



NEWSLETTER

June 2009 Volume 2 Issue 6

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President's Letter:

I hope everyone has had a safe and healthy holiday. I would also like to take the time to say thank you to all our members who have served or are serving in the military.

This spring has turned into a busy demo season. Thanks to the ones that attended and made these demos happen. We have had a lot of sales for our items and keeping a stock is a continuing problem. If you can make something for the table please do so. Anything on the list or any small items of quality will be great. As long as Tim agrees we will continue with the Sunday work days restarting in July.

Our family day will be at North West River Park on June 21st. We will have hotdogs, hamburgers and smoked sausages. Bring a picnic item or desert. Remember **IRON IN THE HAT**. Remember to include items everyone would want, we will have wives, husbands and children, also parents of our younger members.

Regular classes will be starting back up as soon as we can arrange them. We will also be scheduling some special classes as we have instructors and enough interest.

Send me your pictures of projects to be put on the member's gallery, also send anything of interest to Vince Nakovics for the Newsletter. Vince is doing a great job literally by himself and I'm sure he would love to have some input.

Thanks to everyone for what you do.

Travis



Here's some team work going on now!
Mike Lambiase & Joe Gentile during open forge

Blacksmith Interview: by Vince Nakovics

Well let me tell you. I had the good fortune to meet, chat and check out some of this month's interviewee's work at the Blacksmith Guild of Virginia's Annual Hammer In back in Feb. He was chock full of information and more than willing to share it with me about building cannon carriages and a few other items that we both make fairly often. Jymm Hoffman and I discussed bending a 4" x 4" axle to accommodate the correct dishing angle of some carriages that I have at work and came up with several really viable ideas on how to do so. It was a great experience to meet him and take advantage of his tremendous skills. And now...

Jymm Hoffman

Blacksmith

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Jymm's Reproduction Traveling Forge



In the beginning:

My first blacksmithing experience I tried to make a knife with a Hibachi grill, charcoal briquettes, and a hair blow-dryer for a forge with a railroad track as an anvil, spring of 1975. I did not try any forging again until volunteering at Ohio Village in the spring of 1979. The blacksmith, Paul Browning, taught me the proper way to stand at the anvil and swing a hammer, making round stock, square, then round again, and lots of hooks. Later that summer and fall I spent most of my time volunteering in the gun shop, as I wanted to be a gunsmith.

I'm not exactly sure, but I think I decided that I wanted to be a Blacksmith in 1980, I know it was while I was going to Salem College, Salem, WV in a program they called Heritage Arts, later to become Museum Studies. Craft program was at a small log village called Fort New Salem. They did not have a gunsmith there, but had a blacksmith and a wood shop. While working with the blacksmith Tom Goodson, the bug bit me. I knew there were some museums that would pay a reasonable wage to their craftsmen at that time. Then as I decided to pursue the career of a blacksmith, I went to the Blacksmith's Guild of the Potomac's first (I think) Blacksmithing Days at Colvin Run Mill Park in the spring of 1981. They organized a trip to the National Episcopal Cathedral the Friday before the event. That was my introduction to Samuel Yellin's work. The hook was set

on that trip. Then I attended my First Quad State Round Up at Emmert Studebakers Homestead in Tipp City, Ohio, September of 1981. The two demonstrators that kept my attention were Peter Ross and Francis Whitaker. There was no turning back at that point.

Traditional vs. Modern Techniques:

While I do use gas (propane) forges and power hammers, most of my techniques are considered traditional. To me the primary difference is electric welders, torches and plasma vs. forge welding, cutting and splitting with hammer and chisels. While I learned and still take advantage of every chance to learn "the old ways," I have

found it necessary to balance the old ways with the new in order to make a living. However, I do not electric weld where there should be forge welding. I still do a lot of hot punching and cutting as well as use a band saw, drill press etc. I firmly believe that some traditional techniques are faster than modern, depending on timing, etc. The bottom line is the finished product, if you can not tell what methods are used and the craftsmanship is good, it should not matter.

[Favorite Tools:](#)

Ones I have made, probably because I made them, especially when I get the balance just right. They are cross peens with the peen on the bottom line of the hammer. I prefer many early (18th. century) style tools that I make for historic demonstrations. Sometimes they feel really good, so why not use them every day?

[How much does it weigh?](#) My primary hammer weighs about 2 pounds, and I prefer long handles, the length of my inside of my forearm to my extended finger tips, rounded with a swell about 2/3 towards the end and a flair on the end.

[How big is the anvil that you use most?](#) 335 pound Euroanvil. I hope to replace it within a year with one of my variation on this design. My secondary anvil is a continental (double horn) made to my specifications.

