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**UPCOMING EVENTS:****May 13**

Hammer-In: Brad Weber's

**June 10**

Workday at Burton

**June 23, 24, 25**WRABA June Conference  
with Dave Custer**July 15**

Hammer-In: Ky Green's

**August 12**

WRABA picnic

# WRABA

Western Reserve Artist Blacksmith Association



Grant Michener shakes hands with WRABA President Ralph Neumeister, who congratulates Grant on his being voted Blacksmith of the Year.



## President



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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.

***www.wraba.com***

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Newsletter deadlines for articles are supposed to be: March 15, June 15, Sept. 15, Dec. 15th (these dates are in the month prior to the issue that is supposed to come out on the 1st).

## Board Members

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Board meetings are held quarterly or as need requires.

## Search for New Board Position

The Board has added a seat and is looking to fill the position of Communications Director. Duties include coordinating all news of and for the club, maintaining the website, Facebook page and work with newsletter editor. Contact Ralph Neumeister if interested.



# WRABA Events

## May 13

Hammer-In at Brad Weber's  
88250 Mill Hill Road  
Bowerston Ohio 44695

## June 10,

Workday at Burton Century Village  
to prepare for the conference.

## June 23-25,

WRABA Conference, Burton Century  
Village featuring Dave Custer

## July 15,

WRABA/NOB

Hammer In at Ky Green's  
5115 State Route 60  
Wakeman, Ohio 44889

## August 12

WRABA Picnic

# WRABA Events

## Open Forge Summer at Burton 5:00 pm to 9:00 pm Tuesdays

This is one of the main reasons to join WRABA. If you need a forge to use, help or advice with a project, or just to learn something—come to one of the open forges all summer long from **5:00 pm to 9:00 pm** at the Burton Century Village, Ohio 44021



# President's Letter

All is well, the hammer-ins were successful and well attended. Our first work party is finished and all projects were completed. Our next work party is June 10th; this will finish up some painting projects and getting things in place for the conference on June 24 & 25th. In case you haven't been paying attention, we are hosting Dave Custer, who will be demonstrating tool making and some other ornamental ironwork.

We have a few needs in our organization, please let me or Bill Fisher know if you would be of assistance. Our contact information is on the website.

- Librarian: the duties required would be to catalog books in library, list videos on website, and attend the majority of hammer-ins. Members would notify in advance of hammer-in of any book they might want to check out, and would then be brought to meeting. The video library would be brought and member would check out any videos wanted.

Someone or a group would scan blacksmith articles (which we will supply) into a file or CDs that members would then have access to, these could also be laminated as project pages if wanted.

- Video photographer, Video editor: Person or persons to video demonstrations, conference and any other events like our knife making demonstration (April 15th).
- Person who has knowledge on running website.
- A person to be communications officer, who would oversee these things.

See you at our events and keep that hammer swinging,

Ralph N.



## Tips N Tricks

### QUICK & CHEAP HOLD DOWN CLAMP FOR ANVIL WORK

Anthony Goodrum

I started with a 9" drill press locking clamp item # 36221 from Harbor Freight. It sells for \$7.99 regular but is on sale pretty often in their sale catalogs for less. I cut the metric bolt off the bottom, I didn't worry about cutting it off flush nor did I grind it flush because I wanted to plug weld to it. I cut a 3" piece of 1" square stock (to fit in my hardie hole), a 5" piece of 1/4" X 1-1/2" flat bar made up the rest of the components for the project.

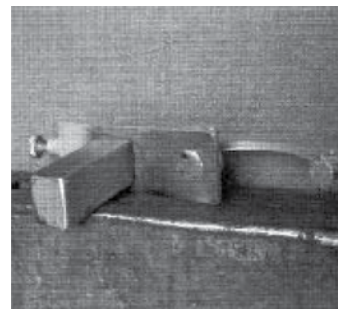
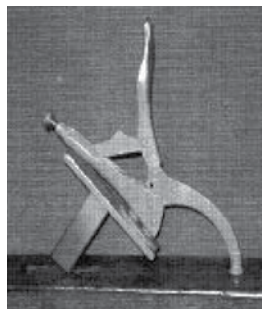
I drilled two 3/4" holes in the 1/4" plate in order to plug weld the 1" stock & the clamp to it. The holes were drilled at 3/4" & 3" from one end. Plug weld the 1" stock on first to the hole at 3", then center the clamps cut off bolt area on the opposite side in the end hole & plug weld the clamp to the 1/4" plate.

