



NEWSLETTER September 2009 Volume 2 Issue 9

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President's Message:

This year has really flown by. We have had some great demonstrations by some great people. We have had some good classes. We are very fortunate to have the quality of people we have in this guild. We have instructors that I would rate with some of the best!

Rusty Healy taught a "Basic Sheath Making" class on the 22nd of August at Dianne's lab at ODU. Thanks to Dianne and her assistant Lisa Yeaw. Dr. Dan was on hand to help and share his knowledge of leather working. This was a very informative class and everyone was able to create a nice piece to take home.

Now on a sad note, as you all know our lease expires September 27, 2009. We have received a certified letter from Roy Hoenig stating he will not renew our lease. He feels there is too much stress being caused to his family. At our meeting with him on the 16th Sept he stated we were perfect neighbors, but he had some other conditions which have nothing to do with TBG that will not be met. Tom and I have been looking at other options for awhile just in case. We have a really good option, it won't give us a normal shop but we think we have a way for it to work. We are still going to try to get our classes in we may have to reorganize and change our way of thinking, but we will get them in.

We have our Elizabeth City demo Aug 29 & 30. Our next meeting will be at Chesapeake Park for Heritage Days, September 19/20. This is an excellent chance to get some forge time.

We will try our best to keep you informed as to what's happening. Please feel free to call any officer or any one on the board with questions or suggestions. Heck we like to talk so just call.

Travis Covington

August 16th, 2009 Meeting: by Vince Nakovics

It was a great day for our meeting not too hot, humidity wasn't oppressive, etc. Travis called it to order promptly at 1300 hrs. Diane deBeixedon is doing the demo today on making a wave bracelet. Mike Lambiase will be conducting a Knife class so those members who signed up should contact him to make the final arrangements. Bob Orcutt and Eric Hinckley are offering an Animal Head course. Interested members need to sign up soon.

Elizabeth City's demo at press time has been reduced to just Sunday 30 August due to high winds expected to hit the area on Saturday the 29th. It should still be fun event and with only one day hopefully it will see more members and more activity! There will be at least one tent with two forges there so everyone should have time to get some forge time.

We have the Heritage Arts Festival Sept 19th & 20th, Emory Ewell and Larry Ange are the POCs for this event. This is the event that has absorbed the Civil War Days demo. It is suppose to be bigger and better than last year, so come on out! We will also be conducting our meeting starting at 10AM. The Guild will be providing burgers for lunch. If you can please make something for Iron in the Hat as we plan on doing it like last year and let the public participate.

Non Guild sponsored events: Travis Covington and Lemuel Brown are sponsoring a Hammer In next year at Grazing Acres in the Cortland Area. Travis and Lemuel will provide more details on this event in the future..

Leather Working Workshop:

It finally happened.....It was something we talked about for months.....and the wait was well worth it! Last Saturday, Aug 22, Rusty Heeley conducted a leatherworking workshop at Diane deBeixedon's Old Dominion University Studio. The focus of the workshop was making knife sheaths. Tim Edney, Tom Herendeen, Travis Covington, Mike Lambiase, Dan Frank and Vince Parrish attended the workshop. The cost of the workshop, \$200, included all materials and tools (remember, the tools and excess material are yours) needed to complete the project and more.

We started at 9 AM and the last person departed the studio at about 6 PM. The first part of the workshop covered the tools and their uses, leather properties and the do's and don'ts of leather.

Rusty demonstrated the process of laying out the elements of several sheaths. The afternoon session was the actual fabrication of a sheath for a knife each of us had brought.

Leather was sliced, holes were punched with the pieces glued and a few false starts each of us walked away with a completed sheath for which each of us are proud to own and have made with our own hands!

Rusty did an excellent job in his instruction, fielding all questions thoroughly. I know I came away with much more of an appreciation for the quality of the leatherwork Rusty has shared with us over the years. The workshop was well worth the cost and time and would recommend it to anyone who has a desire to learn the basics of leather working.

