



April 2015

Volume 19

Issue 2 (Second Quarter)



# WRABA

Western Reserve Artist Blacksmith Association

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## UPCOMING EVENTS:

- May 9th Hammer in at Brad Weber's with PAABA.
- May 23rd-24th Civil War at Burton.
- June 26th -28th WRABA Conference with Jeff Farmer.



*Above: Anvils donated by Art Wolfe at Ken Roby's shop.*

*Right: Ken's primary anvil from a raised hammer point of view.*



## President



**Gary Barnhart**  
Southington, Ohio  
330-898-8170  
[gbarnart@neo.rr.com](mailto:gbarnart@neo.rr.com)

## Vice-President



**Don Pfaff**  
East Rochester, Ohio  
330-525-7836

## Secretary



**Roberta Barnhart**  
Southington, Ohio  
[rsb4@neo.rr.com](mailto:rsb4@neo.rr.com)

## Treasurer



**Dave Aubuchon**  
Uniontown, Ohio  
330-497-8706  
[dnl21@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dnl21@sbcglobal.net)

The Western Reserve Artist Blacksmith Association (WRABA) is a non-profit, educational organization, an affiliate of the Artist Blacksmith Association Of North America (ABANA).

We are dedicated to preserving and promoting the art and craft of hand forging iron. WRABA, our group of blacksmiths meet monthly to share information and techniques at the smithy of one of its' members or at Century Village in Burton, Ohio.

A Membership application is on the inside back cover of this newsletter.

***[www.wraba.com](http://www.wraba.com)***

Get information on our organization. Find out what is going on and take a look at some great pictures of what we've been doing.

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## Editor:

Ralph Bacon  
456 Plymouth Ridge Rd.  
Ashtabula, Ohio 44004  
440-992-3886  
[baconid@windstream.net](mailto:baconid@windstream.net)  
[www.ralphbaconart.com](http://www.ralphbaconart.com)

Deadline for articles to be put in the newsletter: March 15, June 15, Sept. 15, Dec. 15th (these dates are in the month prior to the issue coming out on the 1st)

## Board Members

**Art Wolfe**  
Chesterland, Ohio  
440-729-0777  
[artjudywolfe@sbcglobal.net](mailto:artjudywolfe@sbcglobal.net)

**Bob Temple**  
**2015**  
Bristolville, Ohio  
330-889-3952  
[Drbobcatt@netscape.net](mailto:Drbobcatt@netscape.net)

**James Hyde**  
**2016**  
Ravenna, Ohio  
[jameskirkh@yahoo.com](mailto:jameskirkh@yahoo.com)

**Jason Nass**  
**2016**  
Cleveland, Ohio  
[me@wargoth.com](mailto:me@wargoth.com)

**Ralph Neumeister**  
**2015**  
Auburn, Ohio  
440-552-9560  
[mlforge@cebridge.net](mailto:mlforge@cebridge.net)

## Burton

Bob Temple  
Ralph Neumeister

## Fundraising

Bob Temple  
Art Wolfe

## Special Events

Bob Temple  
Roy Troutman

## Hammer-Ins

Don Pfaff

## Tips & Tricks

Ralph Neumeister

## President's Letter:

A word from our "fearless leader".

**Expansion of the new forge**, well hopefully the new addition is up by the time you read this. We hope this helps relieve some of the bottle necking at our open forges and helps with the "hands on" at our conference.

**Hammer in at Ken Roby's** in Auburn, Ohio. First a big thanks to Ken, his shop is a blacksmith's playground. Twenty Seven people came and had a good time. I heard those who ditched us and went to PAABA's event, did not have as much fun as we did!

**Hammer in at Bob Parks** in Sugarcreek, Ohio. Bob out did himself this year, around thirty persons watch Bob make an old style boat anchor. The anchor was very appropriate since Bob had arranged for the group to tour David Warther's ship carving museum ([warther.org](http://warther.org)). I have never heard of a boat anchor demo being done so, good one Bob.

