

# “Tales of the Western Reserve”



## WRABA

Western Reserve Artist Blacksmith Association

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Our members have been busy—Above: Jim Hovanec demonstrating at the Mapleside Farms Medieval Festival

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **OCTOBER 19  
HAMMER-IN**
- **NOVEMBER 9  
HAMMER-IN**
- **DECEMBER 14  
HOLIDAY PARTY  
(TENTATIVE DATE)**

John Pratt and Bob Temple traveled to Mesopotamia for their “Heritage Day” on Sat. Oct. 5th. It was a hot sultry day with a slight breeze. This was the 13th Heritage Day WRABA members participated in. It was a smaller than usual crowd and we did not sell many items. A grand total of \$12.00 was taken in. The highlight of the festival is always the Amish fried pies and coffee. The afternoon brought rain around 2:45 pm. We waited out the first burst but 30 min. later it started again and we closed down, packed up and headed home. WRABA was approached a number of times this year to supply a smith to demo. Let me know if any of you are interested for next year I will try to coordinate events and pass them on to any of you who would like to be involved.

-Bob Temple



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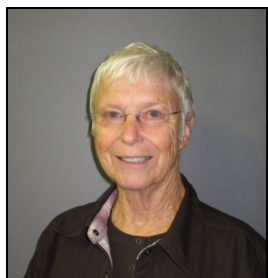
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The Western Reserve Artist Blacksmith Association (WRABA) is a non-profit, educational organization, an affiliate of the Artist Blacksmith Association Of North America (ABANA).

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 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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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)

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## President's Letter October 2013

from

**Gary Barnhart**

Open forge night is still doing very well. We are enjoying a new person almost every time. Along those lines, we will have 2 locations this winter, one at Ralph's place in Auburn and the second at Gary's in Southington which is just west of Warren. We will most likely move from Burton sometime in November. Please check the web site for more info in a few weeks. Also consider doing one if you have the shop.

Poor turnout for the Raccoon County Music Festival. Only 3 other people besides myself showed up for this event. First I'd like to thank James Hyde, John Kirvan, and Roberta for showing up and keeping this day from being a disaster. It made for a long day with few breaks as the people were always waiting for demos. If there were just one or two more people things would have been easier. For those who almost showed up, you were deeply missed.

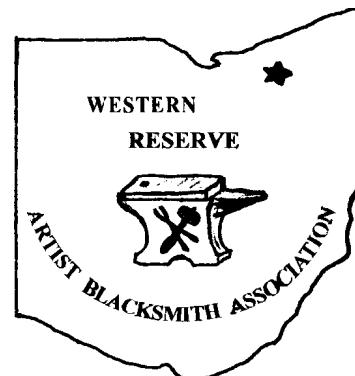
WRABA has a scholarship program available to members. Anyone who is considering a blacksmith class may be selected to receive a monetary gift towards that class. The scholarship committee will review your request and possibly grant funds. The main requirement is that you must give back to the club by writing a newsletter article or do a demonstration of what you have learned.

With 2014 on its way, it is time to plan next year, so consider having a hammer-in. The club provides funds for items needed like paper products, etc. So be the first to let Roy Troutman know you're up for the challenge. We also will be setting a date for the Christmas party during Don Pfaff's hammer-in Oct. 19th. Send me an e-mail or leave a message on my home phone of dates that are good for you, and we will pick the one that has the most hits.

WRABA August picnic was at Chan's. We had a good turnout, lots of good food, fellowship and exploring Chan's wonderful world of ferrous objects. It would take a lot of space to describe Chan's place to you so next time, show up!

I missed SOFA Quadstate last year, but I don't know what was worse, the winds down there or Roberta's kidney stone! This year was near perfect, Roberta and I camped out and the weather was very good. The rain even held out until we had finished lunch on Sunday and were leaving the fairgrounds. We came back with more money than we took and bought some well needed tools while there. Roberta was enthralled with the class by Robert Trout on Copper smithing. She has been self teaching copper work the last year and these classes helped advance her skills. Some of the best times are the friends you make and the information you gain. The nights around the campfires reinforces the fellowship of the great community that is "Blacksmiths". We belong to a very special group of people!

