



NEWSLETTER

March 2009 Volume 2 Issue 3

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President's Message

It's hard to believe it's March already. We have had a busy first two months. We have had a beginner class and Nathan Walker took time to do a demo and came back the following week and taught a class on a nail header. The feedback I get on both classes is both were excellent. Thanks to everyone involved.

Tom and Vince have been hard at work setting up our demonstration schedule for our meetings. The information on our outside demos is slow coming in. Right now we have a possible demo at Francis Land house April 4 and we have the Elizabeth City demo on May 2 & 3.

March 15 our meeting will start at 9:00 Am for a workday. We will be working on items for the sale tables at demos. Everyone that can come needs to participate. This is a way for everyone to be involved and get some good instruction on various projects. Also we have our suggested projects list on the tips and techniques site. Take a look and if you can make some of them go for it.

I want to congratulate Annie on being our newest beginner and hope to see the rest of her class complete their projects. If you have a special need to help finish let us know.

Our **Iron In The Hat** continues to get better. We had good participation in the theme of the month for February. March theme can be as simple or as complicated as you want it to be. **!!Something with a leaf!!** Your participation is needed to assure that our guild keeps getting stronger.

Thank You and see you at the Forge

Travis Covington

Blacksmith Interview: by Vince Nakovics

I found Nathan's on the internet and was stricken by the symmetry and exquisite craftsmanship. I hope that you to find his skill and artistic interpretations inspiring also. Please visit his site and if you're going to be in the area call and arrange a visit. Now...

Nick Vincent, Nathan's Forge, Ltd.

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Metal shop in eighth grade was my first Blacksmithing experience and my first time with hammer and fire was at the Early American Wrought Iron Conference at the Delaware Agriculture Museum, Dover, DE about 1982.

I always knew I wanted to be in business for myself, I had built up a good business with craft shows and wholesale accounts, so in 1991 when I became too busy I quit my 20 year job with the telephone company. I had worked for C&P Telephone Company and then Bell Atlantic for 20 years, when I quit, I was an Economic Forecaster.

I don't subscribe to the debate of traditional or modern, my business is built around, "make it happen" and I am successful because I'm the one that gets called when something has to get done. Sometimes it's the client that demands the technique. I do whatever the job calls for. I started out doing traditional work and historic reproductions, my first paying job was for a museum restoration for the state of Delaware making 5000 nails by hand, on the same job another smith was making re-heads and making more than me. Some of my latest jobs have included making large bronze scrolls for a casino and fabricating fireplace screens.

I use a 2-3/4 pound Hofi style hammer made by Tom Clark, it really cured my tendonitis in two weeks. Before that I used a hammer I made that looked like the Williamsburg hammers. I had suffered with severe tendonitis for 10 years. I have a Peddinghaus, 275 pounds, with the upsetting block, German pattern. About eight years ago I decided that I was a professional and should have the best tools available including a new anvil. After all, my accountant

depreciates my tools, how many times can a 150 year old anvil be depreciated? I had been using a 400 pound Peter Wright. It was a big anvil with a big face, but one edge was bad and the horn was broken. I decided I didn't want to work around these conditions anymore. I called Bruce Wallace, had the new anvil in a week and he gave me a great trade in on the old one. My anvil is mounted on a steel, tri-leg stand, wedged and caulked in place. I have listed the special tools the I use on a regular basis; Kuhn CF-K-40 power hammer (88-pound), a lot of custom dies, Swan Competitor propane forge, Diacro #3 bender, Bantam 12 ton Press brake, an old DeWalt drill press, Ellis band saw (doesn't everybody watch American Chopper for the ironwork?), a big Grizzly lathe, Grizzly Belt Sander, Jet Mill Drill, Miller Mig, Miller Tig, Plasma Cutter, 8' x 4' welding table, a dozen grinders, Burr King deburring machine, Computer with internet access, email, Photoshop, Quickbooks (accounting) and a good CAD program. Last, but not the least I have a network of blacksmith friends that I can go to with problems if the need arises.

The current economic conditions in the world are scary. This is a tough business and takes practice and patience. I've had a website for 12 years and it is really paying off for me now. Education is important. I am constantly taking classes in blacksmithing, drawing and photography. The advice I give to smiths is that you have to understand how your clients live and how your products are going to be used. For the most part, blacksmiths don't live in multi million dollar houses and a lot of my clients do. If you don't have a grasp on how the item is used then you'll have problems with design and execution. Things might be out of scale or not function as intended. One of my favorite memories is from one of the MASA trips to Williamsburg. We had been doing the same trip for a number of years and they wanted to do something different to keep it fresh. So instead of ordering subs from the local carryout the Williamsburg smiths thought we should learn how the kitchen implements we learned to make were used, so we cooked our own lunch in one of the colonial kitchens. We learned by experience why forks and pans had long handles and how to use skewers, spit jacks, spatulas and spiders.



