

Saltfork Craftsmen Artist-Blacksmith Association

February 2011



New work by member Teresa Gabrish.

**Saltfork Craftsmen
Artist-Blacksmith Association
Officers and Directors**

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The Saltfork Craftsmen Artist-Blacksmith Association, a non-profit organization of amateur and professional artist and craftsmen, publishes this newsletter monthly. Our purposes are the sharing of knowledge, education and to promote a more general appreciation of the fine craftsmanship everywhere. We are a chapter of the Artist-Blacksmith Association of North America.

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Visit our Saltfork Craftsmen Website:

It's not too early to be thinking about your membership. All memberships expire on March 31st unless you have paid ahead or are a life time member. There is a 30 day grace period before you start missing newsletters. Back newsletter WILL NOT be sent if you go past the 30 day grace to pay your dues. A post card reminder will be mailed out during March to help those that tend to procrastinate. Check your mailing label if you are not sure where your membership stands.

We have an election for board members whose terms are expiring this year. There will be a ballot in next months newsletter. When you get it PLEASE fill it out and get it back to us ASAP. There are over 300 members in this club and we average about 30 ballots each election. I know that there are many out of state members that are only interested in the newsletter but that still leave over 200 instate that should be taking more interest in how and by whom this club is run.

Many of our board members have held their positions for a long time and are now thinking it is time to let someone else pick up the hammer and start forging the future of the club.

If you would like to help shape SCABA's future by holding a seat on the board, please contact Gerald Franklin and or Mike George to discuss your qualifications. If they placed your name on the ballot, send me something to put in the newsletter explaining why you want to be on the board and why I should vote for you.

Diana-copperrose@hughes.net

President's Notes

Gerald Franklin

During the last Board of Director's meeting on Dec 17th, the Board began work on the slate of candidates for the upcoming Board of Director's election. The Board was unanimous in expressing the need for a large selection of candidates. We ask you to consider putting your name on the ballot and to serve on the board if you are elected.

Contact Mike George to get on the ballot that will come out in the March newsletter. Even if you don't put your name on the ballot, please take to time to mail in your vote when the ballots come out.

Unfortunately, I wasn't able to make the Gloden meeting on the 8th. But I did make the one that Bill and Diana Davis hosted for us at their place on the 15th. It was a really good meeting with great turnout. I'm sure the good weather (for January) helped get people out of the house. Speaking of meetings, there is a sort of special meeting on Feb 5th at the Fort Towson Historic Site. Any of you who are Dutch Oven cooks certainly want to make this one. We don't have many meetings down in the Southeast Region but interest is growing.

The Statewide Meeting/Picnic has been set for April 16, 2011 at Byron and Carol Doner's place in Norman. We have had this event at the Cleveland County Fairgrounds for the last couple of years but it seems like we have to fight through crowds of people who are there for other events. To beat the crowds this year Byron and Carol agreed to have it at their house. We are looking forward to another excellent State Meeting and Picnic and I hope you are able to attend.

We held a Basic Blacksmithing Workshop on January 29 in Elk City. There were ten attendees who went home with a new set of smithing skills and, hopefully, a deeper appreciation of smithing.

So, in closing, I ask that you contact Diana Davis to get scheduled to host a meeting in 2011 and plan on attending as many of our regional meetings as you can. These meetings are where most of our individual teaching and learning takes place.

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting held online on Dec 17, 2010.

Members present: Dan Cowart, Bill Davis, Byron Doner, Gerald Franklin, Mike George, Bill Kendall and David Seigrist. Also present was Newsletter Editor, Diana Davis.

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 PM.

Item 1: 2011 Board of Directors Slate – Secretary Mike George reported that the following director's terms expire in 2011: Bill Kendall, Bill Davis, Bryron Doner and Mike George. Each of these directors indicated that they would agree to their names being put on the ballot for re-election. The board was unanimous in agreeing that more candidates from the membership should be solicited. Diana Davis suggested that she put a request for candidates in the upcoming newsletters. Mike George offered that we have plenty of time to see if anyone is interested but we need to have a slate by mid to late February so that Diana can get it in the March newsletter.

Item 2: State Meeting/Picnic – The Board agreed at the October Board meeting that the State Meeting and Picnic would be held at Byron Doner's house in Norman (not the Fairgrounds as in the past) on April 16, 2011. This date and location was firmed up at this meeting. Mike George volunteered to bring the paper and plastic ware. Food and other items will be arranged at a later date. Byron Doner agreed to contact Mark Vaughn to see if he is interested in donating some of the food again this year.

Item 3: 2011 State Fair Support – The Board agreed that we should support the OK State Fair in 2011. A committee was set up consisting of Byron Doner and Diana Davis to round up volunteers, coordinate set-up and tear down, and to formulate a set of rules for our demo area. It was agreed that no beer would be allowed in the demo area. Byron and Diana are to contact Kent Haddick to ask him to serve on this committee with them.

Item 4: 2011 Tool Box Project - After considerable discussion, the board agreed that it would definitely be nice if we could get the box and tools done far enough in advance to take the finished product around and show it at other events before the conference. We'd have more interest and potentially sell more tickets. We all get anxious when it comes down to conference time and we don't even have tools yet. Byron Doner agreed to build the hardware for the toolbox and Mike George agreed to help Byron. Diana Davis agreed to print and distribute the raffle tickets. Bill Kendall agreed to solicit tools for the toolbox. Gerald Franklin will contact Don Garner about doing the woodwork.

Item 5: Library Discussion – Our Librarian is looking at some equipment to mass copy DVDs so that we can put four regional libraries out there instead of one. The goal is to make the library more available by cutting down on the need to mail DVD's. We will discuss this more at future board meetings.

Item 6: Workshops – We have two workshops scheduled for 2011 so far – a Basic workshop in Elk City on Jan 29th and a Touch Mark workshop on Jul 30 at Bill and Diana Davis' place. We will continue to schedule other workshops for the remaining "fifth Saturdays" in the year. Bill Kendall reported that the anvil repair workshop at his shop in Dec was a real success. He has received requests for another anvil repair workshop. Mike George expressed an interest in conducting a repousse' workshop after we make sufficient tools.

The next Board of Directors meeting was scheduled for April 16, 2011 at the State Picnic.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:29 PM.

Learn how to make your Little Giant power hammer work harder than ever!

Please join us March 18-20, 2011 for our annual Little Giant Rebuilding Seminar!

