Volume 25 Issue 02 February 2011

FORGE

Dedicated to the revival of the "King of Crafts"

Vancouver Island Blacksmiths

www.vibladesmiths.com

New Club Executive Officers Take charge and promise to root out the graft and corruption threatening our very existence!

COMING EVENTS

February 27 2011……..Meeting at Luxton
March 20 2011…….....Beginners blacksmith course begins at Luxton Forge
March 27 2011……..…..Meeting at Luxton

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The recent Annual General Meeting, held at Luxton forge January 30, was the culmination of a bitterly fought campaign battle between opposing camps... struggling to wrest power and control from each other and resulting in a complete disruption of our previously peaceful and happy community. Violence was threatened on several occasions during the proceedings, and only through the skilful diplomatic efforts of our outgoing president **Ray Orchard** was order restored. In the end, amid cries of voter fraud from the loosing candidates, the new officers were elected and immediately sworn-in. Our new president **Joe Gillings** promised to re-establish the principles of democracy in our governing body, but left the meeting early to work on the subtleties of the military-style salute he was about to demand from all subordinates. The new vice –president **Glen Jones** accompanied him, expressing a few ideas of his own on that subject. The current treasurer **Neil Gustafson** was re-elected to a second term (after a good deal of money seemed to change hands) and our current secretary **Charlie Low** was re-elected by acclimation (when he threatened to publish some of the notes he had carefully preserved from prior meetings).

2010 - Executive
President::Joe Gillings
V P: Glen Jones
Secretary: Charlie Low 250 479-6712
Treasurer: Neil Gustafson 250 727-2173
Librarian: Dave Winestock 250 598-9377
Editor:Dennis Gillett

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Submissions & Contributions

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

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V9C 3C4
OR
Email: dgillett@shaw.ca

Secretary's Report
By: Charlie Low

Viba minute Jan 11

Pre-meeting announcement: Jake is bringing in fly presses from England, sizes, number 4 to number 8 (he figures number 4 would be adequate for the club- number 8 is huge). The cost is not fully determined, but will be between $1000.00 and $2000.00, delivery time will be spring, and if anyone wants one, let Jake know.

The meeting was called to order. The first order of business was introduction of a new member, Drew Greig

Show and tell: Dennis brought in some knives, folders with Damascus blades. The Damascus was made with 1084, L6 and nickel sheet, and was folded to produce 576 layers. He has been working to get the weight of the knife handle down. Wood is a good choice, as it is light, and can have a silver wire inlay, but it is relatively fragile. Metal is durable, but heavy. He has made some with a pocket milled in the back of the scales to reduce weight, but this is an awkward procedure, so he is working with aluminum. It is light, but soft and easily scratched. However, it can be anodized, and if it is, it can also be coloured. Once this is done, the finish is remarkably durable. He has had one, coloured yellow, in his pocket for more than 2 months, and there has been no visible wear. To anodize, hook the knife handle up to a battery charger, the handle as the anode, and a piece of lead or aluminum as cathode, immerse in a sulphuric acid bath and soak one hour or so. When this has been done, the surface of the metal is covered with microscopic tubules of aluminum oxide, an extremely hard and durable material, and it will accept colours- and if it is perfectly clean, they will cover it evenly. Once coloured, it can be sealed by simply boiling in water. As well as the wood and aluminum handled knives, he had one with copper sheet and nickel silver mounts for the handle. It was remarkably shiny, and he is expecting that over time it will accumulate a patina. There were patterns on the blades, including his name and various small animals which were smooth in contrast to the Damascus pattern. These were produced by masking the pattern to be left smooth before etching the Damascus blade.

Charlie L brought in a key chain fob in the form of a leaf, with a diamond set in it, and a pair of leaves joined by a narrow stem with a twist. This had no immediately obvious utility, except for being pretty.

Steve brought in a bunch of tools, including 3 cross peen and one round peen hammer, 2 handled hot cuts, 2 handled punches, a barbecue fork and a shoe horn. The tools were made from 4140 or 4340 steel, and the handles were made from old sledge handles, or hickory, blackened with a propane torch, and fastened on with a wood wedge crossed by a steel one.

Jaques brought in some photos of Ben's recent work in France. There were some very fancy railings.

Ray brought in a copy of the front page of the recent Hammer's Blow, with a photo of a folding knife. They acknowledged Doug Newell and Don Startin for showing them how to do it.