**The internet**, I am amazed at the misinformation on the internet. Now I am what they call an early adopter, built computers in the 70's, was using CompuServe at \$12.95/hr for 300 baud dial-up, and was a sys-op for the dial-up main frame access the Macintosh club had at YSU. So I'm not anti tech, but the internet has become the greatest/worst tool ever made. If you listen to some of the 1.3 million hits on a given subject, some of them might kill you! One in mind is burning or welding of galvanizing and the milk trick. I was a certified welder at ITT Grinnell in the early 80's. We sometimes TIG welded Stainless plate to galvanized steel. We were required to drink a pint of whole milk every two hours while doing such welding. I guess ITT Grinnell and the United Plumbers and Pipe Fitters Union thought it was worth it since they paid for the milk and the break time it took to drink it. So take that galvanizing off before you weld or burn!

**ANVILS!** We are in need of anvils in the 100-150 pound range. We will need these for the new expansion to the new shop. If you have one you can donate or sell at an agreeable price, please contact me. A big thanks to Art Wolfe who gave 2 anvils to the cause.

We generate most of our funds through sales and the raffle of items you donate. Those items do not have to be grand, nails, "s" hooks, leaf key fobs; all do well at the Burton sales table and our Hammer-in raffles. So please find some small amount of time to hammer out something. VIP points are awarded so make sure Bob Temple or James Hyde know what you gave.

For those of you who don't know what VIP points are, it is a program that gives you points for efforts towards the group. Those points are redeemed at our Christmas party either as raffle tickets, membership dues or coal. So make sure you sign up at the Burton events and inform those in charge when you donate items.

Up and coming events; May 9th Hammer in at Brad Weber's.  
May 23rd-24th Civil War at Burton.  
June 26th -28th WRABA conference

May the "forge" be with you! (Sorry, George Lucas) Gary



# WRABA Events

## Open Forge

If you need a forge to use, help with a project, or just to learn something — come to one of the open forges. Open Forge is at Jason's on Mondays. Ralph's on Tuesdays, and Gary's shop on Thursdays.

### Mondays:

Jason Nass  
4101 Brooklyn Ave  
Cleveland, Ohio 44109

### Tuesdays:

Maple Leaf Forge  
Ralph Neumeister  
17231 Messenger Rd  
Burton, Ohio 44021

### Thursdays:

SteelTree Workshop  
Gary Barnhart  
1961 State Rt.  
Southington, Ohio

<b>Joint Hammer-In with PAABA</b>	May 9, Saturday 9:00 AM	Iron-in-the-hat Pot-luck lunch	Brad Weber 88250 Mill Hill Rd. Bowerston, Ohio 44695 740-269-1298
<b>Civil War Weekend at Burton</b>	May 23rd-24th 9:00 AM	Iron-in-the-hat Pot-luck lunch	Burton Century Village 14653 East Park Street Burton, Ohio 44021
<b>WRABA Conference with Jeff Farmer</b>	June 26-28th 9:00 AM	Iron-in-the-hat Pot-luck lunch on Saturday	Burton Century Village 14653 East Park Street Burton, Ohio 44021

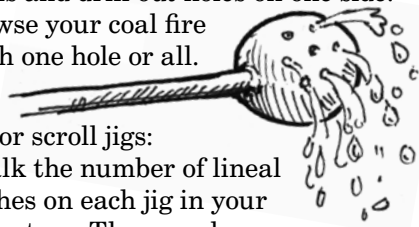
**Jeff Farmer** started his study of the art of blacksmithing as a Junior in High School through an independent study program with Berea College. In the Fall of 1979, Jeff began his apprenticeship with the resident Blacksmith Charles Horrar. Completing his apprenticeship and four years of higher education,

Farmer graduated Berea College with a degree in Industrial Arts Education and an elevated understanding of blacksmithing. In 1985, with the hopes of teaching the trade, Jeff took over the blacksmith shop that he apprenticed at and has been teaching students like himself ever since. Currently, Jeff is the Resident

Blacksmith at Berea College where he works in partnership with the Labor Program to forge merchandise for the College Craft catalog. Jeff also participates in conferences and a Sister City Program in Japan where he demonstrates and educates people about blacksmithing. Jeff lives in Berea, Kentucky.

## Tips & Tricks\*

• Ken Roby water ball: Weld a handle onto it one of those hollow steel balls and drill out holes on one side. Dowse your coal fire with one hole or all.



• For scroll jigs: chalk the number of lineal inches on each jig in your inventory. Then you know how much stock to start with (see photo page 7).

• Permanently mount a wire brush bristles up next to your heat. You'll be able to use both hands to brush off the scale (see photo page 5)

• Keep a wet rag handy for short stock in the fire. It will keep it cool enough to handle.

