

February 2024

CLINKER



BREAKER

Florida Artist Blacksmith Association

Established May 18, 1985



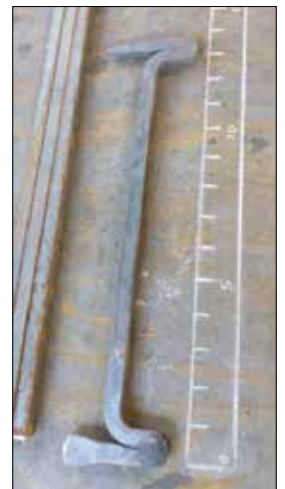
Walt Anderson Scholarship Report:

Playing in the Fabulous World of Wearable Fashion **Page 4**



The Blacksmith Challenge:
Making No-tong
Tongs with the
Punch-Chisel Tool

Page 12



Regional Events & Information



FABA has eight regions, and regular meetings are held in each region on the following Saturdays of each month: 1st Saturday—Central NE / 2nd Saturday—NW / 3rd Saturday—SE, Greater Orlando & Gainesville / 4th Saturday—Far West & SW.

The NNE meetings will be the 2nd or 3rd Saturdays (depending on the month) in 2024.

The regions have no boundaries – everyone is welcome everywhere. Come to more than one if you can!

The dates may vary, so check the schedule noted in the Regional Reports or on Facebook, or contact the Regional Coordinator.

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 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and you'll want to bring a bag lunch if not otherwise noted. If you have any questions about events, please check the region's Facebook page or contact the Regional Coordinators:

Greater Orlando Region	John Hare	802-373-1190	legacy.john.hare@gmail.com
Gainesville Region	Jordan Borstelmann	352-727-8260	crookedpathforge@gmail.com
Central Northeast Region	Heinrich Hole	386-848-6982	heinrich.faba@gmail.com
North Northeast Region	Doug Hayes	910-330-7601	djhayes29@hotmail.com
Northwest Region	John Pfund	850-528-3280	johnwpfund@aol.com
Southeast Region	Peter Hill	651-635-6022	blazeblades561@gmail.com
Southwest Region	Antony Fenn	617-320-4781	antony.fenn@gmail.com
Far West Region	Christopher Sandlin	850-865-9596	Chris@traditionsworkshop.com

Florida Artist Blacksmith Association (FABA) is a nonprofit organization chartered with the state of Florida that is dedicated to promoting and expanding the horizons of architectural, artistic and practical blacksmithing while preserving the rich heritage of this craft.

FABA Officers and members assume no responsibility or liability for injuries or damage caused as a result of the use of any information, materials, design, techniques, etc., contained in this newsletter; our website, www.blacksmithing.org; our Facebook Page at www.facebook.com/FloridaBlacksmiths; any of our regional Facebook pages; or provided at meetings or demonstrations.

Contributions to FABA 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. Send to editor@blacksmithing.org. Materials submitted must be your own work, and citations of others must be clearly identified. By submitting materials, you are allowing FABA to edit, print and post them to FABA's website. 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.

FLORIDA ARTIST BLACKSMITH ASSOCIATION REGISTRATION#: CH38635 EXPIRATION: May 13, 2024
A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE (800-435-7352) WITHIN THE STATE.
REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE.

Table of Contents

2	Regional Coordinators
3	President's Message
4-6	Walt Anderson Scholarship Report
7	North NE Region Report
8	NW Region Report
9	Far West Region Report
9	Ad: Shop For Sale
10	Orlando Region Report
10	Central NE Region Report
10	SE Region Report
11	SW Region Report
11	Gainesville Region Report
12-18	Blacksmith Challenge
19	FABA Officers/Membership

Calling all treasurers!

A Happy New Year to all!

On January 4th, I visited Doug Hayes at Iron Osprey Forge to thank him for 4 years of hard work as FABA treasurer.

Doug saw us through the downturn of membership and event attendance caused by Covid-19 and kept us financially strong in spite of that setback. He has guided us in acquiring professional talent, as we now have both a bookkeeper and a CPA to assist with routine financial maintenance and the annual burden of filing federal taxes. (Yes, even nonprofits have to file taxes.)

He also assisted us in moving to a professional Point of Sale system, necessary for running our growing conference events. I will sorely miss Doug's skill and financial insight.

Thankfully he is not going anywhere and will remain on the board as the regional coordinator for our NNE region.

Until we find a new treasurer, I have assumed those duties. Needless to say, we are earnestly looking for someone to join the board and take on this major responsibility. Please volunteer if being a nonprofit organization treasurer is something you would feel comfortable doing.

As I peruse our various regional Facebook pages, I wish I could attend all the regional events. There is a LOT of good learning opportunities going on. The Hammer-In at Fort King, Ocala, on February 24, 10AM-3PM, looks particularly enticing. If we were not running our own FABA event here in the Far West, I'd be going. If you live in central Florida, I'd encourage you to check the event out.

Once again, I have the privilege of teaching students from Rocky Bayou Christian School for a week. This has become an annual event for me.

Rocky Bayou uses the first week of the spring semester to allow their high school students to find training in the community, getting a taste of the "real world." Each year, 4 students sign up for a five-day blacksmith experience with my workshop. We make nails, hooks, leaves, seahorses, BBQ forks, bottle openers and a knife. Plus, there are a number of side projects and demonstrations.

