



NEWSLETTER December 2009 Volume 2 Issue 12
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Presidents Message Dec. 2009

The year is almost gone. It's been a fast one. First thanks to everyone for all your hard work. We may have lost our shop again but we have had a very productive year. We've had a demo for every meeting. We've had several classes with one by Mike Lambiase at his shop since we moved. We had our last meeting at Annie's shop (First Class Setup). She has even asked us back in March. Donnie Robertson has asked us to his shop in February. John Richter has offered to hold a knife class at his shop in 2010. We will be offering more classes as they can be arranged. Thanks to everyone for having faith in Tom and Myself for two more years and thanks to Joel and Donnie for stepping up for Treasurer and Secretary. Steve, Joe and Vince deserve a big round of thanks from all of us. See you at Steve's in December. Remember, bring your family and be prepared for the best Family Day and The Best Iron In The Hat Ever.

Happy Holidays

Travis

November 15th, 2009 Meeting: by: Steve LaPaugh

The weather was great for the meeting at Annie's "barn". The facility was much more modern and accommodating than I had imagined. We had a good turnout with 22 members attending and contributing to the Pot Luck table and Iron-In-The-Hat which brought in \$288. Travis also brought in Guild purchased coal for resale to members. During the business portion of the meeting nominations were opened for next year's TBG slate of officers. Travis and Tom were nominated to run for a second term as President and vice-president respectively. Don Robertson was nominated for the office of Secretary and Joel Thompson was nominated for the Treasurer's position. Elections will be held as always at the December meeting. Bob Orcutt provided the demonstration on forging his traditional Wizard Head figure from square bar stock. He used few special tools in the process. The most elaborate one was a spring fuller with a ball bearing welded to each end to upset the stock to produce a protruding nose on the figure and two short punches with handles to form the eye recess and details. Bob also used a vise-grip hardy tool he made to hold the stock firmly on the anvil while detailing the figure. He left the stock long to make it into a fireplace broom. Everyone enjoyed the demonstration and we all learned a few new ideas on forging figures.



Annie's Place



Joe making a point to Emory & Mike



Bob Orcutt fields a question



Bob working on the Wizard



It's in the details!



Bob using his fullering tool

Bob using his Wizard tools: Photos by Vince Parrish



The Wizard has come to life:



Steve LaPaugh's RR Spike Heart Hook:

This is the sum total of about 4 hours of work and the forge. I drew the spike out about 5" before I split it with a hot cut chisel. Then drew the splits out to about 7" before making the 90 degree bend in the vise. I used a 1 1/2 " mandrel in the hardy hole to bend the top lobes of the heart. I chickened out on welding the bottom together as it looked good as is and I thought about overlapping it and riveting it together with a small brass rivet, but didn't like the look of it overlapped, so I just left it but at the bottom. I couldn't get in with a file to really clean up the "V" at the top of the heart and it was somewhat obscured by the screw so that detail wasn't a do or die issue. When making this detail it is best to chisel and fuller it before you bend it (Hind sight at work). I stamped "2009" on one side of the spike and "WF" (Warwick Forge) on the other side, as I do with door knockers; I mounted it on a board. This keeps the screw from getting lost and lets you see the "negative space", and attaches my business card to the item.



Drawn out and chisel cut



Ready for mounting



Mounted and ready, front view



Mounted Side view

Steve neglected to mention that he made this item as a part of a Wedding gift presented to Brian and Karen Brazeal at the November Blacksmith Guild of Virginia meeting. Nice job Steve, Thanks for sharing it with us.

Blackstone Methodist Boy Scout Retreat November 7th 2009: by Vince Nakovics

Bear Short was heading up this event and he told me it would be a busy event, he wasn't kidding. This was my first time doing this event and I was really treated to a great experience. I have never dealt with such a large group of boys that were so well behaved. The demo was fast and furious, I lost count of how many nail swords I made early in the day. The large crosses were also very popular. Bob Orcutt was busy pumping out his famous Mule Heads by themselves or making neckerchief rings for the Scouts. Travis Covington, Lemuel Brown and his nephew Hunter Brown set up a couple of rigs and Hunter made his very first hook here today Way to go Hunter! There was a good representation of what the BSA has to offer and was quite an event. We were even treated to a robust Chili and Venison stew augmented with other game meats. A real treat as I don't get to sample much of that anymore. Take a chance and help Bear out next year! It's a great event one of the best I've done.