• For a finish: bee's wax or Johnson's Paste Wax applied to metal at 200-300° tops yields nice black luster. Jason Nash likes to use a dedicated rag for this purpose (the rag gets "seasoned" after a while). Penatrol applied to cold steel will seal with a gloss coat (let dry overnight).

• Place a shear near your anvil for use on hot metal.

• Ken Roby likes his spatula style coal shovel. The slight curve scoops, and the open sides he finds easier to use.



## Editor's Note:

This marks the first issue I have compiled by myself. I'd like to thank Jeffrey Nau for his time and effort in doing the newsletter over the past six years. I am sure the knowledge he

has gained in these blacksmith circles will come in handy in his pursuit of archaeology.

Next issue will have a column about safe practices and safety in the forge. If anyone has a good article to submit, please do so. Send me photos, pictures, drawings and words. If you have a step-by-step piece, I can illustrate those steps to make things more clear.

Thank you also to Roberta Barnhart for all the photos.

I will always accept a tip from the reading audience. If you think you have a good one, email it to me at [baconid@windstream.net](mailto:baconid@windstream.net)

Submissions for next newsletter due by June 15 or earlier.

May your anvils sing,  
Ralph Bacon

\*Most of these were gathered at Ken Roby's Hammer-In—the Editor



# Hammer-In at Ken Roby's Shop



Photo by Roberta Barnhart

*Bernd Schonrank, Gary Barnhart, Pam Turkoc, Roy Troutman, ???, Aaron and Joe Krunkowski, Grant Michener*

All photos courtesy of Ralph Bacon unless specified.

By Ralph Bacon, photos by Ralph Bacon and Roberta Barnhart  
**February 21, 2015**—the weather let up slightly with only 6 or 7 inches of new snow and temps around 20° F. We had over two dozen enjoying the relative break in the weather by showing up at Ken's shop for some demonstrations, camaraderie and good food. After all, a blacksmith's shop is always warm.

Ken is a professional smith so his shop is loaded with tools and equipment. He seems to make enough to employ a few people and provide for his tool habit.

During the demonstrations, Ken



spoke about his awesome array of tools. Five power hammers each with their own job to do. He owns a bazillion clamps, most of which he had to use on a recent railing project. He has a full machine shop, shears, saws, anvils, vises and so on. He uses several power lifts strategically placed to haul power tools or machinery up towards the ceiling out of the way. You can check out his shop online at [www.villageblacksmith.com](http://www.villageblacksmith.com) for his bio, tools, and projects.

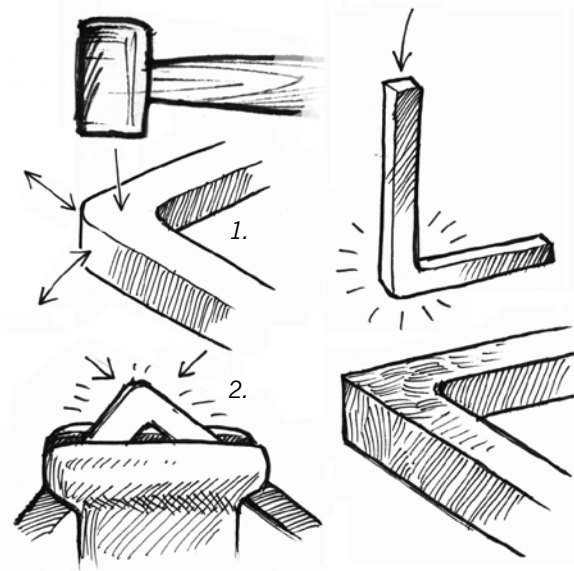
He was asked to demonstrate forging a 90° angle, such as might be used in a frame bracket from which to hang a sign. The challenge was to create a sharp outside corner, which simply looks cleaner. One could bend square stock cold but that yields a rounded outside corner.



"You can never have too many clamps," Ken Roby.