Gary,  
may your tongs always fit the piece you're trying to hold.



## WRABA Events

### October Hammer-In

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup>

9:00 AM

Iron-in-the-hat

Pot-luck lunch

Don Pfaff's  
28151 Mountz Rd.  
East Rochester, Ohio 44625

### November Hammer-In

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup>

9:00 AM

Iron-in-the-hat

Pot-luck lunch

Bruce Hale's  
Jaymac Body & Frame  
1801 Ivydale Ave SW  
Canton, Ohio 44706

### December Holiday Party

Pot-luck-lunch

Gift Exchange

Auction

Burton Century Village  
14653 East Park Street  
Burton, Ohio 44021

Please note the date of the Holiday Party will be set during the October Hammer-In, but is tentatively on Saturday, December 14<sup>th</sup>. Please bring a dish to pass, and a gift for each person participating in the gift exchange. Try to keep all gifts homemade (yourself or a family member).

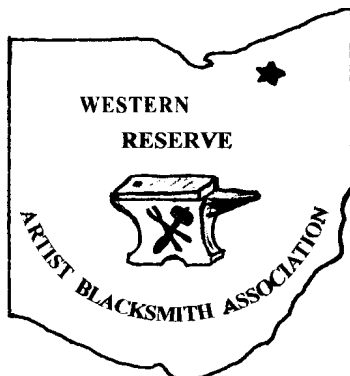
### Open Forge

Tuesdays

5:00—9:00 PM

Burton Century Village  
14653 East Park Street  
Burton, Ohio 44021

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 will be at our Burton forge until sometime in November. For the winter, it will move to Ralph's shop and Gary's shop. Watch the website as it gets colder for details.



From the March-April 2013 Issue of The Upsetter (Michigan Artist Blacksmith's Association)

This 4 page article reprinted from the Upper Midwest Blacksmith Association Newsletter (1996)

## Making Engraving Tools from Nails

By William Howard

*My name is William L. Howard, Bill for short, and I have made my living as a metalsmith for the last 30 years. I am considered a master goldsmith by those who care about such things and I also engrave, sculpt, mint, cast, forge, make prototypes, teach, consult, appraise, drink scotch and whatever else might be available, weld, do seminars and most anything else which is legal, fun, informative and earns fair wages. I live with my wife, Kathy and our kids, Aaron & Missy, in Stoughton, Wisconsin where we operate our business and do all the usual stuff.*

I've had to do some pretty weird things with metal in the course of making custom orders and one of the most useful skills I ever learned was how to make those special tools you couldn't buy if you wanted to but really make the job happen faster. The following constitutes the lecture part of a demo I did for the blacksmiths at the '95 QUAD STATE ROUNDUP in Ohio. It was received well and I wish to thank my hosts who treated me very well.

Not everyone has vast resources of cash or tools so I have presented this information based on a low tech, low cost approach. You will need some concrete nails, a belt sander or grinder, a heat source, hammer, striking surface, a can of water, a vise and about 20 minutes.

### **NAIL TOOLS:** Making an engraving chisel

1. Heat the heads of several concrete nails (bigger is better) and let them air cool to anneal (or soften) the striking surface to avoid chips etc. Heat only about 1/4" to red/orange or until it's non magnetic. If you over heat, the steel will emit sparks which means you are losing carbon content which you don't want to do.

2. Heat the pointed end to red/orange and forge flat as shown in figure 1. If you're quick you can hold this with your fingers. During the same heat, hammer a slight bend near the tip as shown in figure 3. This will save you some grinding later.

3. There are three basic parts to an engraving tool  
FACE, HEEL & SHAFT

- a. You sharpen the face
- b. You shape the heel for the cut shape you want
- c. You hold or mount the shaft

The *cutting edge* is where the face and the bottom of the heel meet. The profile of the face is a cross section which has been ground off the tip, above the heel, at an angle. This will cut different shaped grooves into your work. The best one to start with is the 1/2 round.

