



Balcones Forge Dispatch

President's Corner

October 2012



Greetings!

Fall is for forging! If you have been waiting for cooler weather to turn out all those Christmas presents, now is the time. Even if you don't have anything to forge, just go out to the shop and build a fire.

We had a pretty fair turnout in New Braunfels for a wet, muggy day. Thanks to everybody that brought forges and anvils although not many were used. A few of the new folks got in the fire and hammered, but just a few. Open forging is for learning to hammer with one of know-it-alls. If you don't have an opportunity to forge anywhere else, this is your chance; make use of it.

We will have some more open forge time available on the 27th at Jerry Whitley's shop in Devine. Bring a hammer and be ready to use it. Also, bring a bottle opener and be ready to use it.

Over the years I have gotten a lot of good advice from a lot of people. Here's just a few that I can remember:

If it's hot put it on the ground.

If it's on the ground it's probably hot.

Don't ask anyone questions while he has iron in the fire.

A mallet and wood block are almost as important as an anvil.

Hit it while it's hot.

Tongs and drifts will get just as hot as the iron you use them on.

Don't quench carbon steel in water, ever.

Don't quench pipe with the open end toward your face.

When forging pipe, plug the open end with a rag.

Forge in the darkest place of your shop.

Gas forges require long tongs.

No smoke is good for you.

President's Message continued on Page 2



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Still Don't Have one!



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President's Message continued

Old stuff has lead paint on it.
If your tongs don't fit, get another pair or
adjust them to fit.
Don't just pick up somebody else's hamer.
Don't leave hardies in the anvil.
Hot metal from the forge has the right-of-
way.
When welding shake off your excess flux
and yell "welding".
If someone yells "welding", look the other
way.
Don't forget to normalize.
Anything long and pointed clamped in a
vise will become a medieval weapon.
And my favorite by Al Morgan:" If you ain't
proud of it, it ain't finished."

We are still looking to fill Balcones Forge board
positions. It's ***time to step up and help out.***

We also need your input. If we don't hear from you,
we have to assume that you are happy with what
we are doing.

Be safe and see ya'll in Devine.

Jerry Achterberg
President, Balcones Forge (til the 27th)
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210-842-3049

ELECTIONS THIS MONTH

Have you noticed that we still do not have a
Secretary for our group? Well guess what, elec-
tion time is just around the corner.

ELECTIONS for the Board of Directors will be THIS
MONTH. I ask that all our members seriously con-
sider what they want to see out of the group. Do
you want any change or do you like what you see?
Do you expect things to keep going all by itself?

If more folks come forward to do just a little bit, then
it all gets done so much better. Send an article.
Send a picture. Send an idea. PARTICIPATE.

By the way, the bulk of the Secretary gig is going
to meetings and writing up an article for the news-
letter. Sounds like fun.....

TRADE ITEM

The trade item this month is a bottle opener. See
if you can come up with something as clever as
this one by Sue Murray. If the party at Jerry's is
as fun as I think it will be, we will need several.

Remember, you gotta make one to take one!



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BALCONES FORGE MEETING NOTES 09/29/2012

Diedtrich Stall Blacksmith Shop at Conservation Plaza – New Braunfels , TX

Hollis Wooldridge – history of the Stall Blacksmith shop.

Jerry Whitley – future meetings & events:

Oct 5-7 – HABA Forgefest – Oldenburg

Oct 13-14 – Johnny Stout's Guadalupe Forge Fall Hammer-in, knife maker's rendezvous.

Oct 20 – Running of the Longhorns, San Gabriel Park, Georgetown, TX. Contact Jim Elliott.

Oct 21-22 Saltfork Craftsmen Perry, Oklahoma

Oct 27 – Balcones Forge – Jerry Whitley's Rustyk Forge, Devine, TX

Plenty of food, bring tools & anvils, lawn chairs, iron-in-the-hat to help w/food. Trade item – “bottle opener”

Nov 24 – Balcones Forge – Gary Hilton's shop – Hunt, TX Judged (trade item) “goffering iron”

Dec – (date TBD) Balcones Forge – William Bastas' shop

Be sure to check around the house for lost or overdue library books or DVD's.

Don Tuff is looking for volunteers to man the Stall Blacksmith shop during Wurstfest. More info to follow.

After the “ringing of the anvil” to honor Larry Stevens, the hammer was donated to the Stall Blacksmith Shop. Conservation Plaza will place a plaque in his honor.

George Craig was recently diagnosed with bladder cancer and is focusing all his time and effort on treating his illness. He will be vacating his Balcones Forge board position until further notice. Be sure to keep George & Cheryl in your thoughts & prayers .

