



FORGE

Dedicated to the revival of the "King of Crafts"

Vancouver Island Blacksmiths

www.vibblacksmiths.com



Visvakarma

Visvakarma, said to have been born from Brahma's naval, is regarded as the celestial artisan, creative guru of the arts and from whom all Indian craftspersons have descended. He is the foremost expert in the science of architecture and art of craftsmanship in the Universe, and is credited with the construction of numerous grand cities in the world of gods (Devaloka) and that of human beings. The Visvakarma caste comprises ironsmiths, carpenters, coppermiths, sculptors, and goldsmiths. Hymns in the Rig Veda describe how Visvakarma offered the entire universe he had so painstakingly created as his supreme sacrifice and when this did not appease the Creator, in pursuit of excellence to the very end, he finally sacrificed himself and thus became immortal. When Visvakarma died his anvil became inconsolable and all the gods came to lend him their sympathy. "Your master was an excellent craftsman," they told him by turns, but the anvil remained inconsolable. "Was my master really a great craftsman?" he asked repeatedly and the gods were very surprised and answered, "But who should know better than you? Did your master not build our fabulous palaces? Did he not craft our excellent weapons?" And the anvil heaved a deep sigh and quietly replied, "Yes, that is true, but when he used to beat his hammer on my breast tirelessly to create your palaces and weapons, I only saw my own tenacity tested day and night.

COMING EVENTS

Feb 22 2009 Meeting at Luxton

March 29 2009..... Production Day and Meeting

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2008 - Executive

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Publishing Info: "Forge" is published monthly by and for members of the Vancouver Island Blacksmith Assoc. General Correspondence for VIBA: 1040 Marwood Ave, Victoria, BC, V9C 3C4. (or directly to appropriate executive member) Permission granted for reproduction of any part of "Forge" provided credit is given to the original source, and the item is not marked 'copyright' or specifically stated to be for the sole use of "Forge". Unless otherwise stated, the editors are the authors of all material. Disclaimer Notice: "Forge" makes every effort to ensure accuracy of the information contained therein, but the executive officers & general membership of the Vancouver Island Blacksmith Association including the editors, specifically disclaim any responsibility or liability for damages or injuries as a result of any construction design, use or application of information contained in this newsletter. The use of any information is solely at the user's own risk.

Submissions & Contributions

Submissions to "Forge" can be made at any monthly meeting or by snail mail to:

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President's Report

By: Ray Orchard



Well! Here we are again! I've been in this chair before, a couple of times. The usual progression is from vice to chair. I decided to change things and retire gracefully, but no one else came forward. Still it's nice to see a new face on the executive and a warm welcome to Vice president Marty Gilbertson, getting ready to take over from me in a year or two.

A word of thanks to our new past president, Charlie Dowdeswell. He did a great job in the past couple of years and has VIBA work lined up for the future. We're looking forward to the travelling exhibit. I'm happy to have Skip looking after demonstrations again, and hope for a healthy turnout by members at amazing and affordable sessions to come. He would like any suggestions for demonstrations and/or demonstrators you would like to see.

Also great to have Dennis continue as editor of the Forge!

A few things I'd like to see accomplished, including a successful production day next month, the expansion of the club smithy, (why is anything ever built too small?) With a bit of luck the needed approvals will come through soon and we can get on with it. We also need a new cooler for the stuff.

The executive is only here to see that the club moves along in a way

wanted by the members, so let us know what you would like to see done. Our agreement with the Metchosin Farmers Institute runs out in May this year but there is provision for a two year extension, if agreeable to both sides. I assume its fine with us, but it will come up for discussion at a future meeting.

It's times like this I think I should get hooked up to the internet. Its times like this I'm glad I'm not.

See you at the meeting at 11:00 am on the 22nd, and the executive at 10:30 please.

