

October 2009

*The Florida*

# Clinker Breaker

Florida Artist Blacksmith Association - Established May 18, 1985

## Conference Update

*Mark Stone*

Dina Estenson's Basket class was listed in error on my part. It is listed as Friday PM in the Conference brochure. It will actually be on Sunday Morning from 9:00 AM until 12 Noon. She will not have a Friday PM class.

If you have registered for her Friday class, you will receive a phone call to reschedule your class. Sorry for the error and any inconvenience this may have caused.

Friday evening around 7:00 PM, after the Board Meeting, we will have a special guest. Our special guest will be "The Colonial Blacksmith". As an itinerate blacksmith he traveled to many of the colonies during the War for Independence. He will be telling us of little known, true stories of the Revolution. The Colonial Blacksmith is a creation of History Alive Productions. Our aim is to entertain and remind folks of our rich heritage.

## What is it?

Jerry Wolfe asks (and hopefully will provide an answer for the next issue).



## Kydex Sheaths or I'm Tired of Sewing

*Steve Bloom*

One of the realities of knife making is that customers seem to have a reluctance to slip a razor-sharp object into their pockets. They want sheaths (who would have guessed?).

The traditional solution (no - not cardboard and duct tape!) is a leather sheath. Besides the hassle of having leather slowly molding away in an unairconditioned shop in Florida, there is the need to sew and sew and sew. Even when the sheath is done, there remains the problem of corrosion. The unfinished side of the leather is next to the steel and effectively acts like a sponge to suck water out of the air and to apply it to the once nicely polished blade. The results are to be expected - rust. There are ways of moderating this problem (like soaking the leather in molten beeswax) but the best approach is to tell the buyer not to store the blade in the sheath. That's fine for the buyer but for the maker, having 30 blades banging together in the transport cases and then re-matching the sheaths to the blades is definitely a pain.

In an attempt to make an end run on these problems and to provide the customer with a sheath that can be worn on either hip, I've been playing with Kydex - a thermomoldable plastic.

Kydex comes in a rainbow of colors and a variety of surfaces. The trick is finding a supplier that isn't too proud of what they are selling and who happens to carry what you want. My source is: <http://interstateplastics.com/>. On their website, do a search for "kydex" and then go to "Calcutta Black". There is a specification form on which you pick the thickness and dimensions of the sheet you want to buy. Shipping on anything over 12" wide gets ridiculous, so I usually buy 12" x 48" sheets. Pricewise (as of September 2009) the picture looks like:

0.026 x 12" x 48" = \$9.08

0.060 x 12" x 48" = \$17.09

I use the 0.060' material and typically can get 18 sheaths from a sheet. In other words, a sheath costs me about a buck.