[What special tools do you use on a regular basis?](#) My own design of gas forges running on propane, some might consider these a special tool. I have not burnt coal in my shop since 1993. I have a Say-Mak SPH-50 Air Hammer and SPH-60 Air Hammer. For certain production items, tent stakes and large headed short shank nails for cannon wheels (called strake nails,) I had custom dies made to my specifications and made nail headers and top tools to make the nails completely under the power hammer.

[Surgeon's Tools](#)



[On starting one's own Blacksmith Shop:](#)

Be ready to go hungry for a long time, unless you have some other form of financial support. Even if you have mastered the craft, give yourself several years, not the one or two that most new businesses consider as the normal time to get off the ground. Be ready to do some sort of production line that you might not have ever considered or wanted to do, or be ready to work part time for someone else. I started doing tent stakes and jack hammer bit re-sharpening as a way to pay the rent while doing some of the other projects I wanted to do. Be ready to do craft shows and reenactments for people to learn about you and what you do or can do. However, do pick the better quality shows, and take the time to look at a show to see if the other crafts are of the quality you want to be set up with and associated. Take the time to make some of the things you really want to make, especially when starting out when you don't have orders. Do the best quality work that you can and don't expect everyone to appreciate it nor want to pay the price you think it is worth. Try to do a simple website and brochure as references.

[Gate Element](#)



[Howitzer on a Sled](#)



What do you get out of being a Blacksmith:

Callused hands and upper body strength. Oh, uh, a satisfaction of being able to make some really neat things out of a hunk of metal. I get the satisfaction of setting my own work schedule, the frustration of customers that do not pay in a timely manner and the smiles from customers that love your work and pay immediately.

Influences: There is a list of great blacksmiths that inspired me to do good work, whether it was more modern art works or historically accurate stuff. The list is in order of when I took classes from them or hung out and rubbed elbows, even once or twice, they still influence what I do today;

Paul Browning, Mark Bokenkamp, Tom Goodson, Peter Minier, Peter Ross, Rick Guthrie, Ken Schwarz and the other smiths at Colonial Williamsburg.

Andirons with rotisserie



Reproduction of a 16th. Century Bullet Extractor, used in Warriors series "The Last Crusaders" episode on the History Channel, 4-16-2009.



Hoffman Colonial Anvil



Jymm Hoffman Pre 1840's Hammers



Note: Be sure to check out Jymm Hoffman's website to see more of the depth of his impressive abilities. You will be impressed. Jymm has his Anvils and Hammers for sale there.

<http://www.hoffmansforge.com>

Vince Nakovics



Our May Meeting: We had a pretty good crowd there, all of about 18 members. Tom H. brought up the need for everyone to make something for the sale table as stock is critically low. If you are forging please keep TBG in mind and try to make something for the table. It was acknowledged that it takes time and material, but that you will also be honing the skills you have each time. TBG really does depend on Iron in the Hat and the sale table at our demonstrations. Speaking of which Bob Orcutt was the ramrod at the Gosport Art Festival with help from Pete & Evan Mack and Mike Lambiase, he said that it went very well with brisk sales, some items would have sold more if we had had them to sell; crosses, candle holders, dinner bells, etc., most of the smaller items. We had another demonstration at Adam Thorougood House which Bob Orcutt, Mike Lambiase, Joe Gentile, and Eric Hinckley performed. Bob reported slower than usual sales, but reminded us that May 30th was A.T.'s Annual Yard Sale and that during the June 21st Summer Solstice event A.T. will sell our goods if we have them there for us! Anything with a Wizard or Dragon is sure to be a good seller at this event. Elizabeth City demo is TBA. The Heritage Arts & Civil War Days in Chesapeake will be Sept. 19th & 20th; this has the potential to be a really big sale day for TBG.

Please see the website for directions to our Annual Summer Family Day! It is gearing up to be a great event for sure.

Mike Keeney has agreed to hold a broom making class sometime in the near future, this class will be limited; 6 – 8 people. Part of this class will require that participants make a broom for TBG to sell. It is sure to be a great class. New members desiring to take classes need to contact Joe Gentile and attend meetings to ensure that we can meet their interests.

We will return to recording sales at our demonstrations. This will make it easier to know which items are selling and which are not. It will also help determine a cost basis for items that do sell.

"Safety Note" from the Forge Master (Tim Edney): When using a blower controlled gas forge always turn the air on first and turn it off last. This will keep it from burning up your nozzle and more importantly prevent a possible explosion.

Be Safe!



Meeting Stuff!



Eric showing off his new forge that Mike Helped him make.