This class was first taught by our good friend Fred Caylor of Zionsville, Indiana. We carry on his tradition of teaching how to make Little Giants run well and hit hard.

This 2 ½ day class is a hands-on format. You will help transform a 25 LB Little Giant hammer from functional but sloppy condition into a well tuned, quiet, hard working hammer. Sid Suedmeier, owner of Little Giant, will share all his knowledge and experience gained from working with Fred and from 20 years of repairing and rebuilding Little Giants.

An old style 25 LB Little Giant will be rebuilt during the class, and a new style machine will be on hand to demonstrate proper assembly and adjustment of both styles.

The class is held in our shop in historical Nebraska City, Nebraska. The city has a wide variety of cafes, outlets (including Pendleton Woolen Mills), antique and gift shops, orchards, wineries and museums.

IF YOU HAVE A LITTLE GIANT, THIS CLASS IS FOR YOU!

No experience is required to attend this class. Past students have ranged from age 15 to 90, and from all walks of life. Anyone who wants to learn will benefit from this class. We approach the rebuilding process using tools that can be found in the average home workshop.

If you are in the market to buy a power hammer, this class will make you an educated shopper. If you already own a Little Giant, or any other brand of power hammer, this class will teach you how to get the best performance possible.

The class costs \$95, refundable up to 7 days prior to the class; advance registration is required. We limit the class to 25 participants. The class starts at 9 AM sharp on Friday, and usually ends by Saturday evening. The schedule runs Sunday until noon in case we encounter any exceptional problems in rebuilding, and to answer remaining questions.

When we receive your registration, we will send you a city map, along with travel and hotel information.

Airports are located in Omaha (45 miles north), Lincoln (50 miles west) and Kansas City (125 miles south).

Registration form of page (5)

2011 REGISTRATION

Name: _____

Business name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email address: _____

PAYMENT

Check enclosed

Visa

MasterCard

Discover

American Express

Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____

POWER HAMMER INFO

Brand: _____

Size: _____

Serial Number: _____

Please call or email if you have any questions, or prefer to register by phone. You can reach us at 402.873.6603 or Sid@LittleGiantHammer.com

Little Giant is located at 420 4th Corso, Nebraska City, NE 68410.

SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL PAGE

Meeting dates:

January 15, 2011

Host: Bill Davis
Phone # 580-549-6824
Trade item: spoon

February 19, 2011

Host: Gerald Franklin
Phone #: 580-252-6002
Trade item: a critter

March 19, 2011

Host:
Phone #

April 16, 2011

Host: Byron Doner
Phone #

May 21, 2011

Host: Bo Hall
Phone # 405-485-2690
Trade item:

June 18, 2011

Host:
Trade items

July 16, 2011

Host: Terry Jenkins
Phone # 405-476-6091
Trade item: Fork

August 20, 2011

Host: Richard Simpson
Phone # 405-334-7413
Trade item: camp item

Sept. 17, 2011

Host:
Phone #:

October 15-16, 2011

SCABA Conference Perry, Okla.

November 19, 2011

Host: Bill and Diana Davis
Phone #: 580-549-6824
Trade item:

December 17 2011

Host:
Trade item:

The S/C meeting was hosted by Bill and Diana Davis at their home west of Rush Springs, Ok. A better day in January could not have been asked for. It started out overcast with dense fog but the fog lifted and it turned out just right.

Bill had the forges going by the time the first ones started to arrive. He had planned to do a demo on making a hawk from a horseshoe rasp so was busy getting some rasp ready.

I had plenty of coffee, cookies etc ready for those that needed a pick me up during the morning. With plans for stew and cornbread for lunch. We also had several members bring side dishes and deserts for everyone to enjoy.



As many of you know when host a meeting, the cook doesn't get to spend a lot of time walking around and visiting with the guest. I would like to thank Ken Doner for taking pictures at this meeting and many of the others around the state.

The trade item for this meeting was a spoon and there were several nice examples. The spoons are a useful item to make and is good practice. Most will have some drawing, punching (if you put a hole in the handle) and welding or upsetting to get mass necessary for the bowl of the spoon. A swage is not necessary but makes the job a lot easier.



Bill and I enjoy hosting meetings and hope that everyone has a good time. Our next meeting is in November.

The meeting in February will be hosted by Gerald Franklin at his home east of Duncan on Feb 19th. His trade items is a "Critter". Gerald will provide lunch but bring a side dish if you can. Look for a map to his place in the back of this newsletter is you have never been there before we hope to see you there.

NORTH EAST REGIONAL PAGE

Meeting dates:

January 8, 2011

Host: Gary Gloden
Phone # 918-321-5015
Trade item; made from horseshoe

February 12, 2011

Host: Gerald Brostek
Phone# 918-687-1927
Trade item. Valentine

March 12, 2011

Host: Dan Cowart
Trade items: Spoon

April 09, 2011

Host: Omar Reed at Ft. Gibson
Trade items:

May 14 2011

Host: James Maberry
Phone #: 918-636-7773
Trade item; cooking utensil

June 11, 2011

Host: Mike Krudoski
Phone #:918-789-2484
Trade item:

July 9, 2011

Host: Clayton Hall
Phone #918-605-6241
Trade item;

August 13, 2011

Host: Bill Kendall
Phone# 918-742-7836
Trade item

Sept. 10, 2011

Host: Dan Cowart at Pawhuska, Ok
Phone # 918-440-0653
Trade item: Leaf

October 2011

State conference

November 12, 2011

Host: Matt Goyer
Phone # 918-272-8424
Trade item:

