

New Jersey Blacksmiths Newsletter

NOMMA NE Chapter Meeting

April 4, 2009 Report by Bruce Freeman

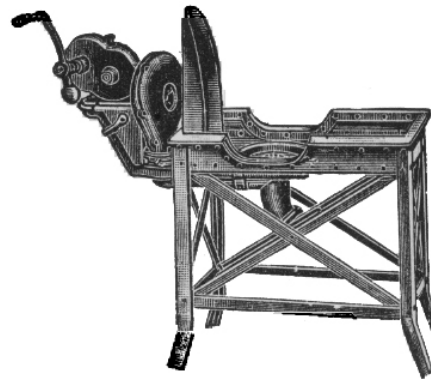
I learned from Eric Cuper that the April NOMMA NE Chapter meeting was in NJ, that it would be a hammer-in, and that NJBA members were welcome to attend. Apparently, this chapter covers an area that includes at least NJ, NY & CT – I'm not sure what else. The host was Keith Majka and his family at their business location in Paterson. Majka Railing Co. specializes in aluminum railings and has a generous shop space in which to construct these. I arrived at 10 AM and shot the bull with Keith and others while helping myself to coffee and a donut. Eric Cuper and his father, Rich, and Dan O'Sullivan showed up soon after. After a generous social period, Keith ran the business meeting, during which I took the opportunity to invite the NOMMA members to NJBA events. After everybody introduced themselves, the business meeting concluded and we broke for a buffet lunch courteously provided by NOMMA and the Majkas.

Eric and Dan were featured early in the hammer in. Eric demonstrated forging of aluminum. Dan demonstrated a snub-end scroll. I missed the names of the other demonstrators, but the demonstrations included forging bronze, forging a dragon's head, and perhaps other demos that I missed while occupied with other conversations.

Of great interest to me was that Majka produces its own biodiesel (methanol-lye process) from waste oil from the diner across the street, and that Keith Majka Jr., a recent Mech.E. graduate, has written this up for NOMMA's magazine, *The Fabricator* (Sept./Oct. 2008 issue). (That same issue has an article on our own Tim Miller and his sister Rachel, of Spirit Ironworks.)

The Majka shop is literally a block from the famous Great Falls of Paterson, soon to be a

National Park. Eric, Rich and I wandered over to look at it, as I had never seen it before. There's a small power house there, but the original use was apparently from a canal that is fed from the top of the falls. This travels along the uphill side of the historic Paterson district and presumably fed turbines to power factories. More about these falls and their industrial history can be found at <http://www.teterboro-online.com/scenic/falls1/falls2.shtml>.



