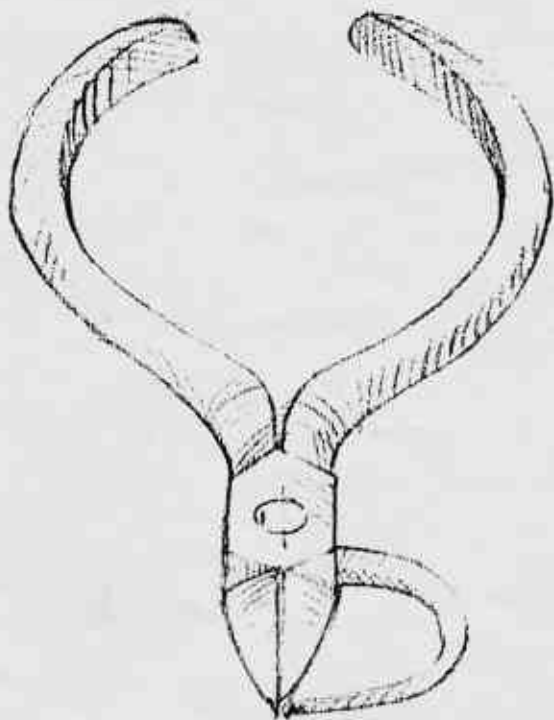


# Newsletter <sup>of the</sup> Blacksmiths Association of Missouri

OCT. - NOV. 1989



JH·BB

WHAT IS IT? — SEE PAGE 5

The Blacksmiths' Association of Missouri is a chapter of The Artist-Blacksmiths' Association of North America. This organization is devoted to preservation, advancement, and communication between blacksmiths of Missouri and surrounding areas. BAM's newsletter's goal is to support these ideas. Letters to the editor, tech tips, tools for sale, or any ideas which further these ends will be considered for publication.

Occasionally some material included in this publication will be copyrighted and may not be reproduced without written consent of the author. BAM welcomes the use of any other material printed in this newsletter provided the author and this organization be given credit.

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Dues are \$15.00 per year, which includes a subscription to the bimonthly BAM newsletter. Please make checks payable to Blacksmith Association of Missouri.

SEND CHECKS TO: Steve Austin  
 44 N.E. Munger Road  
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Next Meeting

November 11th Meeting

The Stone County Iron Works in Mountain View Arkansas will host our Nov. meeting. Dave Matthews shop is set up for production iron work with numerous forging stations. Have you ever seen 20 powerhammers all in a row? This meeting should prove to be very interesting. Don't miss it! The trade item is a candle holder.