Chandelier



Moravian Rat Tail Hinges

I was influenced early on by Smiths such as Peter Ross and Ken Schwarz from Colonial Williamsburg, because that's where my interest was, in colonial work, John Dittmeier because of his engineering background and the neatness of his shop and work, Peter Renzetti because of his colonial work, hammer control and some great workshops at Dover, John Ellsworth because of his low keyed approach to blacksmithing. Then as I got more exposure, through BGOP, Brad Silberburg, for his technique and design and Dan Boone for his movement in metal and his marketing skills. Then through other functions, David Court for his colonial work and Ralph Sproul for tooling and jigs, and most recently, Johnny Boyd Smith for his incredible lifelike organic forgings.

Nick one more question for the road so to speak, "What do you get out of being a blacksmith?"

Besides the obvious of making a living and satisfying my needs and wants, which my wife tells me I have too many needs and wants, I live for "the stroke". It's almost more important to have the client ohhing and ahhing over my work.



Heron's Wreath



Tree Railing

NAIL HEADER CLASS CONDUCTED BY NATHAN WALKER OF COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG:

This class was conducted on Feb 21, 2009 and was limited to 5 lucky TBG members. The members were chosen using a raffle system at the Feb 15th, 2009 TBG meeting. This is one member's account of the events during the class. The names remain the same to protect the innocent. (Can you hear the Dragnet tune?)

The making of a nail header is one of those items that are good to have at a demo so you can show what early blacksmiths had to do just to make one nail. Nathan started out having us perform a practice forge weld on some scrap metal just to get us ready for the nail header. Forge welding is a skill that should be practiced and rehearsed so when it comes time for you to do it on the finished product you do it properly and correctly. What I enjoyed about the class was how everyone (Annie Roche, Eric Hinckley, Tom Herendeen and I Joe Gentile) helped each other in making the nail header. Nathan can do it by himself but it makes the job so much easier if you have that second pair of hands. Everyone in the class was successful in getting there forge weld to stick (maybe not the first time). At the end of the day we walked away with a nail header, punch and drift, but more importantly the teamwork and techniques we shared.

Those are the facts filed by Joe Gentile



Double click on the picture for a slideshow of the Nail Header Class by Vince Parrish



Joe Gentile's Nail Header

finished and ready to use.

February Meeting: by Vince Nakovics

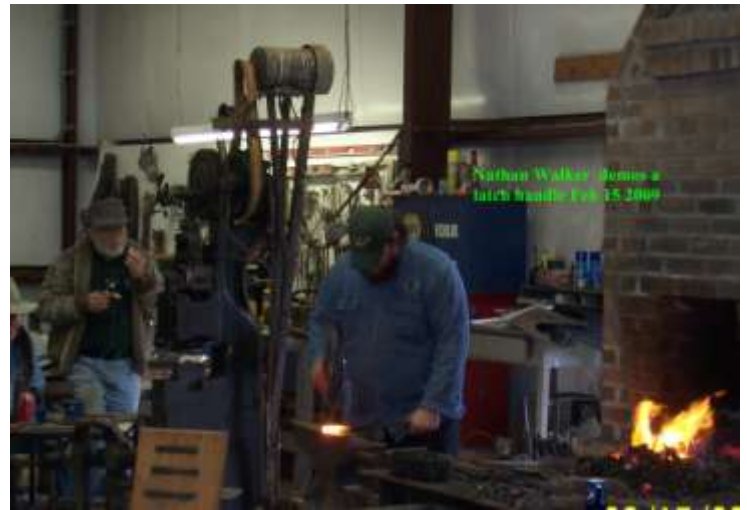
It was a beautiful day for our meeting, sun shining, mild breeze and temperature about 42d. Travis started the meeting promptly at 1pm and went down the list of meeting business. Treasurer's report is we are looking good. He discussed demos coming up and the need to get sale items for the table. We will be having a work day next month beginning at 9 AM to help meet this need. Demonstrators from near and far were discussed and there are some very accomplished Smiths who are more than willing to demonstrated for either ZERO dollars or very few, comparing this with cost of having one of the more distant Smiths demo, it is not the cost of the demonstrator it is the travel and lodging costs that make it almost prohibitive to do. Tom Herendeen and Vince Parrish invite your suggestions and will continue to look for quality Smiths to Demonstrate. We already have Randy Hodges from NC lined up. Randy was a TBG member and has remained in contact with us and has always supported us with be providing a great demo. It was also brought up that a good number of us go to Blacksmith Guild of Virginia's demonstrations and they are more than happy to have us attend. BGV's meetings are conducted at the Yesteryear Blacksmithing School location in Crewe, VA. This is a great asset to us since it is so close and will be getting bigger as time goes on. Travis announced that Vince Nakovics will be heading up the TBG Touchmark registration project and will be sending out submission details to all very soon. Now on to the Demonstration; Presented here is a few of the major points that Nathan Walker made during his presentation.

