

# Saltfork Craftsmen

## Artist-Blacksmith Association

July 2020



**Forged Dragon Head Project**  
by Rory Kirk  
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## Editor's Notes:

The Board of Directors was finally able to meet again on June 14th. Of course, the impact of COVID-19 on the upcoming Annual Conference was a major consideration on the agenda.

While taking safety recommendations and current restrictions into consideration, at this time we are moving forward to make the Conference take place as planned. Both demonstrators are still anticipating being here as well. However, we cannot predict what COVID-19 related restrictions may be in place as the Conference nears. We are monitoring international travel restrictions for Joey which may affect our plans. We have discussed contingency plans and will have alternatives in place should the need arise.

Stay tuned to the August newsletter for more details on the workshops after the conference. We hope to have final Conference, workshop and registration details worked out at that time. Updates will also be made available through the website and member e-mail as new information is available.

Also thanks to Rory Kirk for providing a great demo on his dragon heads for the newsletter. With all of the suspended meetings and workshops, new content is as scarce as ever. Thanks Rory!

*-Russell Bartling, Editor*

The Saltfork Craftsmen Artist-Blacksmith Association, a non-profit organization. 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:**  
[www.saltforkcraftsmen.org](http://www.saltforkcraftsmen.org)



## President's Notes:

Well here we go. Its warming up rather well. I have plenty of fire wood to keep my shop warm.

I have been working in my shop in the mornings. It's pretty nice until about 1:00 pm. It's getting really dry in western Oklahoma. I feel as though they will put us in a burn ban soon. We have had some really bad grass fires already.

We had a board meeting in June and it seems as though the conference is on at this time.

I received e-mail from ABANA and they said the ABANA conference for 2022 will be at North Texas Motor Speedway in Fort Worth, Texas. The North Texas club asked for all the help that we might be able to give. I will help them all I can. If you would like to volunteer and help out, I am sure there are plenty of opportunities.

By the time you read this, the northwest region will have had a meeting June 27, 2020 at the Blacksmith Shop at Elk City Museum. I don't know how many people will be there but I am sure we will have a good time. This will be our first meeting in quite a while.

I hope everyone is staying healthy and staying cool.

Keep your hammer handles tight.

Thanks, - Mandell



## All Regional Meetings are Free to Attend and are Always Open to Any Member or Guest...

New to Saltfork or just want to check out Blacksmithing but don't know where to start? These meetings are a great place for new members or guests who just want to see what it is all about to come network with like-minded people. If you want some pointers on how to get started, there is always someone happy to help get you started hammering. And guests are always welcomed.

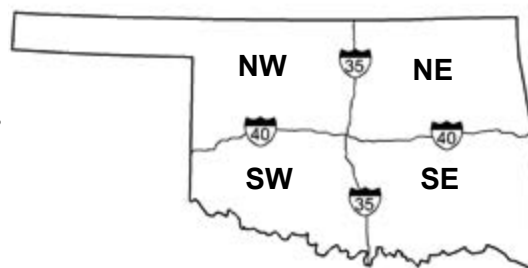
Want to host a meeting? The meeting hosting form can be found on the last page along with membership application form. If you want to host a meeting in any area, please fill out one of the host forms on the website under the calendar section or in the newsletter and e-mail the information or mail the hard copy form in as soon as possible. If you mail a form, please call or e-mail to verify that it is received. E-mail is the most convenient for me, but you can also phone in the information if you prefer. The sooner the meeting is scheduled, the more time there is to get the word out to potential attendees. -Russell Bartling 918-633-0234 or [rbartling@ionet.net](mailto:rbartling@ionet.net)

## What's My Region?

The four main regions are currently defined within the state by being separated by I35 and I40. (For example, the NW region is anything north of I40 and west of I35.)

All meetings are encouraged. These boundary definitions and regional meeting dates are a suggested framework to facilitate orderly meeting scheduling, planning and promotion with a minimum of overlaps and a maximum exposure to the greatest number of members. Not all meetings fit precisely within a rigid boundary definition and members in an area may want to hold meetings on a date that doesn't match their physical region or at a location other than their own region. This may be especially true in the center of state for areas that are close to the I35 and I40 boundary crossing. Special events such as shows, fairs, etc. may also dictate adjustments to the meeting dates within a region.

SCABA Regions



The regions are meant to be a simplification and clarification to the regional boundaries rather than a rigid restriction to any meeting scenario. ***Saltfork members all belong to one club.*** Regional boundaries are not intended to imply division within the club, but are intended to help spread distribution and promote monthly meetings.

## Safety

Blacksmithing can be an inherently dangerous exercise. There is no substitute for personal responsibility and common sense and no list of safety rules can adequately cover every situation. Every person who attends a meeting, demonstration or event sponsored by the Saltfork Craftsmen Artist Blacksmith Association (SCABA) or its members does so at their own risk and assumes all responsibility for their own safety needs. The SCABA organization, its officers, members, demonstrators, volunteers and guests disclaim any responsibility for any damages, injuries, or destruction of property resulting from the use of any information or methods published or distributed by SCABA or demonstrated at workshops, meetings, conferences or other events. SCABA recommends proper attire and safety gear and standard shop safety procedures appropriate for blacksmithing and shop work during any event where blacksmithing and other related methods are involved. Safety attire includes, but is not limited to, appropriate clothing, eyewear, hearing protection, gloves, and face shields when appropriate. It is every individual's responsibility to provide for their own safety, to determine what safety gear is appropriate for each situation and to provide, maintain and use that gear as appropriate for each individual situation.

## Around the State...

**NW Region May Meeting:** No Meeting was held.

**NW Region June Meeting:** No Meeting was held.

**SE Region June Meeting:** No Meeting was held.

**SW Region June Meeting:** No Meeting was held.

**Due to the COVID19 safety directives, no regional meetings were held last month.**

### Coronavirus Safety Concerns/Event Cancellations:

With recent developments concerning COVID19, a large number of blacksmithing related events have been canceled for safety reasons. It will be more important than ever to stay posted with websites, social media, etc. and to double check before assuming events will be held.

**-Russell Bartling, Editor**

### Membership Dues:

Thanks to Eric Jergensen, starting with April, **your membership expiration date is now printed on the back of the newsletter.** Memberships are no longer limited to the March to March duration but are a full year from the date of registration or renewal. So the back of the newsletter will now be a quick reference to check your renewal date. - Editor

#### **\*\*UPDATE\*\***

**The expiration date was left off the mailing label of the May and June Newsletters. This will be corrected with the current newsletter and moving forward. - Editor**

### 2020 Workshop Schedule

**Currently no workshops are scheduled.**

**Have an idea for a workshop or class?** If you have an idea for a workshop that you would like to attend (or teach), please let the workshop coordinator know so that details for time and place can be worked out.

