

The Anvil's Horn

A publication of the
Arizona Artist Blacksmith Association

Issue No. 240, May 2026



*The new AABA copper novelty plates are here.
Details on page 13.*

President's Message

The March event with Steven Fisher was a lot of fun with some hands-on forging for our members. Included was some lighthearted forging competitions with a substantial amount of Iron in the Hat tickets awarded to the winner provided by Steven. Well, yours truly received the equivalent of a participation trophy with a couple IITH tickets. Oh, well... better luck next time.

We also debuted our copper "BLKSMTH" license plates at the March Hammer-In and they were a huge hit! We sold over half our inventory in just a few hours. These plates are made of solid heavy gauge copper with embossed candy apple red letters with ARIZONA on top of the plate and GRAND CANYON STATE on the bottom. They're absolutely stunning. Check out the article in this issue [page 13] for details on how to get one before this batch is sold out.

I want to acknowledge a couple of our members that have gone to extra lengths for the organization these past few months. First, in the Phoenix area, I want to recognize our first VP Dylan Cook. He has been extremely busy lining up demonstrators for the upcoming year, prepping and maintaining the training trailer and upgrading the equipment, and, for completely undertaking ALL the responsibilities of this past Hammer-In by bringing the bleachers, sorting and selling the merchandise, and handling the registration. Thanks Dylan!

Then in the southern part of the state, I want to recognize Board member Sam Rivera for coordinating the Open Forges in Tucson at Sculpture Tucson, which have proved popular and are always well attended. Also, Sam has reestablished contact with the Pima County Fairgrounds who invited us back to the blacksmith shop for demonstrations during the Pima County Fair. This may lead to additional time at the forge for our organization.

And, finally, I want to recognize our second VP Mike Johnson. Mike has established our Google Drive for AABA which serves as a repository for all the administrative information vital to running the organization. This has been important to me as we have never had a centralized location for this type of information. Mike is also creating forms to list Hammer-In attendees, financial information, membership rolls, etc. These spreadsheets will have the capability to generate reports for various time periods for the BOD to analyze and track trends. Mike also has some great ideas for our website as well.

Thank you, Gentlemen, for your efforts and dedication to promoting AABA! As always. Bring the energy!



Jaime Escobido

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The Anvil's Horn is printed by Sundance Press, Tucson, AZ. *The Anvil's Horn* is created with Scribus 1.6.3.

Hammer-In Saturday, May 16, 2026

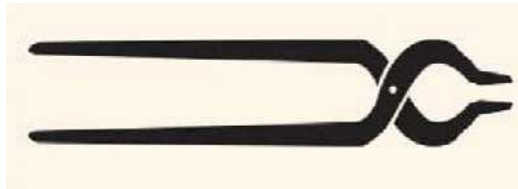
Sculpture Tucson barn, Brandi Fenton Memorial Park, Tucson, AZ

Jose "Pep" Gomez was scheduled to do our May demonstration, but circumstances forced Mr. Gomez to cancel .

So we're going to have a hammer-in for attendees to make tools. Make tools for yourself and for the AABA education trailer. The AABA education trailer needs tools such as bolt tongs, box-jaw tongs, scrolling tongs, guillotines, and bending forks. Make multiple sets and take one set home for yourself!

But you don't have to make tools yourself. If you don't feel you're up to making your own tools yet, this will be a great opportunity to watch and learn as other blacksmiths make tools.

Steel will be provided and there will be several forges and anvils. Bring your favorite hammers and tongs if you have them.



- Registration begins at 8:00 AM, and tool making starts at 8:00 AM.
- Registration fee: \$25 for members, \$40 for non-members,
- Tailgating is encouraged.
- Bring things for Iron-In-the-Hat.

NOTE: No folded tickets. Any folded tickets that are drawn will be thrown away.

- Bring examples of your work for Show-and-Tell.
Don't forget to put your name on anything you bring for Show-and-Tell.
- Lunch is on your own. There are several good restaurants nearby.
- Tailgaters, please consider donating to Iron in the Hat.
- Donations - tools for the trailer or money - accepted.