"The Peen is Your Friend"

Nathan Walker of Colonial Williamsburg performed the basics of how to make a **Thumb Latch** handle. The above title refers to a statement Nathan made discussing the methods for drawing out the decorative ends of the handle. There are many beginning Smiths and Novice Smiths who do not utilize the "Peen" and Nathan was making a reference to this point. When thinning out the handle mass use the "peen" and start from the middle to the outside edges. Ensure that you leave enough material to make your latch pass through on one end. It is this end that will require a greater degree of **Hammer Control** as you do not want to lay an errant blow to your latch way. There are several ways to draw out the end using your peen to first draw material towards you and then push it away from you. This is a more exacting method requiring good **Hammer Control**. A more forgiving method is to draw the material on the end towards you and then turn the handle over and repeat, this method of course will require cleaning up both sides and require that you use caution near your latch way. The Latch way is actually formed before you finish off that end by punching and then drifting it. During the drifting from the backside you will cause a slight rounding of the latch way. This is important as it allows for smooth operation of the latch once installed. It is important that you do not strike this with a blow while drawing out the handle end; you will not be able to get the nice rounding back without filing, if you can correct the damage from the errant blow. Well if this sounds confusing to you, you must not have attended Nathan's demonstration and you really did miss out. We like to make a fuss about Nathan Walker as he began his Blacksmithing career here at TBG. He was very determined and talented while working his way through our training classes and his hard work has paid off for both himself and us as he is gracious enough to return every now and then and share his knowledge and skills with us. There are four very lucky individuals that will be taking a class on the 21st with Nathan and I know that they will learn a lot from him.

Iron in the Hat was chock full of Hearts this month as it was the theme of the day. A big thanks to all those who forged

an item with a heart for IHT this month and thank you to all who contributed and participated in it. We had a good turn out, all appeared to have enjoyed the afternoon of fellowship and blacksmithing, thank you for your support.



Dan Boone's Pasture Party Feb 28th 2009:

A large crowd attended and there were 11 TBG members in attendance and a couple of past members who were also attending. The lunch was excellent, the demo consisted of a Boot Scraper that was auctioned off at the end and it took in \$225.00. Iron in the Hat had upwards of 400 items, the tailgating was terrific. Everyone had a good time meeting new friends and seeing old ones, despite the cold! Thankfully the rain held off until the very end.



Joe G.



Tom & Linda



IHT item

Anvil's ready to be fired.



Editor's Note: Just wanted to thank Joe G. Steve LaPaugh, Vince Parrish for the pictures and everyone else for their participation in our events. Keep up the good work. Hope to see you all at the March 15th work day.



Steve checking out the IHT items won by Vince at our Dec meeting

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”

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

Demonstration Schedule: None scheduled

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New England School of Metalwork 2009 Summer Session Instructor Workshop dates

Don Fogg – Mastering the Hamon May 1 -4

Clay Spencer – Forging Spike Novelties May 29 June 1

Elizabeth Brim – Sculptural Inflation June 5 – 8

Zack Noble – Hinged Outlook June 19 – 23

Rick Smith – Iron on the Wall July 10 – 14

James Batson – Forging Bell Dirks & Woodhead Bowies July 24 – 28

Peter Ross – Thinking Inside the Box August 7 – 11

Mark Asprey – Mastering the Fundamentals of Blacksmithing August 28 – September 1

Charley Orlando – Effective Forging Techniques September 11 – 14

Meagan Crowley – Foundations of Form September 25 – 28

Jonathan Nedbor – From Soup to Nuts October 9 – 13

Josh Dow & Lauren Holmgren – Cast Iron Sculpture October 23-26

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