**Mandell Greteman is the SCABA Workshop Coordinator.  
Contact Mandell at 580-515-1292.**

# 2020 REGIONAL MEETING SCHEDULE

NE Region (1st Sat)	SE Region (2nd Sat)	SW Region (3rd Sat)	NW Region (4th Sat)
Jan 4th (Open)	Jan 11th (Byron Doner)	Jan 18th (Open)	Jan 25th (Rory Kirk)
Feb 1st (Open)	Feb 8th (Byron Doner)	Feb 15th (Open)	Feb 22nd (Monte Smith)
Mar 7th (Open)	Mar 14th (Open)	Mar 21st (Bruce Willenberg) CANCELLED	Mar 28th (Mandell Greteman) CANCELLED
Apr 4th (Open)	Apr 11th (Open)	Apr 18th (SCABA Picnic) CANCELED	Apr 25th (Don Garner) CANCELED
May 2nd (Open)	May 9th (Open)	May 16th (Ricky Vardell) CANCELED	May 23rd (Terry Kauk-CANCELED)
			May 23rd (SW-JJ McGill Boy Scouts-CANCELED)
Jun 6th (Open)	Jun 13th (Open)	Jun 20th (Jim Obenshain -CANCELED)	Jun 27th (Everett Timmons)
Jul 4th (Open)	Jul 11th (Open)	Jul 18th (Open)	<b>Jul 25th (Mandell Greteman)</b>
Aug 1st (Open)	Aug 8th (Open)	Aug 15th (Open)	Aug 22nd (Open)
Sep 5th (Open)	Sep 12th (Open)	<b>Sep 19th (Ricky Vardell - JJ McGill - Sulphur Tractor Show)</b>	<b>Sep 26th (Ron Lehen- Bauer as Host - Don Gar- ner as Contact Person)</b>
Oct 3rd (Open)	<b>Oct 10th (Conference Setup Work Day)</b>	<b>Oct 17th (Conference Weekend)</b>	<b>Oct 24th (Rory Kirk)</b>
Nov 7th (Open)	<b>Nov 14th (Bill Phillips)</b>	Nov 21st (Open)	<b>Nov 28th (Bob Kennemer)</b>
Dec 5th (Open)	Dec 12th (Open)	Dec 19th (Open)	Dec 26th (Open)

## 2020 Fifth Saturdays:

February 29th (Tong Making Class in Elk City - See Workshop Schedule)  
 May 30 (Open)  
 August 29th (Open)  
 October 31st (Open)

# July 2020

NE Regional Meeting July 4th: Open.

SE Regional Meeting July 11th: Open.

SW Regional Meeting July 18th: Open.

**NW Regional Meeting July 25th:** Will be hosted by Mandell Greteman at the Route 66 Museum Blacksmith Shop in Elk City.

Lunch will be provided but please bring a side dish or desert to help out.

The trade item is anything you want to make during the meeting.

Contact Mandell at 580-515-1292 if you have questions.

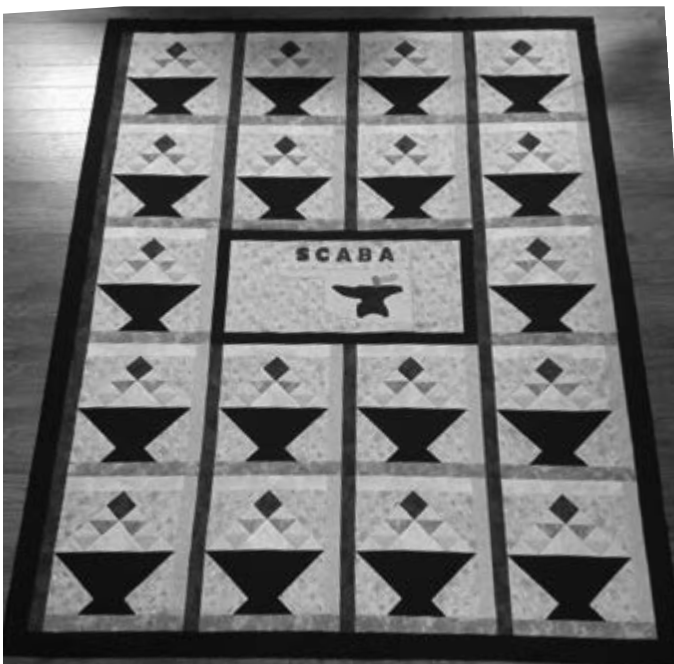
# August 2020

NE Regional Meeting August 1st : Open.

SE Regional Meeting August 8th: Open.

SW Regional Meeting August 15th: Open.

NW Regional Meeting August 22nd: Open.



## Anvil Quilt Drawing

This one of a kind anvil quilt provided by Bill and Angela Phillips will be raffled at the 2020 Saltfork Conference.

You can obtain tickets at the Conference for \$2.00 each. If you will not be at the conference but still would like tickets, contact the Secretary.

Drawing will be held Saturday evening.

# Member Gallery

**Saltfork Gate Project Submission by Jason O'Dell  
(Harrah, OK)**





# Where is YOUR Part of the Saltfork Gate Project?



This is a community project that is open to all Saltfork members. The project is a four-foot-high by sixteen-foot-long gate to be displayed outside at the Route 66 Blacksmith Shop Museum at Elk City.

## Secure your place in Saltfork History FOREVER!\*

*\*(This statement has not been verified by God, Mother Nature, Father Time, Current Scientific Understanding of Metal Oxidation, or the Elk City Museum Management. But probably for a long, long time at least. - Editor)*

Participating members will be given a steel ring that can be filled with any (family appropriate) forged work that will fit in the ring and be permanently attached to it.

Mandell Greteman is coordinating the project and will provide the standardized rings. All of the rings will be provided to ensure they are a standardized size. Once the projects are returned, Mandell will weld them into the gate to be displayed at the museum.

You can submit multiple entries if you would like. If the gate fills up and we have extra entries, we can do additional gates.

***Your Facebook post will most likely be forgotten in two days but daily visitors from around the world will see your gate project for years at the Elk City Museum. Don't forget your touchmark!***

Contact Mandell if you have any additional questions or to find out where to obtain one of the project rings: **Mandell Greteman 580-515-1292.**

# 2020 Saltfork Conference Demonstrators

The 2020 Saltfork Conference demonstrators have been selected. Based on demonstrator availability and an online member voting survey implemented by Saltfork Director, Eric Jergensen, this year's demonstrators by popular demand are:

**Brent Bailey  
(California)**



**Joey Van Der Steeg  
(Netherlands)**



J.J. McGill and Eric Jergensen have arranged commitments from both demonstrators for the Conference.

As with recent years, both demonstrators will remain after the Conference for workshops with a limited number of participants.

Details of the Conference demonstration and workshop topics will be posted once they are arranged. Stay tuned for more information in upcoming newsletters.

If you are not already familiar with these demonstrators, they both have a strong You-Tube presence. Just look them up by name.