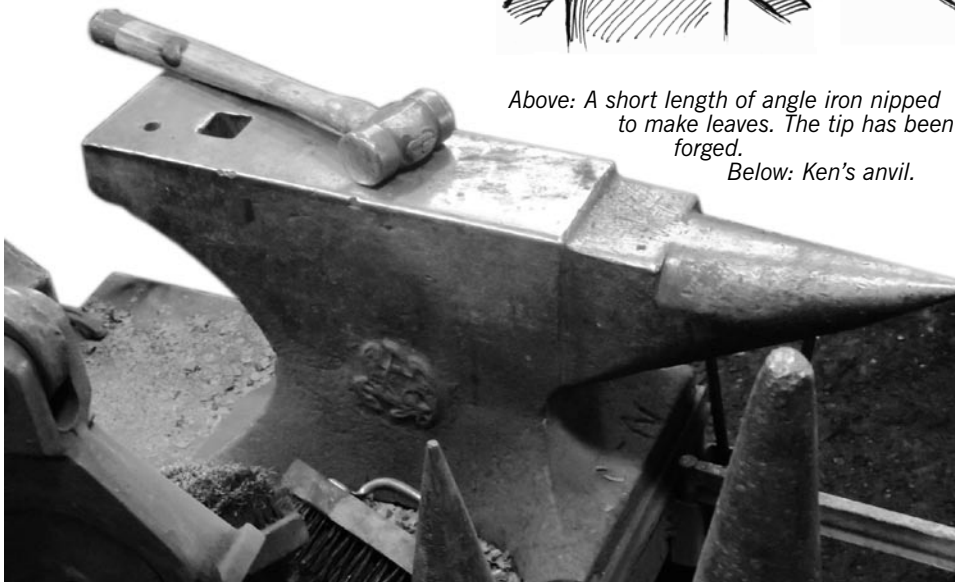
Ken started with 3/4" stock and began the process. (He pointed out a valuable observation: when you want a 90° bend, make sure the face of your anvil is plumb square with its sides. Some anvils are a little bit pregnant in the middle, some a little hollow. It may be worth your while to true up a spot that you know for sure is a right angle.)

To do this properly requires upsetting from two directions to push the iron out into the corner. A few heats, bang bang bang; true it up and repeat. He also used a rasp while it was hot.



*The square corner challenge:*  
Ken explained that to achieve a square angle he would simply weld two pieces together. But for purist aesthetics, you need old school techniques. 1. Heat the metal and make a 90° bend. The outside corner needs to be upset. Several heats were needed to get the metal to decide to move into the corner. 2. Ken put the hot corner in the vise to work both directions with moderate success. 3. Hammering from endwise may help. True up and reflaten as needed. 4. Success.

Above: A short length of angle iron nipped to make leaves. The tip has been forged.  
Below: Ken's anvil.



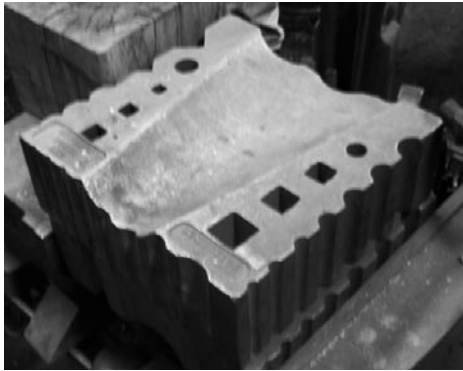
Mr. Roby obliged us by demonstrating his leaf making process. He laments having to make dozens and hundreds of leaves, sometimes for one



Above: A short length of angle iron nipped to make leaves. The tip has been forged.



project. Start with a length of angle iron and nip off the rough shape with his corner shear, doing so several times to make one long piece. Then he can heat the end, hammer out the edges, lengthen the point a little, and perhaps shape a slight curve in his favorite swage block. Don't lose sight of the fact that no two leaves look alike in nature, so identical precision is not necessary. Once a leaf is rendered to his satisfaction, he just breaks it off to start the process again. The corner of the angle iron provides the spine of the leaf, its center vein. The resulting leaf pile is raked up and welded onto branches.