4. Grind the heel slowly with the point up to make the bottom edge 1/2 round. If you rotate it back and forth too fast, you will get a pointed shape instead of rounded. When you're happy, smooth it off with a little wet or dry sandpaper as this will make a smoother cut.

5. Next grind the angle you want for your face. Eyeballing is good enough. Grind with the heel up if you can as this will reduce burrs and try to get the plane of the face ground perpendicular to the shaft. If it's off to the right or left it won't cut straight. See large figure.

6. So far you have been working with annealed or softened tool steel which you will now harden by heating the business end to red/orange or non-magnetic and quenching vertically in water. Don't stir, swirl or move it.

7. Your tool is now hardened and ready to sharpen. Use a light touch and avoid over heating by quenching frequently in a can of water. If you can, keep the face flat and true to the original angle. If it cuts your finger nail, it will cut mild steel or annealed tool steel.

8.. To cut steel, hold at a steep angle and enter the metal with one tap. Continue tapping with a light hammer while lowering the other end until the face starts to cut through the metal.

9. To cut continuous lines hold your tool at a constant angle. Too high and it dives into the metal and too low causes it to surface. With a little practice you can cut a straight line at even depth.

10. To cut curved lines you must either rotate your vise or move around the work piece as you tap the tool through the metal.

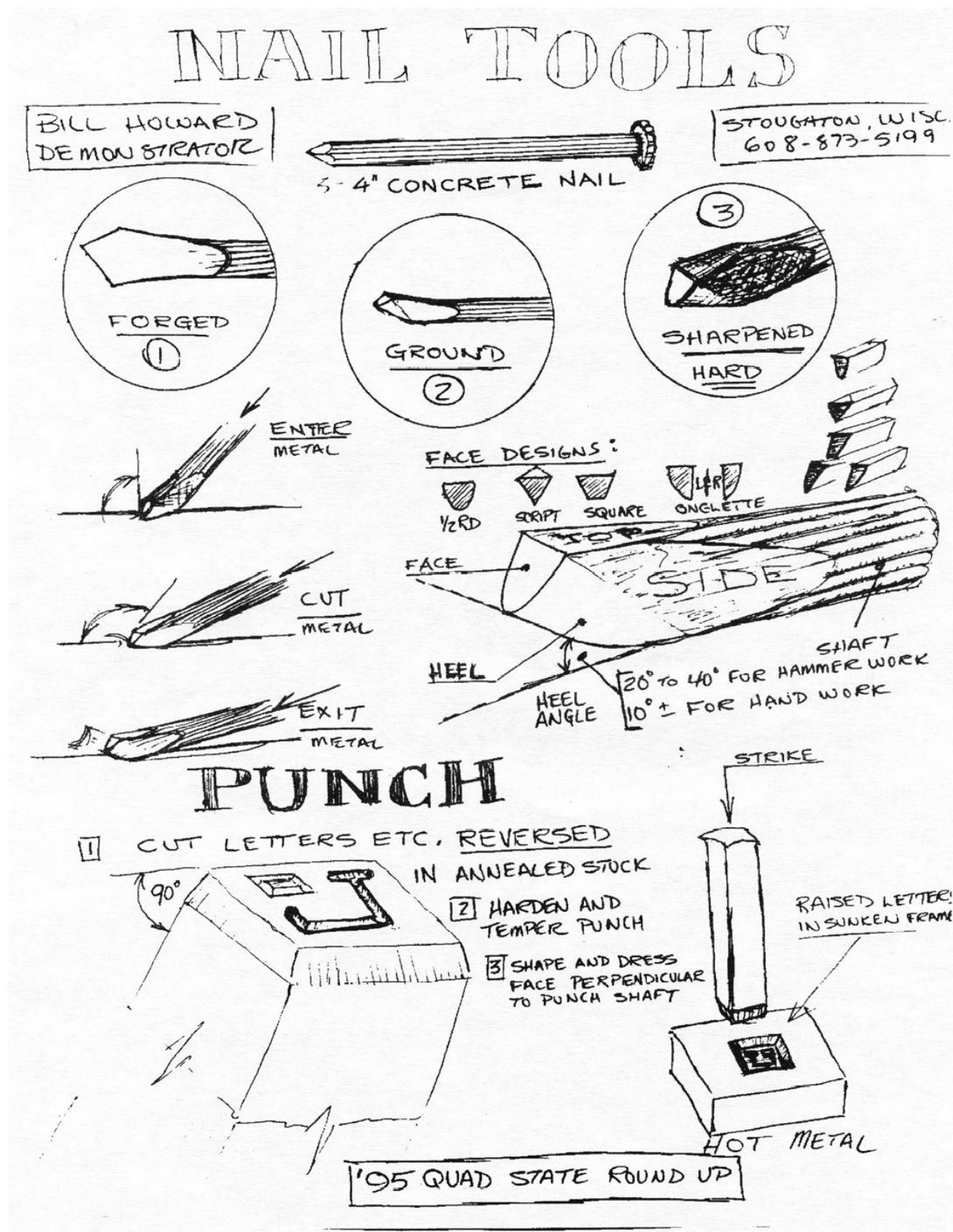
**IS IT RIGHT?:** If your tool has developed a mushroomed tip and won't cut it is too soft. If the tip has chipped or fractured it is too hard. Anneal & re-harden. The nail will stand this a good number of times as long as you don't overheat and burn out the carbon (emitting sparks during a heat).