***UPDATE: At the present time, the Saltfork Conference in October is on with no plans of canceling. Hopefully, October is far enough out to be unaffected by the Coronavirus. We are closely watching the status of international travel restrictions and other COVID-19 related restrictions. If conditions change, updates will be posted as soon as possible. - Editor***

## *The 24th Annual*

### **Saltfork Craftsmen Artist Blacksmith Association Conference**

**October 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> 2020**



**Featuring Live Blacksmithing  
Demonstrations by:**

**Brent Bailey**

**and**

**Joey Van Der Steeg**

### **Murray County Antique Tractor Association Show Grounds:**

7 miles north of Sulphur on Hwy  
177, ¾ mile east on Tractor  
Road. Sulphur, OK

## **Conference Schedule**



### **Friday, October 16<sup>th</sup>**

Conference setup starting at 8:00 am.

### **Saturday, October 17<sup>th</sup>**

Registration opens at 7:00 a.m.  
Demonstrations 8:00 am – Noon  
Lunch break Noon – 1:00 p.m.  
Demonstrations 1:00 – 5:00 p.m.  
Dinner 6:00 p.m.  
Drawing for toolbox 7:00 p.m.  
Auction 7:00 p.m.



### **Sunday, October 18<sup>th</sup>**

Registration Opens at 7:00 a.m.  
Demonstrations 8:00 – 11:30 a.m.  
Lunch Break 11:30 – 12:30 p.m.  
Demonstrations 12:45 – 4:00 p.m.  
Cleanup and teardown 4:00 p.m.



## **RV Reservations:**

It is not too early to make reservations if you plan on camping on site and need an RV hookup. Primitive camping is also available with access to clean toilets and showers if you prefer primitive camping. RV hookups are available for \$15 per RV per night (to the Tractor Club) for electric only service. Spots are already being reserved so contact J. J. McGill as soon as possible if you would like to make a reservation.

Contact J. J. McGill at 580-369-1042 or [jjmcgill88@yahoo.com](mailto:jjmcgill88@yahoo.com)

# 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Saltfork Craftsmen Blacksmithing Conference

Registration Form  
October 17<sup>th</sup>&18<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Please Print Clearly

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## Membership required for attendance.

Charge for non-members is \$30 for membership

	Number	Cost Each	Total
<b>Conference Registration Fee</b> (One Per Family)			
Saturday & Sunday (per family)		\$55.00	
Saturday Only (per family)		\$35.00	
Sunday Only (per family)		\$35.00	
Membership for Non-Members		\$30.00	
<b>Meals</b>			
By donation at time of meal. Donation Jar will be set out when meal is served			
<b>*Family Classes on Saturday - More Classes will be added</b>			
Saturday Morning: Pending		0	
Pending		0	
Saturday Afternoon: Miniature Barn Quilt Class		\$45.00	
Pending		0	
<b>*Family Classes on Sunday</b>			
Sunday Morning: Alcohol Ink on Tile		\$25	
Sunday Afternoon: Pending		\$0.00	
<b>Total Payment Enclosed</b>			

Only one family Registration Fee (family members only) required per household.  
(All meals and all material costs for Family Classes must be paid).  
Saltfork Craftsmen T-shirts will be available at the conference.

### Murray County Antique Tractor Association Show Grounds:

7 miles north of Sulphur on Hwy 177, ¾ mile east on Tractor Road. Sulphur, OK

Make checks payable to Saltfork Craftsmen ABA.

### Mail this form with full payment to:

Teresa Gabrish  
322 Washington  
Blanchard, OK 73010

All adults attending the conference must sign this disclaimer. Parent or legal guardian must sign for minor children.

Disclaimer: I understand that blacksmithing can be a dangerous endeavor. I understand that my safety is my responsibility. I understand the need for eye and ear protection; I will provide and utilize the necessary safety equipment for all activities. The Saltfork Craftsmen ABA, its officers and members are not responsible for my well-being. Registration for the Conference indicates my agreement to these terms.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# **The Best Way to Register for the Conference is Online Through the Website**

Online registration is fast, safe and easy.  
You do NOT have to have a Paypal account to register online.

## **Family Classes**

Family Classes for the Conference are to be determined. Complete information on the Family Classes will be provided in the August newsletter. Stay tuned for more details.

## **Conference Workshops October 19, 20 and 21st:**

Workshops with the demonstrators - Brent Bailey and Joey Van Der Steeg - are planned after the conference. The format will be similar to previous years. Each demonstrator will conduct a 10 student workshop over three days following the conference (Monday through Wednesday). The workshops will run concurrently so you will only be able to register with one instructor. This is an amazing opportunity to receive hands on instruction with instructors of this caliber.

Participants must provide their own (or arrange to borrow) safety gear and forging stations including anvil, forge, vice, and basic forging tools such as hammers, tongs, chisels, and punches etc. Specific tooling requirements for any tools that will not be provided will be made available before the workshops.

The preliminary plan for the Brent Bailey workshop is making tools to forge an Axe head and then making the Axe head with those tools. If time allows, additional tooling or axes may be included (depends on class progress.) Exact details and cost for the workshop are being finalized with the demonstrator and will be announced in the August newsletter.

The preliminary plan for the Joey Van Der Steeg workshop will be forging different sets of tongs and learning details about what makes a good set of tongs. Forging methods will mainly be using traditional methods and may include some forge welding. Forging methods could also consist of smith and striker teams working together. The style and quantity of tongs produced will likely depend on the ability of each student.

Expected cost for each workshop will be around \$350 per student including meals. There may also be an additional material cost depending on final workshop arrangements.

**Registration information and additional details will be announced in the August newsletter.**

# 2020 SCABA Annual Conference

## Peoples' Choice Awards and General Gallery

### Two Categories:

This year, just like last year, we will have **two categories**, one will be for work done using “**Traditional**” methods and the other will be “**Open**,” meaning open to use any and all methods of the artist’s choosing.

As soon as we start placing labels on art and craft work, it becomes difficult to avoid creating overly limiting definitions to clarify those labels. The intent here is to separate work that is done with methods generally considered traditional to blacksmithing, such as forge welding, joinery, punching, upsetting, drawing out, etc. from more modern methods such as arc/mig/gas welding, stock removal grinding, etc. These “modern” methods have become, in many cases, much faster and easier to use than the traditional methods due to modern machines and equipment. This separation is an attempt to allow a potential gallery submission to be judged against other work on a more equal footing than is practical with a single overall category. Though not always true, some of the traditional methods require more skill and time to accomplish a finished result than by using more modern methods.