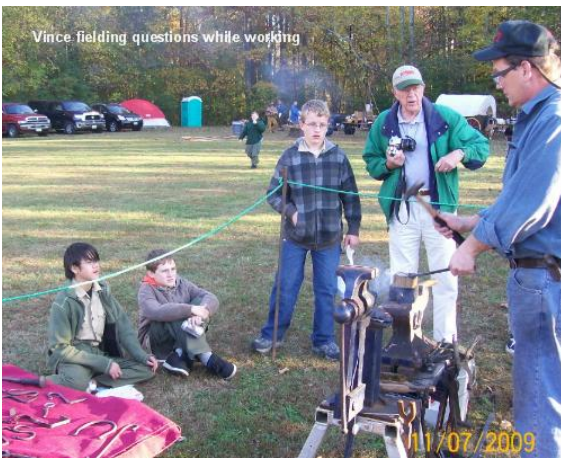


Bob doing his best to keep the demo moving along...



Hunter Brown making his first hook! What a swing he had!

11/07/2009



Vince fielding questions while working

11/07/2009



Lemuel Brown in Background - Bear making nails as Scouts watch on.

11/07/2009



I'll trade you my curved one for a straight one (miniature swords)

11/07/2009



Hunter Brown working his iron! Way to go Hunter!

11/07/2009

Blacksmith Interview: by Vince Nakovics

This month I have the distinctive pleasure of presenting a Smith whose work heralds his artistic side and sacrifices none of the craftsmanship of days gone by. While he enjoys traditional blacksmithing, he utilizes modern techniques to enrich his work and provide him the techniques to take his talents to new limits.

Mark Schwenk
Blacksmith, Metal Sculptor
Frog Valley Forge
www.frogvalley.com



In the Beginning:

Watching the smiths at Colonial Williamsburg and a smith at Carroll County Farm museum were some of my first contacts with traditional style metal workers. I fell in love with the craft early on and craved the visits to small festivals and Colonial era workshops of all kinds.

My grandfather, who worked at the Naval Research Labs and then at The National Bureau of Standards, also showed me blacksmiths and metal workers at his work and gave me hands on experience with some basic techniques. He was primarily a master machinist but he also had training and experience in Blacksmithing and conveyed both of those trades to me. From those early contacts a ground work was laid for my later choice of careers. During my youth metal working was a basement apprenticeship and high school part-time interest, nothing more. In fact, I studied fine art photography long before I developed a working interest in metal arts. I found the ground work paid off as I combined my art experiences with metal work. Consequently, I found that clients liked the artistic vision in

the metal work that I created. By my mid-thirties I had a thriving artist blacksmith career underway.

A Career is Born:

As a professional photographer I was asked to curate a multimedia art show at our local art center. I was the primary photographer and another artist was to supply the metal work for this show. Two nights before the show opened, with most of the show hung on the walls already, the metal artist backed out. I was at a loss as to how to fill the big empty wall spaces. So I went back to my work shop and came up with a couple of metal sculptures. A torch, a little blacksmithing and bit of creativity over a couple of beers was the beginning of a series of sculptures. Suddenly my hobby turned into a career.

The show opened with two pieces of my newly created sculpture hanging on the wall. To my great surprise they were the first pieces to sell, before the show even opened! I knew I was onto something and continued to develop a line of traditional and non-traditional metal work that has since expanded to include custom work and gallery pieces all over the east coast.

I am both a traditionalist and one who embraces the new technology. Of course some technology is hundreds of years old. Power hammers date back perhaps a thousand years. Those fall into traditional tools in my mind. The plasma cutters and MIG, TIG and Stick welders I now use allow me to compete in an ever competitive field. However those modern tools also allow me to create much more than can be done with just hammer, anvil and forge. A sense of unlimited creativity comes from the modern tooling that the village smith could only dream of. As long as I know the underlying skills of the trade and use those when appropriate for reproduction work, I can use the modern tooling to create new and impossible forms that cannot be created any other way. Besides, blacksmiths have been creating new tools and better processes since the beginning of metal working. I am sure that these same minds created the new processes we use today.



Outdoor Fireplace Screen



Collection of Pipe Candleholders

Tools and their uses:

My favorite tooling is my growing collection of power hammers and antique machinery. My 1905 era Fairbanks 25#, to my homebuilt 75# hammer to my new to me 1909 Bradley 300# all are among my favorites. A mill, lathe and hacksaw from the early 1900's are also right up there. The collection feeds itself, repairs itself and can make any part for any of the tools, with a little help from me of course. Hand tools that I use frequently would be my no-name ball peins of 2# and 3# size and my no-name cross peins in 1/2 through 4 lb, with the 3# cross pein being my favorite. All with wooden handles and except for the smaller sizes which are a longer style head, I like a stocky shape for control. I have long handles on all them, except for a couple of special hammers for close quarters. Of course I have about a hundred hammers in weights from a couple of ounces in ball and cross peins to 10 lb sledges. All of them collected for a special purpose or to allow me to use the same type of hammer at one of three work areas in my shop. There is some repetition but not much.