Remember Iron in the Hat

Thanks to all of you who have participated in Iron in the Hat. By purchasing tickets and donating items, you help support AABA events and projects. Items for donation can be a tool, piece of art, something you made specifically for iron in the hat, something you don't need in your shop, a great book, a t-shirt, a hat ... something an AABA member would enjoy.

Directions

To Sculpture Tucson, Tucson, AZ

- I-10 to the Prince Rd. exit
- East on Prince to Campbell Ave.
- North (left) on Campbell to River Rd.
- East (right) on River. Drive through several curves to the light at River and Alvernon (about 1.8 mi.).
- Turn right and enter Brandi Fenton Memorial Park.
- Turn right almost immediately at the Sculpture Tucson sign.

As always, safety glasses are required in the demonstration area.

Hearing protection, closed-toe shoes, and long clothes of natural fibers are recommended.

Coming Attractions

AABA Tooling Workday

Jaime Escibedo

On the weekend of April 25 and 26, I will be having an AABA Tooling Workday at my shop in Payson from 9:00 to 3:00 both days. We will concentrate on forging out punches and chisels for sale at AABA events. These will include a variety of different punches, i.e., round ball end punches, slot punches, fullers, etc. The stock will be precut and pressed into the preliminary shape. I'll have forges, anvils, vises and belt grinders ready to use. It would help if a couple of 5-gallon propane tanks were brought to use. If I get enough smiths, I'll provide lunch (a taco bar). Please RSVP to me at azoldwestforge@msn.com or 928-978-3111 if you would like to participate in this important endeavor as we progress to take our organization to the next level.

Premium AABA Training Opportunity!

What: 3rd Annual Forging in the Forest training with Mark Aspery

When: Wednesday, October 14 through Sunday, October 18, 2026

Where: Jaime Escobedo's blacksmith shop in Payson, AZ

Details: Mark will show students how to forge a one-piece hacksaw frame, a cane bolt, a miner's candlestick, and other projects. Each project will help you develop specific forging skill sets to make you a better blacksmith! There is room on the property for camping out. There are hotels and several vacation rental properties nearby, as well as a USFS campground only one mile away. Come and enjoy a week of forging with one of the best instructors in the nation. Enjoy evenings cooking out and visiting around the campfire with your fellow smiths.

This year we'll be conducting the attendance of this training a bit different from previous years to accommodate those smiths that just can't make it during the work week. We'll have 10 slots available for the full five days of training, Wednesday through Sunday. In addition, we will make available 4 slots for Saturday and Sunday. The AABA Education trailer will be available on site.



Make your reservations early as spots are limited. NOTE: If you reserve a spot, then you will be responsible for paying the registration fees and attending! I'm trying to avoid having our members pay a non-refundable deposit upfront to reserve a spot. The material costs and instructor fees are paid directly from the collected registration fees. I provide the shop and much of the shop materials free of charge to keep costs down for the attendees and the organization. If you commit, then hold up your end of the bargain!

Cost: \$500 for the full five days – Wednesday through Sunday (ten slots).

\$200 for the two days - Saturday and Sunday (four slots).

If you have any questions at all, please contact Jaime Escobedo at azoldwestforge@msn.com or 928-978-3111.

March Demo Report

Bill Ganoe

Photos by Bill Ganoe unless otherwise noted.

Our March demo was held at Paul Diefenderfer's shop in Cave Creek, AZ on March 21, 2026. Steven Fisher was our demonstrator, and he focused on creativity. He gave a short lecture on creativity and ran two hands-on exercises showing certain aspects of creativity. Those exercises got some of the audience members to exercise their creativity at the anvils in Dief's shop.

For the first exercise, five audience members were supposed to make a ring from a flat bar, 3/4" x 1/4" x 11". The point of the exercise was to show how blacksmiths use their creativity to use the tools and techniques they know to make a specified end product. The ring had to be formed by eye - no mandrel permitted here. Another challenge with this project was the question how do you hold the bar as you start to curve it around. At the beginning, it's easy to hold the bar with box-jaw tongs or blade tongs. That gets progressively more challenging as the bar gets closer to a circle. And then there was the challenge to produce a ring where the ends bar met almost perfectly. See the photos below. John Ledington won 6 Iron In The Hat tickets for making the best ring.