Does this mean you can’t use your Baldor grinder with a wire wheel to clean up your hand forged gothic grille? No it is not meant to restrict time saving methods that don’t really impact the nature of the finished piece and are really a faster equivalent version of the traditional “by-hand” method. It does mean you can’t arc weld that one piece that broke off from a stress crack at the last minute and try to hide it with judicious grinding and reheating to cover the tracks with fire scale if you want to enter the piece as “traditional.” Can’t people cheat? Possibly. We are betting most won’t. Will there be judgment calls or “gray areas” in what to call traditional? Probably. If there are any issues that come up, the Board of Directors will make a judgment on how to place the piece in the Gallery. Mostly, any benefit of the doubt will go to the entrant.

### General Gallery:

We would also like to see a general gallery of work from all levels on display. It does not have to be all new work or work submitted for the People’s Choice voting. It can be for sale or just for display. But we would like to have anything you are proud of to be on display. Even work by beginners is often an inspiration so please don’t hold back thinking your work is “not good enough.” Keep in mind, there will be visitors that have never even forged an S-Hook or a leaf key chain. Any work probably has something to teach and inspire others. Please consider bringing your items to display! - *Editor*

# Iron in the Hat

Gerald Franklin

Many of our newer members were confused at last year's conference as to what this "Iron in the Hat" (IITH) thing was all about. Since I have been appointed as the IITH coordinator for the conference, I guess it's one of my duties to explain the tradition and how we observe it at our conferences.

The Iron in the Hat activity is an old blacksmithing tradition (exactly how old is anybody's guess) that makes a little money for the sponsoring organization and provides an outlet for some of the things that an individual smith may not need anymore but another smith may "covet". Basically it's a raffle of sorts where items are donated, tickets are sold and drawn and the items then change owners.

Here's how it works at the Saltfork Conference. Members, merchants, and just good people donate items. We put the items out for display with a paper sack beside each item. Tickets are sold and buyers put one or more tickets into a sack corresponding to an item they are interested in. If you would really like to have a particular item, put several tickets into the sack. At a particular time a winning ticket is drawn from a sack and then taped to the item. Buyers then come by and check the tickets to see if they are a lucky winner. This is pretty simple, and there will be more information posted at the conference as to price, frequency of drawings, etc.

So, what makes it work? The short answer is "item donors and ticket buyers". You can help in both ways. Bring stuff to the conference to donate to the IITH table. This may be a piece of tool steel that you don't need, an extra pair of tongs (I know, NOBODY has an extra pair of tongs), supplies such as flux, rivets, old files, new files, etc. When you go to the hardware store and you see a set of screwdrivers, for example, on sale at a ridiculously low price, buy it and bring it to the conference for IITH. I have already had folks drop donations off with me so it's not too early to think about what you want to donate. Each year I manage to bring a few things and I used to wonder what would be appropriate. It finally hit me that if I would be interested in a certain item, chances are somebody else would be interested in it, too. So now when I'm standing at the bargain bin at Harbor Freight, I buy things that I'd like to have. Simple stuff like epoxy, sandpaper, soapstone, steel tapes, etc are always welcome.

So, we've talked about donors. The other part of the deal that makes it work is buyers. Even if you show up at the conference without anything to donate to IITH, you can buy tickets. They will be on sale by several sellers. You can't win if you don't play.

Not everybody who comes to the conference brings donations. Not everybody who comes buys tickets. Not everybody who buys tickets wins something but every little bit helps raise a buck for the association. It's not cheap to put on a conference and we've managed to keep registration fees low for many years. Think about this: if 100 conference attendees buy \$10 worth of IITH tickets, that's \$1000 that can go a long way toward paying for demonstrators, travel, materials, etc.

*(This article is being repeated by request from the August 2018 Newsletter - Editor)*

# 2020 SCABA Conference Tool Box



This year's Conference Tool Box is made by Bill Corey. Here is a suggested list of tools donation. We are hoping to have as many Smith made tools as possible but other tools are appreciated too.

Any donated tool is greatly appreciated as proceeds from this drawing benefit the Saltfork club as a whole but hand made tools are the most appreciated by those interested in winning the box. Either way, the winner of the tool box drawing will have a nice collection of usable tools that they will be proud to own.

If we get too many of a particular tool, extras will be used in the Iron in the hat or auction. So we cannot have too many of anything, it all is used for the club, somehow.

The list will be continually updated in the newsletters until October to indicate any tools that we have received to date but some tools won't be delivered until Conference day.

Tickets for a chance to win the box will be available up until the drawing at the auction on Saturday night. If you will not be able to attend the conference and want a chance to win the tool box while supporting the club, tickets may be purchased from the Secretary. Tickets are \$2.00 each.

Suggested Items	Donated
Ball peen hammer	
Cross peen hammer	
Rounding hammer	
Hot slit chisel	
Handled hot cut chisel	
File, flat bastard cut	
File, half-round bastard cut	
Farrier's rasp	
Hacksaw	
Rivet backing and setting tools	
Scribe	
Center Punch	
Center Finder	
Dividers	
Tongs	
1/4 V-bit	
3/8 V-bit	
1/2 V-bit	
Punch, Square	
Punch, round	
Punch/Chisel set with tongs	
Scroll pliers	
Soapstone and holder	
Abrasive block, small piece of grinding wheel	
Chisel, large	
Chisel, small	
Metal ruler	
Ball tool (round blunt nose punch)	
Hand held spring swage for tenons	
Hand held swage for necking down	
Set of monkey tools (1/8", 3/16", 1/4")	
Bending forks	
Dog Wrenches	
Flux and flux spoon	
Twisting wrench	
Hot cut hardy	
Bolster plate	
Finish wax	
Shovel	
Rake	
Poker	
Water can	
Multi Square	
Nail Header	
Flatter	
Wire Brush	
Hold Fast	



# Forged Dragon Head Project

## By Rory Kirk



Photo 1: A Finished Dragon Head Display

This is my version of a dragon head that can be used for stand alone display (Photo 1) or to accent a variety of projects like bookends, door pulls, fireplace tools, etc.

This is my specific method and sequence of doing the work which has proven to work well for me. You may want to make adjustments for your own specific situation and artistic tastes. I have gotten ideas and inspiration from others that helped me develop my own style so hopefully this will inspire others in the same way.

I start with 3/4" square mild steel bar. Heat up the end of the bar and set down the end for the beard (Photo 2.) The dimension of the set down isn't important. You will have too much material and will need to cut it off later. But it is really hard to set down with too little material so this is the best approach. The thickness is also up to you. I take it down to about 1/4" or a little less but the final dimension will be adjusted later when finishing the beard.



Photo 2: Set Down for the Beard

Now turn the bar over and knock down the flats for the nostrils. I use a flat faced hammer and knock down each corner made by the set down operation at an angle that is nearly 45 degrees (Photo 3.)

Go with what looks right to you here. Take the flats down until they almost meet each other in the middle. Don't worry about marking the beard with the



Photo 3: Making the Flats for the Nostrils



Photo 4: Make the Nostril Flats Meet in the Middle edge of the hammer. That will be addressed later. (Photo 4.)