January Meeting

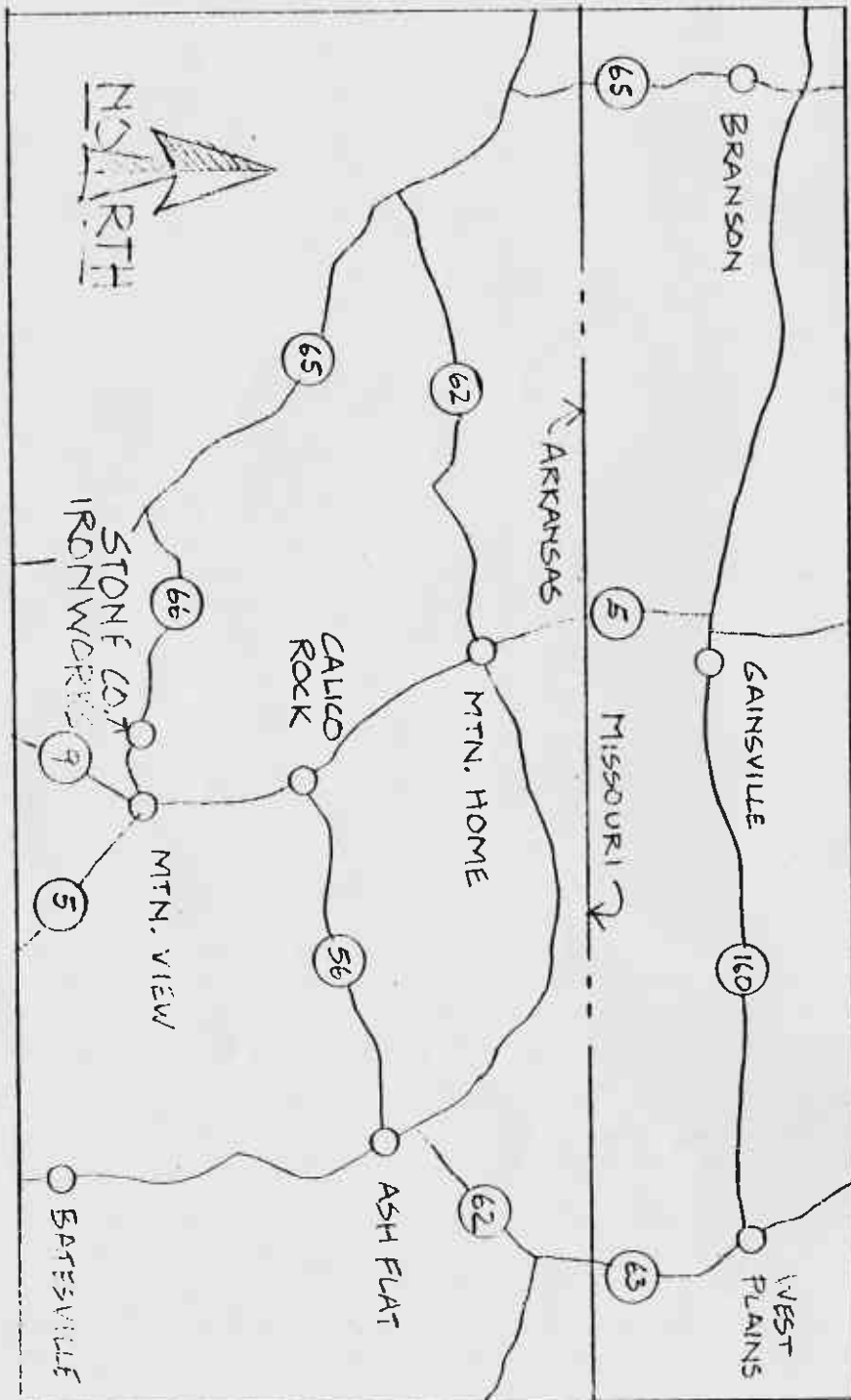
Our January meeting will be in Londell, Mo. at Jerry Hoffmann's shop. More to come in the next newsletter.

## September Meeting

Vernon and Eunice Fischer hosted the September meeting at their home and shop in Rocky Mount on the shores of Lake of the Ozarks. About 25 folks turned out for this get together with many of BAM's regulars and several new people. Arkansas was well represented with 6 or 7 smiths from Mountain View.

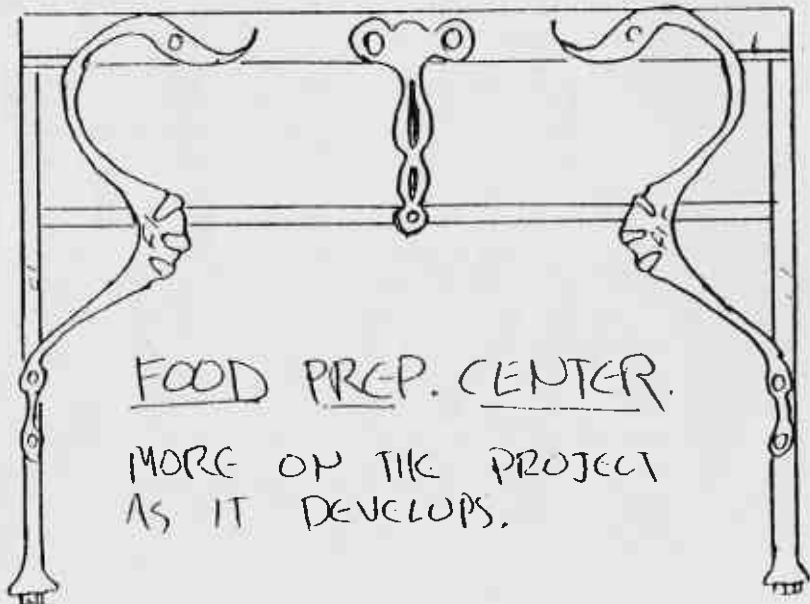
Among the Arkansas contingent was a fine knife maker Shawn Ellis. Shawn brought a beautiful 10" blade with a stag horn handle and brass hilt. Working with basic tools Shawn forged his knife from 01 steel and heat treated it, leaving the back bone flexible with a hard cutting edge. I think we can expect many more fine knives from Mr. Ellis' shop in the future.