December 10, 2011

Host: Charlie McGee
Phone #: 918-245-7279
Trade item: ladle

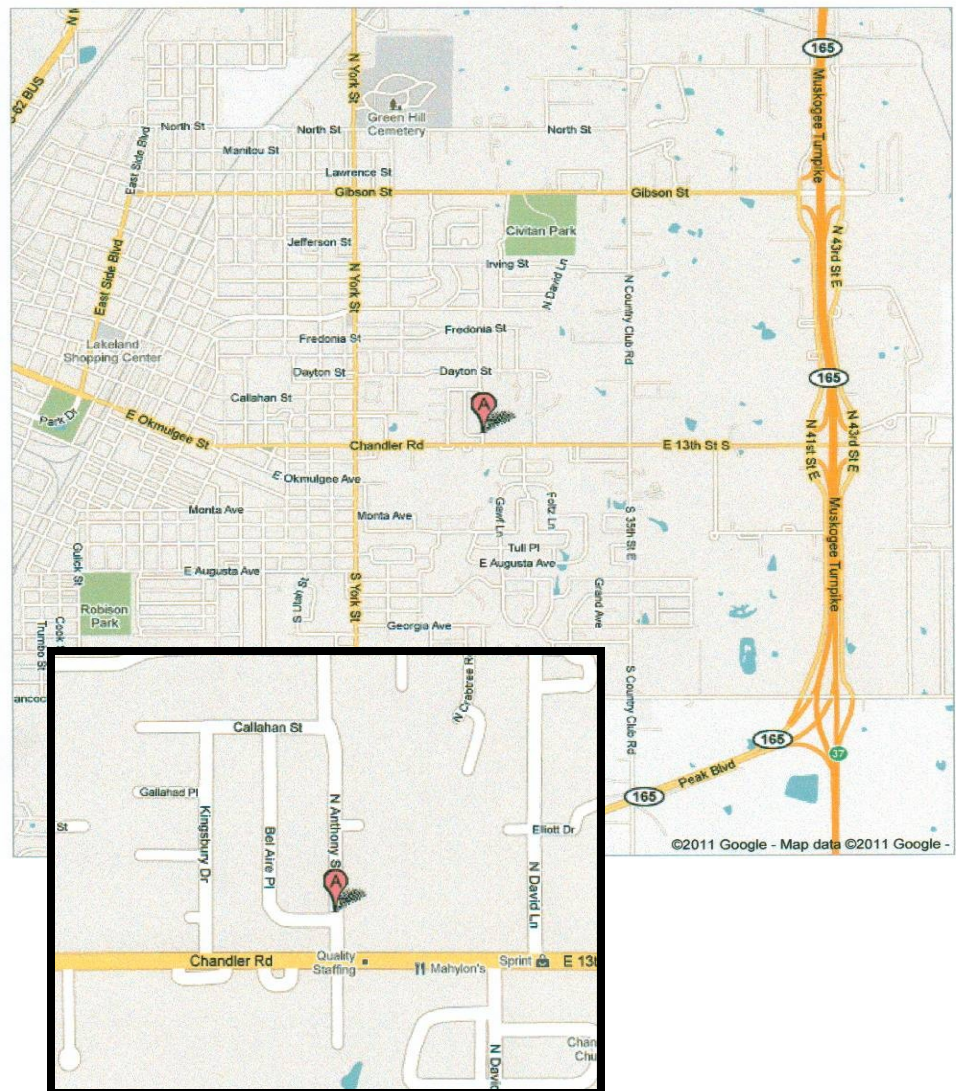
Gary Gloden hosted the meeting for the NE Region. I did not receive any report for this meeting.

Gerald Brostek is hosting the February meeting at his home in Muskogee, Okla.

Since the Month of February is the Month for lovers the trade items is a valentine or anything with a heart.

Lunch is provided but bring a side dish to help out.

Gerald Brostek's address is 205 N. Anthony, Muskogee. I hope these maps help you find your way.



NORTH WEST REGIONAL PAGE

January 22, 2011

Host:

Phone#

Trade item;

February 26th, 2011

Host: Mandell Greteman

Phone # 580-515-1292

March 26, 2011

Host: Dorvan Ivey

Phone #:

Trade item;

April 23, 2011

Host:

Phone #

Trade item:

May 28, 2011

Host:

Phone #:

June 25, 2011

Host:

Phone #:

Trade item;

July 23, 2011

Host:

Phone #:

August 27, 2011

Host: Gary Seigrist (Elk City Route 66 Museum)

Phone #:

Sept. 24, 2011

Host: Ron Lehenbauer (Fairview Thrashing Bee)

Phone #:

Trade item; Fire tool

October 2011

State conference

November 26, 2011

Host:

Phone #:

December 24, 2011

Merry Christmas

There was not a meeting in the North West Region for the month of January.

Mandell Greteman is hosting the February meeting at his place in Foss, Oklahoma. The trade items is any forging tool. Lunch is provided but bring a side dish.

Directions to Madell Greteman's place....

On I-40 take the Foss Exit (exit 53) go north 1/2 mile to RR track. 2nd street that goes west (left) 2 blocks-until street dead ends. (That's all I have) I couldn't find a map so if you need help finding his place you can contact him at 580-592-4460

SOUTH EAST REGIONAL PAGES

January 1, 2011

Host:
Phone #:

February 5, 2011

Host: Eddie Horton
Phone #: 580-873-2634

March 5, 2011

Host:
Phone #:

April 2, 2011

Host:
Phone #:

May 7, 2011

Host:
Phone #:

June 4, 2011

Host:
Phone #:

July 2, 2011

Host:
Phone #:

August 6, 2011

Host:
Phone #:

Sept. 3, 2011

Host:
Phone

October 2011

**SCABA Conference Perry,
Okla.**

November 5, 2011

**Host: open
Phone #:**

December 3, 2011

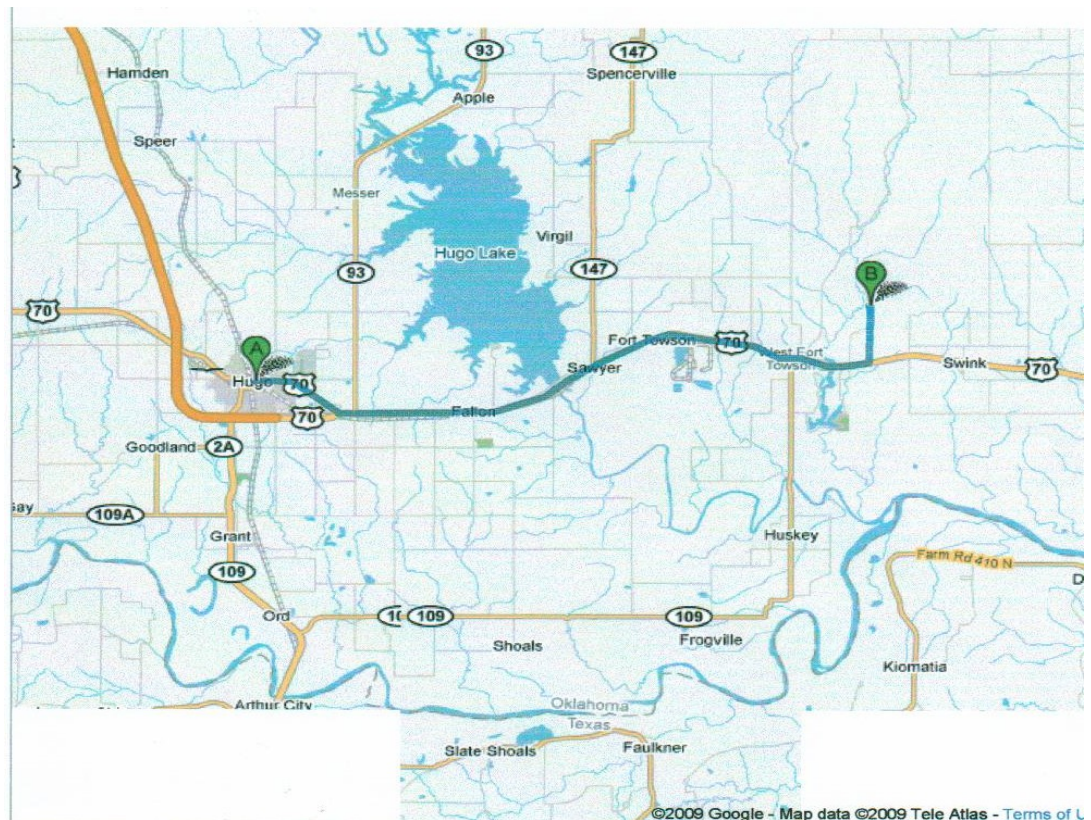
**Host:
Phone #**

There was not a meeting in the Southeast region in January but a nice meeting is planned for February.

Eddie Horton will be hosting the meeting at the Fort Towson Historic Site.

Eddie Horton has a full day of activities planned. Mr. Wallace (who is preparing the noon meal) will be doing demonstrations/ instruction in Dutch oven cooking. If anyone wants to bring something to cook on the Dutch ovens that's fine, or if they have a special dish, they can bring the ingredients. Eddie said he thought he heard rumors that the meal was including fresh venison with lots of vegetables. Bring a side dish or desert if you can to help out.

The trade items is anything used in Dutch oven/campfire cooking.

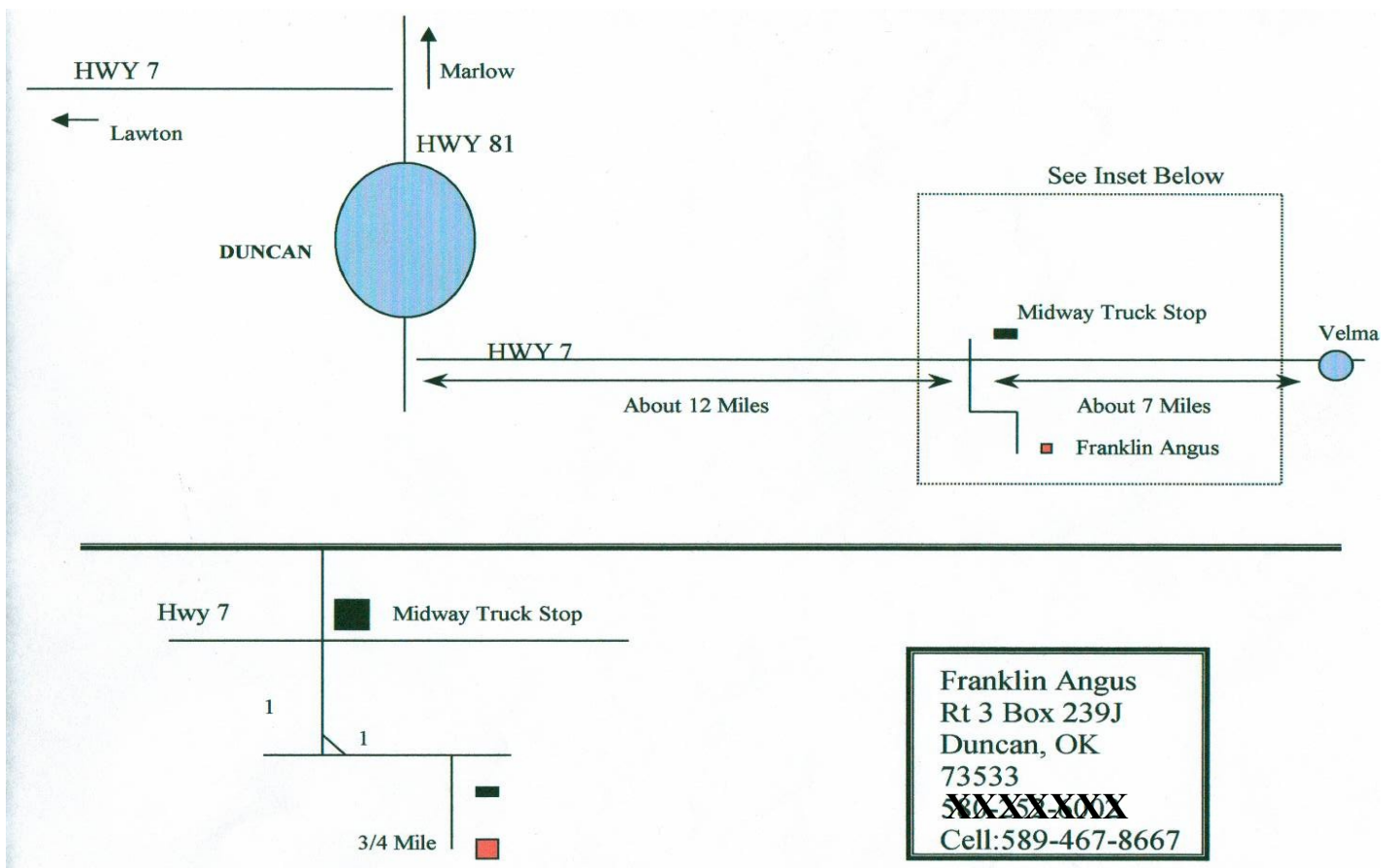


Directions from Hugo, Okla. Head east on US-70 Go approximately 16.7 miles east
Turn Left at N4380 Rd (go 1.7Miles)
Arrive at Fort Towson Historic Site
HC 63 Box 1580, Fort Towson, Ok 74735

Barbara Kirk lost her battle with cancer at 11:30 p.m. December 29th 2010. Her husband, Ray has been a member of Saltfork for several years and we wish to send him our condolences and prayers.

SCABA

Directions to Gerald Franklins place. Meeting is Feb 19th.



Upcoming events:

It's getting to be that time of the year when we start getting request for members to come and demonstrate blacksmithing to a group or for a town celebration. I will also post club events here.