*(continued on page 6)*

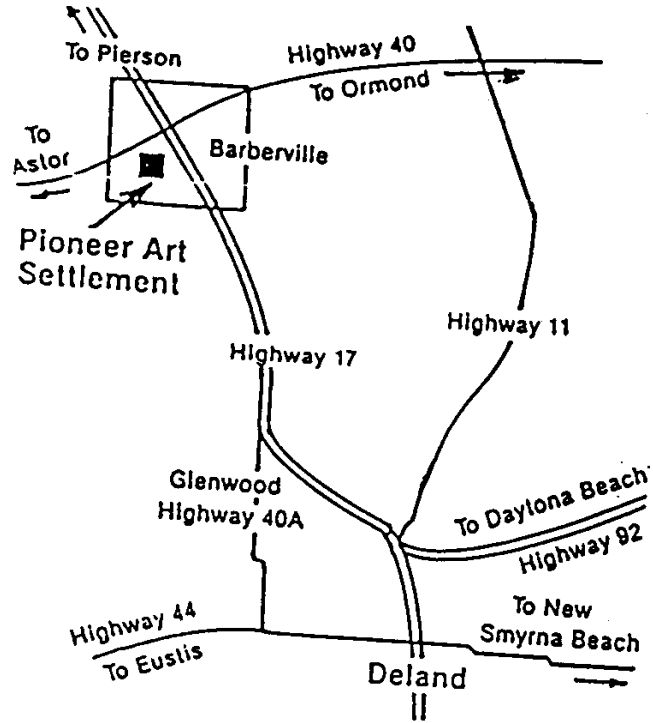
### Upcoming Events

The calendar includes events of interest to the blacksmithing community. The regions have no boundaries - everyone is welcome everywhere. Come to more than one if you can. We hold regular meetings in each region on the following Saturdays of each month: NE-1st, NW-2nd, SE-3rd, SW-4th except for quarterly Statewide meetings. The actual dates vary so check the schedule below. Our meetings are informal gatherings around the forge. Prospective members are always welcome. Come for all or any part of a meeting, bring your tools or just watch. Most meetings run from 9AM to 4PM and you'll need to bring lunch if not otherwise noted. If you have any questions about meetings, please contact the Regional Coordinators:

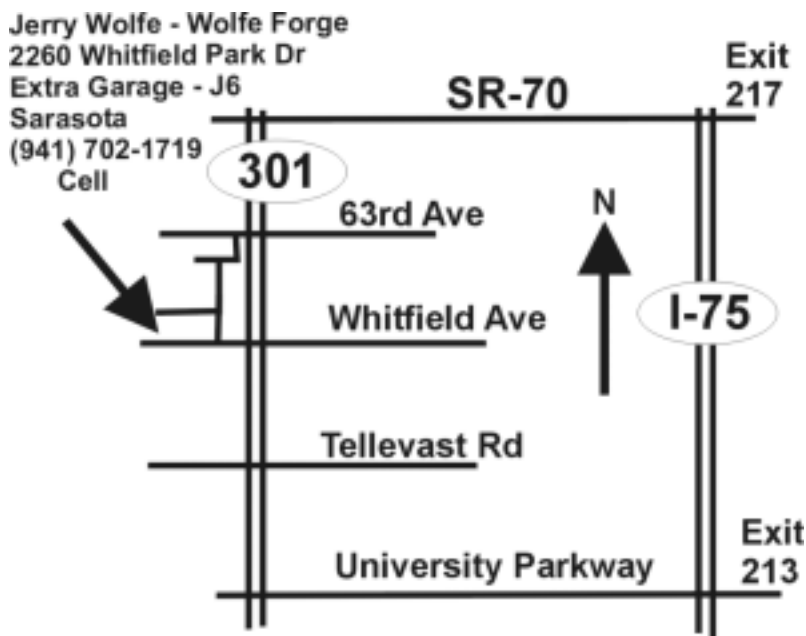
Northeast Region	Mitch Widham	386-673-0174	mwidham@cfl.rr.com
Northwest Region	Billy Christie	850-421-1386	chriswoodforge@embarqmail.com
Southwest Region	Jerry Wolfe	941-355-5615	wolfforge@hotmail.com
Southwest Region	--needs a volunteer - what about you?		

### October 2009

- NE 03 Open Forges & Conference prep
- NW 9-11 Annual Conference-Barberville
- SE 17 Until further notice-Tanah Keeta
- SW 24 Wolfe Forge - The BEST of Barberville - Repeat of some of the best demos. For those who were not able to get to Barberville for the annual meeting, we will bring the best to you. We will be looking for demos that will thrill and motivate you to pick up a hammer and repeat the demo. Demonstration starts at 10AM, come for informal hammering starting at 9AM. We will have our normal Iron in the Hat and a pot luck dinner - Bring a dish to share.



NE Region & Conference



SW Region

### SE Region

Boy Scout Camp: from I-95 exit go east onto Indiantown Rd, go north (left) onto Island Way (1st traffic light). Stay on it until it ends at Country Club Dr. Go left—it ends at the entrance to Boy Scout Camp.