Vince Parrish



The Products



The Author Vince



Travis



Mike to the Left
Tim to the Right



Tom is in the forefront with Rusty
hiding in the background



Blacksmith Interview: This month I have the great pleasure to introduce to you a superb craftsman who continues the craft today in the traditional methods of the 18th century. He is the Master Smith of Kestrel Forge for over 30 years. Please check out his website to view many more examples of his fine work. Vince Nakovics

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My first exposure to blacksmithing was at shops at restorations like the Farmers Museum in Cooperstown, Sturbridge Village and Williamsburg. I began blacksmithing when I bought a shop at age 15. After moving everything home, cutting a hole in the garage roof for a chimney, I started working. The first pieces were very rough, but served the purpose. After reading a few books and watching the smiths at Cooperstown more, things started to get easier and come out better.

I made several decisions while still in high school. I really liked the metalwork, but I was/am also a pragmatist. I decided to keep the blacksmithing as a hobby and go to college to get a regular job that would pay the bills. I did that, all the while continuing to find a venue to keep forging, even when my shop was in storage.

After 20 years in the corporate world and getting laid off for the third time, I decided to blacksmith full time and see if I could make a living at it. Or at least make enough to pay a few bills. I really enjoyed the freedom of working for myself and being creative. More on this area in question 6.

I consider myself a traditional smith. I learned 1700s blacksmithing and the joinery of the period. That being said, I very often arc weld things together for the speed. Very few customers in my area are prepared to pay for pure traditional work. Traditional work requires slightly different engineering and design than modern work. I made the hardware for a period correct Viking box; the nails were forged from 1/2" real wrought iron bars. A lot of work, but it was the smallest wrought iron I had on hand. Kind of like the discussion of "hand made" I had with a shop owner. The metalwork he carried was nice but the scrolls were machine made. When I mentioned that, he got very indignant and informed me he had visited the shop personally. The scrolls had no taper and a big flat spot from the bending machine; once I pointed this out, we came to a new definition of "hand made." Maybe the definition of traditional vs. modern lies in the spirit and intent of the artist and his/her work in honoring the blacksmiths of the 18th and 19th centuries.

My main hammers are; 1.a set of three Peddinghouse French pattern cross peen hammers in 1, 1.5 and 2 kg, 2. A 2.5lb farrier's rounding hammer – I like the half moon face. I use the French

pattern hammer because it's a little different looking. I have not found a technical reason for the style. The cross peen needs dressing for a proper fishtail scroll. Thank you to the Master's in the teaching tent at the KY show for this tip.

My main forging anvil is 200 lbs. I used to use a 150 for quite a while and finally found a larger anvil. I like the 200 much better it seems to make a huge difference. I prefer a wrought iron body with steel face. The all steel are too loud and the cast iron are dead. I also have a farrier's anvil for the narrow face and long thin heel which come in handy on occasion.

If I had to choose; probably my favorite tool is a dogleg vise. You can never have too many vises. Best advice to someone looking to get into Blacksmithing for a living; "Get a rich spouse first."

What do you get out of being a Blacksmith?

Life itself. After smithing full time for 7 years, I took a day job again for personal reasons, not of my own doing. With my shop being 40 miles from home, it's only reasonable to go on the weekends. I relish my time there. It clears my head, empowers me, invigorates me, and makes me a better person. I am all about passion; blacksmithing is truly my passion.

Most of my early work was forging functional items we could use at home and on the farm. I would either copy something I had seen in a picture or design a solution to a problem. I was certainly not considered artistic. But my parents were extremely supportive of my new endeavor and my mother (being artistic) did my drawings so I could concentrate on the forging. On the technical side, the two blacksmiths at the Farmers Museum in Cooperstown, Jim Porteus and Harvey Brotman were the ones that really got me rolling. I still have the trammel hook I made during a weeklong class I took with them one summer. And I still forge trammel hooks when I demonstrate for the kids at Dillingham Middle School during their Colonial Days.



