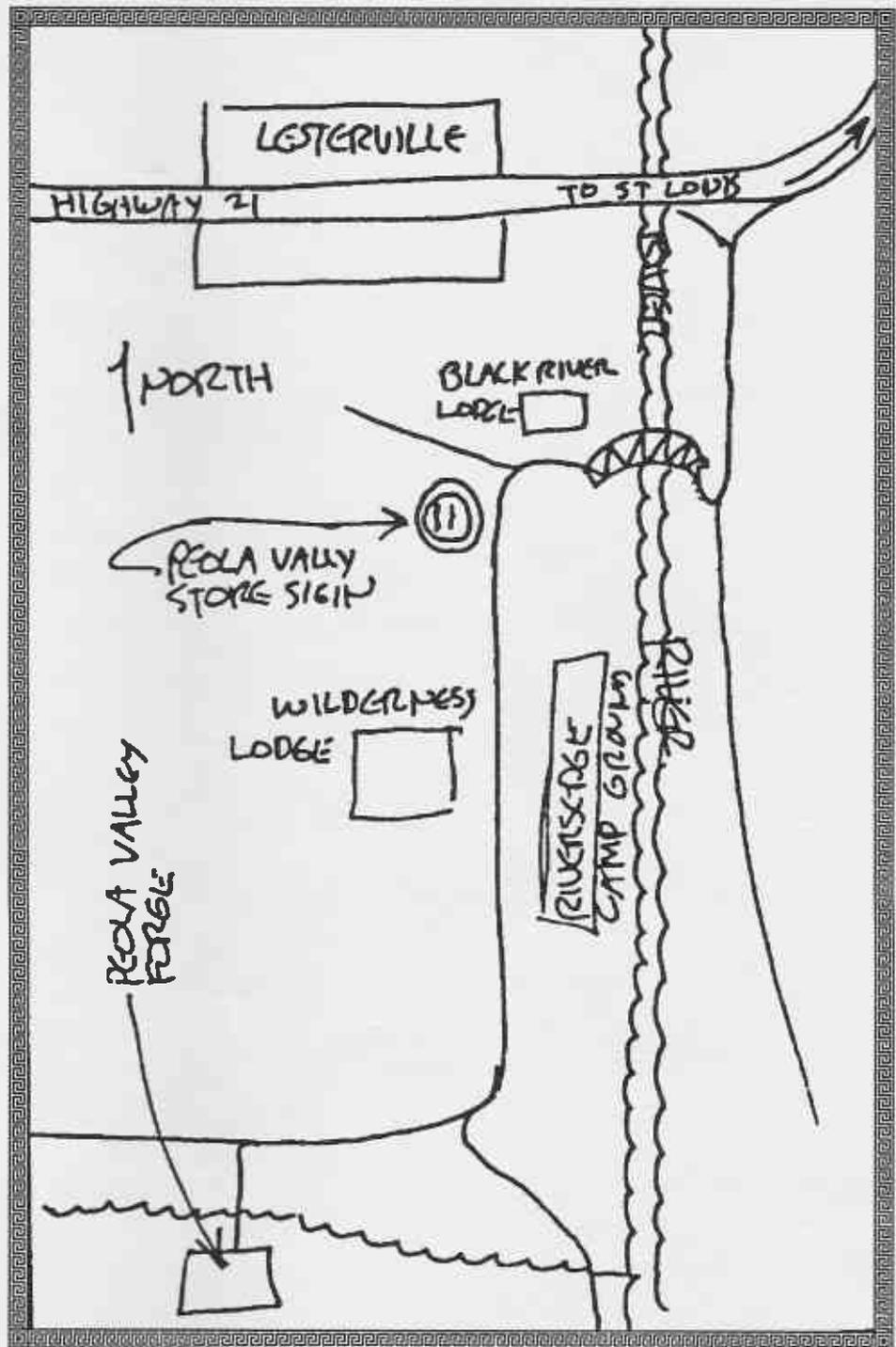
The morning program will feature demos by BAM regulars and a special feature will be a demo by Jim McCarty who will show a little of what he learned at the John C. Campbell Folk School. Doug, as always, has a few demos up his sleeve and maybe we can get him to show how he pops popcorn with his tater gun.

The business meeting will be at noon and will feature election of officers. After that, beginners can step up to the forge and with the help of more experienced members tackle some basic forging problems. Bring questions, problems and your favorite hammer. Four forges, no waiting.

While we do our thing the spouses and kids can play in Black River.

The trade item will be a toilet paper holder (or a magazine holder if you use this newsletter for your supply.) Don't forget the iron in the hat and bring along your tailgate items if you have anything to sell or swap.

Doug is 3 miles off Highway 21. Watch for the Peolia Valley Forge signs along the way. If you get lost call 637-2576 and a rescue team will be dispatched.



New date for September meeting

John Murray is the host for the next BAM meeting. The date for this one has also been changed to miss the date for the Quad States Roundup. John's meeting will be held September 25 in New Melle, Mo. The agenda for this one should be especially good. John will show us how to rebuild an anvil. He is an ace at anvil rebuilding and has a special rod that makes the face better than new. Bring your old clunker along and maybe we'll all go home better blacksmiths. Several trade items were discussed, the last one being some kind of twist.

BAM Members please note:

The date for the July and September meetings has been changed. Please see page 19 of this issue for details.

**BAM
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Loose Creek, MO 65054**



Address Correction Requested