♦ Jimmie Crenshaw sent this in for notification:

Yale will be hosting the civil War Reenactment of Round Mountain once again. The event will be on February 18-20 2011. The 18th will be no charge to the public, several local schools bring their students out on a field trip. There will be no charge to vendors/demonstrators. I have been informed that most times the reenactors are looking for camp life items, cooking tools ect. I have committed to set up to do demos. But my health has not been the best this past year and my skill level has not developed to the level that I am comfortable with. Also I have very few tools. I would like to invite demonstrators to set up for this event. If they would like to bring their tools and use my anvil and forge that would be great. If interested or for more information contact me at 1-918-387-2851 or cell 1-405-334-8933 or one of the event coordinators number is 1-918-387-4252 ask for David. They usually have a big turnout for this event.

♦ SCABA picnic...

This year the SCABA picnic will be held at Byron Doner's home in Norman. The reason for the change in location is that the fairgrounds was booked for every weekend by the flea market people. If you have any ideas for a demo, contest etc. or want to help with any portion of the meal, let Byron Doner know ASAP so plans can be finalize in time to get them in the newsletter.

♦ Norman Medieval Fair will be held on April 1,2 and 3rd. If you are interested in this type of reenacting contact Terry Jenkins for more information.

♦ Jim Carothers sent this one in with a request for members to come and help celebrate.

2011 Rural Heritage Festival at the Cherokee Strip Museum in Perry Oklahoma. This family event will be held Saturday, April 30. The museum is on the west side of Perry just off I-35 on Fir Ave. Take I-35 exit No. 186 (The north Perry exit) and turn East on Fir Avenue. Look for the museum on the north side of Fir across from Braums. In addition to the outdoor smithies, there will be a number of children's events. (including a May Pole). Past events have included antique tractors and stationary engines, a rope maker, a sign maker that used branding iron letters, a cow trail camp site, a chuck wagon cooking demo. And classes in the one-room school house. Saltfork members and their families are welcome to join in the fun. Bring your portable forge and tools or just show up and share the forge and anvil with me. I should have a fire going by 9 A.M: things usually wind down around 4 P.M.

♦ Muskogee Castle Medieval fair is held each weekend in May. If you need information you can contact Terry Jenkins.

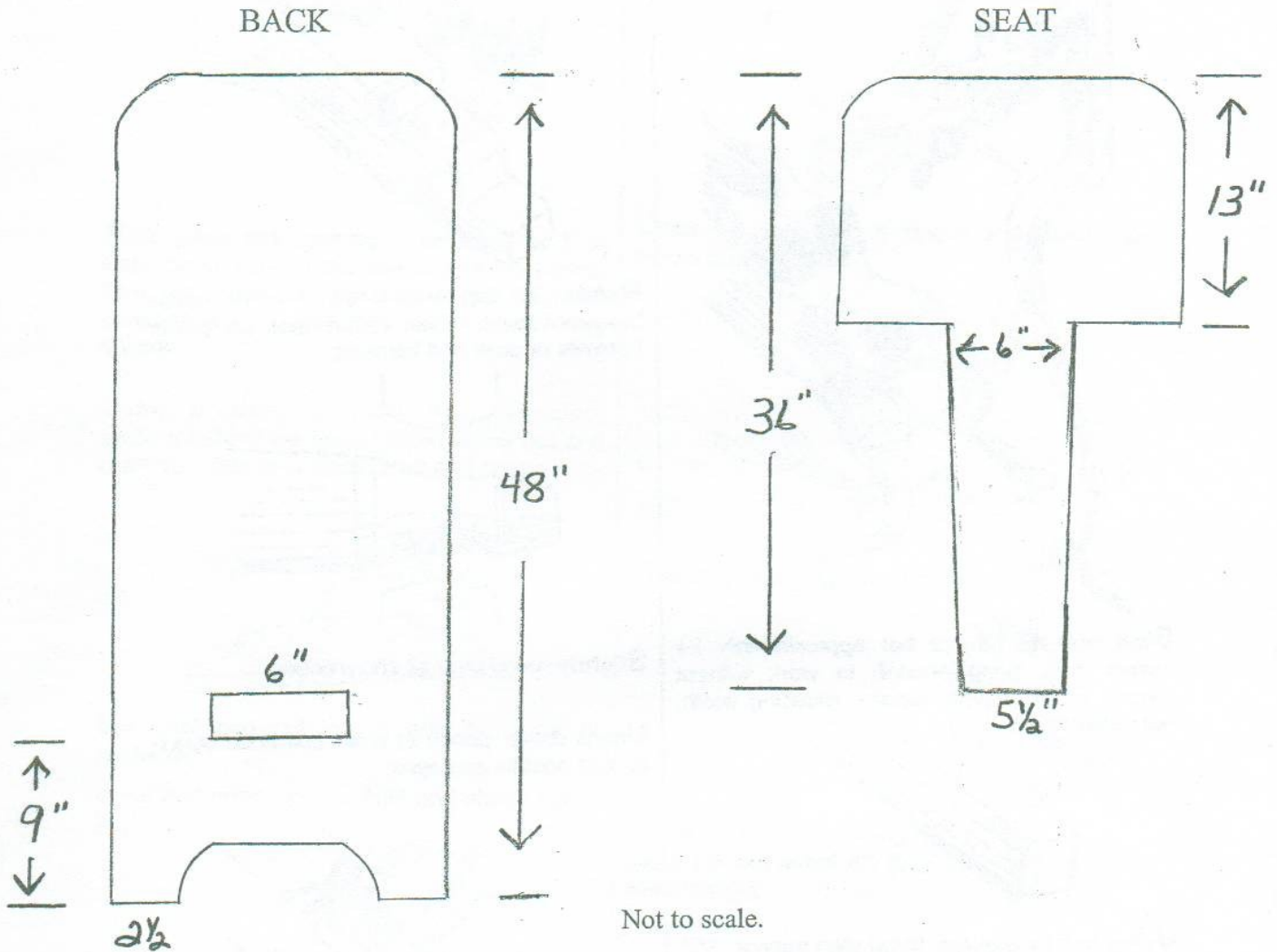
♦ September 1st is the Poor Boys Tractor show in Fletcher, Okla. Diana Davis usually handles this one day event but if anyone wishes to come and help it is appreciated.