Hugh brought in a sheath knife. The blade was made from ¾ inch coil spring. The leather adorning the sheath was hand tanned, de-haired in lime, then tanned in successive baths of tea. It was coloured black by adding rust to the final tea bath. This had the interesting property of also colouring black anything else it touched, like the counters and his hands.

Galen brought in a traditional grill-work ring with flowers and leaves. The flowers were brightened by soaking in vinegar and then sealing to prevent rust.

Skip brought in a new board of demo pieces to be hung

The minutes were approved as published in the last Forge

Business Arising: CanIRON VIII is proceeding about as planned. To sign up, or just to see what they are up to, log on to Caniron8.ca

Willy reports that the spokes for the

gate are all nicely tapered, and we will be going to the assembly stage soon. This will occur at Marty's shop, at 10430 West Coast Rd in Shirley District. The date being considered is Feb 19.

Dan is planning on doing another demo in the spring to complete the cougar head.

Skip has the material from the dockyard to stow, mostly various tools.

Neil's course will start March 20 (Sunday), and go on every Saturday, except Easter (Apr 23), and the following weekend, (Apr 30) when the NWBA spring convention will be happening. The course is expected to finish May 14, or if more time is needed, May 21. The classes will be from 8.30AM to 5.00PM, the cost will be $300.00, and there will be room for 4 people if Neil teaches alone. If more people sign up, an assistant instructor will be arranged.

With that we adjourned the regular meeting and went on to the AGM

The treasurer's report was presented with printed copies for anyone who wanted one. The bottom line is that we are rich.

Election of Officers: Both the treasurer (Neil) and secretary (Charlie L) volunteered to serve another term. Only the president and vice president needed replacing.

Joe Gillings was elected by acclamation as president, and Glen Jones, again by acclamation, as Vice President

Dennis, the newsletter editor, is willing to continue, but would really like people to send in material he can put in the newsletter, either original material, or anything they find on line, or in books or magazines that they consider to be interesting.

We are going to have to start thinking about next summer's fairs. We are going to need co-ordinators, one for each fair, to make sure that there will actually be people at the fairs to do the demonstrations. Also, there are some possible conflicts. CanIRON VIII will be July 29 to Aug 1 in Fergus Ont. The Western States meet, in Mt Hood, Oregon, 3 weeks later, is in conflict with the fair in Nanaimo, so some people are going to have to make a choice.

With that we adjourned, with a vote of thanks and a round of applause for our newly past president, Ray.

I am planning to bring in a shipment of fly presses from England. Please contact me to discuss pricing if you are interested in ordering. I will be getting sizes 2-8, I have a #2 in my shop if you want to check out what can be done with them, they are invaluable tools.
jake@jakejames.ca
250 642 6984

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Show and Tell

Photos by D Gillett

Key Fobs by Charlie L

Silver wire-inlay and anodized aluminum handles on lockback folders by Dennis

Fork and spoon by Steve

Hunting knife with self-tanned black leather and wood sheath by Hugh

Forged grillwork ring by Galen

Hammers, hot punches by Steve

From The California Blacksmith May/June 2010

Chasing With Heather McLarty

Twice a year for the past 26 years Steve has interrupted his Fence World/Iron World business schedule to offer demonstrations and hands-on workshops on various metal working techniques. While they do not bring in much in the way of additional income, these workshops offer a way for him and his employees to increase their knowledge, with the added bonus of getting some of his smithing friends to stop by for a visit.

In February, Heather McLarty drove north from her Los Angeles smithy to lead a two-day, hands-on chasing workshop in Sacramento. A dozen more California smiths had the opportunity to expand their metal-working repertoire and now are able to employ chasing as a means of applying texture and detail to sheet metal.

Heather began by explaining the distinction between chasing and repoussé: Both use hand punches to create intricate designs on sheet material. While repoussé is worked from both the front and the back, chasing is worked only from the front of the piece. Flat material is raised into relief by working from only the finish side of the sheet. Material is pushed around, much like dough under a rolling pin, but done in small, punch-sized increments. A bulge is first achieved by working from the front and hammering down around the outer edges of the design. But I am leaping ahead. Before you begin you will need some basic materials: something with a little bit of *give* to support the metal, chasing tools and a small hammer.