Steven then gave a brief talk on creativity. Today, there seems to be less demand for creative people and more demand for accountants - people who carefully

follow detailed instructions.

One of the problems with today's world is that the busier you are, the less time you have to be creative. Being creative is hard work. You have to spend time and energy to develop your skills and to develop your ideas.

But, beyond things like this, trying to study and understand creativity and help people to be more creative can be quite a challenge. We weren't going to do more than scratch the surface this Saturday.

After lunch and the Iron In The Hat drawing, Steven introduced the second audience exercise of the day for the audience. He held up a common clothes pin, and challenged people to make something that reflected some aspect of the clothes pin. It could have something to do with the head of the pin, the tapered tail of the pin, the spring, the pairing of the two halves of the pin, etc. The restriction was that it couldn't be a tool. That kept several people occupied for the next two to three hours. Unfortunately, as the afternoon wound down, no one wanted to have a picture taken of their creation. I decided to forge an abstract vision of two dancers in a close embrace, but I didn't have time to finish, and I haven't been able to complete my piece before press time.



*Note the difference.
The ends of the bar in the lower ring meet almost perfectly.*



Some of the rings made by attendees. The bottom ring won the IITH tickets.



*Exercise your creativity.
What would you forge that represents some aspect of this clothes pin?*

The AABA Nail Tree

AABA has started a nail tree. That's something that a lot of blacksmith groups have. It's usually a tree trunk or a post (maybe a section of a retired utility pole) that members and guests can drive their hand-forged nails into. The nails can range from the most basic plain nails to novelty designs to fancy ornamental nails. They may include the maker's touch mark or a business card. It's basically a way of showing off the skills and creativity of members and friends.

Nails may seem really simple, but if you've ever tried to forge a nail, you quickly realize how much skill and precise hammer control is required to make a good one. It's been reported that apprentices at Colonial Williamsburg aren't allowed to even try to make nails until they've been building their skills there for several months. Some blacksmiths report that they will make a couple of nails as a challenging way to warm up (literally and figuratively) when they start their day.

So, if you want to show off your skill and precise hammer control, make a nail - as plain or as fancy as you want - and add it to the AABA nail tree. Our nail tree is currently housed in the barn at Sculpture Tucson, but it will be hauled to other sites.



Past Club-Wide Projects

Len Ledet
Photos by Len Ledet

Over the years I have participated in many activities with AABA members. Two very enjoyable projects come to mind. I joined the Club in 1984, shortly after completing a weekend blacksmithing class and two evening classes taught by Bill Callaway. There I met Maurice Hamburger a fellow student. In 1985 the Club announced a work shop to construct an arch for Heritage Square in downtown Phoenix. It was outstanding. Francis Whitaker was invited and served as the “Consultant” for the project. Ron Kenyon, Maurice Hamburger, Peter Sevin, Bill Callaway, Bob Rummage, Ron Smith, and myself were some of the many project participants. Upon completion a ceremony was held to dedicate the installation of the arch at the park. The press and Terry Goddard, the Phoenix Mayor at the time, attended the installation.

I recently visited the Heritage Square. The AABA arch is still there. The park is very nice, worth a visit.

The other club wide project was for the Phoenix Children's Hospital. A park, Braeden's Playground, was created to honor a child who had passed. It's a place where families can come out and enjoy the sunlight and the fresh air instead of being cooped up in a waiting area or an exam room. Somewhere in the mid-1990s AABA members created some ironwork for Braeden's Playground. I think Bill Callaway was the “driver” for this project. Construction proceeded at various member shops. Dan Jennings, Bill Callaway, Ron Kenyon, Peter Sevin, Maurice Hamburger, MaryAnn LaRoche, and myself were some of the many club participants.

I recently visited the Phoenix Children's Hospital and the park. It has been enhanced several times in the past few years, but the work of AABA members is still there.