Next pre-fuller the cheek area. If you don't have a striker on standby, a spring fuller or Smithin Magician works well here. I use the Smithin Magician with 1/2" fullers top and bottom. Fuller from the top of the face first. Try to place the fullers to come tangent to the back side of the nostril flats. Don't go too deep at first. You can fuller again if you need to. (Photo 5.)

You can adjust swelling behind the fullers with the



Photo 5: Fuller the Cheeks Behind the Nostrils



Photo 6: Fullered on Top and Sides of Cheek Area hammer now if you need to.

Next rotate the bar 90 degrees and fuller the sides (Photo 6.) Then rotate the bar at a 45 degree angle and soften the corners where the fullers meet (Photo 7.)

Now widen the fullers by going back over the whole cheek area with a larger fuller. I used a 1" diameter spring fuller tool for this operation. Follow the same sequence and widen out the fullers without pinching the cheek area down too small (Photo 8.)



Photo 7: Fullered Cheek Area



Photo 8: Enlarging the Cheek Fullering

Once the fullering enlargement is done, set the bar aside to cool slowly. (Don't quench as the next step is going to involve some sawing.) You should have something that looks more like a platypus at this point than a dragon (Photo 9.)

The next step is marking out and cutting the horns. Start with a mark about 3/4" behind the back edge of the fuller on the sides of the face. This will be a reference line for the base of the horns (Photo 10.)

Now come down about 3/8" from the top on each side and draw a line about 3" long that angles up to the top of the bar. This will be the side to side cut



Photo 9: Progress After Fullering



Photo 10: Reference Line for Base of Horns

line for the horns (Photo 11 and 12.)

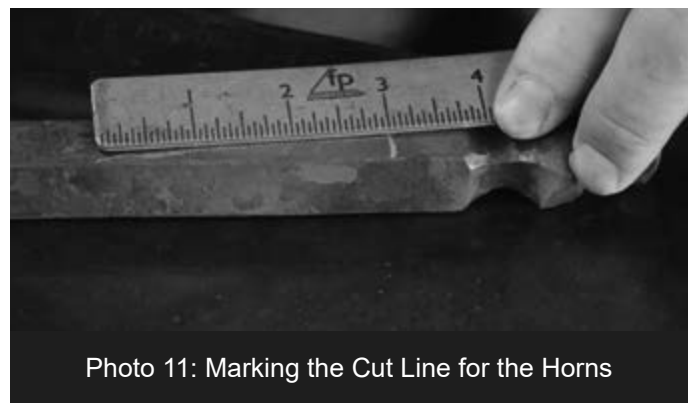


Photo 11: Marking the Cut Line for the Horns



Photo 12: The Cut Line for the Horns

Now cut across the bar on the band saw up to the reference line for the base. If you don't have a band-saw, you can probably use a hacksaw or cutoff wheel but the bandsaw works really well with minimal material loss and it helps to keep the cut even on both sides (Photo 13.)



Photo 13: The First Cut for the Horns

Now you will need to make a mark down the center on top of the horns from the base to the tips and grind that mark just deep enough for a reference. I use a die grinder with a small 1 1/2" diamond wheel for this step (Photo 14.)



Photo 14: Marking the Top Cut for the Horns

You can deepen the cut with a 4 1/2" angle grinder but don't go all the way through. You will probably mark the neck. It is better to go heat the head now and pry the horns up with a chisel to gain extra clearance. (Photo 15.)

Then you can easily separate the horns with a 4 1/2" cutting wheel (Photo 16.)

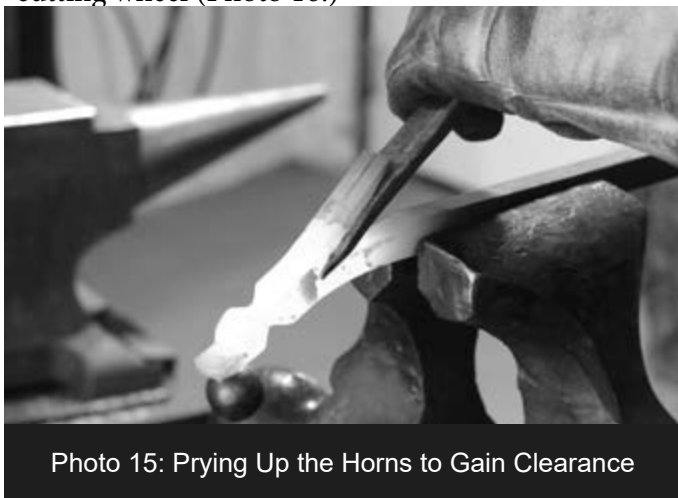


Photo 15: Prying Up the Horns to Gain Clearance



Photo 16: Cutting the Horns

You want the top cut and the side cuts to meet at the base as close as possible. Use extra care at the base to avoid cutting too deep. If you have enough heat left, go ahead and spread the horns (Photo 17.)



Photo 17: Spreading the Horns After Cutting

You can reheat the piece now and clean up the base with a chisel and/or very small fuller. You will just have to work back and forth over the area until you have it smoothed up and softened after the cutting. It is really helpful, if not completely required, to have a good support for the head when you do this and the upcoming chisel operations. Mine is a piece of angle that mounts in the vice - you have probably seen these before. Use the chisels and files to get the base of the horns cleaned up and get rid of any cold shuts waiting to happen in preparation for rounding the horns. (Photo 18 and Vice Tool Photo 19.)



Photo 18: Cleaning Up the Horn Base Cuts with Chisels and Files

Next heat and bend the horns out to the sides with convenience bends that will aid in rounding them (Photo 20.) You may have to work this step out to keep everything in a configuration that will fit in your forge. Round each horn on the anvil (Photo 21.) You may be able to get closer to the base with a cross pein. Both horns will stretch a little while rounding. If one horn stretches more than the other, just cut to length.

After rounding, I bend the horns to point forward. This gives me more access to the base but also makes the whole piece fit my particular forge. I do a little more cleanup at this stage with the files now that the horns are rounded (Photo 22.)

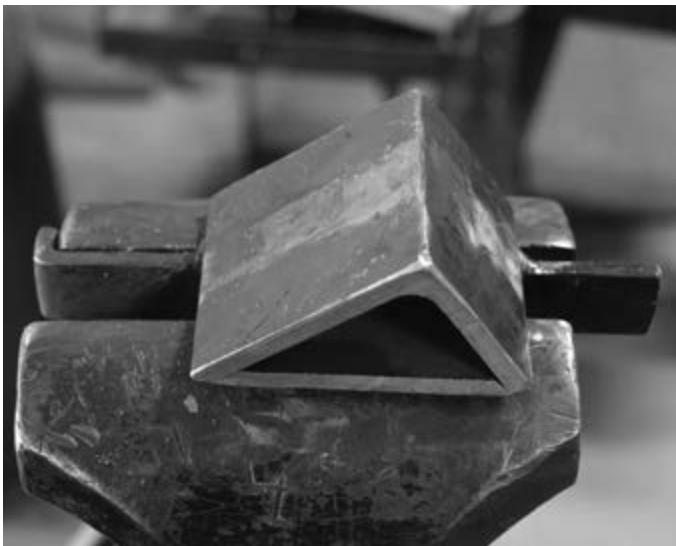


Photo 19: The Vice Tool to Support Chisel Work



Photo 21: Rounding the Horns



Photo 20: Convenience Bends for Rounding the Horns



Photo 22: Hot Filing to Clean Up the Rounded Horns

Adjustable bending forks in the vice can be a useful tool to make adjustments if the head gets out of line. It is best to keep everything where you want it using small frequent adjustments as you work (Photo 23.)