Coal Alert

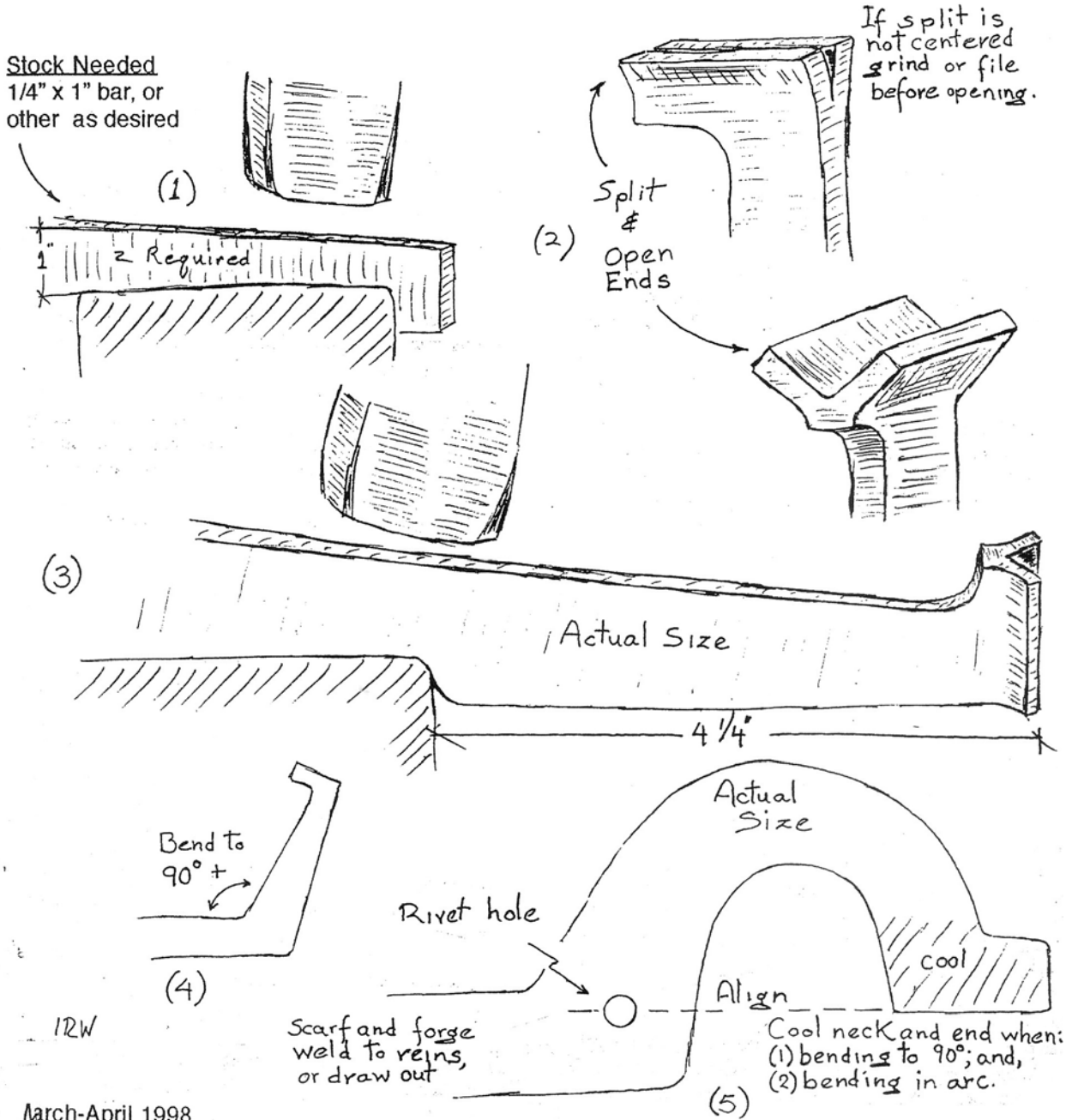
I have heard mention that there are efforts on the New Jersey, New York and Federal levels to outlaw the burning of coal without proper scrubbing equipment or completely. This would be a disaster for the rebirth of blacksmithing. The small shop smith and the hobbyist burn very little coal compared to an industrial facility and should be exempt from these requirements along with historic villages and old engine groups including railroads.

If anyone knows how to research this problem to find out about legislation that may affect all of us, please do so and let me know so we can share it and work to save our craft again. If anyone is a member of NOMMA they may be aware of the problem or might be able to help, please contact them. Larry Brown-ED

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Vee Jaw Tongs

I believe these were by Doug Wilson and published in the New England Blacksmiths Newsletter. A small computer problem caused me to lose the text that went with this but the drawings say it all. My apologies to the originator of this if I am wrong as to the source. I have made this type of tong and they are very nice to use. L Brown, NJBA Editor



March-April 1998

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Blacksmithing Workshops and Classes:

Peters Valley Craft Education Center
19 Kuhn Rd., Layton, NJ 07851 (973)948-5200
pv@warwick.net www.pvcrafts.org

**Academy of Traditional Arts
Carrol County Farm Museum**
500 South Center St. Westminster, MD 21157
(410)848-7775 (410)876-2667

Touchstone Center for Crafts
R.D.#1, Box 60, Farmington, PA 15437
(724)329-1370 Fax: (724)329-1371

John C Campbell Folk School
One Folk School Rd.
Brasstown, NC 28902
1-800-365-5724 www.folkschool.com

Brookfield Craft Center
286 Whisconier Road
P. O. Box 122
Brookfield, CT 06804-0122
203.775.4526

Open Forges

We are looking for members who are interested in opening their forges up to members as an open forge. This does not have to be a weekly forge as is Marshall's the others can meet once or twice a month. Please contact, Larry Brown, Editor.

We want to encourage all to join us at:

Monday Night Open Forge in N.J.