Bernie Tappel demonstrated how to make a gig from an old pitch fork. Doug Hendrickson brought his new Plasma Arc cutter and demonstrated some of the possibilities this strange tool is capable of doing. It cut through aluminum, brass, steel and copper like a hot knife through butter. Steve Austin attended FIFI (First International Festival of Iron) in Cardiff Wales in late August and early September. He presented an exciting slide show of his travels. The conference had demonstrators from all across the globe, exhibitors of both contemporary and historic iron work and even some hands on work stations. Steve did some leaf forms that will be included in a sundial which was forged at the festival. FIFI was a great success from all Steve had to say. Colin Campbell reported that all is on track for our 2 day work shop with Peter Ross in March. At this writing the exact dates have not been pinned down.



Walt Hull, project director, presented drawings of our food preparation center and solicited volunteers to start forging parts. Jim Waller and Shawn Ellis will each be forging two braces while Doug Hendrickson will be doing the four legs. Walt is still at the drawing table designing the rest of the piece. More forging assignments will be doled out at our November meeting.

(Typist note: The meeting broke up shortly after our meal was served and many of the guys hit the road. Little did they know the forging went on until almost 8 o'clock that night. Three of our Arkansas members arrived after 3 o'clock due to automobile trouble in southern Missouri. In hand they were toting the trade item of the day, brooms. One was iron rope made in the shape of a hangman's noose with a nice broom attached. The other was an iron ear of corn in detail with 2 husk leaves turned back. The broom was made from what else-cork husk. We enjoyed visiting with these guys.) Thanks! Vernon and Eunice you were great hosts.



## THE OLD WAY

BY AL STEPHENS

I first became interested and involved with blacksmithing at Lincoln's New Salem State Historic Site near Springfield, Ill. The blacksmith shop there is set up much as it would have been in 1835. Because of this, my interest tends to run towards tools and any item that would have been made or used by smiths of all kinds of that era. Many of these items are no longer in use, and sadly all we have left are pictures and descriptions of them.

In these articles I'll show and tell about tools, cooking implements, lighting devices, and any old thing that may have been used by our forefathers (and foremothers). So if anyone has a grandfather who was a blacksmith, or knows anyone whose grandfather was a blacksmith, and has any interesting items, send me a photograph or sketch and any information you have about it and we'll see what we can all learn.

The picture on the cover of the newsletter was shown to several people as I was writing this article. It was called:

1. "some kind of pliers" - retired machinist
2. "looks like a catfish skinner" - retired teacher
3. "ear piercer" - teenager
4. "don't know and don't care" - wife

The place that I first saw these was in a reprint of A Catalogue of Tools for Watch and Clock Makers by John Wyke of Liverpool, originally published between 1758 and 1770. They are called Hawk Bill Pliers. Alan Smith, Senior Lecturer in the History of Art Department, University of Manchester, England, describes them as:

"An unusual but useful tool with the left nose in the form of a hook working against the flat right nose. The manner of showing this is somewhat deceptive, but the inner face of the right nose is shown as though seen from the left, with a serrated surface to grip any work in the pliers. This tool must have been very useful for holding pieces with upturned edges, e.g., spring barrels or contrate wheels. The tool may have been used by jewelers for closing the hinges of pins on the backs of brooches."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>John Wyke, A Catalogue of Tools for Watch and Clock Makers. University Press of Virginia: Charlottesville, VA, 1978, pp. 44-45.