These are memories of the Club I will never forget as well as the members I have had the pleasure to work with. It would be fun and interesting to come up with some projects like these for AABA members today.



Heritage Square, Phoenix



Phoenix Children's Hospital

Editorial by Mike Mumford

Why you should take classes instead of just watching videos.
[Mike Mumford is a former editor for the California Blacksmith Association.]

Editorial • *Sharpen The Saw*

As some of you know, for a long time I have been a fan of the late Stephen Covey, author of *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. His ideas and principles have been a guiding light to me and have been very useful in my former work life.

One of his habits, one that often comes back to my attention, is *Sharpen The Saw*.

It hit me again the other day, when I had to drill a number of holes in a steel piece that I was making. As soon as I started, I realized that the drill bit was not sharp. So, I stopped, took the bit out of the drill, and touched up the bit on the grinder. Back to work, I was turning out nice spirals of cut steel as the drill worked effectively.

As I recollect Covey's version of the story, someone has this big pile of wood to saw up. It's a huge pile, so he's gotta get right to work. No time to stop – no time to go sharpen the saw. Rather, this person has to work away with his dull saw. The moral of the story: he would be way ahead to stop, sharpen the saw and work much more effectively.

For you: *Sharpen the Saw* means go take classes. Books are good, YouTube is good, but you can't stop the book or video to ask questions of the author. Watching a demo is good – you may be able to get the demonstrator to clarify if you don't catch the idea right at first.

I can listen to someone play the piano expertly, which may be inspiring, but that doesn't help me learn to play it.

Nothing is a substitute for a good, knowledgeable instructor – guided practice – somebody showing you what to do and then correcting you as you attempt it.

And nothing is a substitute for practice, lots of practice. We're talking about developing motor skills. You gotta get this stuff into muscle memory.

Take advantage of the many learning opportunities that are available. There were big educational opportunities at Weaverville, at Spring Conference, at the Vista May Hammer-In. Venues like Adam's Forge, The Crucible and Vista offer regular and guest-instructor classes. You have available smaller events such as the forge welding workshop, as well as your local Forge Workshop instructor.

Get out there and learn, and develop your skills: ***Sharpen YOUR Saw!***

Mike

Update relating to the coronavirus situation

I wrote the above editorial back in mid-2019. Things changed recently, so the paragraph about learning opportunities is on hold for a while.

Many of you have shops at home or in an isolated setting. While we are in stand-down, this is a good time to practice. Take advantage of the down time from regular life pressures to improve your skills.

And stay safe! ♣

Reprinted from the May/June 2020 issue of *California Blacksmith*, the newsletter of the California Blacksmith Association.

Open Forges

Sam Rivera hosted the AABA open forge in Tucson on March 7, 2026, at the barn at Sculpture Tucson. It featured a contest to see who could make the best spoon in a couple of hours. Paul Gaffer, who runs Ornamental Welding Hardware in Tucson, donated several laser cut spoon blanks, and attendees at the open forge could take a blank and make whatever kind of spoon they liked. The winner got a hammer made by Peter Sevin that Sam had picked up several years ago at an Iron In The Hat drawing or at one of the AABA annual auctions. Sarah Sutton's spoon was judged the best and she took the hammer home.



*The spoons submitted for judging.
(One of the blanks is on the left.)*



February 2026

Pittsburgh Area Artist – Blacksmiths Association

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Randy's Shop Tips and Safety Tips!

Along with a tour of Randy's well equipped shop and grounds, he also provided us with lots of his useful information he learned from experience. Learn all you want from You Tubes and Pod Casts but there is nothing like the voice of experience to save you time and frustration! In addition, you usually hear about an amusing situation that explains a useful discovery...nothing like learning from your own mistakes!!!