Jay with Yard Sculpture



Octagonal Table

Brackets

It all started when Mike Tanner had a \$15 air cylinder for sale at the blacksmith Guild of Virginia. I bought it as soon as I saw it and that started me on the quest to find all on the material I needed to put together an air hammer similar to the one featured in the ABAMA booklet, also \$15. Mike tanner and Grainger's ABAMA Relationship Manager, John Cosenza were the major sources of parts with a little help from York Bolt. I bought the steel from Mike Tanner's leftover stock at a very good price. The valves, silencer and UHMW polyethylene bearing material came from Granger at a discount with free shipping the next day. I used a TBG 2" curtain weight for the cylinder mounting plate and a 1" weight for the hammer guide plate. The base plate is a 15"x3 1/2" channel with RR fish plates to spread the load from the center of the channel to the flanges. The upright and spacer is make from a 6 foot piece of 5 1/2" x 10 1/2" wide flange I-beam with a 5/8" thick 10"x 18" hammer guide plate attach with skip welds. I made the guide spacers and adjustable guide mounts out of oak, cut and ripped to suit. Lateral adjustment was achieved by cutting from the outside through to the holes to create slots with my band saw.



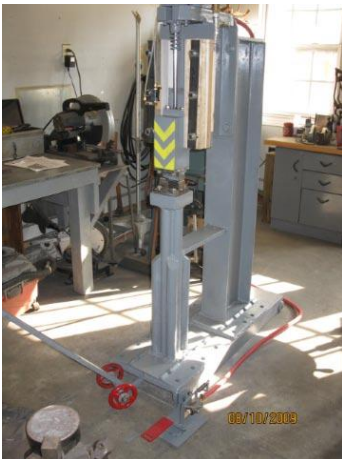
Slide Assembly



Bottom Die



Slide Assy. with Top Die



Shots of the hammer almost ready for action!

The adjustable mount for the pilot valve was made by cutting a slot in a piece of 3/4" x 3/4" box section using three thin cutoff wheels stacked together on a 4 1/2" angle grinder using a piece of flat bar stock for a guide. I drilled and tapped a 3/16" inch witch slides in the box section and can be tightened at any location vertically. While I was grappling with how to weld up concentric pipes with a piece of 3 inch bar stock in the center, Mike Lambiase gave me a tower made up of 4 long and 4 short pieces of 1 1/4" bar stock that he had welded together for a hammer but not used, thus, ended my concentric welding problem. I smoked in a lot of 5/16" inch E 6011 welding rods. After getting my left arm sun-burned from the welding arc on the first day I remembered to wear a long sleeve shirt while welding and when soaked with sweat, as I had to turn off the air conditioning and turn on the exhaust fan for welding, the sparks didn't burn any holes in my sleeves or gloves. One useful feature of making the base out of channel is that I can roll a home made "Johnson bar" under the anvil end along with the

wheels I put on the other end to move the hammer around in the shop. When the channel is flat on the floor the wheels do not touch the floor but when I lift the anvil end with the Johnson bar, the wheels on the back contact the ground and lift the back of the channel off the floor and allow it to roll freely. I don't plan to move it much, but with limited space in the shop, it has to "live" just behind the forge. So when at the forge, the anvil is at my left and the power hammer is at my right. Very convenient, but in order to pull down my attic star-way, I have to roll the hammer out about a foot or two, and return it when done. After forging with my new hammer today, it did not walk at all with the channel on the concrete. The total cost of purchased items for the hammer came to \$462 and change including four cans of gray shop paint. The most expensive item was the purchased steel, followed by the ball, check, pilot, and directional control valves. I run it off my shop air system set at 100psi. It is supplied by 5hp motor with an 80gal receiver. I have a moisture separator in line with the pressure regulator and no lubricator. I also run the UHMW hammer bearings dry also. I may give some thought providing some means of periodically adding a little air tool oil to the upper end of the air cylinder. It was a lot of fun to assemble the hammer after completing the scavenger hunt to acquire all the material. It has been a fun month or two in the forge without lighting a fire!