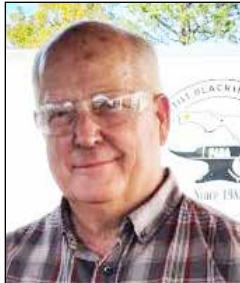
We also cover blacksmiths in the Bible, applied geometry, physics, history, and business practices. It is a lot to cover in 5 days.

I'm proud to say that everyone is very eager to take this "class" (it counts for school credit). Often, they show

up early and stay late. As the week progresses, I challenge them to apply what they have learned to the next project in creative ways. And they can be creative!

Today's project was to make a BBQ fork. Really just an exercise in splitting steel at the end of a bar. We discussed making the handle and I pointed to examples of how making a hook could be turned into making a hand grip and how twist ornamentation can be used to enhance the look of their project.

Mind you I don't tell them how to make the handle, I just show them how to split the bar in order to make a two-tine fork and roll out some example forks that were finished earlier. After they have split the steel, they are on their own to finish their project as they like. One student decided to make a triquetra (trinity knot) as the handle.



David Sandlin
FABA President



Maybe not practical, but it sure was ambitious. Why a Triquetra? I'm told it's for beef, pork and chicken. Now I wonder what they will dream up for tomorrow's exercise, when we punch and drift a bottle opener!

Hope and pray your anvil rings true, be creative.

— David Sandlin, President

Playing in the World of Wearable Fashion

Our Week at Ellen Durkan's Forging Workshop

By Tony Fenn and Erin Harlow

Thanks to FABAs and the Walt Anderson Scholarship, Tony Fenn and Erin Harlow were able to attend Ellen Durkan's Forged Fashion: Body Adornment Workshop. This was hosted by Jordan Borstelmann, for four days, at Crooked Path Forge in Gainesville, Fl. They were joined in the workshop by friend and FABAs member, Jake Rehacek.



Master Smith Ellen Durkan of Iron Maiden Forge is a passionate blacksmith artist and has become a name we all know for her unique wearable art pieces.

Both Tony and Erin wanted to attend the workshop to expand their

skills to enhance their own art pieces, as well as share the knowledge gained with other FABAs members via demonstrations at regional meetings.

In this article, they will try and give you a feel for what it was like to be part of this amazing experience.

Ellen's Forging Techniques: Twisty and Bendy Bits

First, we need to give a big "Thank You" to Jordan for being a fabulous host. When we arrived early on a Sunday morning, Jordan had set up a number of forges, anvils, vices and tools, all were ready so we could take right off.

At the beginning of the week, Ellen introduced us to a whole new set of forging techniques and a whole new vocabulary to describe them. When it came to describing her forging methods, she playfully referred to the various elements with words like "squiggly," "bendy," and "squishy" bits. This immediately set the tone for a fun time. She then demonstrated each forging method and after each demo, we all practiced the technique. As you can see from the



pictures, many of the techniques involved isolating a piece of the stock, flattening it, and then peening out the area into a leaf or spoon-like shape. Ellen provided each of us handouts to take home on how to breakdown each technique and reference them later. It was obvious that Ellen was a seasoned teacher.

Ellen constantly paid attention to each of our attempts and was very 'hands-on', to the point that Tony commented that he had never experienced his teacher and mentor, Trez Cole, taking his hammer out of his hand in mid swing to correct his technique like Ellen did. Her unique style and vocabulary will stay with all of us. Erin especially appreciated the instruction from a female perspective. Ellen was able to help refine her technique and give pointers for someone who is smaller in stature.

Design and Problem Solving: Merging Our Ideas with Forging Techniques

At the end of day 2, we began a design session by Ellen describing her process of sketching her ideas and incorporating the various forging elements. We then looked at a finished piece she brought along, and photographs of her other work.

Our homework for the evening was to sketch an idea for each of our pieces



Walt Anderson Scholarship Report

which would be worn on the chest or around the neck.

In the morning we each presented our sketches and we all worked through how the piece would be made with Ellen guiding us on a chalk board to refine our designs for sizing to fit a body and how to join the elements with traditional methods.



Tony's creation would be a warrior-like piece with spikey shoulders. Jake came up with a horse crab idea with a tail that would extend down his back, and Erin designed an organic botanical-inspired neck piece with lots of squiggly and bendy bits. All were very ambitious if they were to be completed by the end of the workshop.

Fit and Finish: From the Basics to Extraordinary

We then transferred our final designs to full size sketches which we chalked onto sheet metal provided by Jordan. This is so we could keep checking our hot forgings to ensure we were close to our intentions.

Then we all dived into forging. But not before fueling-up with a great lunch at a nearby Mexican restaurant.

As our pieces progressed, Ellen constantly checked our techniques and answered our many questions. We refined the new basic elements we had practiced and added in our own repertoire of drawing out, fulling, punching and twisting to create elegant curves, and forming each of our designs. Jordan kept us supplied with steel stock, any special tools, and plenty of water.



Since Ellen also teaches art and sculpture workshops that focuses on the human form at her local university, she had amazing insight in how our final pieces would form to the body. Designing in 2-D for a 3-D wearable piece was a challenge. You had to consider how you would put in on, where the weight would fall, fit, and aesthetics. It was sometimes hard to imagine how a piece would sit while looking at it lying flat.

The last day was definitely crunch time as we had to



Walt Anderson Scholarship Report

finish all our bits and pieces and then assemble them. Tony had many individual pieces to make, many of which were knife shaped. He managed to pull in some great hammering help from an expert knife maker, Peter Hill, who dropped by the day before the conference.