**SPARK TESTING TOOL STEEL:** Take the suspect stock and grind it hard enough to create a shower of sparks. If the sparks are straight and not too bright you have non-tool steel or iron. If the sparks fork and fan out in a bright pattern you have tool



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steel. Use a wood nail and an old drill bit for comparison. Compare a wood nail (bends) and a concrete nail (breaks) for spark patterns. This is a scroungers' test and will not provide an alloy number or hardening information but can lead to results with a little trial and error experimentation. Junk is cheap, high tech tool steel ain't!

#### **IF YOU CAN DRAW IT, YOU CAN ENGRAVE IT:**

Can't draw? Use this Xerox trick!

1. Draw, trace etc. your pattern on paper.
2. Xerox it bigger or smaller as you wish.
3. Clean your metal with Acetone or Lacquer thinner.
4. Tape your Xerox face down on the work surface.
5. Rub the back of the Xerox design with a rag which is damp with acetone so the paper looks translucent and you can see the pattern through it.
6. Before it dries or gets moved, press down with the dry end of your rag on the design until it is dry (60 seconds max).
7. Peel the paper, which will stick a little where the toner transferred, away from your work piece and see if the design is all there.
8. This produces a durable pattern which you can spray clear lacquer over for longevity of complicated designs. It will not rub off easily and can be transferred to anything the solvent won't eat!
9. NOTE: Your pattern is a mirror image of the original! You may want to trace the back of your design and Xerox that to allow the lettering to transfer as readable, etcetera. It works great for making stamp or die patterns which must be reversed anyway.
10. If you want to do it over, just clean the metal with acetone and repeat.

**SAFETY TIPS:** For those of you who have lawyers please observe the following advice. You are responsible for your own safety and work habits. Use safety glasses when using grinders, torches, hammers and all potentially dangerous (especially rotary) power equipment and tools. Avoid burns, if it gets hot let go! Remember that black heat (not glowing red) can bum you. You can hold work with your hands while forging but if you're not a quick worker be prepared to let go quick. Enough said about the obvious.

**HELPFUL TIPS:** If your Xerox transfer smears, you either got it too wet or your copy moved during the rubbing procedure. This transfer will not resist heat like soapstone lines will for cutting purposes.

Once you have a good pattern, you only have to follow the lines until you have cut them all to your satisfaction. Beware brushing off your work surface with your hand as the burrs you have raised at the end of your cuts will cut lines in your hand until they are removed with an exit cut. (SEE ILLUS.) This is designed to get rid of them and save your hide from damage.

While cutting, your graver acts like a plow or a wing according to the angle of attack. Steep angles cut deep and vice versa. The more taps per inch of line cut the smoother your cut will appear. Numerous light taps will work better than heavy blows for delicate line work.