# SHOWBIZ

More advice on doing demonstrations  
By Handsome Heavy-Duty (Hisownself)

In the August-September issue of BAM's newsletter, Brad Silberberg offered some advice on blacksmithing demo's. I would like to offer a bit more and argue some of the points that Brad raised.

When you give a B/S (you may interpret the abbreviation as my wife does, or as Blacksmithing) demo, you are an attraction, as much or more so as the band, fife and drum corps, or the guy who makes animals from the long skinny balloons. These demos are often more show biz than blacksmithing. People come to see you perform. Some buy, but most watch. They expect you to entertain them. They often come back 2 or 3 times and ask where you will be appearing next.

The next point is where Brad and I disagree very much. When you demo in public, it is imperative that you separate your equipment from the civilians. At the BAM meetings, we all know the risks and accept them. Civilians don't know the dangers and if they were to be hurt, you would probably have the immense displeasure of being introduced to some very nasty people with law degrees and large monthly payments on BMW's and condos in Bermuda. I'm sure they would appreciate any contributions that you might care to make. Why take chances? Segregate yourself. We rope off a 20'x20' area. That way, I can keep 5 or 6 feet between myself and the

crowd. They can't reach anything to "help" me and the tools have to walk farther to get lost.

Try to get a shade tree, it helps you judge the heat better and it is a lot cooler. A chestnut is poetic, but take what you can get. We have a fly that we use when there is no shade and it helps when the weather is iffy.

Know your B/S history, at least as much as you can absorb. Bring a piece of old wrought iron to show the grain that appears as it oxidizes. Know some local history, I try to bring up the Meremac Iron Works in relation to the wrought iron. Try to explain tempering in simple terms. Demonstrate how the iron loses it's magnetic properties when it is heated. Tell them how charcoal was used, explain the difference between coal and coke. These are questions that I'm asked all the time.

Don't try to be a voodoo witch doctor. Because, if you do, there will be somebody in the crowd who knows something about what you're doing and he will, I garrowntee, make an ass out of you. There are a lot of welders, tool and die men, and various other metalworking tradesmen out there. They know if it is B/S or BS.

Little quickies of 15 or 20 minutes are good for demos, and people often buy them because they saw you make it. Carry a set of letter and number dies to initial and date your work. Believe it or not, there are those who consider us B/Sers as artists.

When you have a sale, make a big thing out of it. Flirt with the ladies. Talk to the men, ask them what they do for a living. Make them feel special. Most people just want to see a friendly face and have an interested

person to talk to. When you talk to the people, it keeps you from getting bored and it helps keep the crowd from drifting away. If the promoter sees that you always have a good crowd, that you are a good attraction, you will be invited back, maybe with a raise.

Talk to the people as you would like to be talked to, don't talk down to them. Remember, they didn't know it all the first day, like we did. Most are genuinely curious and want to know more. Always remember, you are there for the people's benefit, if they weren't there, you wouldn't be either. So what if every other person's grandfather was a blacksmith, yours was a horsethief and that was a hell of a lot more exciting. Occassionally you may run into an all-dayer. Then you have to diplomatically explain that you have to get back to work, or go take a long needed leak.

Speaking of breaks, don't forget them. You can get awfully tired just hammering for 6 or 8 hours straight. If you drink beer or anything with caffeine, you will get very dehydrated and weak. Alcohol and caffeine make the kidneys work overtime, they take the fluid out faster the you can replace it. You'll find that when it is time to call in the dogs and piss on the fire that you will be too pooped to party. Besides, if the people are too far away to smell your breath, they may think that you're half a bubble off from the goofy way that you are acting. Besides guys, it's easy enough to get hurt when you're sober.