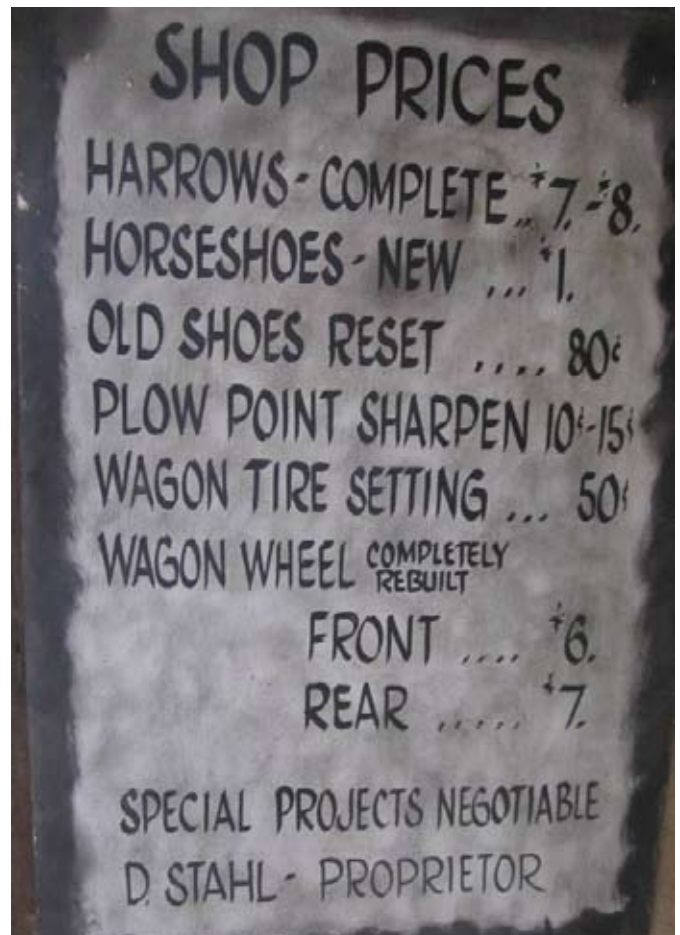
Lots of cool forks in the trade item pool.

Iron-in-the-hat: Sue Murray – vintage forged swivel.
Jerry Achterberg – set of dragon forks.

Demo – Tom the Blacksmith –
casting of ornamental balls on metal rods.

Several folks took advantage of the open forge to sharpen their leaf and nail making skills.

Notes by Jerry Whitley
Vice President, Balcones Forge





George Craig enjoying the forge smoke at the 2012 Bluebonnet Demo in Marble Falls

photo by Jerry Whitley

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Universal Tongs

Michael Wollowski

The tongs in figure 1 are possibly the most universal tongs you can make. They combine the superior holding power of the Patrick Pelgrom Tongs and the light weight and geometry of the Off-Center brand tongs.

In a prior article (see May 2011 IBA Forge Fire newsletter), I showed how to make the very versatile Patrick Pelgrom tongs by re-working existing tongs. Recently, I taught a couple of students how to blacksmith. We decided to make our own tongs, however, I did not have five donor tongs lying around. This meant that we were going to have to start from scratch. I always liked the light weight of the Off-Center brand tongs as well as the fact that you can hold items that have an end on them such as the water lily of figure 2. Hence, I decided to combine the advantages of those two types of tongs and a new kind of tongs was born. After some research, I decided to make the tongs from 36" length of 3/8" round 1045 carbon steel. In this article, you will find construction notes on how to make these tongs. The bit shown on the upper side of figure 1, I will call the "top".



Figure 1: The finished tongs



Figure 2: Usefulness of tongs



Figure 3:

Top Bit. To make the top bit, gradually flatten one end Detail of bits over a length of about 1 3/4", ending in a 1/2" wide and 3/16" thick tip, as shown in figure 4. Next, bend this end to a semi-circle of about 3 1/2" diameter. The exact diameter is up to your specific needs. Make a second, fairly tight 100° bend where the reigns begin. Mine ended up with a 1/2" radius. See figure 5 for the current state of affairs.

Using a 1" round punch; flatten the tight bend, the portion that will eventually be punched for the rivet. Flatten it to about half the width of the material, i.e. about 3/16". Ensure that you flatten a little bit towards the business end of the tongs. See figure 6 for details.

Next slit and drift a 1/4" hole for the rivet. You need to make sure that the center of the hole is at least above the inside edge of the reigns; see the dashed line in figure 6. Otherwise, the reigns will open up too much when you hang them in-between the reigns.