Heavy Duty Miller Scp-200 constant potential (mig) welder for sale. Currently set up for aluminum and flux core, but could be set up with a wire feeder for mild steel. Comes with loads of cable, contact tips and a flowmeter. Also set up on a rolling cart. \$600 obo if interested call 250-208-5499



Secretary's Report

By: Charlie Low



VIBA minutes Jan 25 '09

Show and Tell: Charlie L told about the Leighdon Gallery at 190 W 3rd Ave, Vancouver B.C. V5Y 1E9, phone 604 875 0029, website WWW.leighdon.ca, email jane@leighdon.ca. They are looking for art to sell, have a 30% take, and would like a \$45.00 viewing fee, but can be talked into waiving it. He also showed a pair of railway spike snake coat hooks and a dragon head shoe-horn which will be sent to them tomorrow just to see what they can do. He also brought in a jar of used scalpel blades for sharing.

Galen brought in a small dish made from a piece of 3/8 stock, 4 inches square.

Minutes were accepted as published, and there was no business arising from them.

New Business: Trevor Cole of Colwood sent a letter. He is looking for someone to make brackets for his truck. There will be an exhibition called Iron 2010 with juried exhibits sponsored by ABANA from May 29 to July 19 of 2010 in Memphis.

There is a new directory of metalworkers, the Metal Artcraft Directory, based in Calgary, started by Shane Jost. At the moment there is no charge to be listed in it, but it is expected that this will change soon.

Neil has purchased a 10 x 20 foot wall tent and offered it to the club at cost. This was accepted unanimously. He is also maintaining our membership in the West Shore Arts Council.

Neil's blacksmithing course will be starting Saturday March 28. It usually runs for 6 Saturdays, all day, and is an incredibly good introduction to blacksmithing. Beginners should certainly plan on signing up, and even some of us old guys could benefit from a refresher.

Skip will be the new coordinator of demonstrations. He would like some help from the membership. The demonstration next month will be a variety of welders, from cheap to really good, put on by Carl. The welders will be 110v inverters, so can be plugged into household current, and people who want to try the various types can do hands-on stuff.

It was agreed that we would again make a \$1200.00 donation to the MFI

The extension of the shop is still on hold till all the disputes about the land are dealt with, but the time to get started is fast approaching.

Committee Reports: Library- Skip has newsletters, the Hammers Blow and Blacksmiths Journal

Neil says it is time for the people in charge of organizing the fairs and rodeos next summer to send out letters to their event saying we will be there as usual.

There will be a production day at the March meeting, Mar 29, so plan on getting home later than usual. For the new members, production days are when we make things to sell at the fairs. Lunch is usually hamburgers, cooked by our new president, Ray, and we always have a nice time socializing as well as making wonderful blacksmith art. High degrees of skill are not required- some of the stuff is quite simple, and instruction is always available.

Treasurer: Norm reported our financial status and all is well. The meeting was adjourned, and the AGM was started.

We needed a new president and vice president. The treasurer and secretary could continue to serve if they wished. Norm, the treasurer, and Charlie L the secretary both volunteered to continue serving. As no other candidates were forthcoming, they were re-elected by acclamation.

Ray, nominated by Dennis, accepted the nomination for president, and was elected by acclamation, and Marty, nominated by Charlie D, accepted nomination for vice president and was also elected by acclamation.

The meeting was then adjourned.

BLACKSMITHING IN WINE COUNTRY

CBA Spring Conference April 23-26, 2009

The 2009 CALIFORNIA BLACKSMITHING ASSOCIATION

Spring Conference will be held at the Sonoma Marin Fairgrounds in Petaluma, CA about 50 miles north of San Francisco on Highway 101 in Sonoma County. Come join us for blacksmithing, fellowship and enjoying the Sonoma County wine country and coastline!

Featuring:

Italian Demonstrators: Claudio Bottero and Jadran & Martino Stenico

California Demonstrators: Eric Clausen; Andrew Kyte; Jill Turman and Tony Standteiner

Events:

Carl Jennings Residence Tour

Workshops by Ed. Committee

Gallery

Stephan Bondi Retrospective

Vendors & Tailgate Sales

Auction & Iron-In-The-Hat

Web site for registration info: www.calsmith.org

Contact: Lowell Chaput 707-586-1324 or

info@chaputmetalsmith.com

Show and Tell

Photos by D Gillett



Railroad spike hangers and shoe horn by Charlie L.