- ◆ -Carbon steel is harder than stainless steel.
- ◆ -Stainless steel needs constant pressure to cut. When you need to drill stainless keep even pressure on the drill bit.
- ◆ -Welding! If you cannot see the puddle, you cannot weld! You MUST be able to see the puddle and the edges. Add a magnifier that permits you to have a good "look" at your work.
- ◆ -Welding Machine. You are actually paying for the welding duty cycle when you purchase a welder. Buy a Lincoln or a Miller. If you buy an off brand welder, you will not be able to have it repaired easily or at all, the money you "save" will cost you time and probably the welder.
- ◆ Grinder sparks. When you are using a grinder in the shop, finish up one half hour before you close up for the day. Grinder sparks can smolder for hours and cause a fire in your shop over night.
- ◆ One of the many causes of fires in workshops are lithium batter chargers...keep this in mind regarding placement and plug in site in your shop!
- ◆ When you finish welding, get in the habit of turning off the tanks and the welder as one practice.
- ◆ Tools and Equipment source. Regarding finding used equipment and tools, consider attending school and public community auctions. Sometimes you can find items that have had very little use or damage. Often items used in educational situations have few hours and limited wear.
- ◆ Randy's whole shop is three-phase. This advantage can provide an opportunity to purchase a wider range of machinery for sale.
- ◆ If you think your propane tank is empty...think again!!! Check the safety valve because these will not allow you to empty the tank completely. This is a safety factor in one sense but can be explosive if you are cutting or drilling into the tank. Remove the valve from tank to be sure!

AABA Calendar 2026

July 18 & 19	Demo and workshop	Zach Lihatsh	Prescott Blacksmith School	Prescott, AZ
Sept. 19	Demo and tool sale	Sarah Harms	The Morris' home	Camp Verde, AZ

It's time to renew your membership!

AABA membership runs from January 1 to December 31 of each year — unless you join in the last 4 months of any given year in which case your membership will expire on December 31 of the following year
If you haven't renewed for 2026, you will be dropped from the AABA membership roster on July 1, 2026.

Welcome New Members

Robert Fee	Tucson, AZ
Conner Moon	Mesa, AZ
Raymond Torres	Gilbert, AZ

MCC Blacksmithing & Welding Class

The Mesa Community College blacksmithing program is an excellent deal - over 60 hours of instruction including material and propane! Check the Mesa CC website for specific dates and details for classes in the Summer 2026 sessions as they become available. Blacksmithing is listed as **WLD103** in the class schedule. Classes fill up early, but waiting lists may be available. For more information go to: www.mesacc.edu

Available Positions in AABA:

Retail Sales – Richard Rozinski is in charge of Retail Sales, but, after several years of having that responsibility, he thinks its time to pass on the Retail Sales torch to a new person. Richard will provide training and all the info required for this position.

Contact AABA President, Jaime Escobedo, at azoldwestforge@msn.com to volunteer for Retail Sales. Thank you for your consideration on fulfilling this important role in support of AABA.

Deadline for the July 2026 issue

June 1, 2026 is the deadline submitting photos and articles for the July 2026 issue of *The Anvil's Horn*.

Send articles, pictures, etc. by email to:

editor@azblacksmiths.org

or by regular mail to:

Bill Ganoe
PO Box 40233
Tucson, AZ 85717

Blacksmith Workshops In Prescott

Individual and Small Group Classes/Workshops are tailored to individual skills, goals and interests of students. Half Day, Full Day and Multiple Day Workshops available. ABANA LEVEL 1 Certification and LEVEL 2 Instruction also available.

Details at prescottblacksmithschool.com or contact Dylan Cook at **928-830-8168** or dylancookforge@gmail.com

Not Seeing the Demonstrations You Would Like?

Is there a project, tool, ornament you would like to see at an AABA demonstration? Is there a particular demonstrator you would like to see? Send your request(s) to the AABA 1st Vice President, Dylan Cooki, **928-830-8168** or dylancookforge@gmail.com

Not Seeing the Articles You Would Like in *The Anvil's Horn*?

Is there a particular project or technique you would like to see in *The Anvil's Horn*? Is there a general topic you would like to see covered? Send your request(s) to the editor, Bill Ganoe, by email to: editor@azblacksmiths.org or by regular mail to: Bill Ganoe
PO Box 40233
Tucson, AZ 85717

Xerocraft Makerspace in Tucson

Xerocraft is now offering multiple blacksmith classes and open forges at 101 W 6th St #111, Tucson, AZ. A safety class is required for use of the Blacksmith shop. All classes and open forges, along with non-blacksmith classes, can be found at <https://xerocraft.org/calendar>. Be sure to register in advance for any classes to ensure space and supplies."