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## Current Events

### Future Events

**NW:** Nov 14. We will meet at Ken and Louise Burns' shop, 5984 WW Kelly Rd., Tallahassee, FL. 850/878-9643.

**NW:** Dec 12. Bill Adams "Blind Hog Forge" at 1307 Shady Rest Road, Havana, FL.

**NW:** Jan 09. Jeff & Brook Mohr's "Mocking Bird Forge" 22 Ironwood Court, Crawfordville, FL.

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## Report from the Northeast

*Mitch Widham*

The Northeast's Region September 6th meeting at Barberville was heavily attended with almost 50 Smiths signing the roster. I think that the weather is finally cooling off a bit and we are all a little more willing to get the old forge fired up. I'd like to recognize a bunch of first timers that came out, John McCurley, Lucy & Mark Mannion and David Hansen, all seemed like great folks and very interested in the whole thing, I'm sure that they will all be back, and thanks to Tim and Tom for sharing your knowledge and getting them on the forge. Good job.

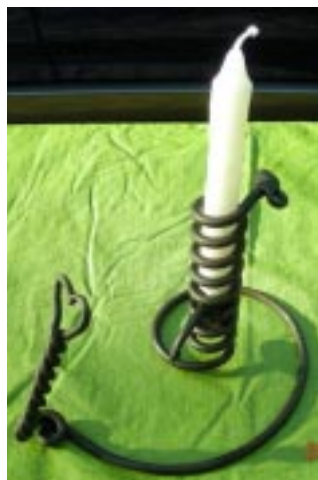
The demonstration was preformed by Jordan Thomas, who made a beautiful and ornate courting candle out of round stock, incorporating many smithing skills such as forge welding, leaf making, twists and both hot and cold forming techniques. A large crowd was gathered around the forge to watch Jordan work, he did an outstanding job,



**Jordan Thomas**

answering questions, demonstrating techniques and keeping it simple and understandable. The demo piece was latter auctioned off and brought in \$50.00 for FABA. I was the lucky winner, and my wife really likes it. Thanks Jordan, well done.

On the last two meetings, B.B. Last name unknown, sorry, donated handmade



**Courting Candle**

knives to the Buck in the Bucket, it has really helped our sales with \$200 for Aug and \$146 for Sept. Of course these were run by Bob Mancuso who also ran the auction.

As usual many members brought in interesting items for show and tell, of particular note was Thurmond Chaffin's miniature brass post vise that he cast and made.



I got rid of some old rusty junk but brought home twice as much, my wife asked "what is that thing" and I explained that it's an old hand powered water pump, first she wanted to know how much I paid for it, "free", then she asked if it worked, I replied "if it worked they wouldn't be giving it away", that's when she walked off shaking her head. Some folks just don't appreciate old rusty metal.

Next months meeting will just be open forges and conference prep as it is only one week prior to the annual shin dig, as always bring your Buck-in-the-Bucket items, a dish to share, items to donate to the settlement, show and tell and tailgate stuff to sell and trade as well as tall tales and funny yarns. Thanks for everybody's help, you folks are great and it is a pleasure to serve you all. See you next month.

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## Report from the Northwest

*John Watson & Billy Christie*

Hello again from the Northwest. The August meeting was held at Marty & Pattie Shimansky's Machine Shop located just SE of Tallahassee and North of Woodville.

Marty is the owner of Shimansky Specialty Machining, Inc. and provided a detailed demonstration of water jet cutting along with other machining operations. As each of us expand our knowledge and ability to make different pieces of iron, at times a machined piece is needed and Marty is a real good source to know and use.

At this month's meeting, Marty showed us that before the water jet cutter can do its job of precision cutting, the object has to go from a concept to a computer program, complete with a detailed position of the metal (as location in bed of machine), the thickness, type of metal, and number of items to be made. It can take this information and determine the best way to cut them with the least waste, and after it cuts one, it can show how long it would take to complete a job and approximate cost.



For the demonstration, Marty cut each of us an anvil key chain with FABBA cut in the center. These were 2" long x 1" wide. Each of us will hold these keepsakes with a fond memory of the skill and technology use to produce this one item.

Marty also demonstrated how his computer operated; multi-headed, automatic self feed lathe could be loaded up with stock-programmed, then close the window and watch it work.