Marshall Bienstock is hosting an open forge in his shop at 7 pm almost every Monday night (Please call ahead on holidays to make sure , (732)780-0871)

Open Forge in Long Island

Sunday from 10:00 am to 6pm.
Starting the 1st Sunday in November until the end of April. Please call ahead to confirm and get directions. Ron Grabowski, 110 Burlington Blvd. Smithtown, NY (631) 265-1564
Ronsforge@aol.com

If any members have a forge at home and work in the evenings or weekends and want to open it up to help a few local guys, let me know, Larry Brown, editor, as we get requests from members who have a hard time traveling to some of the open forge locations.

Business Members

We would like to thank those who joined with our new Business Membership category .

Business dues are \$40

Please show them our support

John Chobrda, Dragon Run Forge
P.O. Box 315 Delaware City, DE, 19706
302-838-1960 jchob@verizon.net

Grant Clark, GWC Forge
PO Box 158 Perrineville NJ 08535
732 446-2638, 732 446-2638

Eric Cuper Artist Blacksmith
109 Lehman Lane, Neshanic Station, NJ 08853
908 642-6420 ericuper@msn.com

Bruce Hay, Jr.
50 Pine St., Lincroft, NJ 07738

Jayesh Shah, Architectural Iron Design
950 S. 2nd St., Plainfield, NJ 07063
jay@archirondesign.com

Louise Pezzi, Blacksmith
1241 Carpenter St
Philadelphia, PA 19147
215 336 6023 pezziandjr@gmail.com

Search

I am looking for a #250 fisher anvil in good shape. If you have one for sale or run across one, contact me; Larry Brown, NJBA Editor. (718) 967-4776

BLACKSMITH TOOLS FOR SALE!

John Chobrda

Has a large selection of tools for sale.
Anvils – Forges - Leg Vices—Blowers

Tongs – Hammers

and/or resurfaced Anvils

Call John for prices and availability
(302) 838-1960 cell (609) 610-3501

New Jersey Blacksmiths Newsletter

WORK SMARTER IN THE SHOP: HAND TOOLS

By Barry Denton

To me there is nothing better than going up to the shop and having all my tools organized, polished, tight, and ready to go to work. Normally the day before I start a new project I will make sure everything is in order. There is nothing more irritating than starting a project and having to stop because you can't find something or you have to repair it. During my shoeing career Sunday afternoons were always spent sharpening and repairing tools for the week ahead. Because I punched and counter punched hundreds of horseshoes each week, I would keep about 6 of each style of punch on hand. In the normal course of work I would break or melt the tips of my punches so I always had another to move on to. This allowed me to keep the dollars rolling in by not stopping to repair a tool. I simply laid the damaged one aside and proceeded with the next punch. The damaged punch would wait until Sunday afternoon to be repaired. The point being, not to hold up production due to breakage.

The most important tool in my box is my hammer. My primary hammer is a rounding hammer, next is my cross peen, and third is a ball peen. Each of those hammers perform their functions very well if they are properly maintained. I switch hammers to make my working time more efficient. Yes, I can probably do 90% of my work with just one hammer, but it makes it much easier on me if I have the right hammer for each job. Blacksmithing is hard, taxing work so why not make it as easy as you can on yourself? All three of my primary hammers weigh the same, so when I happen to switch hammers I don't have to readjust my body to accommodate the new hammer. I also have secondary hammers of heavier and lighter weights for different applications, but for now let's concentrate on our primary hammers.

The first thing in my mind when I pick up a hammer is balance. Hammer balance allows a fluid even swing when you are striking metal. If your hammer is balanced it will swing with minimal effort, will rebound nicely, hit squarely, not turn in your hand and not make your forearm tie up. Avoid hammers that are clubby and unbalanced as they will only contribute to the destruction of your arms. Hammers are very much like cars. You can go anywhere in a Volkswagen that you can go in a Lincoln. However, when you arrive in a Lincoln you will be a lot more relaxed and less worn out. Expensive hammers are always worth the extra money. What you hammer with everyday when you are 25, will have a

direct effect on how you hammer when you are 45.

The face should be constantly watched and polished. This keeps your work free from unnecessary marks left by a chipped or distorted face. A few minutes on a belt sander with a #400 belt goes along way on an air hardened hammer head.