If you find that the shank of your graver is bending it is because it got too hot during forging or some other part of the process and didn't get hardened later. Heat the center and quench to try and remedy this. Take care to keep the ends cold or you will have to fix them next.

Engraving and penmanship have much in common. Everyone has a different style so experiment with face shapes and angles as well as heel angles. Use the bottom and sides to create compound or beveled cuts and tapered lines etc.

These tools can be hammered, which is the usual method for cutting steel or they can be mounted in handles for cutting softer metals and fine work in steel by hand. The plates for printing our money are hand cut in steel for example. This is highly advanced work not recommended for beginners or amateur counterfeiters. A clever combination can be had by mounting your shaft in a handle you can use and including a short steel striker of smaller diameter which contacts the shaft through the other end of the handle. This allows you to cut by hand or hammer cut with the same tool.

Handle shapes are usually shaped like a mushroom cut in 1/2 from cap to stem. The shaft is mounted in the stem end with the heel and the flat part of the handle on the down side.

Stamps, dies and trademarks can be made with your new skills. Coining dies, embossing dies for shaping thin metal and a multitude of other techniques are now available to you. You can also do decorative gun engraving, inlay work and a variety of other things which I highly recommend you practice first before you cobble up a valuable shotgun etc.!



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Steel is hard and mistakes you make are hard to erase! Try planning your cuts, working some from two directions. This works well with curves. Most cuts work well if you cut from right to left (southpaws may ignore) and you don't have to make a cut all at once. It can be segmented and cut from different angles and directions as with lettering.

Last but not least, use finesse. Most novice engravers try to make a deep cut all at once when a better and more controllable approach is to shave it down in stages. A power slip can spoil hours of work or require the removal of a sharp tool from some part of your body. I know, I've done both. Try and plan your mistakes with the "what if game".

### STOCK FOR MAKING

#### A STAMP or TOUCHMARK:

If you want to avoid the trial and error method of finding junk to make a stamp with and you can spare a few bucks; call your local tool and die or machine shop. Ask for W1 or W2, water hardening tool steel. It is adequate for our needs here and comes in a variety of shapes. I recommend round or square about 1/2" to 3/4" for stamps. It depends on what size your finished mark is to be. Water hardening is simple and easy. For those of you with the right stuff there are other steels with oil and air hardening properties which are useful but more high tech. Size and cut your stock to a length which is appropriate to the use. Don't hit a stamp 3" x 3/16" with a sledge, use a tap hammer. Old chisels and punches are a good source for heavier duty stamps. Drill bits will work fine for light work but tend to be brittle unless tempered for heavy use.

### MAKING A

#### STAMP OR PATTERNED PUNCH:

1. Heat red/orange and forge work end to shape desired. Soften striking end. I recommend forging a short taper towards the work end - approx. 1/3 the total length or as required to shape and size the tip.
2. Heat and air cool to anneal and normalize (even out hardness of forged portion) the working end of your stamp.
3. Trim off the end of your stock so that the face of your stamp is perpendicular to the shaft and as flat as possible (90 degrees). If it will stand on the face on a flat, level surface you got it right.
4. Engrave or punch design into the end of the stamp. Letters and numbers must appear backwards like a mirror image if the mark from the stamp is to come out right. Don't cut or punch too deep as 1/32"

is usually adequate to produce a legible mark. Keep your cuts neat and to an even depth so the resulting mark will have an even height. Use modeling clay, wax or lead for test strikes and to check your progress.

5. Grind or file an even bevel all around the edge. This will make a nice "frame" around your maker's mark.

6. Clean up the face and make sure all burrs are neatly removed. Double check your work. A good stamp will make 1000's of impressions for you and if there is a flaw it will multiply.

7. Harden by heating to red/orange or non-magnetic heat and quenching vertically in water. Just hold it still until it quits steaming and is cool to the touch.

8. Clean up with a fine steel brush and test strike in lead or soft metal.

9. If you are going to mark iron work, stamp the work while at least cherry red or hotter. Non-ferrous metals such as copper, brass, bronze gold etc. can be stamped cold. If you worked it hot - stamp it hot.