In the photos, you can see the progression of Erin's piece towards the end. Because her piece was more organic in nature, Ellen and Erin spent a lot of time arranging how the piece might go together and fit best on a person. In the end, Erin chooses to not use all of the pieces she had made and they agreed that simpler was better to highlight the collar and not overwhelm the piece. The last photo shows the piece assembled and the "squiggly bits" moved to fit Erin.



In the afternoon, we all collaborated on final assembly with lots of hot riveting. As these were wearable pieces, we had to make a lot of adjustments to fit our bodies and Ellen helped by tweaking and bending parts with the help of an oxy-acetylene set. Great care was taken to avoid touching hot metal as we kept trying the wearable

fit of our pieces.

By the end of day 4 all of work came together and we had made some extraordinary wearable fashion work which was way beyond our initial expectations. We finished up with a posing and photo session and all of us tried on each other's pieces. We even had the local paper visit us and we made the front page!



Ellen Durkan's forging wearable fashion workshop was a great experience and it's fair to say it took all of us up to another level in both skill and creativity. Ellen's workshop is an absolute must to add to your bucket list and don't forget to apply for a FABA scholarship to help you attend.

If you would like to learn more about the Walt Anderson Scholarship and application dates, keep an eye out in the Clinker Breaker for announcements. To learn more about what Tony and Erin learned at Ellen's class visit a regional meeting with Tony in the Southwest where he is incorporating the techniques at each meeting or join Erin at the Gainesville April meeting where we will be focusing on some of Ellen's techniques.



NNE Region Meeting, Feb 10

NNE Region will meet on Feb 10th @ Iron Osprey Forge at 9 a.m. Topic undetermined.

NNE Region Meeting Report

Had a great January North Northeast meeting. Several new members got forge time making letter openers, tongs and more.



Dan with his letter opener.

Jesse Allan helped Jeffrey A. Haley Sr. complete a set of tongs and most of the second pair. William Thornton drew out a bearing race and helped Alvin John Osmeña make a nail header with Jesse. Alvin also got tips and practice at drawing out and tapering a couple of different ways. Pizza kept us going til mid-afternoon.

Some Iron Osprey students also came by to visit for a short while. Lots of folks got to play and fun was had by all.

Some future meeting topics will include a welding workshop (an introduction to MIG welding with some hands on practice); brazing and soldering, forge welding, coal fire management, small forges – what can I make with this empty can (including projects), and iron jewelry projects.

— **Doug Hayes, NNE Coordinator**



New FAB member Jill twisting a handle.



Jeff (new FAB member) and Jesse with their new tongs.



Jeff, Alvin and William encourage Jesse as he braves the dragon's breath.



William pressing on with drawing out a large bearing race.



Alvin's new nail header (spike size), two hardy bending forks and rebar practice pieces.

NW Region Meeting Report

As I write this report, I've already reported on the December meeting and we haven't had the January meeting yet, so I'm going to report on what else has been going on.

On Saturday, the Northwest Region had two volunteers teaching classes at two great locations both in opposite directions from Tallahassee.

Chris Cauthen taught a class in Blountstown, 60 miles west of Tallahassee at the Panhandle Pioneer Settlement. This was the first class of the new year and we will be back for more on the first and third Saturdays, every month through the end of May.

The Settlement has room for up to 10 students in a class, and sometimes we've had 10 with 3 teachers, and it worked out just right. The fee schedule for the 6-hour class is \$75 for the first class, and the fee is reduced by half to \$37.50 for the second class. Any classes after that are only \$25. Each.

The curriculum is based on the Blacksmith Challenge school of making all of your own tools right from the start. We always start with nails and s-hooks, but we move right to the basic tools as soon as the student is ready. Everyone progresses at their own pace and picks up where they left off when they return for another class.

Often in a large class we have students at all different levels and it seems to work out fine. Students learn from each other, often previewing or reviewing by observing and discussing with others while waiting for their metal to heat. It's like an old time one room school house where the new students are helped along by the older ones, who are in turn having their newly acquired skills reinforced in the process.

In the opposite direction, 100 miles east of Tallahassee, I was teaching a class at Stephen Foster State Park in White Springs. The blacksmith shop at Stephen Foster is a lot smaller than the one in Blountstown, with room for only two or three students in a class. Same curriculum here, only with a shorter class.

At the gift shop, anyone 18 and older can sign a release form and pay \$25 for a 4 hour class. The class is available any Saturday or Sunday when we have a teacher available. So far, I'm the only one teaching at Stephen Foster, but both places are looking for FABAs to be teachers and demonstrators.

Two FABAs in the White Springs area have started the process of becoming teachers and demonstrators there and we have room for more in both locations.

Additionally, we've been having some great "Open Forges" at Roger Bell's house on Tuesday mornings. This is every Tuesday from 8 or 9 in the morning until noon at least and



sometimes well into the afternoon. Often we share a lunch at Rogers, but not always, so don't count on it. If you want to check in with Roger, his number is 850-566-4629.

Last Tuesday we were working on putting horse heads on horseshoes and turning them into useful items. We've done a lot of things at Roger's house, including tongs, knives, tomahawks, swords even making charcoal. Roger's house is a great place to try Blacksmithing, we are always ready to help someone get started.

NW Region Meeting, Feb. 10

Greetings from the Northwest Region. Our February meeting will be held on Feb. 10th at the home of Marcia and Craig Hines. The address is 6340 Maddox Rd., Ochlocknee, Georgia 31773.