Chasing tools are held in one hand and are pushed into the metal sheet by striking the butt end with a lightweight hammer. There are a few CBA members who make sets of chasing and repoussé tools for sale. Check out the new Bulletin Board at www.calsmith.org and the *California Blacksmith*. Heather 's tools mainly consist of versions of fullers of various sizes. She provided each student with a bundle. Chasing tools are not difficult to make, but they do take time. You could make and heat-treat all the tools in Heather's basic set in a morning and be tap-tap-tapping away by afternoon. One student had made several tools from high grade bolts after cutting off their heads and threads. The bolts are made from good steel containing some carbon. Making tools from high-carbon steel and heat-treating them will ensure that they will last a lifetime or longer. Mild steel tools worked on annealed metals will do the job but will require periodic dressing and reshaping. If chasing and repoussé will become a regular method of working, it is generally recommended that your tools be made from a metal stronger than mild steel.

Heather uses a medium pitch, which she gets from Northwest Pitchworks, www.northwestpitchworks.com. She places the pitch in a round-bottomed, metal bowl. The pitch serves as a backing for the metal sheet. To support the bowl and keep it from tipping in undesirable directions, she uses a rubber wheelbarrow tire (hub removed) as a pedestal. Buy a wheel with a plastic hub because the metal hubs are difficult to remove. A damp towel or sandbag can also be used for this purpose.

Before any tap-tapping begins, you have to draw or transfer your design onto the metal. Using rubber cement, glue the paper design to the top of the copper sheet. With the metal on a flat surface, following the lines of your design, create dotted lines on the metal by striking with a rounded center punch through the paper design into the metal. Be sure there is a mark where lines intersect and along the main features of the design. Keep in mind that these points will always remain a part of the finished piece. Therefore, avoid putting dots on areas you will want to remain smooth.

Before chasing can begin, anneal (soften) the copper. Soften the pitch in the bowl with heat and firmly press

Mike Brady transfers his leaf design from a paper pattern.

Chasing

Recommended book about creating designs.
Adolf Stein's *Moving Metal* $55 @*Amazon.com*

the copper into the pitch. It is important that there be no air pockets. Begin by striking from outside the perimeter dotted lines in a pushing motion toward the design. If you are careful when you pitch the piece, air pockets should not develop under the bulge that forms.

As the outline and bulge take shape, you will need to remove the sheet, anneal it again and fill the raised area from the back of the bulge with small chips of pitch, a bit at a time. Melt the chips into the bulge space using a paint remover heat gun. Heat the surface of the pitch in the bowl so the pitch on the back of the piece will adhere with no air pockets. This process will need to be repeated several times since the metal work-hardens when it is struck. The goal is to have no surprise unsupported spots (air pockets) that invite unwanted splits. Always anneal before you begin working a new area. It is easy to bend copper by hand when it is annealed.

Mike Bromley anneals copper.

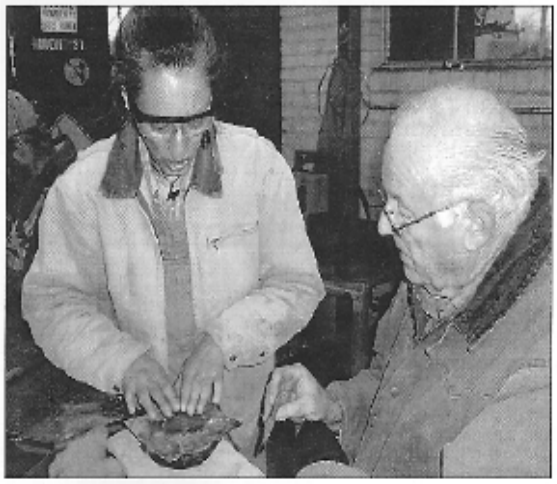
Jan Aijian softens the pitch.

Keep working from the outside edges – in towards the design. The goal is to create vertical walls along the edges of the design. When the walls of the design are established, repeat the same techniques using smaller tools to create the peaked details within the design. *(see triptych below)*

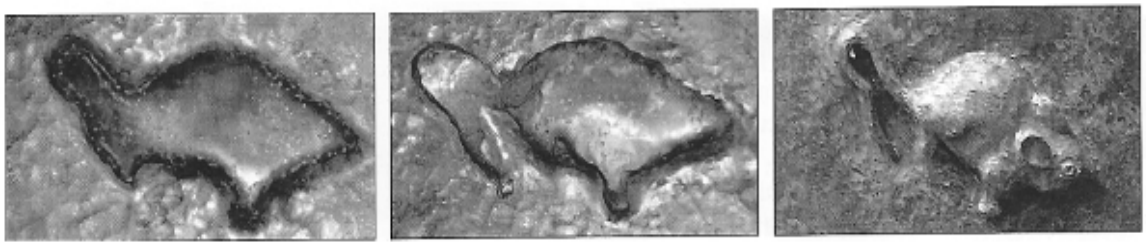
Annealing Metals

Copper is annealed by bringing it to critical temperature – when it turns pink to dull red – and then quenching it in water. Bronze is annealed in a similar way, but the ferrous metals are never quenched when hot. Work-hardening occurs wherever any annealed metal is hit or bent, making the material very rigid. A propane or MAPP gas weed-burner is an efficient tool for annealing non-ferrous metals. An oxyacetylene torch or forge fire can also be used.