Photo 23: Keeping the Head in Line Using Adjustable Bending Forks

The next step is to punch in the nostrils using a center type punch. Secure the head in the vice tool and drive the punch into the nose at an angle that gives you the look you want. Mark each side carefully to keep them even before punching either side too deep. Adjust and re-punch as necessary until it looks right (Photo 24.)



Photo 24: Punching the Nostrils with Center Punch

The next step is to depress the eye sockets. This is a large depression made prior to punching the eyes. I use a ball pein hammer as a handled punch tool and strike it with a soft hammer. Be careful when doing this step to either use a soft hammer for striking or take time to soften the struck end of you tool. The ball pein hammer I use has a 1 5/16" diameter ball which makes the depression about the right size for me. Strike one side, then the other until you get the look you want and make sure they are both equally sized and the same depth (Photos 25, 26 and 27)



Photo 25: Depressing the Eye Sockets (Use a Soft Hammer to Strike!)



Photo 26: Depressing the Eye Sockets





Photo 27: The Progress After Dishing the Eye Sockets

The head is starting to take shape but there are still several steps left to complete. This is where the dragon head will really begin to take on a personality. Next we will fuller between the eye sockets and the nostrils. This will set the areas apart and gives a nice look. A 1/8" diameter fuller is about right. I think mine is actually 3/32" diameter. Punch the fullers, check the look and location, and fuller again until it looks right to you and all marks are blended smoothly. (Photos 28 and 29.)

After fullering, reheat the head if necessary and punch the eyes. I use a Blacksmith Depot 1/4" Eye Punch for the round eye shape (Photo 30.)



Photo 28: Fullering Between Eye Sockets



Photo 29: Fullering Between Nostrils



Photo 30: Punching the Eyes

Then follow up with a center punch to make a depression for the pupils (Photo 31.)

Some people make happy dragons and some make angry dragons. Mine is a happy dragon. If you want to make yours look mean, then you may want to change the eyes to reflect a mean attitude. You could try leaving them more hollow, fullering in frown lines, etc. But either way, the eyes are key to setting the attitude your dragon head will project. At this point, your dragon should look something like (Photo 31.)



Photo 31: Progress After Punching the Eyes

The next step is to heat the piece and bend the horns forward to expose the neck for finishing. We will hammer the neck on all four sides to square up, clean up the surface, and narrow the sides behind the head. Taking the sides in will define the cheeks. Be careful not to distort the facial features and hammer carefully as you approach the base of the head. Hold the piece at an angle on the face of the anvil to get a good cheek line (Photo 32.)

Finish by softening the corners of the neck (Photo 33.)

At this point, I like to bend the head down a little



Photo 32: Hammering the Neck



Photo 33: Softening the Corners of the Neck

and go over most of the head, neck and horns with a 60 grit flap disc on a 4 1/2" angle grinder to clean up the surfaces that it will reach (Photo 34.)



Photo 34: Cleaning the Surface with a Flap Disc

Next, I bend the horns back and then work on the beard. For this step, I bend the beard down to a 90 degree angle on the edge of the anvil. We will narrow the beard and cut off excess material later but it is better to bend the beard first. We also want to flatten the front of the face in this step in preparation for cutting the mouth which is easier to do with the extra beard material. Hammer the beard over and then flatten the face by hammering into the edge of the anvil (Photo 35.)



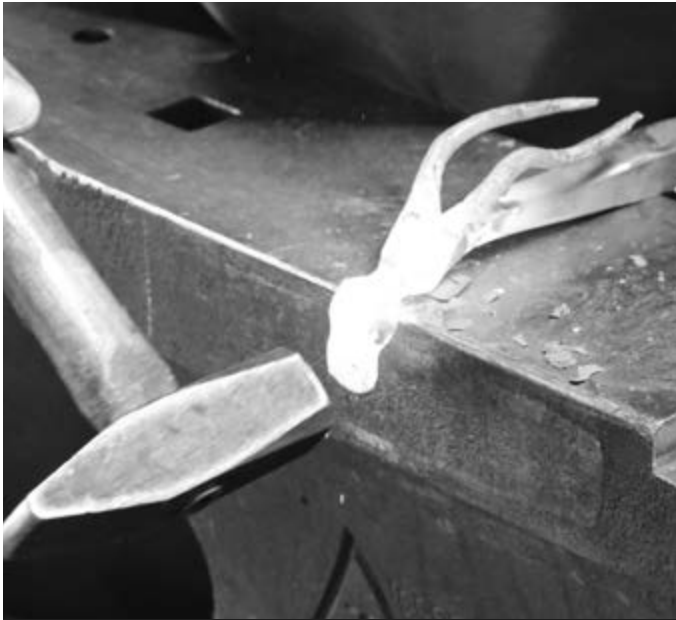


Photo 35: Bending the Beard and Flattening Face

After the face is flat and even, turn the dragon head on its side and start narrowing the beard. This is a typical drawing out operation but use careful hammer blows when close to the mouth area (Photo 36.)



Photo 36: Drawing Out the Beard

After drawing out the beard it will start to be too long for my taste but will still have a lot of material. I usually cut about half of it off at this point and then continue drawing out (Photo 37.)

If you have trouble getting the hammer into the beard, you can use the Smithin Magician with fullering dies to help drawing it out. Use light blows



Photo 37: Cutting Off Excess Beard Material

and walk the beard out like using a miniature power hammer. Then smooth out and blend any fuller marks (Photo 38.)



Photo 38: Drawing Out Beard with Smithin Magician

While working on the beard, watch to make sure it stays centered and adjust as necessary.

Check the face at this point as you may need to bend the nose up a little after working on the beard. I then like to heat the whole piece and go over it hot with a wire wheel on an angle grinder for a nice surface finish. I use the small cup wheels with twisted wire which seem to hold up better (Photo 39.)



Photo 39: Hot Brushing with Wire Cup Wheel

You can also go over any rough spots again with a flap disc if needed. Once done cleaning up the surface, let the piece cool slowly to remain soft and we will cut the mouth.