The "Iron In the Hat" this month had a number of hand made items along with items ranging from a glass juicer, wheels, and of course reusable steel. The ticket sales brought in \$123.00 and attendance was 33 sign-ins plus others.

A big thanks to John Watson for bringing his custom smoker and cooking the great burgers, plus the delicious covered dishes that were provided by those in attendance.

Each of us thank Marty and Pattie for opening their business and sharing with us their time, knowledge, and skills. If you ever need machining or water jet cutting, Marty can be reached at (850) 656-3250.

We look forward to seeing you in October at the annual conference in Barberville.

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### Report from the Southwest

*Jerry Wolfe*

The Florida Artists Blacksmiths' Association SW Gathering was held Saturday, August 22nd, at Tandova, Inc., with 32 people in attendance. Our demonstrators included John Perry, a local blacksmith who re-creates and builds armor for jousting and other pas d'armes. John had



previously demonstrated repousse at Steve Bloom's shop.

We also revisited Gregory Ecenia's welded, table-top dinosaurs, and Lash Oberst's custom motorcycles! Lisa Anne and Lash also showed off their 16' tall metal-wire-mesh trees for a production of "Into the Woods". (Tandova, Inc. is a Scenic and Properties Studio which builds sets/scenic elements for the entertainment and conference/convention industries.) The usual potluck lunch and "Buck-in-the-bucket" Raffle rounded out the gathering.



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### Report from the Southeast

*Ed Aaron*

Hello All, the SouthEast Region is still in need of a coordinator. I took a welding course a few weeks ago just before my surgery (*Ed is doing fine and hopefully recovering rapidly - Editor*) and did a couple of projects that I've been wanting to do. Just remember, they need cleaning up and painting and would look lots better, and don't check out how great my welding is. Between my shakes and bad eyesight, I'm lucky to have done them at all.



This is a semi-portable (too heavy to be classed as portable) leg vise and blacksmith helper(or other hardie hole tool holder)



These are blank dies for the helper. Probably should have made the dies before welding all the other stuff on.



This is a copy of plant stand that I forged over 8 years and just got it welded together.

Back to the welding class, I missed a week since the instructor had to take off for a death which they gave a make-up week but I was scheduled for surgery to remove my prostate. That was a success. They got it out. Anyone needing any info just email me. This next info may have been sent in by Ralph.

Pete Brandenburg and I pushed approximately 50 Boy Scouts through the blacksmithing option of their Metal Work Merit Badge in June and July.

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### *Notices, For Sales & Want-Ads*

#### **BLACKSMITH COAL**

\$35 per 100 lb bag (Pickup only) & details - Pioneer Settlement, contact the Settlement at 386-749-2959 or 386-749-2087 or mail your order with payment to PSCA/COAL, P.O. Box 6, Barberville, FL 32105. Accepted forms of payment: cash, money orders, checks, MasterCard and Visa.

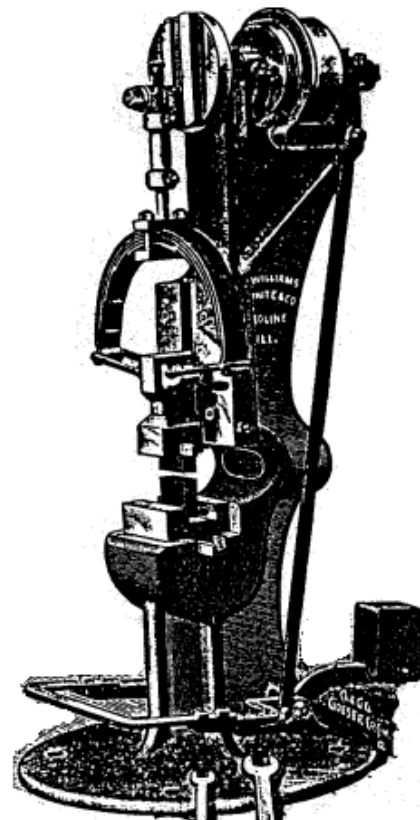
#### **Power Hammer Tooling**

A nice overview of tooling authored by Clay Spenser is now available on our website. Got to [How-to-do-it] Articles, then do a search for 'Tire'. It's 6.8 MB pdf, so be patient during the download.