May Demonstrator: You probably thought that I forgot to mention the great demonstration by **Joe Gentile** on How to make a "Rose" from a solid piece of round bar. Joe heated and beat that bar until it was hot see. Then he put some cuts in the now marginally flattened part using the hardie see. Now about this time he was mumbling some stuff about using the vice to bend the rose stem 90 degrees so that when you start to curl it you will have the stem in the center of the rose. See now if you had been there you would be able to See this all in your mind's eye and use it as a recall tool. So to those you who attended good luck with your Roses! Those of you who didn't maybe you will be able to take one of the mini classes on this type of thing in the near future. Thanks to Joe G. for standing in for the demonstrator that was unable to attend.



Editor's Note: May's meeting was really a great. Iron in the Hat had a lot of quality forged items and the proceeds for proved that as the take was over \$20 per person in attendance. To all who contributed these fine items Thank You! I also want to thank Steve LaPaugh for supplying the photos in our Newsletter. Steve pretty much is the TBG Photographer, his shots are always better than any I take and he always remembers to take photos no matter where he goes. Thanks Again Steve! Well it's short and sweet this month. If you have any articles, pictures etc. send them to me and I will use them. If you have read or used a blacksmithing or metalworking book and would like to comment on its virtues please do so. I hope you enjoy this issue and remember Safety glasses work better if they are on your face, not just dangling from your neck.

Vince Nakovics

P.S. I will begin dismantling the old golf cart I have next weekend. The body is shot, but I am sure that the axle will make a good tire hammer for someone to make for themselves or sale. I am sure that we can work something out, I hate to just trash it, but that's what I will be doing with it, I can get \$50 for the whole thing. I am not looking for cash really. Got a pair of Old tongs, dies or other kind of junk, um, er, I mean transformable materials lying around. Well think about it. V.N.

My Project:



Emory Ewell & Joe Gentile w/ Post Top Detail



Joe G. & Eric Hinckley do wrapping

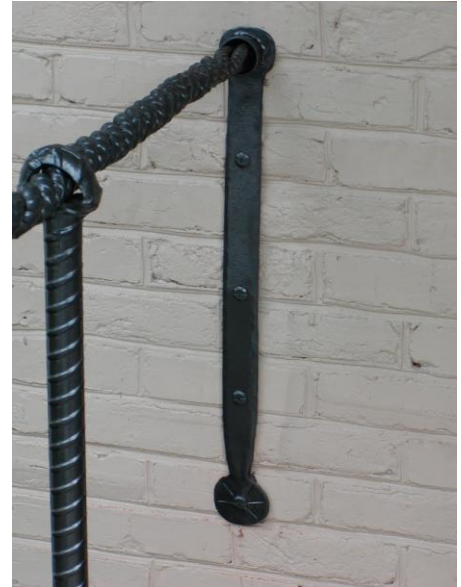


Me doing the twist



Completed Post & Railing

Stanchion, Twisted Railing & Back Plate Detail



Hi Guys,

Here is the finished railing. A far cry from the original conception, but the project manager wanted a simpler style. At least I got my wall art design through the 1st approval stage. That will be coming some time this year.

Recap: Post is 1-1/4" Rebar, with 3/4" rebar scrolls on top and a 1" x 3/16" ribbon like wrap extending on to the Railing consisting of a rope twist using 3/4" rebar. Single stanchion is 1-1/4" split and collared around the railing. Wall connector is pc of 1-1/2" x 1/4". It is attached with lead anchors and withstood the shake and pulls test, hahaha.

It really only took about 22 hours for me to do the work. That's not man-hours, as I needed some help, just straight time including installation. Help was provided by Emory Ewell, Joe Gentile and Eric Hinckley.

I am very pleased with the results of our labors and hope you are as well.

Thanks again for your support on this project. I have more to come!

Vince Nakovics

Fourth of July Sale & Referral Program Need Real Wrought Iron? We Have IT! ... and it's all on sale through July 4! Rods up to 14' long!

We are dismantling the 1887 Globe Elevator, on the edge of the Duluth-Superior Harbor, and reclaiming its old-growth pine. Among its other treasures are several tons of Real Wrought Iron rods ranging from 5/8" to 1-1/2" in diameter. We also have millions of square-cut wrought iron nails. Prices start at \$2 per pound. Call to check current inventory. Special on 5/8" rods - back by popular demand! We have revived our 10 lb. special: You can have 10 one-foot-long pieces of 5/8" rod (a total of 10 lbs.) delivered to your door for only \$59, including shipping and handling. Wisconsin Woodchuck LLC, P.O. Box 97 * Superior, WI 54880-0097 Phone: 715.392.5110 * Fax: 715.392.5112, Email: judy@wisconsinwoodchuck.net
Web site: <http://www.wisconsinwoodchuck.net>

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> .

Demonstration Schedule: See website or contact Tom Herendeen or Vince Parrish for details.

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