Chris Belden is going to give us a forge welding demonstration. Craig might demonstrate something for us, too. Also we'll have a chance to try some of the techniques we've seen after lunch.

Lunch is going to be a chili cook off, with several people cooking chili and the rest of us bringing sides and desserts. Please coordinate by texting Marcia at 229-574-5278.

Please bring donations for the raffle as well. Handmade by you items always receive a free ticket bounty based on the item itself. More items just bring more tickets, and members take pride in the number of tickets their donated items draw.

Speaking of pride in making something, we always appreciate "show and tell items." You can bring in something that you've been working on, just to show it around, without donating it to the raffle. We're always interested in what you've been doing.

Tailgate sales are welcome too, if you have something you want to sell. Craig's shop is a great place to hold a meeting, I hope to see you there!

— John Pfund, NW Region Coordinator

Far West Meeting Schedule

Far West Region is proposing the following schedule:

January 27, Traditions Workshop, 9-3, lunch provided by the workshop, donations appreciated. Discussion of our vision for the regional project – Medieval religion and folklore; be ready to sign up to make your part.

February 24, Traditions Workshop, 9-3, lunch provided by the workshop, donations appreciated. We will work on Journeyman projects.

March 23, John Butler's Farm, 9AM set up, then from 10AM to 3PM our annual FABA fund raising class, "How to Craft a Viking Era Utility Knife." Class cost will be \$120 with a lunch hosted by Sonny's BBQ included. We will have plenty of instructors but limit this to the first 12 people who sign up so everyone will have access to the necessary tools.

April 27, we are in negotiation for a return to St. Michael's Brewery. Most likely the project will be a bottle opener. Public welcome to participate if they sign up to be a FABA member. (Yes, this is a thinly disguised membership drive.)

May 25, return to Timber Creek Distillery, 9AM set up, 9:30AM open forges to 3PM. Bring your parts, or use the time to make your part for the regional competition project. Cam and Aaron also encourage you to bring your projects to sell. They will keep your work on display over the bar, and attempt to sell it over the summer until we meet again at Timber Creek in November.

June 22 and July 27 locations are TBD but most likely will be held at Traditions Workshop, 9AM-2PM.

August 24 will probably be back at John Butler's farm so the most western part of the Far West will have their oppor-

tunity to make final contributions to the regional project.

September 28 will be at Traditions Workshop, 9AM-3PM, lunch provided by the workshop, donations appreciated. We will work on finishing our gift exchange (something with teeth) and regional competition (Medieval religion and folklore) projects. Plus this is the meeting where we start packing the trailer.

October 26 will depend on when the conference is held. We will either be packing or unpacking a trailer at this meeting.

November 16 Timber Creek Distillery, 9AM set up, then at 10 AM the hammer falls and we compete until 2PM. We will then start taking things down while we wait for the judges and people's choice decisions which will be announced at 3PM. Competition project to be announced later this year. Cam and Aaron also encourage you to bring your projects to sell as a "Kris Kringle Mart."

December we will take a bye, unless someone has a better offer.

As a bonus, if you are interested in working through the ABANA National Curriculum Level I, we will host workshops on the Friday afternoons before we meet at Traditions Workshop on the following Saturday (January, February, June, July, September, October). These are not classes! It's more like the blind leading the blind as we try to work through all the parts of the Level I. If you show up on a Friday when we are packing to take FABA Far West on the road, we'd appreciate your help.

— **Christopher Sandlin, Far West Coordinator**

SHOP FOR SALE

FABA member Ray Nager is closing his shop in Lakeland, FL, and looking to clear out the equipment there. The classified ad is at right, but more information is below:

- 2 gas forges
- 2 anvils, including a 274 lb. kohlsua anvil with double horns and an upsetting block
- 2 hydraulic presses
 - one 75,000 pounds of pressure
 - another doesn't have a tower
- 2 drawing/drafting tables
- a lot of bottles and propane tanks, tools, tongs
- 3 steel layout tables - one on wheels
 - one table is 4 feet wide by 12 feet long
 - one table is 5 feet by 7 feet, with 6-inch pipe legs with 1 1/2 inch thick steel top

(2) Hydraulic Units: 7.5 & 10 hp, 3ph w/controls, Lg Gas Forge, 20pr Spring Swages, 3T asst. steel, 17" South Bend Lathe, Asst. tongs & Clamps, Miller Plasma Cutter #2020, Drafting Table, (3) layout tables 2 steel, 1 aluminum, 313# Peddinghaus Anvil dbl horn, New 30HP for 3ph conversion. Call for pricing! Contact Ray Nager, Lakeland, FL, 863-398-4995, metal8481@yahoo.com

Greater Orlando Meetings

January's meeting will be Saturday, Jan. 20, at UnderGround Metal Works, 660 W. Kennedy Blvd., Maitland, FL. We will take the blanks we forged in December and everything we've learned to make punches, chisels, etc., as part of our "Fundamentals in Heat Treating for the Blacksmith" series. Please bring safety glasses.

If you are able, please bring something for the potluck; cookies, chips, sodas, etc., are all welcome!

We have plenty of extra stock to be forged out if you want to jump in, so don't be shy and come on by.

Greater Orlando meets on the 3rd Saturday of each month at UnderGround Metal Works in Maitland, FL.

For more information, contact John Hare at 802-373-1190 or legacy.john.hare@gmail.com.