Note

The Xerocraft blacksmith shop is looking for donations of used equipment. If you have a surplus anvil (Is there such a thing?), extra tongs, punches, chisels, etc.. contact Patrick Cassady at patrick.cassady@gmail.com

AABA Website: www.azblacksmiths.org

Open Forge: Tucson

There will be an AABA open forge from 9 am to noon at Sculpture Tucson on Saturday, May 2, and Saturday, June 6, 2026. If you are on the email list for southern Arizona, you will get a notice with full details about a week ahead of the open forge. If you aren't on that email list, send a request to editor@azblacksmiths.org

Open Forge: Iron Rhino Forge

2051 E. Cedar St. Suite 6, Tempe
Open forges are scheduled every Tuesday evening from 6 PM to 10 PM. Free to watch, \$30.00 to participate. Check <https://www.arizonablacksmith.wtf/open-forge> for details and to reserve a spot. Since space is limited, reservations are needed.

Open Forge: Desert Rat Forge (Phoenix area)

Paul Diefenderfer will host an open forge at Desert Rat Forge on Saturday, May 2, and Saturday, June 6, 2026, from 9 am to noon followed by lunch (You gotta' buy your own.) at the world famous Big Earl's Greasy Eats in Cave Creek. Have fun with a propane or coal forge, fly press, power hammer, widgets and gadgets.

Desert Rat Forge is at: 7645 E. Highland Rd., Cave Creek. **602-509-1543** or dief@phoenixrockgym.com.

Directions: From the center of Cave Creek – 4-way stop at Cave Creek Rd & School House Rd. Head north on School House 1.2 miles to Highland Rd (if you get to the 4-way stop at Fleming Springs you've gone a tad too far) . Turn right (east) on Highland After about 1 mile the pavement ends. Please drive slow to avoid kicking up dust. As the gravel road makes a turn to the left there will be a single lane gravel road on the right with a sign for 7645. Drive down this road for bit until you see the big anvil. You are there! Park in the pull-out if there is room – please do not park on top of any vegetation! If no room, return to main dirt road, park along the north edge, and walk the 700 feet back to property.

If You Are Attending An Open Forge...

These open forges are part of AABA educational activities, but AABA does not provide funds for these events. They are hosted by our members for all of our benefit. So if you participate in forging, welding, use shop materials, or accidentally damaged something, please put something in the donation box to help our hosts with their expenses. Thank you! From all of your open forge hosts.

You will need to wear safety glasses. Hearing protection is recommended.

***** Also, observe the safety requirements of the open forge hosts.*****

Classes and Events at AABA Members' Shops

Desert Metal Craft

544 E. 24th St., Tucson, AZ

The schedule at Desert Metal Craft features a wide range of classes and workshops. A list of classes and workshops coming up this fall and winter has been released. Check the DMC website, <https://www.desertmetalcraft.org>, for details of specific events, and to register for each class or workshop. Be sure to check out the scholarship opportunities.

Iron Rhino Forge

2051 E. Cedar St. Suite 6, Tempe AZ

The Iron Rhino Forge has a wide range of special blacksmithing and knifemaking classes, demos, and workshops with local instructors and master-level guests from around the country and the world! Details and registration are at <https://www.arizonablacksmith.wtf>.

Prescott Blacksmith School

2700 N. Lake Valley Rd. Suite 4E, Prescott Valley AZ

Workshops are now open! Small workshop sizes allow us to work with many skill sets from beginner to advanced and provide instruction based on your interests. National Curriculum Certification available. For more details, visit prescottblacksmithschool.com and follow us on Facebook and Instagram for updates on upcoming workshops.

The Simple Nail

By Harold Hilborn

During the summer I was in Northern Michigan and had a chance to spend the afternoon in at Colonial Fort Michilimackinac, in Mackinaw City. This fort was built around 1715 as a trading post for the French explorers in the area. It was relinquished to the British in 1761 as a result of the loss of the French Indian War. It was mostly burned to the ground in 1783 by the British when they built a new fort on Mackinaw Island.