The Man! The Legend! The Man and Legend with his Machine and very 1st Project! Awesome!!!

Made inexpensively and works great!

[Diane's Wave Bracelet:](#)

Diane did a great demonstration that showed once again how something so simple really is a little more complex than you might think, at least if you want it to look right. I have listed below the points that Diane emphasized during her demo. If you attended they will hopefully spark a memory that you had forgotten. If you didn't attend, well you should have!

- Weight of the material is extremely important, bracelets need to be light in most cases.
- Always watch the twist, keep the piece smooth while working it.
- 1st bend is made in the vice and decide if you are going to bend it to the right or left, because the 2nd bend needs to bend in the same direction.
- When making your 2nd bend hold the 1st up and you should see an "S", if you see a "Z" shape then you are holding it backwards
- Remember that the final shape will be oval not round. Wrists are actually a sort of oval shape. Unfortunately no one sent me any pictures to go with this demonstration this month so.... I hope the verbal content of this article is enough to help you with this project. If it isn't then by golly gee wiz next time you better be in attendance.

Editor's Note: Well another month has come and gone and there has been a lot going on. This weekend we have Elizabeth City, for which I can't believe they cancelled Saturday because of the remnants of Danny.

As you all have read in the President's Message our lease will not be renewed at Blackwater. Roy Hoenig says it's time for us to go. This is really a very good point on the importance of ensuring that all the parties involved know what our organization is about and we need to have a lease in hand before we move and especially before we start making any kind of renovation to the premises. This also reemphasizes the need to find a permanent location within the Tidewater Area. This is a real challenge for us. The majority of our members and the communities we serve Urban communities and the more Rural areas are quickly being developed. So what options does that leave for us. There are many, all of us need know someone who operates a business, owns or knows someone who owns property, or belong to organizations that are in a position to help either locate us or help us relocate. There is the possibility of a Grant or very low interest loan, in fact someone on the board was looking into getting a grant writer for our cause about 18 months ago. If anyone has any ideas please, **NOW IS THE TIME TO PITCH IN**. All ideas should be taken a look at and given serious consideration before we set up our next location, your ideas, opinions and expertise are and will be needed during this our next transition.

I would like to thank Vince Parrish and Steve LaPaugh for their articles and pictorial contributions to our Newsletter. I know that I attend many of the events and almost all of our meetings, but it is very hard for me to get enough material and take pictures of the event at the same time and I have often relied upon the sharp eye of Steve LaPaugh in particular. Steve has contributed pictures and articles for every issue since I have taken over the Newsletter in early 2007. So I ask that if you take pictures of events please send a few of them to me. I can not use all of them in one issue, but they do get put in storage and may be featured in regular future issues or special issues. Thanks for your help.

We have Heritage Days in Chesapeake on Sept 19th & 20th. This is a big event for us. We will also have to wait and see when we have to get together and move our equipment and supplies out during Sept. This will be a very busy month, School starts, Labor Day weekend, Demo and our move. I know that most of you will pitch in and help move us once again. If we each do a little then it will all be a small(er) job. Thanks in Advance and I hope to See Ya At The Forge! No matter where that smoky trail takes us.

Points to ponder – we still have a Scholarship program - \$500 for a school! Keep track of you contributions to the Guild, demos attended, work performed, committees worked on, etc. We also have elections this year in Nov. We will need a new Treasurer in particular. If you want to know more about the duties and how much time is involved please contact Steve LaPaugh for details. The position is not that demanding, but must be filled by someone who will allow for the time needed to take care of Treasury business.. It is a very important position in our Guild. Please give this position some consideration.

I hope to See ya all at the forge!

Vince Nakovics

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://www.tidewaterblacksmiths.com> .

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

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