Polished steel vessel by Galen

The Gallery News **by Charlie Dowdeswell**

Well, once again Happy New Year.

I'm becoming quite excited about what lies ahead as far as V.I.B.A.'s Traveling Blacksmiths Gallery is concerned. For the very few that may not have heard about the Blacksmiths Gallery, it is going to be a portable gallery minimally traveling to all of our Fairs and Rodeos and featuring blacksmiths artwork. This artwork will be juried by the West Shore Arts Counsel.⁹ As it is V.I.B.A.'s mandate to introduce as many people as we can with regards to the revival of blacksmithing, this will highlight and be a demonstration of the top end work that is being produced. For the time that I will be responsible for the gallery [one-year] I would like to keep the submissions to working with metal until we get all bugs out. I will announce at a later date when you can bring in submissions to be juried - hopefully April. Remember - if the piece is over 100# you must either supply a means of moving it or assist with same from trailer-to Gallery-to trailer.

As this is the first 'Gallery News' for insertion into 'The Forge', I would like to include a general wish list. Of course this list is not finite and it is just a vision at this point in time and many of the things could change.

What I envision, is:

A tent about 20 x 20 for the display.

A secure trailer to haul everything in.

I believe one of the old-style horse trailers would do the job quite well. The one I'm envisioning is about 12 foot from hitch to back bumper with a domed roof. The interior Measures about 9 x 5. [*How they squash Horses into these I have no idea, but they do*] Tandem wheels brakes outside of the body with brakes. The idea of this particular style trailer is that many more vehicles would be able to pull it so we wouldn't have to rely on large trucks and always be encroaching on the same people to 'do the deed'. Also, they would require minimal work to be usable and they have a nice little storage area at the front.

Plinths - I have a feeling I may know where I can scrounge some very nice ones.

Lighting - preferably LED spots.

Have the trailer spray-painted when it's complete.

Professional lettering and logos etc. [on tent and trailer]

Of course, inexpensive is good but donations are even better as we are, after all, a none profit Association. :-)

I welcome ideas from anyone who will not be insulted if their ideas are not used. I am guessing the end result will be many idea parts amalgamated to garner the best final outcome.

Lewis and Clark War Axes By Eddie Rainey

The Lewis and Clark expedition was the first federally funded scientific expedition in the United States. Prior to their departure in 1804 Lewis and Clark spent almost one full year planning and gathering supplies for their journey across America. They had to be sure they had extra supplies and gifts to trade with the Indians they expected to encounter.

The first leg of the journey took them north to Bismarck, North Dakota. They reached the fort just in time to prepare for the worst winter on record. The fort was equipped with a blacksmith shop where the first trade axes were made to trade with the Mandan Indians. Because of a late run of the Buffalo the Core of Discovery found that trading with the Indians was their best source for food. The Mandan Indians were experienced farmers and were willing to trade food for metal objects. The Mandan village was located just outside the fort along the river and was the hub of trading activity. The population was the same as Washington, D.C.

These trade axes became the status symbol for Indian chiefs. Almost all photographs of Indian Chiefs shows the trade axe or tomahawk held across the chest. Below is the details of the construction of an authentic Lewis and Clark trade axe.

- The length of the axe is 9"
- The cutting edge is 6"
- The eye for the handle has a diameter of 1" - 1 1/4"

—Start with 3/16" plate 9" in length and 6" in height tapered to 1 1/4"

The eye is made from 1/4" x 1" flat bar 5 3/4" in length. First find the center of the bar and measure 2" from center both directions and mark with a center punch. This gives you 4" for the eye and approximately 3/4" for the scarf.

From the center of the bar forge the bar to 1 1/4" in width. As you widen the bar to 1 1/4" leave a ridge line in the center between the center punch marks.