I have been there several times over my lifetime, but this time I was there to study all the hand forged ironwork used in the reconstruction and unearthed in the archeological digs which began in 1959. Among the hundreds of forged iron artifacts found were thousands of nails, which made me begin to think about the simple nail.

During the archeological digs there was a study done and report published entitled; "Colonial Nails from Michilimackinac." By, David J. Fruip, Russell Malewicki, and Donald P. Heldman. This study allowed the archeologists to determine at what time period buildings were constructed. They were able to do this by analyzing the slag trapped in the wrought iron nails from known buildings of a certain time period. They could then tell what smelting mills they might have come from and determine if the building was built by the French or British tradesman.

This book also explained how nails were made, before and all the way up to the cut nails of the 1830's. During colonial times, in England, France, and French Canada (colonialists here in America where not allowed by law to make finished products) iron ore from certain regional areas would go to a mill to be made into wrought iron billets, from there to a rolling, slitting or rod mill and then to a middle man called a "nail monger". He would then distribute bundles of rods to the "nailers". Nailers at the time were usually made up of families, wife, sons and daughters working in their homes or small shacks built alongside their homes; working six days a week sun up to sun down. Their economic status was extremely poor. An example of the rapidity: in a two week period a blacksmith made 40,800 flooring clasps, each made with a 2 pound hammer struck twenty five times including the welding of the end pieces of rod which amounted to 1,033,656 strikes, heated 42,836 times. They would be paid by the nail monger and who would sell them.



William Hutton, the subsequent historian of Birmingham, England, first approached the busy Centre of the iron manufacture in 1745. He was surprised to observe the great number of blacksmith shops on the road, and could not conceive how a country, so populated, could support so many people of the same trade. In some of these shops he remarked:

"I have observed one or more females, stripped of their upper garments and not overcharged with their lower, wielding the hammer with all the grace of the sex. The beauties of their face were rather eclipsed by the smut of the anvil, or in poetical phrase, the tenure of those lips which might have been taken by a kiss, struck with the novelty." He then inquired if any of these ladies shod horses? But the answer with a smile, 'They are nailers'

I have read and been told many times through the years about the village blacksmith making weapons and the tools of many trades, and all items for survival of humans. Seems to me the nail has been overlooked. It was the building block that has held many buildings, ships, wagons, holding on horse shoes and one of the most valuable trade items in settlements throughout centuries.

When I began blacksmithing as a hobby in the mid 1990's I was told the best way to develop your skill was to learn to make nails. To me this seemed boring and too simple. I wanted to learn how to make fancier type items. What I did not realize at the time is you need to learn the basic forging techniques at

the anvil, like how to point, draw a taper, hot cutting, upsetting, forge welding and many more. I skipped over this which still haunts me today with my skill at the anvil. As In most things in my life I have learned the hard way, not wanting to learn how to crawl before I walked. It has taken me into my 50's to learn this. It is much harder to go back and break the bad habits then to take the time and learn the right way at the beginning.

So go back, give some time and thought to the "Simple Nail".



*This article was reprinted from the November 2012 issue of **The Anvil's Horn**, the newsletter of the Arizona Artist Blacksmith Association.*

AABA COPPER PLATES

We have received our order of our AABA copper novelty plates and they are stunning! These novelty plates are made of solid heavy gauge copper and are deeply embossed with BLKSMTH in the center, and on the top of the plate in smaller letters ARIZONA and GRAND CANYON STATE at the bottom. All lettering is candy apple red and, when combined with the shiny copper background, make for a great keepsake that is pure Arizona Artist Blacksmith Association!

These plates will look great in your shop and also make great gifts for the blacksmith in your life – Mother's Day, Father's Day, Christmas, birthdays, or just because! Grab yours soon! We have already sold half our current stock in just one day at the March event. But don't worry, we will have more on the way.