— **John Hare, Orlando Regional Coordinator**

SE Region Meetings

The SE Region meets every third Saturday of the month at The Farm, 1566 S. Military Trail, West Palm Beach, FL. The Farm is located off Military Trail; just turn at the pole painted red, white and blue, and follow your GPS or Google maps. It should get you there!

Get more info on the FABA SE Facebook page at www.facebook.com/groups/603288803747002.

Central NE Meeting Report

January was a fun month. Thank you William for your demo. It brought a nice new flavor to our region's demonstrations. I'm happy to say that several people got to go home with hard-to-get bearing tracks of unusually large size. I'll be looking forward to hearing about what gets done with those beasts. There were also a lot of great donations to the table that just made for an awesome Iron in the Hat. Thank you to everyone that came out and made it the meeting it was.

Central NE Meeting, Feb. 3

Where: Barberville Pioneer Settlement,
1776 Lightfoot Lane, Barberville, FL 32105

When: February 3rd, 9AM to 4PM

Alrighty guys, I'm gonna just come right out and say it. I don't really have a plan for this meeting. So, how about everyone just head on over anyways and we'll pull a meeting out of our *cough*. That sounds like a good idea right? I was thinking maybe we could have a Settlement appreciation day and do a bit of shop clean up and organize a touch. Maybe some of the guys could make a thing-amajig or two to donate to the Settlement store. BTW, we have a lot of coal bagged up right now, so if you were thinking of restocking then now's a good time. Lunch will be potluck style again. We did well last month with food donations, so I wanted to thank everyone who contributed. It really helps a lot. Hope to see you there :).

— **Heinrich Hole, Central NE Coordinator**

Support our FABA business members

DAMASCUS SPONSORS

David Sandlin - Traditions Workshop - Fort Walton Beach, FL

STEEL SPONSORS

Greg Hagen - Holland Anvils - Holland, MI

John Elliot - Blacksmith Supply - Chester, VA

Michael Oliver - Turn and Burn Metalworks - Lakeland, FL

Doug Hayes - Iron Osprey Forge - St. Augustine, FL

IRON SPONSORS

Scott Brown - Medieval Smith - Land O' Lakes, FL

Jordan Borstelmann - Crooked Path Forge - Gainesville, FL

Rick Smith - Gainesville, FL

Nicole Horenstein - High Springs, FL

Mark Fillmore - Naples, FL

Cameron LaFrance - Micco, FL

Interested in being a FABA sponsor or expanding your sponsor listing? Please contact FABA President David Sandlin at President@blacksmithing.org and include your business name, tag line, and contact information for use in the Clunker Breaker and online.

SW Region Meeting, Jan. 27

On Saturday, January 27th, at 10AM, we will be back to Crowley Museum and Nature Center just east of Sarasota. We will light up the forges in the restored museum blacksmiths shop.

At this meeting we will get back to Journeyman skills where Trez, Doug and I will demo tricky square corners in both square and round bar.

Please bring safety eye wear and dress appropriately.

Please bring something for Iron in the Hat, and a food or drink item to share.

Crowley Museum and Nature Center

www.crowleyfl.org

Address: 16405 Myakka Road, Sarasota, FL 34240

Telephone : (941) 322-1000

DIRECTIONS to Crowley Museum

From the south or west: Take Fruitville Road (exit #210 off I75) and drive 10 miles to the dead end. Turn right on Myakka road. Go 3 miles, Crowley is on your left. If you travel over the bridge to the north entrance of Myakka State Park, you missed us by a mile.

From the north: Take I75 to route #70, exit #217B, travel to Verna Road. Turn right and travel south for approximately 6 miles to the Crowley entrance on your left.

From the east: Take Hwy #70 to Verna Road. Turn left. Travel approximately 6 miles to Crowley entrance on your left.

SW Region Meeting, Feb. 24

The SW FABA February meeting will be at 10 am on Saturday, Feb. 24th, at Heritage Village in Largo FL.

Address: 11909 125th Street, Largo, Florida 33774

The Heritage Village Forge is in need of basic tools, so the meeting will be dedicated to us all making tongs to give to the Forge. They will provide stock and some tong blanks. Please note that what you make should stay at the forge. I mention this as the last time we did something like this, Smiths were so pleased with their creations they couldn't part with them and took them home.

As always please bring something for a Pot luck lunch and if you have a spare tool then please consider bringing it as a gift for the Forge.

We have not yet set a meeting location for the end of March. Please check our FABA SW Facebook page in mid March for a meeting announcement at www.facebook.com/groups/228279738123674, or contact antony.fenn@gmail.com.

Thank you!

— **Tony Fenn, SW Region Coordinator**

Gainesville Region Meetings

January's meeting will be held at the Hoggetowne Medieval Faire in Gainesville FL. It is held from 10 am till 6 pm January 27th and 28th.

The address is at Depot Park 874 SE 4th St., Gainesville, FL 32601. This is downtown Gainesville, so show up early if you want to park nearby.

I will have a forge and some anvils setup for folks to play around with. We will likely have a forging competition around 1 pm. Wear your best medieval outfit if you have one. This can count as our January meeting, but it is also me making my living, selling my work. More info can be found at www.hoggetownemedfaire.com.

February's meeting will a hammer in at Fort King Park in Ocala on Saturday, Feb. 24th, from 10am till they kick us out. The address is 3925 E. Fort King St., Ocala, FL 34470.