The clamp will adjust for stock on the anvil from 0" to 3". There is enough binding action on the long 1" piece in the hardie hole to insure a good bind on the anvil top. Needless to say none of these stock sizes are cast in iron, use whatever you have available, naturally you will need a piece that fits your anvils hardie hole.

Harbor Freight has a new drill press locking clamp available now that rotates, I haven't seen it but from the picture it appears it is mounted to a plate & may be a better choice for this project. It may entail less work by not having to cut off a bolt. It sells for the same \$7.99 price as the one I used, the item number for it is #47429.

I have one of the pipe clamp type hold downs that Clay showed several years back but it requires knocking a wedge out to get it off the anvil, this quick & cheap one just pulls out quickly. I don't think it will have the holding power of the pipe clamp hold down but for small & light work it should work just fine.

From ALABAMA FORGE COUNCIL NEWSLETTER, 2008



#### *Safety tips for the fledgling smiths:*

- Wear safety glasses—sparks and hot metal can bounce in unexpected ways.
- Wear loose fitting leather gloves; if one gets hot, it is easier to remove quickly. Synthetics will melt, and melted plastic will take your skin off when removed.
- Assume all metal to be hot around the forge. Wave a hand over to check for radiant heat. Make and keep a place for hot metal to cool.
- Use hearing protection. Wrapping the feet of your anvil in chains or attaching a magnet helps dull down ringing from hammer blows.
- Wire wheels. Use extreme caution! Eye protection is a must—bristles can break off and spear your eyes. Secure all loose clothing, jewelry, long hair and push sleeves up to elbows. If the metal has paint or is very dirty, a dust mask may be in order. Hold metal from end without gloves, which can get caught! Or use a cup-shaped brush in a variable speed angle grinder set at its slowest speed for work in a vise.



# Blacksmith of the Year

Grant Michener has been awarded WRABA's Blacksmith of the year 2016. Grant has time and again displayed his value to the club. He has volunteered countless times for events at Burton offering demonstrations, helping out at hammer-ins, and open forges. He willingly shares his knowledge and expertise about the craft at every opportunity. Just as importantly, he sits on the board and has a hand in the direction the club takes. Truly a member in which we can all count upon for advice, a third hand at the anvil or answering a question about smithing.



*Left and below: Grant at Burton in the old forge. Right: My sketch of Grant working on an engraving project at an open forge at Ralph N.'s place a couple years ago.*



*Grant Michener practices engraving.*

*Right: Grant helps out at a summertime open forge at our expanded facilities in Burton.*





# Welding

Photos by Ralph Bacon

By Ralph Bacon

Randy Barker hosted this event at J F Martt & Associates in Sebring, Ohio on Saturday January 14. They weld and restore all kinds of heavy duty machinery and parts.

Randy started with an overview, a bit of history, and touched on the mechanics of welding. After reviewing safety issues he handed out coats and masks for those who needed, and set us loose to try our own hands at the various welding stations. These included MIG, TIG, GTAW torch, oxygen/acetylene torch cutting, welding and brazing... and so on—6 or 7 stations in all.

Also on display were a couple of foot-enabled clamps. The potential of these handy devices aroused great interest, which led to a special event to gather and construct a bunch for club members. The story may be covered in the next issue of the newsletter.

Overall this was a great event. Many got to weld for the first time, or do so via a different method. I saw parts of Ohio I never knew existed (hence my arriving later than preferred). Thank you Randy Barker for hosting!



Above three photos: Various welding stations in action. Right: Bill Fisher and Rob Volanski. Left: Ralph Neumeister and John Klingler watch Bill F. welding. Below that is a close-up. Bottom: Some of the units in use for the day.