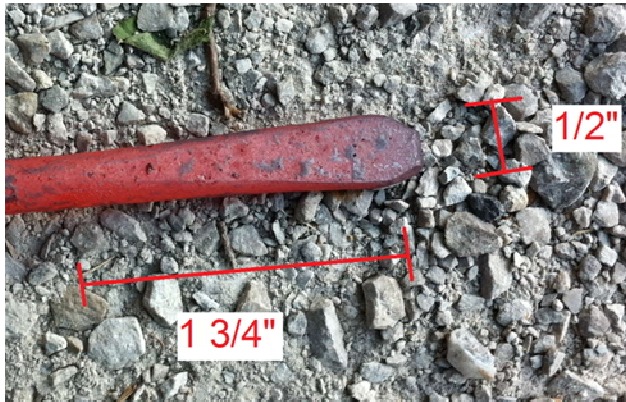


Figure 4: Business end of top flattened



Figure 5: Top bit bent to shape



Figure 6: Top bit finished

If you do not have a 1/4" slot punch and drift, a quick fix is to obtain a small round punch and grind the tip so that it acts as a slot punch. Measure and mark the punch where the tip has a diameter of 1/4". Figure 7 shows this combination slot-punch drift tool. Slit one side all the way through, then turn over the bit and slit from the other side. Continue on until the punch is just shy of the 1/4" mark. You may have to use the 1" round punch to re-flatten this portion of the tongs. The hole may not be perfect; however, it is ok to drill the hole to size.

Once this end has cooled, you are ready to work on what will become the bottom bit of the tongs. Be mindful that 1045 will crack if you quench it from too high of a heat.

Bottom Bit. The first order to business is to flatten the other end so that you can eventually form the bottom V. Since this requires a good amount of materials, spread the steel with the pein to about 3/4" wide and about 1/8" thick. Do this over a length of about 1". The transition from the 3/8" round stock to the flattened tip is about 3/4" long. See figure 8 for details.



Figure 7: Combination slot-punch drift

Next, form a V over a 90° swage block and while you are at it, extend the V by scoring the round portion of the bit; see figure 9 for details. Bend the bottom bit by first bending the V you formed at a fairly tight 100° angle, then bend the next portion to a semi-circle of about 2" diameter. Finish the bending operations by a fairly tight 100° bend where the reigns begin. This last bend should be similar to that of the top bit. See figure 10 for details.

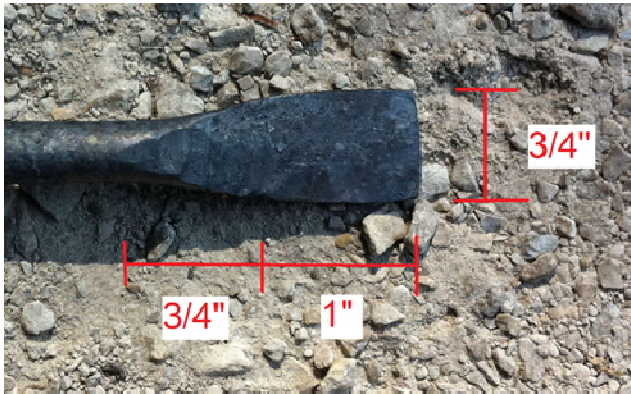


Figure 8: Business end of bottom flattened



Figure 9: Bottom bit end formed

Now is a good time for some file work. The back portion of the bit, i.e. the portion that was merely scored, now needs to be filed to a V. The V has to extend over the entire length of the bottom bit, such as shown in figure 11. The bottom bit needs to have just two contact points, one on each end. In other words, it needs to be slightly concave. This way, with the top bit meeting up in the center of the lower bit, you have just three contact points, ensuring a tight grip.

The next couple of operations are the same as for the top bit: flatten the bend, slit and punch a hole for the rivet and drill it to size. Next, cut the forged piece in the center between the two rivet holes and draw out the reigns to your preferred length and shape. For your reference, mine ended up 13" long, as measured from the rivet hole.