♦ September 24th is one of the days for the Fairview Threshing and John Deer Show. Ron Lehenbauer is hosting a meeting in the Blacksmith shop there on that Saturday. The trade items is a fire tool. Plan to attend the meeting and enjoy the many tractors and other vendors on site.

♦ SCABA Conference is October 15 and 16th with setup day being the 14. It is held each year at the Fair ground in Perry, Okla. You will want to book your rooms as early as you can because sometimes we have to compete for rooms with the home football games for Stillwater. I have a schedule but haven't look to see if this is one of those years. Doesn't hurt to book early. Our attendance grows each year.

RENDEZVOUS CARRY CHAIR

John Lovin



I take 4 of these chairs when I go to a rendezvous and have folks take a rest while they watch me work. They slide apart for easy carrying and storage. They are easy to make, with a few power or hand-tools. The chairs are adjustable, by making the seat leg longer or raising or lowering the opening in the back, this makes the seat set straighter or more leaned back. The dimensions given are what I've found works best for me. I used 2 by 12's, for those less physically challenged than me, 1 by 12's would work. John Lovin

Heart Hook

submitted by Pat McCarty of Washington, MO

Pat gets a lot of ideas from woodworking books and figure out how to make them from iron.

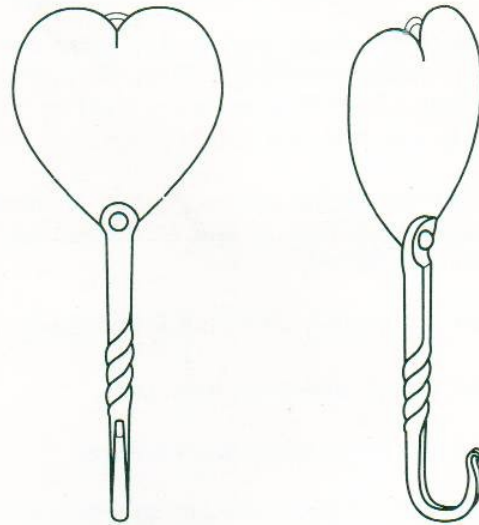
1 - The heart is cut out of 16 gauge copper or iron. 4-1/2" wide, back over depression in a wood block.

2 - The hook is made from 7" of 1/4" square stock. Twist about 1-1/2" in center of stock.

3 - Flatten one end and drill a hole for a rivet to fasten hook to the heart.

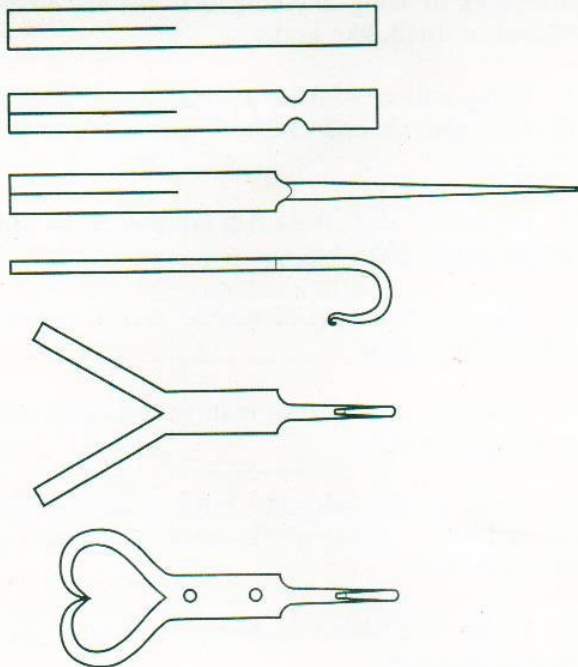
4 - Taper, square and shape the hook end and rivet to the heart.

5 - Flatten a piece of #12 copper wire for the hanger, form a loop and solder to the back of the heart. Finish with wax and your favorite finish.



Heart Hook

demonstrated by Bill Hahn
at Quad State Round-Up



1 - Using a piece of 1/4" by 1", length of about 6" or 7", split one end about 2-1/2" to 3" along center line.

2 - Using a fuller, neck it in about 2" from the other end. Leave about 1" or 1-1/2" untouched in the center.

3 - Draw the fullered end down to about 1/4" square with one way taper at the end. Form a square hook at that end with tapered finial at the end.

4 - Heat the split end and draw each end to about 1/4" square taper, with one way taper at the end. Form into heart shape.

5 - Punch or drill hole in the center of unforged center section. Bill's hook had a diamond shaped hole and looked really great.

6 - Finish with boiled linseed oil, or your favorite finish.

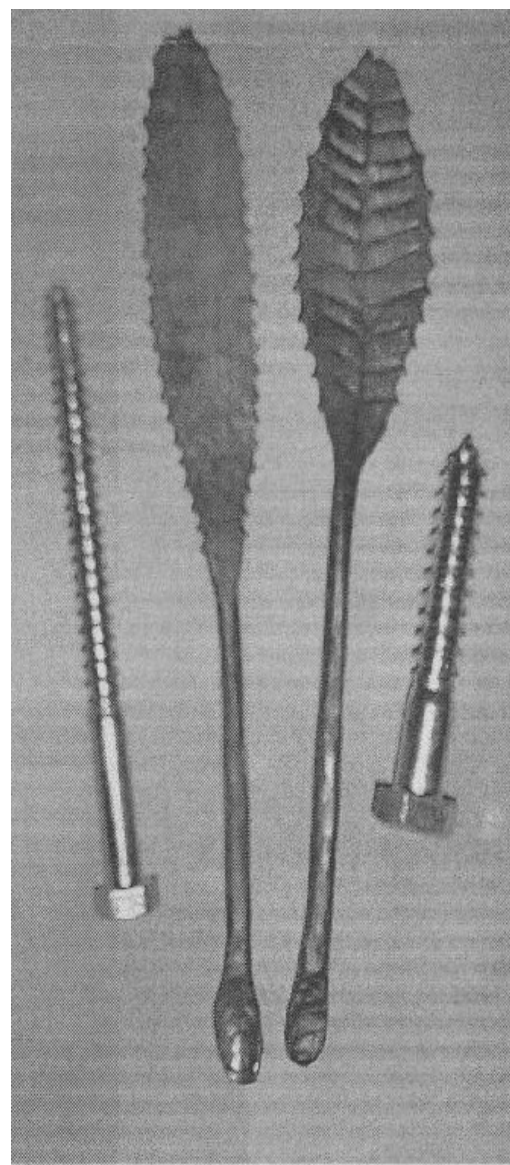
Serrated Leaves from Lag Bolts

Common lag bolts provide a good stock for making leaves with serrated edges. The photo shows the lag bolts together with the resulting leaves: On the left is a 3/8 x 5 inch bolt next to its leaf; on the right is a 1/2 x 3 inch bolt and leaf.