# Ken Roby

Photos by Ralph Bacon



By Ralph Bacon

February 11 meant a large influx of attendees to the hammer-in at the Village Blacksmith, Ken Roby's shop.

He mostly introduced his latest equipment acquisitions: an ESAB portable welding unit and a thing call a "Zipmax", a sort of cross between a scroll saw and a miniature power hammer.

Lots of Ken's work is on-site, so having the option to weld is very handy, from heavier duty to precision work.

The Zipmax is made by an old guy out west who basically invented this design of a smaller pneumatic hammer in a scroll saw configuration. Comes with several top and bottom dies and is powered by air pressure. It works like a dream come true, as Ken demo'd a few items for us. Essentially, it allows the forming of sheet metal into objects of sculpture. So, if he had a flat stack of grape leaves, the Zipmax can turn them into shapely leaves perhaps 10 times quicker. There may be an effort to get or make more of these. We will keep you informed!

Well over 3 dozen attended. The food was great, iron-in-the-hat was plentiful and the demonstrator for the WRABA Summer Conference was announced, Dave Custer, so that is another reason to come to this event.



Above: The Zipmax—indispensable tool for the production shop. Right: The spring clamp that was also on display at Randy Barker's Hammer-In. Below: Lots of stuff for iron-in-the-hat.



Top: A current railing project. Ken pointed out that a spiral staircase requires a helix curve, which bends AND twists at the same time. Above: Dave gives tips on pattern making. Below: John Klingler inspecting a section of railing.





# March at Bob Parks'



Most photos by Ralph Bacon



Photo by John Klingler



Above: Two shots of the forge welding first step.



Above: Starting cut for the ears.



Above two: Punching in the eyes. Note how Bob puts the table of the anvil to good use.

By: John Klingler

The March hammer-in at Bob Parks' shop was well attended and as always Bob does a great job of demonstrating.

Fundamental blacksmith processes such as forge welding, cutting, drawing down, and chasing were used in the making of a three-dimensional mule head. Bob uses this bar end element on things like fire place tool handles.

Bar size: 5/16" X 5/8" required.

- Mark bar 3" in from the end.

Heat and cut half way through at the mark with a hot cut.

- Fold the 3" section back onto itself and forge weld all of it except for the last 1/2", which will be the mule's nose.

- The next operation is drawing out the ears. Place 1 1/2" of bar on near side of anvil face down and taper top and sides to a blunt point. This sets up the ears and establishes the top of the head.

- Heat and split the ears, but do not cut all the way through yet.

- Support one side of bar against the step of your anvil, and use a rounding hammer to profile each side of the mule's face, centering hammer blows between the ears and nose.

- Punch eyes next... Bob used an oversized eye punch for this [which was hollowed out to create a ring punch, rather than a solid circle].

- Clamp bar in vise jaws and with a center punch, punch both nostrils.

- Go back to the anvil and with a narrow fuller, form the inside of both ears.

- Clamp again in vise and finish ears with hot cut. This time make the cut starting at top of ears and cut towards head. Clean up base of cut with a narrow fuller.

- Spread and shape ears to suit.

During the hammer-in anyone who wanted to try their hand at making one was welcome to do so. Bruce Hale stepped up to the anvil and forged a nice example. Thanks go to Bob Parks for hosting another great event!

NOTE: Welding flux used for this project: "Iron Mountain Blacksmiths Products." Distributed by Blackwater Forge, Jasper, Alabama. Phone number: 205-275-9396.

*[The method described above could easily be used to create other animal heads: goat, dragon, horse, rabbit—what ever is your favorite! The editor]*





Above: The punch used for the eyes.



Above: The look so far...



Above: Adding details inside ears.



Above: Bruce Hale stepped up to the anvil to forge a nice example.



Above: Adding nostrils with a smaller punch.



Above: Splitting and spreading out the ears.



Above: Bob cutting ears while Roy Troutman offers a spare set of hands.



Above: Some of Bob's "scrap" just banging around the shop...