As to anvils, my main anvils are a Peter Wright 150# and a Fisher 200#. I use them both equally, but I also have 3 or 4 others in weights of 20# to 200#, each one at a different location for different work around the shop. A must have and most used tool for me is my swage block. The multitude of shapes it provides gives me what I need to create almost anything. I find it an indispensable tool for on site as well as shop work.

Advice for the adventurous:

Take a business class and trust to an accountant your important tax issues. Do a "**REAL**" analysis of cost and overhead and price your work in accordance with those costs and what other smiths charge. The danger that most up-and-coming pro's face is under charging for their work. It's ok to be a little bit off or under price on a \$500 commission but you can bury your business if you make a mistake on pricing a \$50,000 job that takes a year to make. There are so many different costs of doing business (insurance, taxes, commodity pricing of steel, electricity, coal or gas) that we sometimes forget what they all are. **Don't ever quote off the cuff!** tell your client that you'll get back to them with a quote. Always charge for quoting your jobs, large or small. Your time is valuable and it takes hours or weeks to design intricate work. We often forget that design time is part of the job and should be charged or built into the project cost.

Build your business slowly. Don't go into tons of debt to buy a big new toy until you are sure that you need it.



Terrace Railing



Fire Tree Small

Aside from the satisfaction of being able to say “I can make that myself” and really mean it, I take great pride in having some form of immortality that will continue for perhaps a thousand years after I am gone. In terms of the technical stuff and the underlying skill set, that came from my family. I have smiths in my ancestry dating back 300 years in a virtually unbroken line. My grandfather and father taught me the basics when I was young.

As to the artistic influences I have looked to Lee Badger of Anvilworks in Hedgesville, WV. <http://anvilworks.net/> comes to mind first. He helped me with many technical aspects over the years and artistically we enjoy a similar flow and natural influence in our work. Much of that flow was inspired by his work before I even knew it was his work. We met many years after I had seen his work and only while looking through his portfolio did I realize I had seen this before. Enrique Vega or QuiQue (Key-Kay) of the Art Metal.com forum similarly influenced my work artistically before I knew who he was. You can see his work at <http://enrique.artmetal.com>. His strong design elements and both the flow of some works and the rigidity of other designs also helped to shape the forms that I create.

Editor’s Note:

Christmas time is here again. Ah yes the hustling and bustling to get those perfect gifts. Lets all take the time to remember the Spirit of the Season at hand. Give a Fellow TBGer a hand with a project of theirs, get together and make something great for the Christmas meeting. Steve LaPaugh will be hosting us again this year and I am sure that it will be even better than last years. Steve tells me he has improved his pavilion and it will be even cozier than ever. Thanks in advance Steve.

Nominations have been submitted, but the last I heard was that there were no other nominees so all those nominated will be filling those offices. President: Travis Covington, V.P. Tom Herendeen, Treasurer: Joel Thompson, Secretary: Don Robertson. There must be an election in December, even though those nominated are unopposed, so remember to cast your vote to formalize the process. We all know all good things must come to an end sometime, so as you all know this is my last newsletter. I have enjoyed the last 3 years as your Editor and hope that you have to.

I want to thank everyone who supported the newsletter, but in particular I wanted to Thank Steve LaPaugh who has provided pictures and articles for every edition that I published. Thanks again for the opportunity to be your Newsletter Editor.

Sincerely,

Vince Makovics



Steve LaPaugh’s Steak Turner



Joe Gentile’s Ring fashioned after Brian Brazeal’s

Tidewater Blacksmiths Guild Mission Statement

"The Tidewater Blacksmiths Guild is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the craft of Blacksmithing and to increasing the public awareness of the history of Blacksmithing while at the same time demonstrating that in this world, things hand made still exist and remain objects of art"

2007 - 2009 TBG Officers:

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Tidewater Blacksmiths Guild meets every third Sunday of the month. Location of the meeting is posted on our website: <http://www.tidewaterblacksmiths.com> .

www.blacksmithsupply.com

<http://www.yesteryearschool.com>

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