We do about 2 shows a month starting in May or June. We've got the packing and setting up down to a science. I can unload the trailer and be hammering within an hour and a half or less. We pack up even quicker. We only do 2 day shows because of the packing and traveling. It isn't worth the trouble

for a one day show. About 50 or 60 miles is the limit for travel or you spend too much time driving. If you go any farther than that, you should ask for 2 nights lodging. If it is shorter, then \$50 to \$100 is about right depending on the distance and conditions involved. You have a lot of time and trouble not to mention expense in doing demos. When you pull a trailer load of tools, you can't bring a trailer of finished work. We bring a small amount of finished goods and sell what we make. This is basically a hobby with me, I do it because I enjoy it. However I would like for it to pay for itself and not become a charity.

I want to address Brad's comment about "Colonial Drag." When we take our little dog and pony show on the road, we try to create a mood, a little slice of time. The guys at Silver Dollar City wouldn't have near the appeal if they all dressed in industrial gray work uniforms. How would Peter Ross and the folks at Williamsburg do if they were all in color coordinated jump suits with the contrasting left coast stripe down the sleeve? You're selling an idea or mood much as a craft. Most of the shows that you will do are meant as escapism. The people forget about the neighbors, the bald tires, and the home equity loan that just went to the max. For a day or an afternoon they can escape all of that, if you help a little.

When we do a rendezvous, it is the Williamsburg type clothes, knee breeches, drop sleeve shirts, weskits, and a tricorne hat. Buckle shoes were proper for that period, but a tradesman, like a smith, wouldn't have worn them in the shop. When I work, it is without the weskirt and with the do-rag. Everyone says you look like a pirate but your hair is a little cleaner and doesn't catch fire as quickly. We keep our water jugs and coolers covered with tow sacks or

blankets. We drink from crockery mugs. I have even had a pair of small round eyeglasses made to keep my outfit kosher. My wife, The Divine Donna Jean, dresses as the ladies did at that time.

For the 1850 to 1900 period, it is broadfall pants and the calico or osnaburg shirt, much like the "Little House on the Prairie" series. For the early 20th century, dress like Roy Underhill or wear the good old, wonderfully comfortable bib overalls.

Try to use tools that are appropriate to your time period. This is kind of iffy I know, but don't use vicegrips or tape measures and other obviously modern tools. If you have to use a modern tool, make a joke of it. Tell them it is an optical illusion because it hasn't been invented yet. That usually gets a giggle and keeps me from being heckled. I often bring unusual tongs and handled tools that I know that I won't use, but they look good in the tool rack and generate a lot of comment. Do not use jigs. I know they are often essential, but leave them in the shop, the folks want you to do it the hard way. A friend of mine had a request for a heart hook. It was one of those days when he was really cooking. He knocked it out in about 5 minutes. The price was \$5. The prospective patron wouldn't pay because he made it look too easy.

I hope that my ideas have helped anyone who may try to take up this area of blacksmithing. It is often frustrating, discouraging, and hard on the bod, but it is also habit forming. The day before is always one of anticipation, the day after is one of dread, when you have to unload the trailer. I never do though, it can wait another day. This past summer has left me with a lot of good memories and new friends, I'm looking forward to the next "season." All in all it

is one big continual learning process, I don't think that it will ever end, at least I hope that it doesn't.

Keep on Hammerin,

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#### Editors Note

This newsletter is the product of several folks who need a thank you from all of BAM. Thanks to Bernie and Patti Tappel and their computer, Wall Hull, Al Stephens and Judd Hirshfield, who contribute material, Jerry Hoffmann, for his illustrations and layout, and Karen Hoffmann for paste up and mailing.

#### Renewing your BAM Membership

You may have noticed we no longer nag you about getting your \$15 bucks to our treasurer to renew your membership. The reason is that Bernie has programmed the computer so that your due date is printed on your newsletter mailing label. We all would hate for your membership to slide so check it out and take care of business. The last newsletter you receive before your membership is to expire will also have an extra label on it notifying you that your membership is about to expire.