*Ken's favorite swage block.*

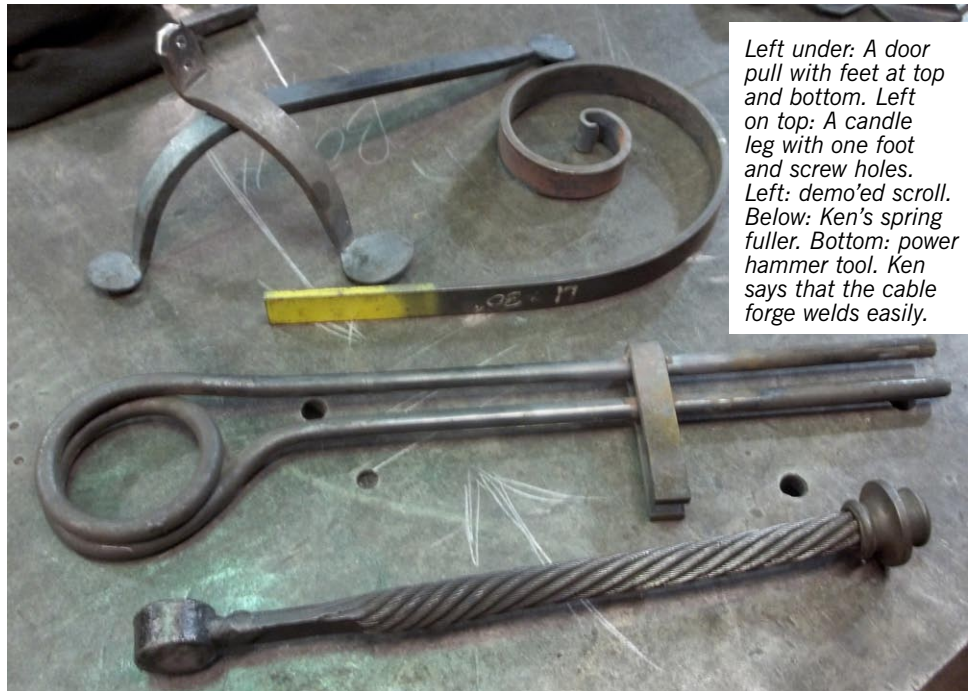
Ken also demonstrated his scroll-making technique. Since he is by definition a professional blacksmith, Ken finds himself including lots of scrollwork in his production pieces. One tool he made to make that process more profitable was his modified ratchet. He bought a 3/4" ratchet from Tractor Supply and promptly welded a matching length of angle iron to it. This allows it to be clamped in a vise at right angles. He also welded a hook tail to its end for convenient hanging. Ken says it is very tough steel and very affordable.

With ratchet in vise, he places onto it one of his numerous scroll jigs. The advantage becomes clear when he simply rotates the hot iron without having to walk around the vise.

One thing the editor noticed was the dirt floor around the forge (concrete floors are the rule). When asked about



*Above: the ratchet in vise. Right: A hot scroll being placed in the jig.*

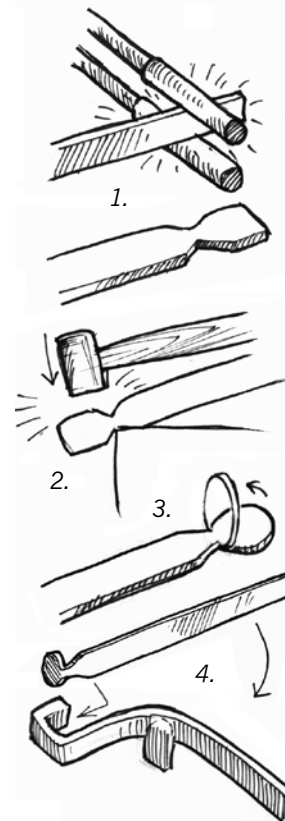


*Left under: A door pull with feet at top and bottom. Left on top: A candle leg with one foot and screw holes. Left: demo'd scroll. Below: Ken's spring fuller. Bottom: power hammer tool. Ken says that the cable forge welds easily.*



this, Ken replied that it is easier on the tools and wrought work when it falls. Plus, it is easier on the feet to stand on for hours at a time.

And a good time it was for all who attended. Thank you Ken Roby.



*Making a leg:*  
1. Pinch hot bar with fuller.  
2. Deepen the ankle of the foot on corner of anvil. Make foot as round as possible. Flatten and true up.  
3. Bend foot to desired angle.  
4. Heat bar, quench foot, place in leg jig and bend to shape. See the finished leg in upper left corner of photo above.