As you push the material, it will become thicker in some areas and thinner in others. The idea is to move material into places that will be the thinnest. Thin spots occur readily at the base of the walls.



Heather shows Neil Carpenter how the tool is pushing the metal up to form the walls.



Chasing the Mouse. *The walls around Heather's mouse are formed, ready for work on the details. The mouse tail is defined. Marks, appearing as ripples, around the design show how the metal was chased to fill depressions made by the tool. This is how you shore up the base of the walls where cracks readily occur. Her mouse is complete with tail, toes, eyeball and even fur!*

CanIron VIII Info

Registration for CanIron is now open! A copy of the registration should be included with this issue. For those of you receiving the newsletter electronically, it should have come with the same email. If you have any problems, the registration form can also be downloaded from:

http://www.ontarioblacksmiths.ca/CANIRON8/CanIron-Reg.pdf

For those coming in from out of town, a list of possible accommodations can be downloaded at:

http://www.ontarioblacksmiths.ca/CANIRON8/Accommodations.pdf

For those looking to volunteer, contact Dan Linkenheld at:

519-364-2916
dlink@bmts.com

Peter Parry & Bob Young are looking after equipment for CanIron. If you have something you're able to contribute, contact them at:

Peter Parry
(905) 894-4843
blacksmith@forterie.com

Bob Young
(905) 765-6067
shirley.v@sympatico.ca

Keep up to date with developments and news at the CanIron VIII blog at:

http://caniron8.blogspot.com/

CanIron VIII Events

DEMONSTRATION AREAS - There will be two main areas equipped for your featured demonstrators. You can see that this means two choices for any given session - with sessions planned for both morning and afternoons on Friday / Saturday / Sunday.

HANDS ON AREA - There will be a third work area, equipped with between 6 - 8 forge work stations:
1) The featured demonstrators will conduct a specific hands on workshop session. Sessions Thursday afternoon, plus both morning & afternoon of Friday / Saturday, plus Sunday morning. Individuals wanting to participate will need to sign up in advance, and available slots will be limited. Of course others will be free to observe those sessions.

2) In the evenings (Thurs/Fri/Sat) The SIX work stations will be available for pick up work, inspiration, or just plain messing around. There will be teaching supervision provided in the evenings from 7 - 9 pm only.

LUNCH TIME LECTURES - In the later half of the lunch period, speakers drawn from a wider pool will be presenting shorter sessions on an expanded set of topics inside the gallery space. We expect to be able to provide 35 - 50 spaces of seating there. This in addition to presentations in the main dinning hall by our featured demonstrators. So come feed your mind as well as your body. (Friday / Saturday / Sunday)

EVENING PRESENTATIONS - We have broken the evenings down for two individual sessions, to take place in the main dining hall and also in the smaller space inside the gallery. Each session is for an hour, and is certain to include formal presentations by your featured demonstrators.

FORGING COMPETITION - Love it or hate it, forging competitions done on the spot between teams of participants are always a big part of any gathering of Blacksmiths! Our hope is to allow the general public to be able to observe the goings on 'from behind the ropes'. This event will take place in the Hands On area on Sunday afternoon.

AUCTION - In keeping with our mission to inform and involve the public in selected aspects of CANIRON, we are hoping to open up participation in the fund raising auction to those with fatter wallets! The Auction is scheduled for Saturday early evening.

GALLERY - The best way to inform the public to what we REALLY do is to allow them access to the Gallery. Bring your best and most inspiring work, make sure you include a stack of business cards. The layout of the site at the Fergus Sportsplex is ideal in terms of both layout and large size. Security and close supervision will be provided for all the work.

OPENING BBQ SOCIAL - All registered participants are invited to join in for an informal BBQ on a Bun dinner on Thursday - hosted by OABA. (Included with your paid registration.) Come meet the other conference members!

PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS - A special area is being set aside, accessible to the general public, to illustrate just what Blacksmithing is all about:

1) Thursday - A demonstration of bloomery furnace iron smelting by members of the Dark Ages Re-creation Company.
2) Friday & Saturday - Work on creation of a larger artwork project, undertaken by OABA members under the direction of Dave McCord.
3) Sunday - 'Hammer in' style work by members of OABA

From http://caniron8.blogspot.com/

SAD NEWS FROM THE KOOTENAYS

Our readers will be concerned to hear that Charter Member Derry Cook has passed away. One cold Saturday morning in January 1987 Derry and I and two other hopefuls showed up at Arnie Noesgaard's forge in Sooke to start, our beginning blacksmith's course. I was lucky to share a forge with him every now and again because he had been born with a blacksmith's hammer in his hand on an outback farm in the Land of Oz. There. his family had to be very self-sufficient in order to keep going. He had Romany blood in his veins, and was proud to be a 'shasta mengo'which I think means blacksmith. The gipsies were great blacksmiths and tin-smiths. Derry gave me lots of tips as we worked our way through Arnie's course. Skip was on the same course but in the afternoon section.

That July the call came from Adrian Mulholland to form a blacksmiths association ,and we all met out in Central Saanich to get VIBA off the ground. Derry was our first secretary and was very influential in laying out our constitution. In the early days it was he who organized de-monstrators thus helping to burnish our technical skills. Also we used to meet at member's forges for meetings, and we often met at Derry's place where we generally picked up some good tips on technique. I remember Derry had a vast anvil. 'Get the biggest anvil you can lay your hands on, ''he always used to say.

He was always looking for projects at meetings that would get everybody doing something other than gabbing, and at one meeting we stumbled on a beauty. Derry was the first amateur member to get a power hammer, and the hammer was to be the'' piece de resistance'' at a meeting at his forge. I had just got an anvil from a really wily scrap metal dealer. Part of the deal was that I had to make twelve heavy duty crowbars from tool steel supplied by him. Lots of toily hammering Well ,Derry agreed to make this the project at the meeting. Everybody got to make a crowbar, the hammer got a workout, and guess who was saved a lot of work.

We were all very enthused about the power hammer which was designed to run on three phase power, but crafty Derry knew how to wire it up to run on single phase. I told a fellow church member about this ,who was an electrical engineer who had broken his teeth on oper-ating high tension grids. He was horrified and opined that Derry would trip a phase breaker in the high tension grid and knock out power to his road. When I passed on these misgivings to Derry he just coughed and carried on. As far as I know Central Saanich Road never had any troubles. Does anybody have Derry's wiring diagram? This is the sort of thing every smith should know.

In the early days we often met at Arnie's shop out at the Saanich Historic Artefacts Society. Arnie was a mite deaf, and once his mind was made up just a little inflexible. Quite often things would get a bit awkward. Nobody dared get in his bad books. Luckily all we had to do was con-fide our troubles to Derry and he'd say' 'Never mind, leave it to me, I'll have a chat with Arnie". Fortunately he always got things fixed up.

Derry was a very skilful general smith and knife maker. His Damascus steel knives and reg-ular artefacts were often admired at show and tell. Derry, in his white coveralls, will be sorely missed both here and at The Kootenay Blacksmith's Association, which he helped to found.

At this sad time our hearts go out to Derry's wife, Pat and his family.

Submitted by Don Startin

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
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by Phone: 703-680-1632
Mail: ABANA, 15754 Widewater Dr
Dumfries, VA, USA, 22025-1212
Email: abana@abana.org

World-Famous Beginner Blacksmith Course taught by Master Blacksmith Neil Gustafson.

Starts **Sunday March 20th 2011** then subsequent **Saturdays** including Saturday March 26, April 2, 9, 16, May 6 and finish on May 14. No class on Easter weekend (April 23) & NWBA Spring Conference weekend (April 30).

Class starts at 8:30 A.M., Lunch break somewhere around noon, Finish the day about 5:00 P.M.

Please bring your own personal safety wear, Ear protection, Eye Protection, Cotton clothing (synthetic clothing melts when burnt), preferably boots that are above the ankle and pants the cover the ankle (so no hot trinket can be caught in your boots/shoes). Gloves are a personal choice, I prefer to wear gloves ONLY when I am using the Power Hammer.

Applications will be received on the morning of Sunday March 20, 2011 at Luxton forge in the Luxton fair ground. The fee will be $300.00 for the course. Call Neil Gustafson 250 727-2173

All tools and material will be supplied.