Now form the scarf by forging the ends into a fish tail. Your piece should now resemble a bow tie. Heat and bend over the horn until your scarfed ends almost meet. Insert the 3/16" plate between the scarfs and line the plate up with the center punch marks. Now forge weld the 2 pieces together. Now you are ready to drift the eye. You want an hour glass shape to the eye. You should drift the eye round using a drift with a diameter of 1 1/4"

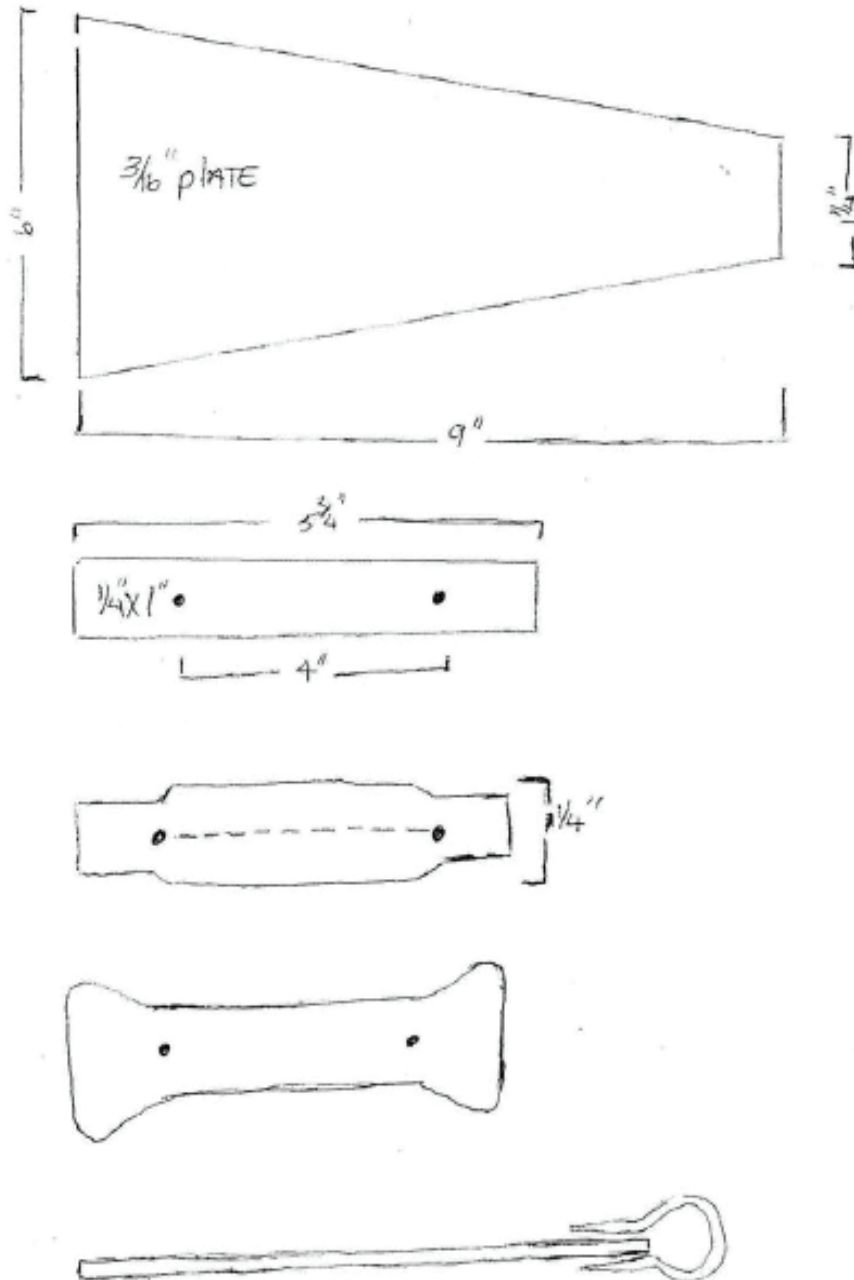
You may have some clean up around the eye to do from the forge weld. Hammer dress the edges and the taper to the eye making a smooth transition from eye to the body of the axe. Use borax to clean by heating until dull red and wire brushing. Forge the cutting edge to 1/2 inch taper. You can decorate the axe by punching round holes into the body of the axe. Some had weeping hearts which was a favorite for some tribes.