10. QUENCH your stamp after using it on hot iron or you will eventually ruin it through gradually softening the face. Air hardening steel eliminates this problem but water hardening steel is just fine and a bit easier to work for your first stamp.

#### NEED HELP? or DID IT WORK FIRST TRY?:

Send me sample of your work and I'll provide a constructive critique of your engraving or maker's mark etc. if you send a SASE. NO charge but donations are gleefully accepted.

William L. Howard, POBox 472  
188 W. Main. Stoughton, WI 53589



#### MABA editors

##### Note:

An example of a nicely detailed 1/2" square punch we collected along the way.

But the maker did not apply instruction #4...



Letters need to be mirrored!  
(So easily done with a photo!)

White box is a 1/2" square.





## The Bridge Anvil—Summer 2013

### The Artist's Blacksmith Association of North America

*"The Bridge Anvil" is the Affiliate Newsletter from ABANA to better enhance and "Bridge" the continuing relationship between ABANA and its Affiliates. The goal is to better forge a future for the blacksmithing community through constant communication, discussion, and sharing of ideas.*

I have recently talked with several of the older members of ABANA; and also one of our founding fathers, Dimitri Gerakaris.

Our last issue of the Anvil's Ring (summer 2013) has been a great improvement over past issues. However, that said, there is still room for improvement. The Ring and all the hullabaloo that goes with it; I mean the people who like it and the people who don't, remind me of a job I once had.

Several years ago, I had a job that encompassed the designing and making of a retirement plaque for a devoted employee with 30 years of service at a Credit Union. Although the final design chosen after many meetings, was a forged tree with hammered leaves and all 66 members of the workforce had to have their names engraved on those leaves, I learned one thing for sure. Don't ever take a job where you have to please more than two people at one time.

Now, what does that have to do with ABANA, and the precious Anvil's Ring we all look forward to receiving? First of all, you can't please all the people all the time. Secondly, each of us must remember we are all part of a whole. Unless each and every individual contributes something to ABANA; ie, an article, a finished project with quality photographs, maybe our time as a teacher, something, just get involved. Think of ABANA as an ant colony or a bee hive. Each member has his or her duty towards the success of the whole.

Don't leave everything up to your Board of Directors. For our part, we try to make the right decisions. Our new Anvil's Ring editor is doing a great job, and she is there mostly because of Amy Pieh's insistence on giving her a chance. The Board wants to see ABANA prosper, wants to see the Ring as a class act, wants to see new members and more communication between us, (the Board), and the affiliate chapters. But that's not possible unless each and every member gets involved.

I, personally, am sending in three new articles. Help me by doing your part.

Ray Nager  
Affiliate Chair  
ABANA Board of Directors.

[RayNager@abana.org](mailto:RayNager@abana.org)

867 Morning Star Dr.  
Lakeland, Florida 33810  
863-398-4995  
863-213-4043 Fax

## From the ABANA President—Summer 2013

Dear Members,

ABANA is 40 years old and we had a great convention in Columbus, Georgia to celebrate it! I thought this would be a good time for you to hear from our 2nd Vice President and founding member, Peter Renzetti.

Thank You,  
David Hutchison

### Communication and Sharing

Well, here we are, after celebrating the 40th anniversary of ABANA on March 17, 2013; we look to our future with enthusiasm. At the convention, seven of the original "founding fathers" were able to attend. We installed a plaque on the forge door commemorating the event. The remembrances of our founding days and what inspired us to dive in deeper to discovery and sharing was very uplifting. The weather was perfect, as if we were blessed, and the demonstrations and presentations were inspiring. There were over 200 attendees at the Westville, GA site, with local groups demonstrating as well. The banquet had over 100 people with good food, great conversations, and wonderful memories to share. Sadly, as time goes on, there will be less of us founders to pass on what we know, and share what was given to us. I was, and am, very proud to be one of the founding members. And I am doing my best to serve ABANA as a board member. I also think of ABANA as a team. We have to work together to advance ourselves and others. To promote, practice, and share all that we have for the future of the craft. Communication is the key to any successful endeavor. We are here to serve the membership with information, resources, guidance, and inspiration. We ask that you, the members, share with us your ideas, tips of the trade, and articles of interest. Also, please share what (or who) inspired you to further your knowledge of the smithing trade. We are working hard to improve and upgrade our website and resource network. We ask that you share what you have so that we can make it available to us all. Actively participating by sharing and passing on your inspiration (along with your renewal membership) is the glue that holds us together. As the old saying goes, "united we stand, divided we fall." Sometimes a few well-thought words mean more than volumes. My favorite is, "the more we share, the more we have." What is really neat is that it works just as well in reverse—"the more we have, the more we share." So take a few minutes, think about our team, send in your dues, articles to share, ideas, etc. —and tell us what is on your mind. We'll listen and pass it on!!