#### **Blacksmithing Books Available**

*Fred Holder*

I quit blacksmithing in 1988 when my shoulder gave out from the hammering. Finally, in December 2006, I stopped publishing Blacksmith's Gazette. Now, I've finally decided to start getting rid of my many books on blacksmithing. I've set up a page on my More Woodturning web site to list the blacksmithing books. That page can be reached at the following URL: <http://www.morewoodturning.net/BlacksmithingBooks.htm> At this time, there are only a few books listed, but I will be adding to the list over the next week or so as I have time.



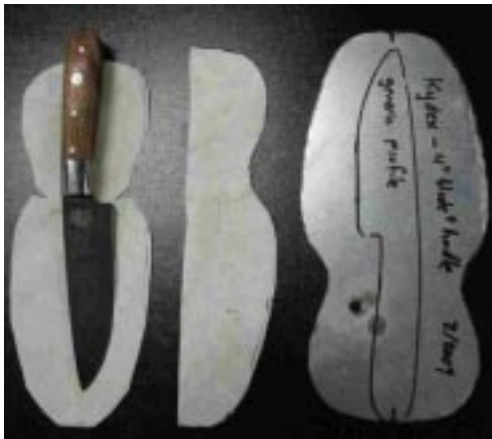


*(continued from page 1)*

The basic tool set is PVC cleaner (the purple stuff), ABS cement (if using black kydex) or CPVC cement if not, a heat gun, a decent set of scizzors, a scribe, some cotton swabs, and some mechanics gloves, i.e., the stuff shown here:



You will need to make a template (a little too big is a lot better than a bit too small), since you can sand off excess but it's real difficult to add some back. For the sheath shown here, the template was layed out as:



Cut the kydex with the scizzors (or saw it, then clean up any edge burrs). Wipe the glue area with the cleaner. Put on those



gloves because things are about to get hot. Fire up the heat gun and start moving the kydex through the heat zone. Try to get it as uniform as you can and don't over heat. I use a weak spring clamp as a handle when I do this. Keep waving the kydex through the heat until it becomes limp (probably about 200-250F) - or you could use a toaster oven. Once the material becomes about as stiff as thin leather, fold the edges together as shown here.



When it cools (30-60 seconds), spread the seam with some light wood wedges and smear glue in the seam. Try not to



smear glue anywhere else! I found that a couple of slabs of plywood and a machinist vise makes a decent clamping system. Once the glue has set (or when you get tired of



waiting), you can heat the handle end of the sheath, slip the knife in place and refine the shape. I found it helpful to reheat



the blade area and then clamp the soft material (blade still in place) between those plywood blocks. This nicely flattens the blade section and makes a clean demarkation between the blade and handle sections.

The final profile can be achieved with a bit of carefull grinding. I used a 60 grit belt but it isn't critical. Once you are happy with the profile, a couple of light rivets ought to be added to insure the seam won't open. I found that a #43 bit and some



left over electrical wire (#12) makes quick and easy rivets. I use a rivet at the top and bottom of the seam.

The next step is to figure out a way that the user can wear the sheath. I've used two approaches, a belt clip and a leather hanger. The belt clip consists of a thin nickel silver band that