Keith Hill built the new blacksmiths shop at Fort King. They made it as historically accurate as possible. Keith told me he forged over 2000 nails for the place.

The folks at Fort King want to start having demonstrations on a regular basis out of the shop, as well as hosting classes. Our goal is to prepare their equipment so classes can be run well, and to build some hardware for the blacksmith shop and grounds. Once again, there will be bonus points for those in period dress.

More info can be found here: www.ocalafl.gov/government/city-departments-i-z/recreation-parks/fort-king-national-historic-landmark

— **Jordan Borstelmann, Gainesville Coordinator**

The Blacksmith Challenge

By John Pfund, NW Region Coordinator

Are you ready for a challenge? This challenge is fairly well-known in the Florida Artist Blacksmith Association (FABA), and it is worth sharing. I'll start with two questions:

- What is the punch/chisel tool?
- And why make your own tongs?

Back story: My professional experience was as a repair shop-type welder, including about a quarter of it done portably. I didn't start blacksmithing until I was 45 or 50 years old.

My formative learning of blacksmithing happened at a historical site in Tallahassee, Florida, called Mission San Luis. First as a volunteer and then as an employee, I portrayed a 17th century blacksmith.

During this period in history, the blacksmith made all of his own tools and all of the tools for the rest of the community of craftsman and farmers. I learned a lot using the tools around me and, most importantly, learning how to make them.

Part of my job was to teach my coworkers and volunteers, and sometimes classes were open to the public. To my surprise, teaching blacksmithing was even more fun than blacksmithing itself. In trying to set up a class or teach someone a skill or technique, I had to explore the process, to figure it out better than ever, and it helped me improve.

I only worked on at the historical site for about 2.5 years, and by the time I quit, I had become associated with FABA (Florida Artist Blacksmith Association) and had become a member. As I started hanging out with other blacksmiths, I was surprised how many people didn't make their own tools, I had assumed that everyone did, yet I found that many — if not most — didn't. Eventually I came to understand that we all have different approaches to our craft, which is a good thing. Everyone should think their way is the best, otherwise why would we choose it?

That being said, please let me share my way with you — The Blacksmith Challenge!

The Blacksmith Challenge is an article I wrote for the FABA Clinker Breaker in 2015, my first year as regional coordinator of the Northwest Region.

I was frustrated that I was having trouble finding other smiths to share my love of making tools, so I put out the challenge: Make your own tools!



A Blacksmith Challenge completed by John Pfund in 2018.

The challenge starts with a forge and anvil, a post vice and four hand tools — a hammer, wire brush, file and a two-sided sharpening stone. The idea is that everything else a blacksmith needs can be made by hand, from this start.



Lots of things are allowed and even encouraged to make this process safer and easier. Safety equipment, of course! But also all the fuel, metal supplies, wood and leather, etc. The challenge can be done as a group or by a single person. It can be done as a one-time experiment or as a preferred way of practicing the craft.

If you read the original article (pictured at right), you'll find it's quite long. I mentioned using longer-than-usual pieces of metal to make the first punch and chisels, to make up for not having tongs to work with yet. I also mentioned no-tong tongs.

My first no-tong tongs was a response to a class I tried when I was still at Mission San Luis. It was a follow-up class for three people who had already taken the basic beginners class. I gave them a choice of about five different things they could try, and they all chose tongs!

THE BLACKSMITH CHALLENGE

By John Pfund

- You start with:
1. a forge of any kind, electric blower is allowed
 2. a anvil
 3. a vice
 4. a hammer
 5. a file
 6. a two sided sharpening stone
 7. a wire brush

Okay, That's all the tools you are allowed to start with. Everything else has to be made using what you have made so far.

Here are some givens though:

1. You are allowed (and Encouraged) to use any and all safety equipment. Ear and eye protection, gloves, Etc.
2. You have an unlimited supply of fuel for your forge.
3. You have all the metal you need in basic shapes, including some hard metal.
4. Help from another person is allowed, still restricted to the tools that have been made so far.
5. Measuring devices are allowed, markers like pencils and soap stones.
6. Wood is allowed, from trees or from salvage is preferred.
7. Leather and prepared cordage(like thread, string and rope) are allowed.
8. Sandpaper and glue, bee's wax, paint, wood oil and wax, are all allowed.

Ok, so what's the point? The point and the challenge is that an unbelievable amount of things, including complex things can be made starting from this humble beginning. First you make your basic blacksmithing tools. Temporary punches and chisels can be made from basic metal stock using longer than normal pieces to hold in your hand. No Tong-Tongs can be made with almost no tools and the jaws can be modified to fit almost any shape. All the other tools can be made from this start, using hard steel when needed. When the basic tools are completed, a tool box is needed to hold them, so that is the next part of the challenge. Woodworking tools are needed to make the box. Which tools exactly depends on the source and condition of the wood to be worked, but some will be needed. Wood must be procured, shaped and put together to make a tool box. The woodworking tools will go in the box also or another box might be needed.