Something else that is important is the tightness of the head. The head should be absolutely solid on the handle. If it is moving around you are wasting energy. Maintaining tight hammer heads under the drastic conditions of the Mojave Desert takes some ingenuity and extra effort. First of all I drill all my hammer heads through the middle from side to side and put a pin in them. About once a month all my hammers find their way to a bucket with about 2" of anti freeze in the bottom. I put them in head first and soak them about 4 hrs. The anti freeze seems to keep the head tight for a long time and does not rot the wood as quickly as water. I have tried many things over the years, but this is what works best for me.

Lastly let's talk about tongs. The worst thing you can have in a blacksmith shop are ill fitting or poor working tongs. Remember that your hammer hand is the "power" hand, but your tong hand is your "smart" hand. Therefore, use a little time before you start a project to make certain all the tongs you will use fit the work, swing open easily, and fit comfortably in your hands. If you are trying to present a professional image of yourself in front of a customer there is not a worse thing to watch than a blacksmith fumbling with tongs that don't fit or don't open. Your work gets out of position and so do your hammer blows which in turn distort your forging project. I like all my tong reins small and rounded so they feel good in my hands. If I buy a pair of tongs at a yard sale that are big and clunky I'll take the rivet out and forge them down to my comfort zone. Tongs are very easy to make so I really like the control I have when I do that. If I buy a new pair of tongs, I will buy the best I can and still alter them. Forging and belt sanding go a long way to making a pretty and comfortable pair of tongs. When you are working and a rivet seizes up on you, dip your tongs into the water bucket quickly, then immediately drop the end of one rein on the anvil face. Nine times out of ten "jogging the rivet" in this manner will free it up.

Hopefully you have a few new ideas on maintaining your hand tools. Now get out there and be efficient! It only makes your life easier.

The Anvil's Horn

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703-680-1632 USA
703-680-6222 VOICE Website; WWW.ABANA.ORG Email; ABANA@ABANA.ORG

_____-_____-_____
 EXPIRATION DATE _____

Join ABANA or Check out other area chapters!

Northeast Blacksmiths Association

Northeast Blacksmiths holds its meets twice a year at the Ashokan Field Campus in New York State.

The Ashokan campus is located in Olivebridge, N.Y., several miles west of Kingston, N.Y. The meets are held the first weekend in May and in the first weekend in October every year. The main demonstration is in the blacksmith shop and there is a "Hands On" workshop for beginners. A main demonstrator is brought in for each meet, food and bunk-house style lodging are provided as part of the cost of the weekend long meet.

Contact : Tim Neu
 to register for hammer-ins
 or subscribe to the newsletter;
Tim Neu, The Ashokan Center,
447 Beaverkill Rd.
Olivebridge, N.Y. 12461 [914]657-8333
 For more information check out the web site; <<http://nba.abana-chapter.com/>>

Join The Pennsylvania Blacksmiths Association!

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip code _____

Home / work Phone # _____ E-mail (optional) _____

New Member ___ Renewal ___

Do you have any particular skills (welder, accountant, carpenter, doctor) that may be helpful to the group or membership?

Suggestions for PABA demonstrations

What is your skill level?
 Beginner Intermediate Advanced Professional

Membership paid by ___ Cash ___ Check # _____

Send your completed application with \$ 20 (one year dues) to:
 PABA Treasurer, Buzz Glahn
 1667 Wyomissing Rd.
 Mohnton, PA 19540
 (make Checks payable to PABA)

PABA Membership Application
 Membership is from Jan. 1 — Dec. 31

New Jersey Blacksmiths Association
Attn: Larry Brown, Editor
90 William Avenue
Staten Island, New York 10308



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How to Join or Renew your Membership in NJBA:

NJBA Dues are \$20 per year.

NJBA Business Dues are \$40 per year

Please make your check out to: “NJBA”

Please mail checks to:

NJBA, P.O. Box 224, Farmingdale, NJ 07727-9998

Please include payment with the information listed below. You will receive a postcard confirmation of your membership, and will receive a newsletter within a month.

NJBA's "year" runs from June to June. If you join mid-year, the postcard will offer a prorated dues option which will then allow you to extend your membership till the following June. The following information will be listed in a roster available to other members.

Name _____ Home Phone _____

Address _____ Day Phone _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

E-Mail _____ Skill Level (optional) _____

Comments _____