# Dave Custer at WRABA Conference June 23, 24, 25, Burton Century Village



Photos courtesy of Fiery Furnace Forge Facebook page

*My blacksmithing journey began at a very young age with nothing more than a dry-stacked, outdoor brick fire pit. It was nothing special, but I enjoyed playing with it and trying to figure out what made it get hot. I redesigned it numerous times to achieve higher burn temperatures and eventually began heating rocks and then steel just to see what would happen.*

*While the safety of my endeavors could be debated, it fed my interest, until one day I saw a blacksmith demonstrate at a Civil War era reenactment. From that point I began reading both online and in that "terribly old fashion way... in books on actual paper." This lead me to the infamous brake-drum forge... you know, that horrible scrap yard invention. I used my brake-drum forge for over a year, with great pride.*

*That was eleven years ago now, and the years have brought me through quite a journey. I've been most fortunate to be able to work with blacksmiths known to us all, such as Clay Spencer and Brian Brazeal, both of whom have helped and taught me much. I've been able to travel and demonstrate all over the country, and I've been able to work with and help smiths worldwide by providing tools and advise.*

*I currently work in tooling primarily*

*but I also do a little bit of decorative and functional interior hardware and some historical iron-work.*

*Fiery Furnace Forge is a full time blacksmithing company that has become an enormous family effort. I do most of the forging, my brothers are learning forging and do a lot of cutting, parts prep, and clean-up, and my dad helps with striking and welding jobs. Mom keeps the paper-work going and packages most of my orders.*

*I look forward to meeting you guys in person in June, and working with you for a few days.*

## **Dave Custer**

Dave Custer will be our demonstrator at WRABA Conference this June 24 & 25, 2017. He will be showing us tool making on Saturday and probably do a little forge welded tree or forge welded Heron on Sunday. There will be a special hands-on class Friday June 23 for making punches and chisels.

Send in money for the hands-on early as they fill up fast. Cost for hands-on \$50 plus \$1.50 per chisel made, Saturday only is \$35, Sunday only \$25, or both Conference days \$55. Contact Ralph Neumeister or a Board member for fees and details.





## 31st NOB HAMMER-IN HELD AT AUGLAIZE VILLAGE, DEFIANCE, OH

MAY 5 - 7, 2017

[www.nob-blacksmiths.org](http://www.nob-blacksmiths.org)

For more information contact Butch Sheely – 419-308-3471

Bring examples of your work for the gallery and auction. This Hammer-in is for the metal arts enthusiast, from beginner to experienced. The event is not open to the public, so be sure to register.



### Main Demonstrator Terry Sheridan:

Terry is a self-employed machinist, welder and blacksmith from Collingwood, Ontario, Canada. Most of his work is for the heavy construction machine industry, as well as the local ski resort industry. His passion is at home using a coal forge and simple tools to create historically correct items from centuries past and likes to make tools. Terry has demonstrated for various blacksmith groups in Ontario. Terry will be demonstrating forging tongs and pliers and the tooling required to make them.

### Hands on Demonstrators:

**Roger King:** Roger became involved in blacksmithing through re-enacting. He has done demos for several Historical Reenactments, NOB's open forges, is a club board member and past newsletter editor. Roger will teach making a camp-fire spatula.

**Ron Sheely:** Ron is a Superintendent for Turner Construction. He became interested in blacksmithing once he realized that he would be pushing a pencil during the day instead of swinging a hammer after college. Ron is a member of SOFA and previously held the position of Treasurer for the NOB until he moved to the Columbus, Ohio area in 2013.

To download a PDF detailing this event go to this link:

<https://www.nob-blacksmiths.org/hammer-in-2017/>

# Classifieds & Sponsors



Was at WRABA 2016 Conference, donated books for our auction and had a great variety of books for sale.

[www.bluemoonpress.org](http://www.bluemoonpress.org)



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## WRABA.store

Items can be purchased by contacting Pam Schonrank at [WRABA.store@aol.com](mailto:WRABA.store@aol.com). We have T-Shirts, zippered sweatshirts, long sleeve shirts, hats, anvils and much more.

### 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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Ralph Neumeister  
440-552-9560

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## Ornate Ironwork



*Above & below: More examples of Bob Parks' talent and expertise.*

*Right: Another view of Ken Roby's railing. He has a great team in his shop.*