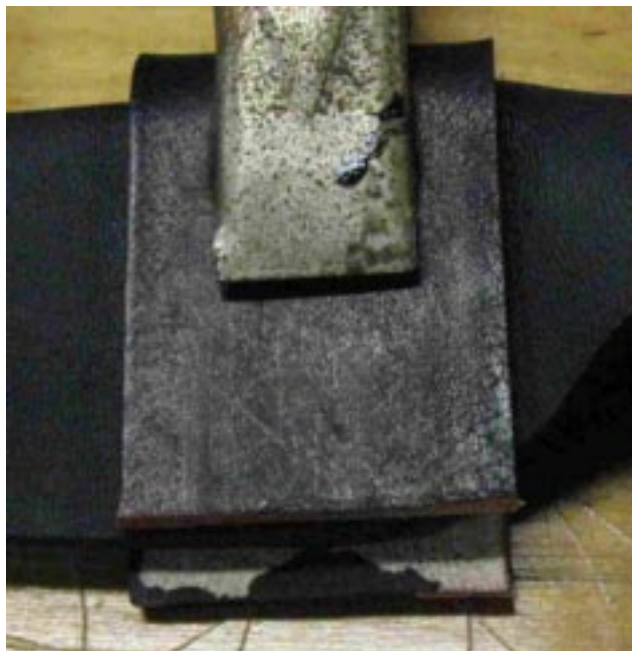


wraps around the sheath at the level of the top rivet (which hasn't been riveted yet). A stainless steel clip is shaped as shown (note the roll under on the free end and the tiny right angle bend at the strap). The clip is riveted to the strap with copper rivets before the upper bend is made. The upper bend is made and the strap is slipped over the sheath and riveted in place. This design allows the user to slip the clip between the waistband of his pants and the belt and the rolled over free end keeps the sheath in place when the knife is drawn.

The leather hanger consists of two straps of 7 oz leather (1.5" wide or so). The length of the longer piece is set by the twice the length of the handle of the knife plus twice the width of the strap (about 11" for the blade shown here). The



length of the cross strap is a bit more critical. If it is too short, the kydex won't be able to slip in. If too long, the kydex will fall on through. What I found to be the sweet spot was to



wrap the cross strap around the sheath as shown - one end flush to the back edge, mark the leather 1/8" to 3/16" out from the edge and cut it to that length. I found it way more convenient to dye all the straps at this stage of the project.

Barge cement (leather contact glue) was then smeared on the back edges of the cross strap and on the back end of the long strap as shown. You will also need a strap of wood as wide as the strap and maybe 1/4" thick. Trust me - you need this crutch. When the glue is ready, place the cross strap midway on the end of the long strap and whap the glued area lightly with a hammer to set it. Now, wrap the cross strap around to position the other end so that it butts against the first, Slip

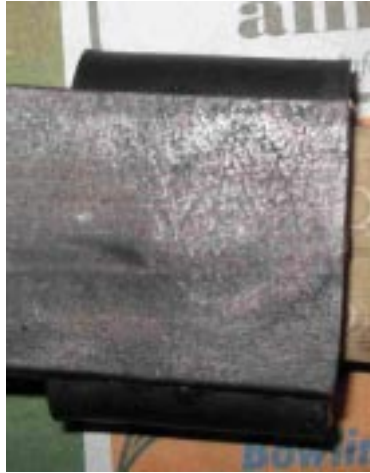




that piece of wood into the loop and whack the overlap area to set the glue. It ought to look like the picture to the right.



Smear glue on that area and the other end of the long strap. When ready, fold the strap over and make the bond as shown. The ends of the cross strap are now hidden and the back of the hanger where it meets the kydex is three layers thick.



I don't trust the glue to be sufficient, so I drill two 1/8" diameter holes through the three layers (and the wood strip not only backs up the system, it keeps you from drilling through the front strap too).