Cheers,  
Peter A. Renzetti

'The Unknown Blacksmith'



# Classifieds

## Blacksmith Tools

- 18-20 swage blocks (for ladles, pots, etc.)
- 50-60 swages of various types
- 10 anvils
- 200+ pairs of tongs of all types
- ? (lots) of chisels
- ? (lots) of punches
- 2 electric drive power hammers
- 1 gas forge
- 1 coal forge
- 4 or 5 miscellaneous forges

Probably more than a semi-load (weight-wise) .  
The tools are in Pennsylvania.

**Complete lot only.**

Asking \$18,000.00

Contact: James A. Bacon  
6713 Howard Rd.  
Williamsfield, OH 44093  
(440) 293-5477



### **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.

12 foot gas hose 3/8 inch—\$20

Trenton 143#—\$325

Trenton 234#—\$525

Early American Wrought Iron book with  
dust jacket—\$100

Other assorted blacksmith items, call for  
availability

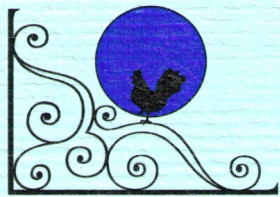
**Ralph Neumeister 440-552-9560**

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Huntingdon, PA 16652

Blue Moon Press sold books at our 2012 Conference  
and generously donated two books for its auction

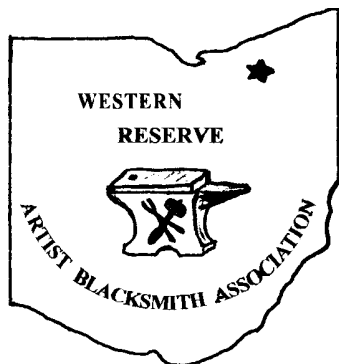


This item is wanted. It is a cradle, used to cut  
stone blocks. Dr. Phil Wanyerka, an Archaeologist,  
would like to have an original sample for a current  
project. Contact Dr. Wanyerka at  
[p.wanyerka@csuohio.edu](mailto:p.wanyerka@csuohio.edu) or the editor at  
[jeffrey@naufamily.net](mailto:jeffrey@naufamily.net) 216-409-6291



# Western Reserve Artist Blacksmith Association

4922 Treeline Dr.  
Brunswick Hills, Ohio  
44212



Send To:

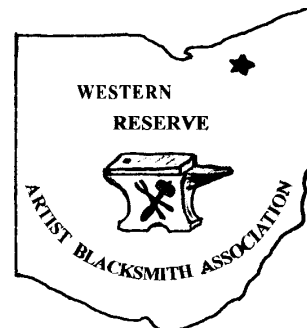
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Forwarding Address requested postage guaranteed

## "Tales of the Western Reserve"

### WRABA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
Forge Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Occupation \_\_\_\_\_  
What areas of metalworking are you interested in? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Smithing:

Professional\_\_\_ Hobbyist\_\_\_ Beginner\_\_\_ Advanced\_\_\_

**Dues are payable by MARCH 1st. \$20. yearly single \$25. yearly family**

(new members prorated quarterly: March-May, June-August, Sept.- Nov. and Dec.-Feb.)

New membership\_\_\_\_\_ Renewal\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

Send application and dues to:

**WRABA**

**6374 Lake Rd. W.**

**Madison, Ohio 44057**

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