#### Bulk Coal Purchase

Ken Rehmer of Cole Camp, Mo. has offered the use of a building on his place to store coal in if anyone is interested in a big buy. The last big coal purchase was just dumped on the ground outside - not a good deal. Contact Ken if you want to try to get it together.

Ken Rehmer  
Rt. 3  
Cole Camp, Mo. 65325  
816-668-2371

# ABANA

Artist-Blacksmiths' Association of North America



P.O. Box 1181, Nashville, Indiana 47448  
Executive Secretary, Janelle Gilbert

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Phone: (812) 988-6919

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE October 1989

Dear Friends,

I'm pleased with the return of the board of directors ballots and by-laws change. I wish I could give you the results, but the ballots are still being processed. I will notify the candidates on September 29th and I will update the membership in the next chapter mailing and Anvil's Ring Fall issue (due out in December).

We still have some of the engineer and baseball caps left from our 1988 ABANA Conference to be used for chapter fund-raising. These caps have an '88 conference logo patch which can be replaced with your individual chapter logo. Baseball caps are \$2.00 each and engineer caps are \$4.00 each. Be sure to order in lots of twelve and add \$2.00 for shipping of each lot order (any combination).

The gas forge plans are going like hotcakes and if you wish to get in on the first printing, be sure to contact the ABANA Office as soon as possible. Member price is \$15.00 and non-member price is \$20 with an additional \$2.00 for shipping on any order.

The British Artist-Blacksmiths Association (BABA) is to be commended for the excellent conference held at Cardiff Wales in September. It was an international event in every sense of the word --from the conference booklets given to each delegate upon arrival, to the food and conference site. Can you think of a better place to have a blacksmith conference than at a 900 year old castle? I understand they were building onto the thing when Columbus discovered America! How's that for an antique? It was wonderful meeting old and new friends and it was obvious to everyone in attendance that they were getting their money's worth.

The demonstrations and the lectures were each 2 hours long with 30 minute breaks. No two events were scheduled at the same time and you came away knowing that you had the opportunity to attend everything you chose. I am unsure if this schedule would work for the ABANA conference as we have more than twice the delegates in attendance; food for thought, however.

The BABA conference was sponsored by Allied Steel so the funding was substantial compared to the ABANA conference budget. The large amount of money available certainly showed itself but the incredible organization was what pulled it all together. In my opinion we who attended were certainly treated to the event of the decade. Good job BABA!

The ABANA board is preparing for the annual budget meeting in Tipp City, Ohio coming up the second week in November. If you have anything that you would like discussed at the meeting, please inform someone on the ABANA board very soon.

Warm regards,

Dorothy Steigler  
ABANA President

DES/jrg

FOR SALE

150 lb. Armitage Anvil - \$140

2 Champion 400 Blowers \$35 & \$20

26" x 38" cast iron Buffalo Forge with  
fabricated fire pot--no blower \$35

Contact: Bernie Tappel  
Rt. 1 Box 81  
Henley, Mo. 65040  
Ph. 314-496-3793

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Design Competition for a Sign Bracket for the  
Headquarters of the American Farriers  
Association

This Competition is open to all Blacksmiths.

Want to show off your creative skills? Send  
a scale drawing of what you envision as the  
sign bracket for the new AFA headquarters in  
Lexington. The steel fabricated bracket  
should be L-shaped, or any shape that will  
hold a sign approximately 3' long. Design or  
theme silhouettes may be used to complete the  
bracket.

Please send your scale drawing to Charles  
Orlando, PO Box 37, Belmont, NY 14813, by  
December 31, 1989. If you wish to also  
fabricate the bracket, state the cost of  
fabrication less installation. If you have  
any questions, call Charley at 716-268-7383.

The results will be announced at the AFA  
convention at Lubbock, Texas at the beginning  
of March 1990.



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