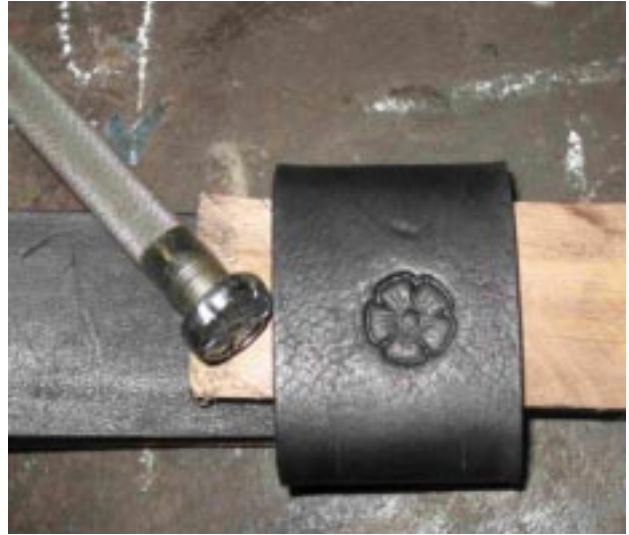


A couple of leather rivets (Tandy medium nickel silver two-piece rivets) are positioned with the back of the rivets inside the loop and the heads of the rivets on the back of the hanger as shown. A couple of light taps with a hammer (again using the wood block as an anvil - I did say it was



necessary!) sets the rivets.

As a final touch, a bit of tooling can be done on the front of the cross strap.



Now comes the moment of truth. Does the kydex sheath slip into the loop? If it is a just a bit too tight, grind a little off the edge of the kydex until it does fit. It ought to be snug enough so that it is possible to remove the sheath but will not move when the blade is drawn. One subtle advantage of this hanger-sheath combination is that the user can reverse how the sheath is inserted in the hanger so the knife can be worn on either hip. The kydex will not encourage rust, so the blade can be stored in the sheath.

The overall effect is shown in the last two figures -- not too shabby, no?





# Cheesecutter

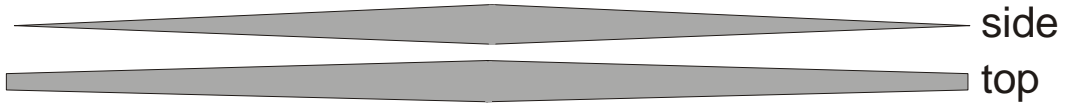
Steve Bloom, IronFlower Forge



(1) 3/8 square stock - 7" (tool steel)



(2) Taper from center to ~ 12" overall



(3) Tight twist (1 1/2 turns) CW close to center, then CCW on other side



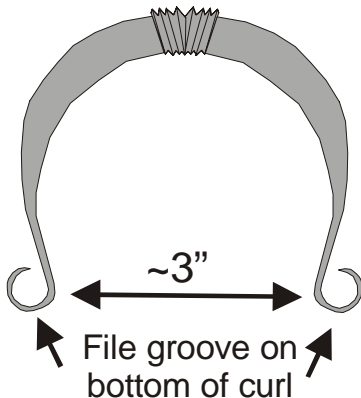
(4) Slit the ends (saw cut ~ 1/2 "). Annealing may be necessary



(5) Roll open finial on both ends.  
Leave a slight (0.1") gap



(6) Shape into matching curves (spread slits to ~ 0.1" apart)



(7) Heat treat to make a spring (oil quench, temper at 650 F)

(8) Squeeze in a vise and run SS fishing leader between curls. Use slots and passing wire under the cutting bar to lock wire in place.



The Florida Artist Blacksmith Association (FABA) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization whose purposes are to teach, promote, and preserve the art of blacksmithing. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law. FABA publishes the Florida Clinker Breaker monthly, and FABA membership includes a subscription. We solicit correspondence and unpaid articles on any subjects related to FABA's purposes. ABANA chapter newsletters may reprint non-copyrighted material if it is credited to the author and this newsletter. You need the publisher's permission to reprint copyrighted material unless otherwise noted.

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### FABA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Florida Artist Blacksmith Association, Inc.  
 Founding member Southern Blacksmith Association.  
 Date \_\_\_\_\_ New      Renewal

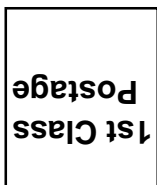
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Send application & a membership fee of \$25.00 to

Juan Holbrook, FABA Treasurer  
 6418 NW 97 Court  
 Gainesville, FL 32653

Make check out to FABA. Your FABA membership begins when we receive your payment and lasts one year. Membership is for a family.

Don't list me in the directory [  ]



**October 2009**

*The Florida Clinker Breaker*  
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