I like to mark the mouth line with a chisel as it lets me get the line just right and I can adjust as I mark it (Photos 40 and 41.)

The mark serves as a guideline for the band saw. I find marking with the chisel before sawing gives me the best results. Cut the mouth back until it just touches the original cheek fullers we did earlier (Photo 42.)



Photo 40: Marking the Mouth Line with a Chisel



Photo 41: Mouth Marked and Ready for Sawing



Photo 42: Sawing the Mouth

Next heat the bottom of the mouth with a torch (Photo 43.)



Photo 43: Heating the Mouth Prior to Bending Open



Photo 44: Opening the Mouth with a Chisel

Then bend the mouth open slightly with a chisel (Photo 44.) It doesn't take much here (Photo 45.)



Photo 45: The Mouth After Bending Open

Now file the sharp edges on all sides of the mouth to slightly round and soften them. I use a small (6 to 8") half round file for this step. I don't file much here and mostly just take off enough to get rid of the sharp edge from cutting (Photo 46.)

Now heat the piece again and bend the beard. I basically just curl the beard back on the horn of the anvil (Photo 47.)



Photo 46: Filing the Mouth



Photo 47: Bending the Beard

Now I pre-bend the horns up away from the neck (Photo 48) to gain some clearance to put a graceful S-curve into the neck. I use the bending forks for this operation. First bend the base of the neck backward (Photo 49,) then bend the upper part of the neck forward (Photos 50 and 51.)

You will probably need to make some small adjustments at this point to square everything back up, give the final shape to the horns, touch up the facial features, etc. By making small adjustments along the way and keeping everything in line as much as



Photo 48: Bend the Horns Up to Gain Clearance



Photo 51: Finishing the Forward Bend



Photo 49: Bend the Base of the Neck Backward



Photo 50: Bending the Neck Forward

possible, this final step is easier and less disruptive to the work you have already done. I also like to go over everything one last time with the wire cup wheel to remove scale and provide another pass to smooth and texture the surface and give the horns a final shaping (Photo 52.)



Photo 52: The Completed Dragon Head Prior to Final Finishing

To use the completed dragon head for a stand alone display as was shown at the beginning of this article (Photo 1,) I cut the base of the neck and make a tenon. I use a 3" square base of 1/4" plate with a hammered texture and rivet the tenon in the center. Grind off the excess if necessary for bottom clearance. Four self sticking soft felt pads on the bottom will keep the base stable and avoid scratching table surfaces.

You can also put the dragon head on fireplace tools, door pulls, etc. You may need to give special attention to the horns and bend them into a position that allows for handling without causing any injuries.

For door pulls, I cut the stock long enough for the handle and forge a stylistic tail on the end opposite the head (Photo 52.) I bend the curves of the hand hold part to contact a backing plate at two points where it is riveted to the plate (Photo 53.)



Photo 52: A Dragon Head Door Pull Ready for Attaching to the Backing Plate

There are a lot of steps involved in making these dragon heads and most of the details can be personalized to reflect your own artistic taste. The methods and order of operations shown here are what



Photo 53: A Finished Dragon Head Door Pull

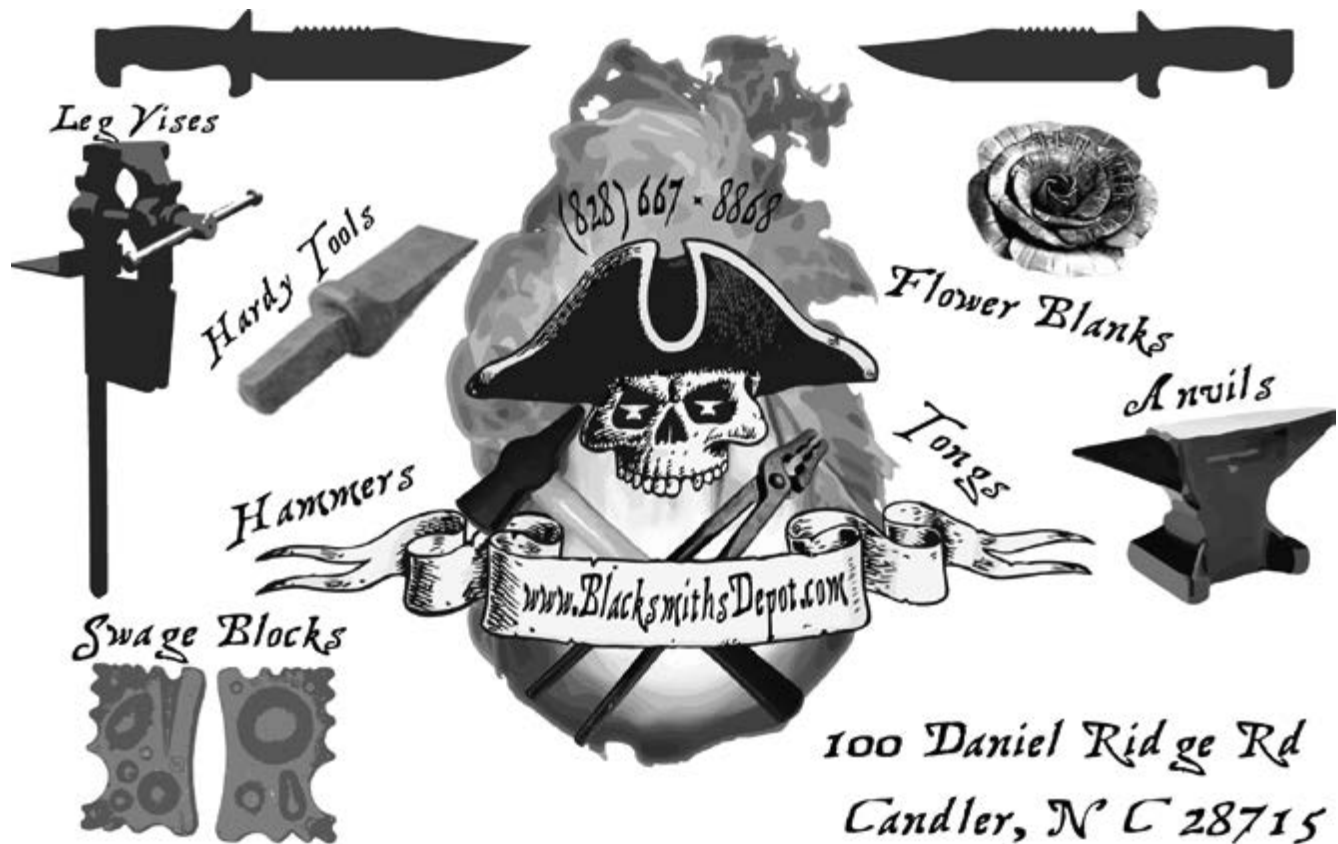
have proven to work well for me but you may find different procedures work better for your specific forge set up and work situation.

