



Balcones Forge Dispatch

President's Corner

May 2022

Greetings,

Thanks to all the members who came out and demonstrated with us in New Braunfels. We had a great time talking with the public. Special thanks to Aaron and Joe for working with the kids on making nails. It is always a fun time being with the public. They are always curious and have lots of questions.

We are currently working on a curriculum for all the inexperienced smiths who have joined our organization. It will be based off the ABANA Controlled Hand Forging Techniques.

Our next meeting will be April 30th at 0900 at the Old Settler's Association in Round Rock-3300 E Palm Valley Blvd, Round Rock, TX 78665. This will be an open forge for all Balcones Members and we will also be demoing for the public. If you are not a current member in good standing (paid this year's dues) then you can sign up at the event.

Look forward to seeing y'all soon. Keep forging.

John Meyer, President

Meeting is on April 30

wcosa.org
Meeting starts at 9am



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The April meeting of the Balcones Forge was a great success. We had 5 new members sign up as well as 2 renewals. If you haven't renewed now's the time.

John, Tim, Joe, and Aaron did open forge and taught some new skills to our young smiths Owen and Hollis. Joe also worked with one of the Folkfest volunteers to make a Camp fork.



Aaron started his forge in the traditional way by using a flint striker.



Jerry A. was busy all day with show and tell of his forged works and discussing the history of New Braunfels.



Tom Leining was busy giving rides to families in his 1913 Model T. The lines were constant all day to take a ride.



Aaron donated a boot scraper he made to the Rangers. Stuart looked good in the top hat



This event was a lot of fun, and it was good to see members show up for the meeting as well as helping in the forge. Hope to see you all at the next meeting on April 30th!

This 1/2 page article reprinted from the Anvil's Horn, September 2009

Dumb Things Not To Do

By Dan Jennings

Actually, this should fall into the smart things to do category.

Recently, while using my small inverter welder outside with an extension cord, it failed to start when switched on. I immediately unplugged it from the wall, took the connectors apart. Sure enough, a wire had come loose inside the plug on the welder, even though the strain relief was still tight and doing its job. I made the repair, tightened all the lugs and went back to work.

The very next day, my plasma cutter failed to start when switched on. This time, I found a loose hot wire and a burned through neutral lug. This required a trip to Home Depot for a new plug,

In relaying these issues to other blacksmiths I found that it is a pretty common occurrence, especially on welders. It seems that when an arc is struck the wires actually surge or jump from the high amount of current running through the wires. This surge can cause the wires to move in the connectors and come loose.

In my shop the electrical circuits are run in conduit. Quite often, especially when using the big stick welder, one can hear the wires rattle in the conduit. When I first built my shop, that movement of the wires caused a wire nut to fall off inside a metal junction box. There were sparks shooting out the hole that the bare wire had burned through the box, but the 50 amp, 220 volt breaker never blew (why do we need the welders when the bare wires would do the welding?)

I found that many electricians don't like wire nuts for these high current applications. I replaced the wire nuts with copper screw lugs wrapped in electricians rubber tape and covered with electrical tape, all (including the advice) of which I got from Evergreen Hardware.

It would be a great idea to take all your welding plugs apart, inspect and tighten the wire lugs. A little prevention might keep you alive.