# Hammer-In at Bob Parks' Forge



All photos courtesy of Roberta Barnhart

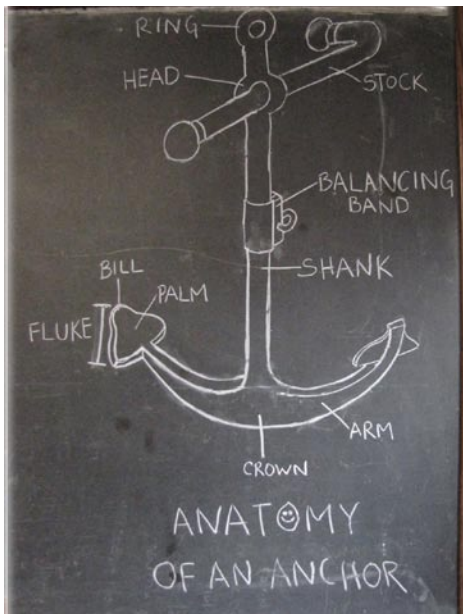
Bob Parks began blacksmithing in 1976. He learned more of his craft in New Hampshire and further in Montana to work as a farrier for many years. Many of his clientele started asking Bob if he could do this or that as far as decorative ironwork. So what do you do if people with excess money ask you how they should spend it? You keep the clients happy and invoice them!

Bob's shop is in half of an old gas station in Sugarcreek, Ohio. Great space with a brick hearth flanked by



Top left: Bob Parks with anvil and hearth.  
Top right: Bob clamps hot anchor into post vise.  
Right: Bob and his monster hammer.  
Above: The usual cast of characters.





Left: Bob's chalkboard. Above: Forging the anchor's crown

a couple of anvils, with one or two more lurking nearby. Most impressive is his Nadel industrial 4140 power hammer.

Bob chose to demonstrate the making of a classic ship's anchor. Such a project uses upsetting, drawing and drift punching blacksmithing skills. It is typical of something that has been made by smiths for centuries. Bob donated the anchor to the Warther Museum. Many of those from the hammer-in went to the museum to view the beautiful and amazing carvings on display.

All in all it was a good day for WRABA. Thank you Bob Parks.



Above: Details and closeups of the anchor. Left: The group checking out displays at the Warther Museum.





**Jason Pfaff***Sales/Technical Service*

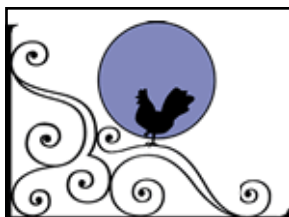
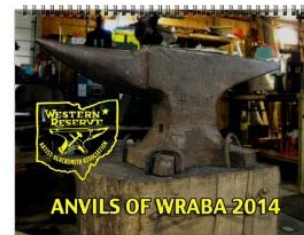
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WRABA now has an online shop at Zazzle.com/wrabashop, also linked on the website. It currently has WRABA shirts, ball-caps, mugs, and calendars of many various styles and colors so you can get exactly what you want with the WRABA logo. Pictured: a WRABA calendar starting at \$20.95, full-color images featuring the anvils of our members.



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Was at WRABA 2014 Conference  
& donated books for our auction  
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### WRABA Anvils

"WRABA" brass anvils  
are available.

They are 4" long and 2" tall.

Their cost is \$25.00

Get one at the next WRABA event.



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call for availability  
Ralph Neumeister 440-552-9560



## WRABA 2015 Membership Form

☐ New Membership    ☐ Renewal – Please fill in all sections so your information may be updated

Name \_\_\_\_\_ **Best way to contact me**  
 Spouse/Family Names \_\_\_\_\_ (check one or two)  
 Occupation \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Email  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Home Phone  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Mobile Phone  
 Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Mail  
 E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Forge Name \_\_\_\_\_ **May we list your forge**  
 Specialty \_\_\_\_\_ **in a directory on the**  
 Forge Address \_\_\_\_\_ **WRABA website?**  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Yes  
 Forge Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Web site \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ No

**Smithing Experience:** **I wish to receive my newsletters**  
☐ Beginner **via (choose one)**

- ☐ Hobbyist    ☐ USPS Mail  
☐ Advanced    ☐ E-mail (as a PDF file)  
☐ Professional

**Comments:**

**Participation:**

- ☐ I am willing to hosting a Hammer-In  
☐ I am willing to demonstrate at a Hammer-In  
☐ I am willing to demonstrate at Century Village events  
☐ I am willing to host an Open Forge  
☐ I am willing to assist with the newsletter  
☐ I am willing to serve as an officer or board member

Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Membership year starts March 1st.*

*Dues are prorated as follows:*

Join Date	Single	Family
<input type="checkbox"/> March-May	\$25.00	\$30.00
<input type="checkbox"/> June-August	\$18.75	\$22.50
<input type="checkbox"/> Sept. - Nov.	\$12.50	\$15.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Dec. - Feb.	\$6.25	\$7.50

**Print form and mail or Email to:**

WRABA c/o Dave Aubuchon  
 9634 Brixton Ave NW  
 Uniontown OH 44685  
[dnl21@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dnl21@sbcglobal.net)

*Membership valid once dues are received.*

**Payment**

*I'm using the following method for payment:*

- ☐ Cash  
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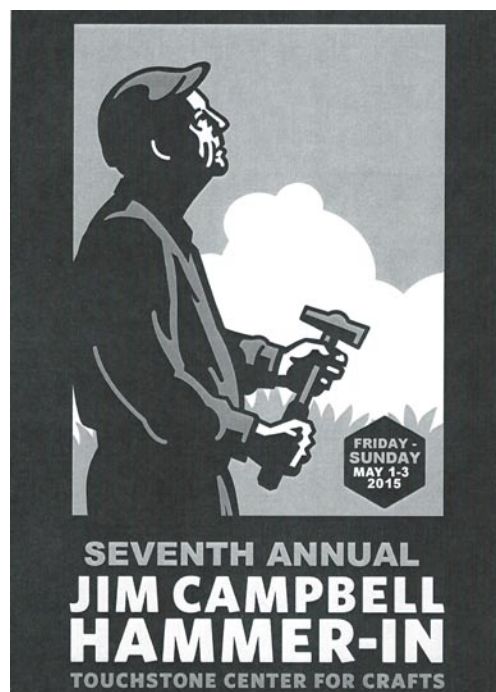
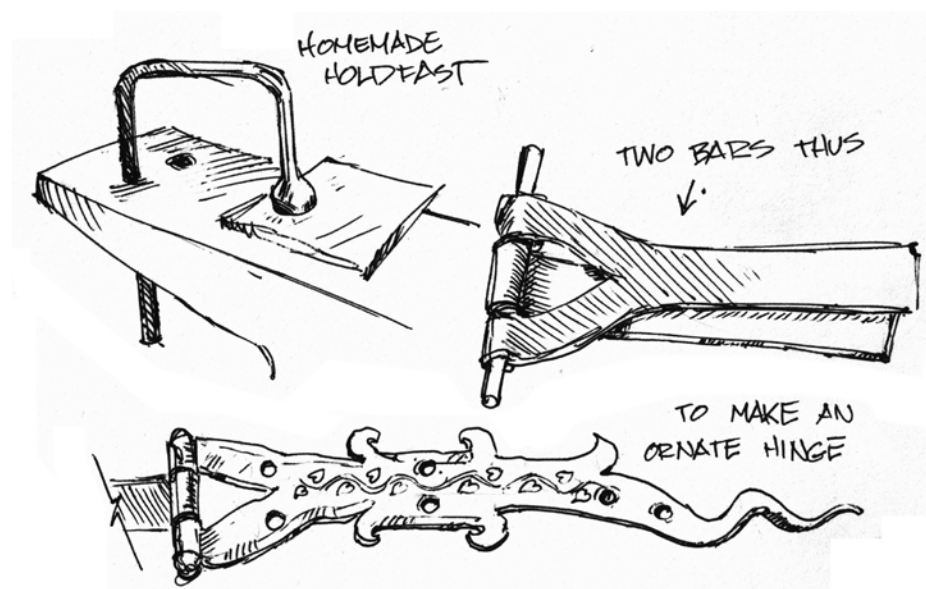
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# WRABA

Western Reserve Artist Blacksmith Association

From Ralph Bacon's sketchbook:



Blacksmiths Glenn Horr, John Rais, Nicholas Kimball and Sean Macmillan will demonstrate. See artist lectures, forging demos, iron work displays & tool vendors. Friday through Sunday May 1-3; Meals and/or lodging can be reserved separately. Visit [www.touchstonecrafts.org](http://www.touchstonecrafts.org) or call 724-329-1370 for more information. Classes run all summer long