-From the OBG newsletter- continued on the next page

New Jersey Blacksmiths Newsletter

Apply a good coat of wax and your authentic reproduction of a Lewis and Clark trade axe is ready for a handle. *The* handle can be decorated as well, Good forging a let your creativity soar

Thanks to The OBG for sponsoring the scholarship that made this learning experience possible. Thanks to Jim Batson who taught the class on this unique and fun forging experience.



Spoon Utensil Demo by Bob Ehrenberger

Cooking utensils are a popular item when I demonstrate in public. They like to see how the steel is completely transformed into something useful.

What they don't want to see is me spending an hour of non-stop pounding to draw out the handle. I do that part at home under the power hammer. I start with 12" of 1/4x1 flat bar. I leave 2"-3" on each end unforged and draw the center down to about 3/8" sq. The final length of the blank is 19" to 20".

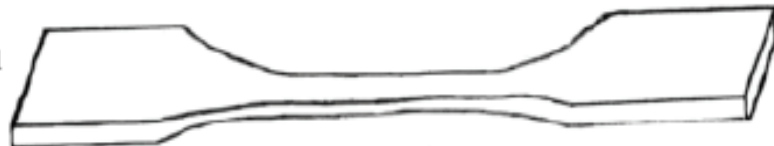
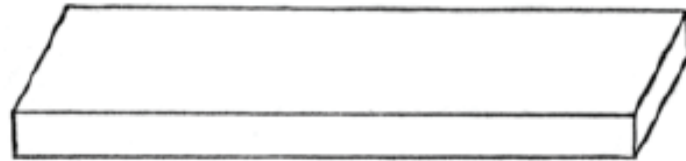
To make a spoon, you forge the corners back into the bar to kind of round it up. Then with the peen of your hammer, start spreading the stock. Start in the middle, this will let you get the maximum amount of width. As you go, keep pushing the corners in to refine the curved shape. When you get done it will be about 1/16" thick and around 3" wide. In a perfect world it would be 4" wide but there is some material loss to scale and a little lengthening.

With the face of the hammer remove the marks made by the peen.

Sink the spoon into a swage block, or like I do, into a ring sitting on the anvil using a medium sized ball peen hammer. You can refine your spoon on the ball at the end of your vice, like a steak tool.

I finish utensils with beeswax for a food safe finish.

Ring made from 1/2" rd.



ABANA Affiliate Liaison Letter: What is ABANA and what can it do for us? 1/28/2009

ABANA is the Artist Blacksmith Association of North America. It is an organization that helps unite artist-blacksmiths from over 75 affiliated groups in the United States and other countries. ABANA is an important resource for a wealth of artist-blacksmithing information from around the world. This information is passed on to its members via its two quarterly publications The Anvil's Ring which presents feature articles on many blacksmithing topics, affiliate news and many other subjects and the Hammer's Blow which features technical tips and techniques for the amateur and professional smiths. ABANA has a very extensive and usually current web site. In addition to being an information resource, the web site allows affiliates and ABANA members to post a link to their own web sites and to post announcements of their conferences, exhibits and other events.

ABANA's web site is also open to the public and has been very effective in reaching and educating the general public about what the artist-blacksmith can do. ABANA is planning to resume its biennial national conference in June 2010 with a grand effort. It will be a gathering of international artist-blacksmiths from around the world with a sharing of their ideas and techniques. Coinciding with the conference is a National Ornamental Metal Museum international contemporary blacksmithing exhibit which will tour the US for two years after the conference. ABANA's Scholarship Program provides financial assistance to its members for educational workshops or for extended study such as journeyman programs. ABANA's Affiliate Grant Program provides financial support to ABANA Affiliates sponsoring a visiting artist for educational conferences or workshops. ABANA members receive a 5 to 10% discount when shopping with blacksmith merchants supporting ABANA. ABANA members can obtain affordable health insurance through Transamerica and Amerits; including limited medical and hospital, disability, dental and vision coverage. These are but a few of the benefits ABANA offers blacksmiths.