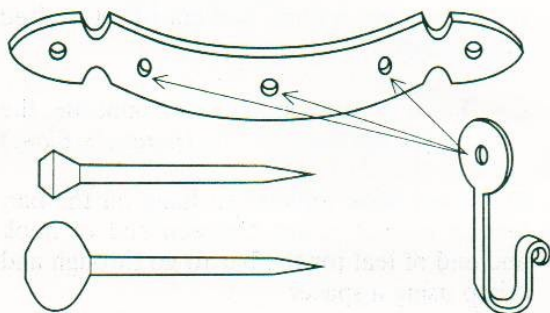
After burning off the plating (the fumes are dangerous, use ventilation), initially flatten the threaded part to about half its original diameter. The bolt head may be kept or cut off, depending on whether the mass is needed. If keeping the head, forge it down to the same size as the unthreaded shank, then grind out the cold shut which is forming before continuing to draw down the shank towards the right size for your leaf's stem. Stop working the stem while it is still a stout diameter and draw out the threaded part of the bolt sideways using a cross peen. Alternate between the peen and the face of the hammer until you have your leaf. There will be a faint residue of the cold shuts formed from the crushed threads, but it is not that visible, and the leaf will have well-formed serrations all around its edges. Finish the stem when the leaf is done.

As you can imagine, the bolt selected should have some unthreaded portion, and the diameter and threaded length of the bolt affect the type of leaf you may get.

Roger King
November 2005



Cup or Key Hooks



A delicate key hook is made from horse shoe nails fastened to a backing plate.

1 - Flatten the head end of the horse shoe nails. Drill a small hole in the center. Bend the point around into a finial and bend the hook shape.

2 - Make a backing plate from 1/8" x 1' strap with leaf or arrowhead finials. Curve the plate out from the wall line. Rivet the hooks to the strap.

Split Weld Poker By Bob Ehrenberger

1) Start with about 4" of 1/2" round.

2) Draw a long taper on both ends, leave about 1 1/2" in the middle unforged.

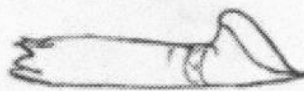
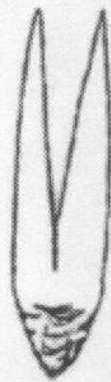
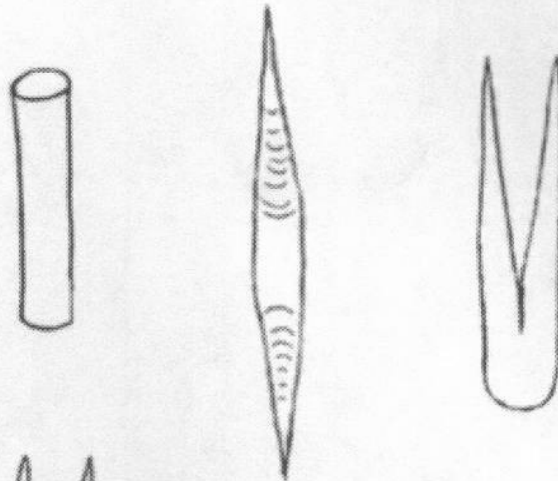
3) Fold the bar in half so the points line up.

4) Make a scarf at the base of the bend. You don't need to upset this because it is already twice the thickness of the bar you are welding it to. You basically just put it on the edge of the anvil and pull a scarf out like making a clip.

5) To make the handle, I use about 30 inches of 1/2" round. I cold texture the bar under the power hammer and make whatever grip I want on one end.

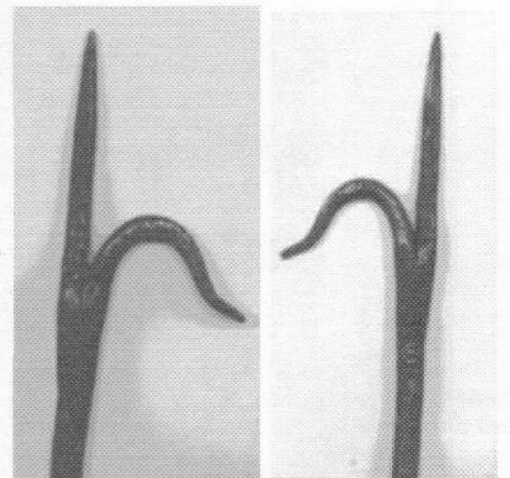
6) I trim the bar to length, figuring the tip will add 3" or 4" (You can measure the tip you just made). The end is then upset and scarfed. I do a fairly heavy upset because the place where it is being welded is pretty big.

7) The scarf is split from the point with a hot cut while it is being held in a vice. Take care to open the split up enough so that each point lines up with the center of one of the sections of the tip when the two scarfs are held together



8) Do a drop tongs weld to join the handle to the tip.

9) Form one of the tapers into a hook.



This is one of my finished pokers. Sorry about the poor picture, the camera is in the shop and I used the scanner to get these.

Teresa Gabrish is the daughter of Bill and Diana Davis. She is an accountant/bookkeeper in Oklahoma City during the day but at night she works with Sterling Silver and Gold filled wire to make beautiful wire wrapped jewelry and has taught many classes at the SCABA conferences. As many of you are aware the price of Sterling silver and gold have gone through the roof so, Teresa has had to find another medium to work with. She found she could work with copper and brass in much the same way she had done with the silver and gold. The only problem is that copper and brass are not very popular as a jewelry component.

Teresa got the idea of making a cross from some square copper stock, then putting it in liver of sulfur to turn it black. She then buffed it to bring back out some of the copper highlights.

Teresa used many of the same twisting and scrolling methods that are used when working with steel but doesn't have to heat the copper unless she has worked it to the point of work hardening, at which point she would need to anneal the copper to keep it from breaking.

Teresa is a new member to the board for the Oklahoma Gem and mineral Society that is based in Oklahoma City, so it was only natural to try to find a "ROCK" to mount the cross on. After searching through all the stock at her favorite rock shop "Arrowhead supply" she settled on a piece of soap stone. And yes this is the same stone that welders use to mark on metal. This piece was about 6 pounds worth of pinkish stone that already had a flat base from where it had already had some stock removed from it.