So, Now what? Well the whole tool box set could be given away, (donated) or sold, and the process could start over. Or the Tool box set can be used to take it to the next level. What is the next level? The next level is to use it to make other things. What kind of other things? Here's where it gets interesting and the part about the unbelievable amount of things, even complex things that can be created, comes in. Whatever needs to be made or whatever the blacksmith is interested in comes now. Here is a partial list of things that could be made: An endless variety of tools, for blacksmithing or woodworking, gardening, cooking. Furniture or decorations for the home and yard. Bird houses and feeders, musical instruments, art work of all kinds, a boat, a bow and arrow, a fire bow, a loom or spinning equipment, a treadle hammer, a foot powered lathe. All these things can be made starting with what was started with and going almost anywhere. Whatever the blacksmith needs or is interested in. There does not need to be an end to this challenge. Locks and keys, clocks, farm tools and equipment for harvesting or processing food and materials, hand carts, horse carts and wagons, navigational and surveying equipment, scales and measuring devices, cloth and clothing, leather products, including shoes..... There is no end to this list !

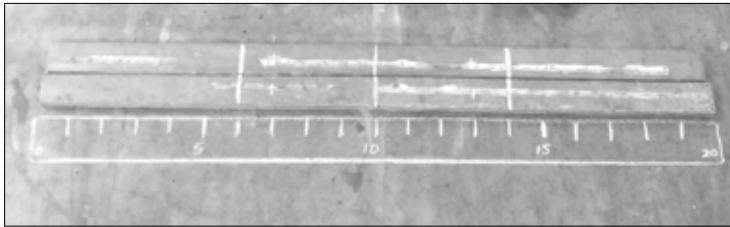
By the way, I am doing this. So far I've only worked on it one day, but I've made 5 tools so far in this order; a round punch, a chisel, a tool to twist tongs, a pair of no tong-tongs, and a hardy. I am having so much fun thinking about what I'm going to make next!

Thanks for all you do, John.

We launched right into it, and they all had quite a bit of trouble, because the tongs we had didn't fit the metal we were using to make the tongs very well. As I watched them struggle with the poorly fitting tongs, I thought, "There's got to be a better way," and I came up with the idea of the no-tong tongs. These are tongs that can be made bare-handed, without using a pair of tongs in the process.

I should mention as a disclaimer that a solid fuel forge works way better than a propane forge for working without tongs because of the way it provides an isolated heat on one end of a piece of metal without heating up the whole thing.

The original no-tong tongs are made from one 20-inch-long piece of flat iron, usually 1/4 inch by 1 inch.



Six inches of material on one end is drawn out to make a 12-inch-long handle or rein of the tongs.



It's then cooled off and turned around to make the second rein at the other end.



At this point the tongs are cut apart in the middle, making two parts with handles long enough to complete the boss and jaws while the handles are held in bare hands. The handles can be cooled in the quench bucket during the process.





At that point, a quarter-turn twist in the jaws makes them look like jaws, instead of scissors.



Shape the jaws to fit the material to be held and the tongs are finished.



Holes are punched and a rivet is installed, making the tongs look like a pair of scissors.

This became my go-to choice for teaching someone to make a first pair of tongs. The flat material makes it fairly easy to make the boss and jaws, but it does take quite a bit of work to draw out the handles. If you start on with material long and thin, then the handles are easy, but there's not enough material there to make the boss and jaws. So you need to start with material thick enough to make the boss and jaws, then draw it out quite a lot to make the handles.



A year ago or so, I was invited to teach some classes at the Panhandle Pioneer Settlement in Blountstown, Florida. Older smiths had been teaching them, and I had worked as a helper with them before, but now they were retiring out.

The Panhandle Pioneer Settlement has equipment and room for about 10 students in a class. The classes I had helped to teach were set up so everyone in the class made the same thing. Some finished quickly and easily, others took a long time and struggled., and there was no next step or continuity.

I was looking for a chance to try something more long-term and ongoing, more like starting a new hobby than having a one-time experience, and something that allowed for the differences in aptitude and experience.

I wanted to give them a reason to want to come back for more. And I wanted to use the Blacksmith Challenge!

Using the Blacksmith Challenge as a teaching program goes like this: We ask you to make nails first — a small object tht takes a short time to make it, just a few to get the hang of it and start learning the basics. Next is a fairly difficult S-hook, again not too big, but a lot more of the basic procedures. When the students are satisfied with their nails and S-hooks, we move right on to making our own tools by starting with the punch/chisel tool.

So now, what is the punch/chisel tool? When I first wrote the Blacksmith Challenge, I said that you can make a punch or chisel from a slightly longer-than-usual piece of metal, so you can hold one end while you heat up and work on the other. But I found a longer punch or chisel is awkward to use. Also, I noticed that mild steel seemed to work just fine

for punching a hole or cutting hot metal. In fact, it even seemed to hold its edge if I followed the proper procedures and treated it right. It is easy to resharpen it with a file. So I shifted to mild steel and never looked back.