ABANA is continually seeking ways to benefit its membership, such as in obtaining affordable health insurance for the self-employed smith or for the recently laid off hobbyist who could not afford a COBRA or private insurance plan. ABANA is also working to soon have catastrophic medical and property and causality insurance available to members. The economy right now is terrifying and it is predicted to get worse before it recovers. And it will recover, however for now, millions of good workers have lost their jobs and many companies have shut their plants down permanently. Not since the great depression in the 1930's has the economy's outlook been so bleak. In the middle of all this mess are professional smiths who are trying hard to make a decent living from an honest day's work. There are amateur smiths, now unemployed because of plant closings, who are doing all they can to survive and turn their hobby into a fledging business and get through these rough times. And they can do it. For, unlike during the depression, today's artist-blacksmithing community has the resources and networking available to help them successfully compete in today's turbulent business world. And ABANA with its affiliates is at the center. Some of our affiliates have been around a long time. Some of them were formed as local chapters of ABANA soon after ABANA was formed. Well, they have grown up. They are big boys now and no longer need the guidance and the direction and the assistance of their parent. And they really have done a great job of it. They have extensive workshops, great grant and scholarship programs, sponsor and promote artist-blacksmith exhibits, coordinate extensive demonstrations and conferences and the list goes on.

ABANA is a very proud parent, and I am sure our founding fathers would heartily agree. As in any family, we have had our disagreements and conflicts, but we are all part of the family of blacksmiths and that's the way it is. ABANA was begun many years ago with a gathering of blacksmiths to share ideas and methods. Demonstrate one and learn a dozen more. This marvelous method of sharing of knowledge was carried to Europe by British and German smiths and has since spread over the world. At the founding of ABANA, Dimitri Gerakaris said "Our task is great and so is our joy". And the joy of a proud parent is a wonderful thing indeed.

If you are a member of ABANA, we thank you. If you are going to become a member of ABANA, we welcome you. If blacksmithing is important to you but what ABANA can do for you is not enough, will you become an ABANA member for what ABANA can do for blacksmithing?

Bruce Woodward
ABANA Affiliate Relations Committee Chair
woodwardiron1@roadrunner.com

**Vancouver Island Blacksmith Association
Membership Application**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov./State: _____

Post/Zip Code: _____

Email: _____

Phone: (____) _____

Fax: (____) _____

Are you a: New Member Renewal

Regular Membership \$30.00 Annually

Contributory Member \$100.00 Annually

Members are required to sign a Liability Waiver
Make cheques or money orders payable to:

**Vancouver Island Blacksmith Assoc. (VIBA)
1040 Marwood Avenue
Victoria, BC CANADA
V9C 3C4**

**Artist Blacksmiths Assoc. of North America
Membership Application**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State/Prov.: _____

Zip/Postal Code: _____

Phone: (____) _____

Fax: (____) _____

- Full Time Student.....\$35./year
- Regular Membership.....\$45./year
- Senior Citizen (age 65+).....\$40./year
- Overseas Surface Mail.....\$60./year
- Oversea Air Mail.....\$80./year
- Contributory Membership.....\$100./year
- Public Library Subscription.....\$35./year

Credit Card Payment

Card No. _____

Visa Mastercard

Expiry Date: _____

Signature: _____

by Phone: 703-680-1632

Mail: ABANA, 15754 Widewater Dr
Dumfries, VA, USA, 22025-1212

Email: abana@abana.org

For Sale Power hammer and anvilcontact Marty Gilbertson

Waterloo 50 lb hammer, needs an electric motor-.\$700 obo and 100 lb anvil and Ferrier stand-
.\$450 1-250-646-2334