Figure 10: Bottom bit bent to shape



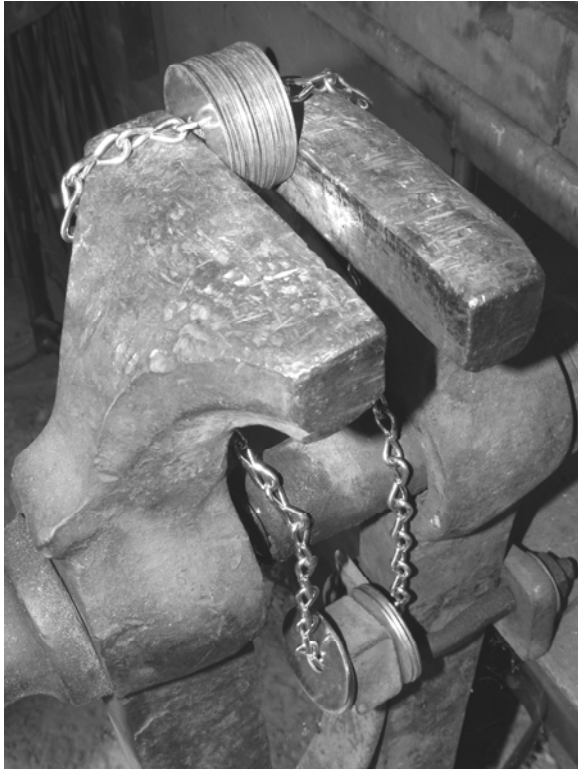
Figure 11: Bottom bit filed to V

Assembly. Using a 1/4" rivet, dry-fit the tongs and based on it, ensure that the two bits line-up. Next, cut the tip of the top bit to size and file a V notch into it. See figure 3 for details. Punch a 1/4" hole in a small piece of cereal box cardboard, heat the rivet and assemble the tongs, placing the piece of cardboard in between them. Once the rivet is set, burn away the cardboard and gently tighten up the rivet as needed.

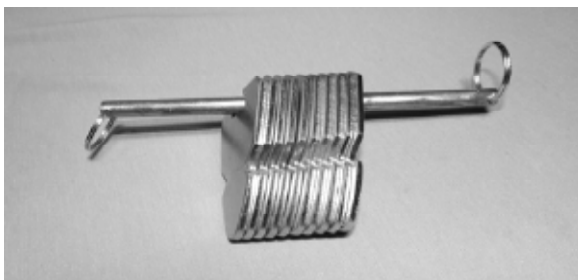
Vise Spacer

By Steven Spoerre, a MABA member

Jim Cokewell brought a vise spacer for a MABA Iron-In-The-Hat this Spring. When I found a box of large fender washers (2" diameter, 1/2" hole, 1/16" thick) at a garage sale, and remembered how slick Jim's vise spacer was, I bought the washers to make another version.



Instead of mounting them on a rod and balancing it on top of the jaws, 27 inches of chain was threaded through the holes and a weight was added. To use the spacer, the needed amount of washers are put between the jaws with the chain looped over the outside of the jaws. The weight and any un-needed washers are then draped over the screw box, which holds the spacer in place. When not in use, the chain is slipped over the back jaw of the vise and it hangs down out of the way.



Jim Cokewell's vise spacer.

This article courtesy of the Michigan Artist Blacksmith's Association



HABA once again hosted a great event at Oldenburg. This year the demonstrator was Jay Close. photos by Vince Herod





Trade Items (above)

Scenes from the September meeting.
photos by Vince Herod

Tom Leining (left) demoed how to cast an
ornament on a bar (below)





Balcones Forge Meeting

October 27, 2012

9:00am until ?????



**Rustyk Forge
Jerry & Marsha Whitley's
295 CR 663
Devine, Texas 78016**

We are looking forward to serving a Barbeque
Brisket Dinner with all of the trimmings.
Iced Tea and Water will be provided.

If we need any vegetarian plates, please let me
know we would be happy to accommodate.

Our Trade Item and Demonstration is a
"Bottle Opener"

We are working on a Special Demonstrator!
Word is, he will be forging
a hammer.

Bring items for "Iron In The Hat" to help cover dinner expenses!

WE HAVE 3 FORGES BUT WILL NEED ANVILS

All are welcome to stick around after the meeting.

Dave is taking charge of the music.

We can fire up the pit and scrounge up something to put on it.
If you prefer something other than Jack Rabbit, bring
it and we will throw it on there too.

Bring you lawn chairs and adult beverages and stick around and
we will give the Bottle Openers a work out.

Our sticker crop has been exceptional this year. You may want
to consider sticker friendly footwear.

Please RSVP to jerry.whitley@ymail.com. It would be nice to know who and how many.

N

San Antonio

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3
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CR 669

CR 663

CR 6610

CR 664
4 Way Stop
Little Store

Feed
Store

DQ

County Road
5710
Yellow Blinking
Light

High
School

Hwy 173 – Exit 122
← Hondo

Laredo

S

**Having Trouble????
Call Jerry – 210-288-3961
Call Marsha – 210-288-9416**



Check out the 1907 REO housed at Conservation Plaza. Can you make out the detail in the tread?

photos by Vince Herod

Return Service Requested

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