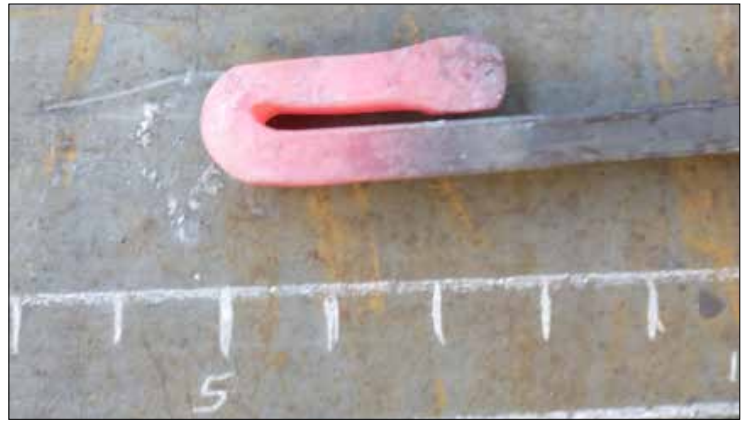
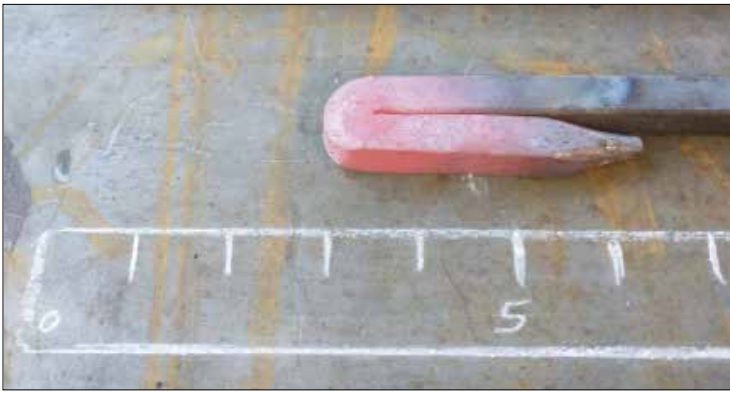
A long tool is difficult to use, and any punch or chisel is dangerous to hold with your hand around the tool. It puts your hand close to the hot metal, right in front of the hammer and blocking your view.

So what could be better? When working at Mission San Luis, I encountered a group of tools referred to as hot sets. They were like a short punch or chisel with a handle attached to it. Maybe I could do something like that? With that, the punch/chisel tool was born.



To make a punch/chisel tool, we start with a piece of 1/2-inch square stock that is 20 to 24 inches long. We shape one end like a round punch and put a couple bends in it to make it look like a hot set.





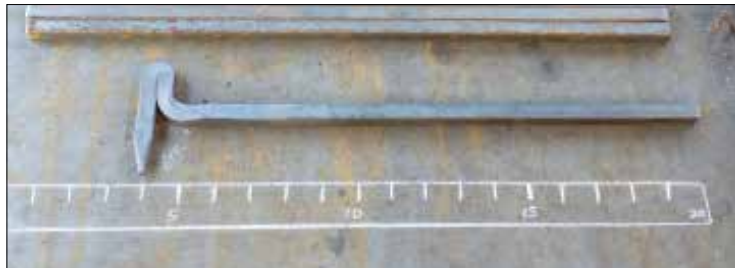
After making the tool, we try it out making a punch/chisel/rivet thing. This is something I made up to test the tool and learn how to use it.

Take a piece of the 1/4 flat bar and punch a couple holes in it, cut one punched end off and stack it on top of the other. Make and install a rivet in it, making sure the rivet holds them together but still lets them turn all the way around. Then you can make your first pair of tongs!

After making the tongs and trying them out, the students at the Panhandle Pioneer Settlement get to pick what they work on next. In order to make it easier for students to come back for more classes, I asked the settlement to give a discount for returning students. They agreed to offer them full price for the first class (\$75), half price for the second one and only \$25 a class after that.

We've been trying it for a year or so now, and it seems to be working well. The settlement says when they were offering one class a month with the old system, they had trouble filling the class up, but now with two classes a month, they were filling up.

Two other members have been helping to teach the classes, and we all find them fun and easy to teach. Classes are open entry, open exit, work at your own pace. We have students at all different levels in the same class, and it all works out. A student gets a preview or a review by watching the others around them. And they enjoy helping each other and comparing notes.



Cool it off in the quench bucket and turn it around to make a chisel hot set on the other end.

This is the punch/chisel tool. It is safer to use than a regular punch or chisel and easy to make and maintain.





THE FLORIDA CLINKER BREAKER

Florida Artist Blacksmith Association

David Sandlin, President
114 Choctaw Cove
Valparaiso, FL 32580



NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
Tallahassee, FL
PERMIT 329

February 2024

FABA Officers

President	David Sandlin	President@blacksmithing.org
Vice President	Lisa Anne Conner	Vicepres@blacksmithing.org
Interim Treasurer	David Sandlin	Treasurer@blacksmithing.org
Secretary	Tia Kitchen	Secretary@blacksmithing.org
Past President	Mark Stone	markham62@comcast.net
Trustee NW	Roger Bell	bellrgr@yahoo.com
Trustee NE	Bill Harris	wrabh01@gmail.com
Trustee SE	Steve Silvers	SEtrustee@blacksmithing.org
Trustee SW	Trez Cole	nokomisforge@hotmail.com
Editor	Jennifer Jhon	Editor@blacksmithing.org
Interim Program Chair	Erin Harlow	FABAprogramcoordinator@gmail.com
WebMaster	Jessica Sandlin	FABAwebmaster@gmail.com

FABA Membership Application: Membership begins when your application and \$30 membership fee is received. Membership is per family and lasts one year. Use your credit card to join or renew your FABA Membership via Square by going to www.blacksmithing.org and clicking the **JOIN FABA** button to access the Square payment system.

OR send the below application and your check to "FABA" for \$30 to FABA's temporary Membership Secretary at:

FABA Membership Secretary,
C/O Sandlin
114 Choctaw Cove
Valparaiso, FL 32580

NAME _____

FAMILY MEMBERS _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ CELL _____ EMAIL _____

DATE _____ NEW _____ RENEWAL _____ I want B&W Newsletter by mail (quarterly) _____ OR Color Newsletter by Email _____