Once the cross was finished and mounted to the stone she started on the rose vine that she planned to "grow" out of the rock and attach itself to the cross. The roses were made from copper using a miniature version of the rose pattern that many of us use to make roses from steel. To get a nice contrast she used brass for the leaves. There is no welding on this piece so each leaf had a hole drilled in it so that the copper wire could be inserted. Because of the method for doing these, she had to start at the end and work back to the main vine. A thin copper wire was attached to each leaf and then a group of three or five leaves were twisted together to make a branch, and so forth working back attaching roses and leaf groups until you have the vine.



The vine was attached to the rock using some small holes drilled into the rock and some special adhesive made for jewelry manufacturing. She worked most of the weekend during our meeting so she could have it finished for a meeting of the Gem and Mineral Society the following week and also because she already had someone speak for it. She is already planning her next one. She has made an arrangement to obtain an Amethyst Cathedral (large hollow rock with amethyst crystals inside) that she plans to make a cross and rose vine to attach to. Maybe she can bring it to the conference to put in the gallery if it isn't sold by then.

Talking about the blacksmith shop

For a young farm boy during the 30s, being at a blacksmith shop ranked only slightly behind a Saturday shoot-em-up movie. Farmers from far and near would converge on that noisy, fun-filled place; some just to "shoot the breeze" with my dad or Uncle Charlie, others for the more serious business of having their plows sharpened or their horse or mule shod. Our rocky, hard clay soil wasn't the easiest in the world on a plow or the plowman, so blacksmithing was a thriving profession back then. But the job definitely was not for sissies. It took a lot of strength and skill to heat a dull plow in the heating furnace, hold it with tongs in one hand and a ball-peen hammer in the other, and beat it into just the desired balance or shape.

The labor involved was made even more difficult by the fact that some of the plows were already worn thin and practically ready for the discard heap. More than once I've overheard my dad or my uncle say to the owner, "Neighbor, I'm not sure I can do much good with THIS plow. It's about 'plowed out' and in bad shape." Rather embarrassed, the "dirt poor" owner of said plow would murmur softly, "Just do the best you can. Maybe next time around I'll be better able to buy new ones, but I sure can't now."

Dad or ol' Unc would nod sympathetically, then strive valiantly to bring some semblance of make-do from a piece of junk. Raised on a hard-scrabble farm themselves, they'd truly "been there — done that."

Sometimes on Saturday, when school was out, I had the honor of turning the bellows that kept a coal fire burning to heat plows

and horse/mule shoes. The job was not particularly hard, but it wasn't one you tackled frivolously, with the idea that if you didn't like it you'd just quit in ten minutes or so. Nosireee! Once you'd "put your hand to task"

you were expected to keep it up until quitting time, which was? Or whenever. My remuneration? The magnificent sum of seventy-five cents, which I immediately "blew" on hamburgers, cokes and big powerhouse candy bars. No, young readers you didn't misunderstand me. All those words are plural, but correct. Why? 'Cause you could buy a lotta stuff for six bits during those dismal ol' Depression days.

It made me feel nine feet tall and proud as a peacock to be a part of that laughing, kidding, sweating bunch of grown-ups for a few treasured hours. My dad was my hero during those times. He was strong and self-confident about his capabilities; so one said when Mr. Lube Brown bet him a dollar he couldn't put shoes on Old Blue, the meanest you ever saw, Dad hollered, "Bring 'im in. I'll cover that bet!"

The rest is history, folks. That mule was tough, for sure, but Dad was even tougher. In a matter of several minutes, Old Blue was sporting a new pair of shoes and my hero was collecting his dollar.

Ah, for the good old days. You see, they just don't make 'em like that anymore.



By
Owen Perry

Owen Perry was raised in Dubach and is now a resident at the Arbor and Terrace of Ruston. He has been inducted into the Southern Songwriters' Guild Hall of Fame and the Louisiana Hall of Fame.

Making the Jim Claar Anvil Vise

Michael Wollowski

Jim Claar made this kind of vise when he was asked to make 20 hooks for a pot rack. He wanted to be able to form the hooks under closer scrutiny than allowed by the low height of an anvil. A post vise provides the right height but not enough surface to work the hooks. To solve this problem, Jim modified a post vise by cutting off the rear jaw and welding in its stead a stake anvil. His design seems to be a natural progression of the post vise, extending its use to work where good clamping power enables the use of both hands to form metal. I found his design intriguing and decided to build one myself. On these pages, you will find construction notes.

To begin, you need a post vise and a small anvil. A post vise with 4 1/2" jaws seems to be just about the right size. While I would have liked to use a slightly larger anvil, I settled for a 25 pound anvil that is 11 1/2" long and has a 3 7/8" wide face. Both were in pretty good shape. It takes some heart to cut up a perfectly fine tool, however, the end result is a tool that is far superior to each of the individual ones.

Cut off the rear jaws fairly close to the screw hole as seen in figures 2 and 3. This way, you can leave as much of the anvil as possible, giving you more mass. Cut the anvil so that its top aligns with the top of the front jaws. In order to ensure a strong weld, grind a 1/2" bevel in the front and rear of the anvil as well as the front and rear of the vise. See figures 2 and 3 for details. There is no need to cut a bevel on the heel and throat of the anvil as the bottom of the cut anvil and the top of the cut vise form quite a large cavity.

The welding was done by a local fabrication shop. I gave them the post and anvil and asked them to weld the anvil so that it is



Figure 1: Finished vise

square to the post. This was a mistake. As the post is forged and has a taper to it, it is hard to determine a good reference point for squareness. Instead, assemble the front jaws to the back post when dropping off the welding job, giving the welder the intended reference points. It pays to take some time to aligning the anvil to the post when first tack welding them. The more precise you align the anvil with the front jaw, the less grinding you will have to do.



Figure 2: Dry-fit anvil and leg showing the ground bevels



Figure 3: Cavity created by the anvil and vise top.

Figure 4 shows the weld between the anvil and the leg. As you can see, they did a fine job filling in the cavities. Next, clean up the welds and grind the sides of the anvil as well as its top so that it aligns with the front jaw.



Figure 4: Anvil welded to post.

Figure 5 shows that the left side of the jaw does not line up neatly with the side of the anvil, instead there is an overhang. While not intended, I imagine that this may come in handy when attempting to bend a piece over the horn, while holding it tightly in the vise.



Figure 5: Detail showing jaw overhang.

All in all, this was a neat project. I am anticipating years of back-saving use.