Making small adjustments along the way to keep the project from getting too far out of whack will help you overall. And keeping an eye out for symmetry and alignment really needs to happen all through the project.

I hope this article has inspired and helped you to make your own dragon head.

-Rory Kirk, Cheyenne, Oklahoma

# SCABA Shop and Swap



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## For Sale: 15 Lb Tire Hammers:

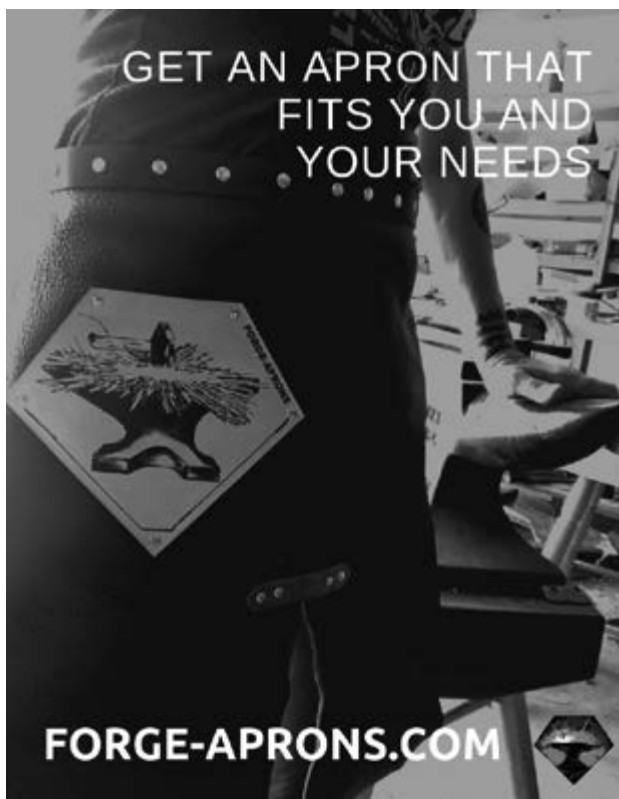
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## For Sale:

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Send a check or money order for \$30 US to Clay Spencer, 73 Penniston Pvt. Drive, Somerville, AL 35670-7013. Or send \$32 US to Paypal.Me/ClaySpencer. E-mail me at clay@otelco.net. PDFs will be e-mailed outside US. Phone 256-558-3658

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**For Sale:** I have numerous old tools and collectible items of various kinds including blacksmith related tools and equipment. Too many tools to list them all. Inventory is always changing. Contact: Craig Guy (SCABA Member), Piedmont, OK  
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# SCABA Shop and Swap

## SCABA Library DVD's Available:

This is a partial list of the DVD titles available to members from the SCABA Library. Contact the Librarian (Don Garner) if you would like to obtain a copy of any listed title or if you have questions on any other titles that may be available. Additional titles are listed on the website. DVD's are available for a very minimal cost to offset the blank disc and cases or sleeves. Shipping cost applies if you need these delivered by mail.

- Robb Gunter Basic Blacksmithing parts 1,2,3 and the controlled hand forging series
- Clay Spencer SCABA conf.2013 pts. 1,2 and 3
- Jerry Darnell 18th century lighting, door latches and hinges
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- Mark Aspery SCABA conf. 2011
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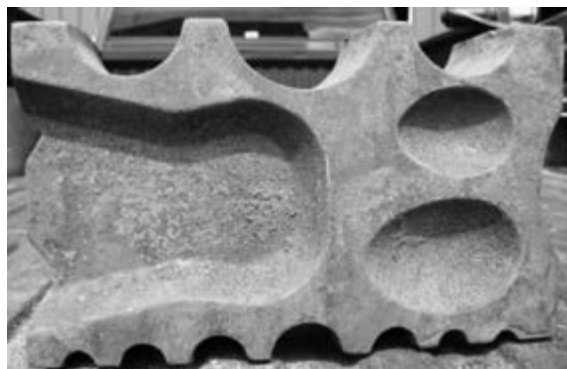
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# SCABA Shop and Swap

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**No sales to non-members.**

**NW Region coal pile located in Douglas, OK.** If you make arrangements well in advance, Tom Nelson can load your truck or trailer with his skid steer loader for a fee of \$10 to be paid directly to Tom. Tom has moved his skid steer and must now haul the loader to the coal pile to load you out, hence the \$10 charge. You may opt to load your own coal without using Tom's loader. The coal can be weighed out at the Douglas Coop Elevator scales. Contact Tom Nelson (580-862-7691) to make arrangements to pick up a load. Do not call Tom after 9 PM!! Bring your own containers and shovels. Payment for the coal (\$.07 per pound) should be made directly to the Saltfork Treasurer.

### **NW Region Coal Pile in Thomas:**

Don Garner now has a new pile of club coal available for sales to SCABA members. The shop is at 23713 E 860 Rd in Thomas, OK. (One mile west, then one mile north of Thomas.) Contact Don at 580-302-1845 (Cell Phone) to arrange details for purchases.

### **NE Region coal location:**

\*\*\*\*NOTICE\*\*\*\*

*Charlie McGee is no longer hosting the coal pile in the NE region. If you would be interested in hosting a location in NE, let one of the SCABA Board members know.*

**S/C region coal location:** Club coal is now available at Norman at Byron Doner's place. Call Byron to make arrangements to come by and get coal.

## SCABA T-Shirts!

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Legacy SCABA T-shirts and long sleeve denim shirts are also available on clearance while supplies last. T-Shirts are \$5.00 and Denim Shirts are \$10.00. (Plus shipping if applicable.) Contact Josh Perkins to check sizes and quantities that are still available.

If you would like to purchase shirts, contact Josh Perkins (918) 269-3523.



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(Please Print Clearly!)

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Phone (Best Number to Contact) (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

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ABANA Member? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

I have enclosed \$30.00 for dues for one year membership from the date of acceptance.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

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Note: Registration online by Paypal OR credit card is available from the website.

[www.saltforkcraftsmen.org](http://www.saltforkcraftsmen.org)

You do NOT need a Paypal account to use your credit card and registration/renewal is immediate.



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Region: \_\_\_\_\_ NE \_\_\_\_\_ SE \_\_\_\_\_ SW \_\_\_\_\_ NW

Date: Month \_\_\_\_\_ Day \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Host Phone (Best Number to Contact) (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Host e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Trade Item: \_\_\_\_\_

Lunch Provided: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Please provide detailed directions and/or a map to meeting location if possible. Meetings are scheduled on a first come basis.

**Return to: Saltfork Craftsmen Regional Meeting Coordinator, Russell Bartling**

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Sand Springs, OK 74063

You can also send the information in an e-mail or text or fill out the online form available on the website in the top banner of the Calendar Tab: [www.saltforkcraftsmen.org/Calendar.shtm](http://www.saltforkcraftsmen.org/Calendar.shtm)

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