To get your BLKSMTH copper plate, contact one of your AABA leadership team members: Jaime Escobedo, Dylan Cook or Mike Johnson (the contact information is on the inside cover of the Anvil's Horn) and soon on our official website: <http://www.azblacksmiths.org>.

These plates are only available through, and are an official product of, the Arizona Artist Blacksmith Association.



My Favorite Tongs

By Steve Anderson, a MABA member

My Favorite Tongs are a unique design which allows forging a larger bit with less work to draw out the reins. They are extremely versatile and their light weight makes them feel like an extension of your hand.



Stock Size	Stock Length (2X*)	Rivet Size	Bit Drill Size
3/8" round	11" (22")	3/16"	3/16" or 1/4"
7/16" round	12" (24")	1/4"	3/8"
1/2" round	13" (26")	1/4"	7/16" or 1/2"

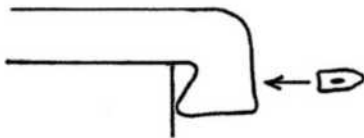
*cut the stock twice as long and forge bits on both ends, then cut in center to avoid having to use tongs.



Bend the stock up 90 degrees. Bending 3/4" of an inch for 3/8" stock and 1 inch for other dimensions.

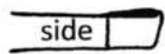


Upset.

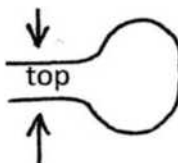


Square up bit ends.

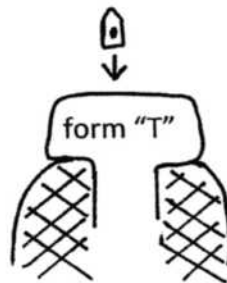
Repeat upset and square steps to drive bit end further down to almost as thick as stock, keeping it square.



Forge upset down to stock thickness at welding heat.

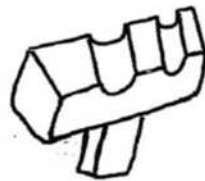


Slightly flatten sides.



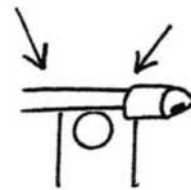
form "T"

Form "T" in post vise, then square ends on anvil.

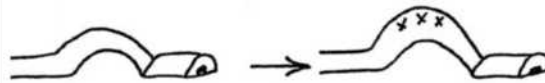


Round the bits in a swage.

Drive a 1/4" rod into the ends to form a groove.



Form an arch by hitting alternately on both sides of the horn NOT on top.



Spread pivot point with ball peen, and then re-flatten.



Draw out reins to length and align as shown above.

Slit and drift rivet holes and drill to size.

Assemble with a temporary bolt and set bits, offsetting them as shown.



Grind bits to match, and then hold in vise just behind the pivot with a thin spacer. Hold bits together with vise grips and drill hole for bit size from chart.

File groove in bits to taper back and soften edges.



Reset bits if necessary, finish with a file, and rivet.



Forge Welding in a Gas Forge - Mark Aspery

A riveting way to deal with forge welding in a gas forge.

I recently taught the basket handled poker at a gas-forge-only school in the L.A. area.

I'm not very practiced in a gas forge, so I tried the class at home in a farriers gas forge.

I found that I could weld faggot welds, that is, stock sister'ed to another piece of stock, but that jump welds (drop tong welds) were quite a bit harder to deal with effectively with repeatable success.

For the basket, I chisel cut the slope to the scarf and thinned the toe slightly. For the $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch square bar that makes the shaft, I upset and created the slope to the scarf only. I eliminated the step for a normal scarf in both pieces, and drilled a $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch hole just behind the scarf area.

The two pieces were then riveted together with a length of $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch round bar. The 'rivet' held the two bars together, but didn't stop sideways movement - just for the record.

I used a washer as a spacer when riveting the bar, giving me spare material to head the second side of the rivet.

The pieces were heated and then fluxed and returned to the fire. There wasn't a whole lot of brushing involved.

Angling the basket down slightly as I approached the anvil helped straighten the two pieces back into alignment.

The weld, now a faggot weld, worked great. We had over 20 students in the class and everyone got their welds, both at the handle and at the poker end.

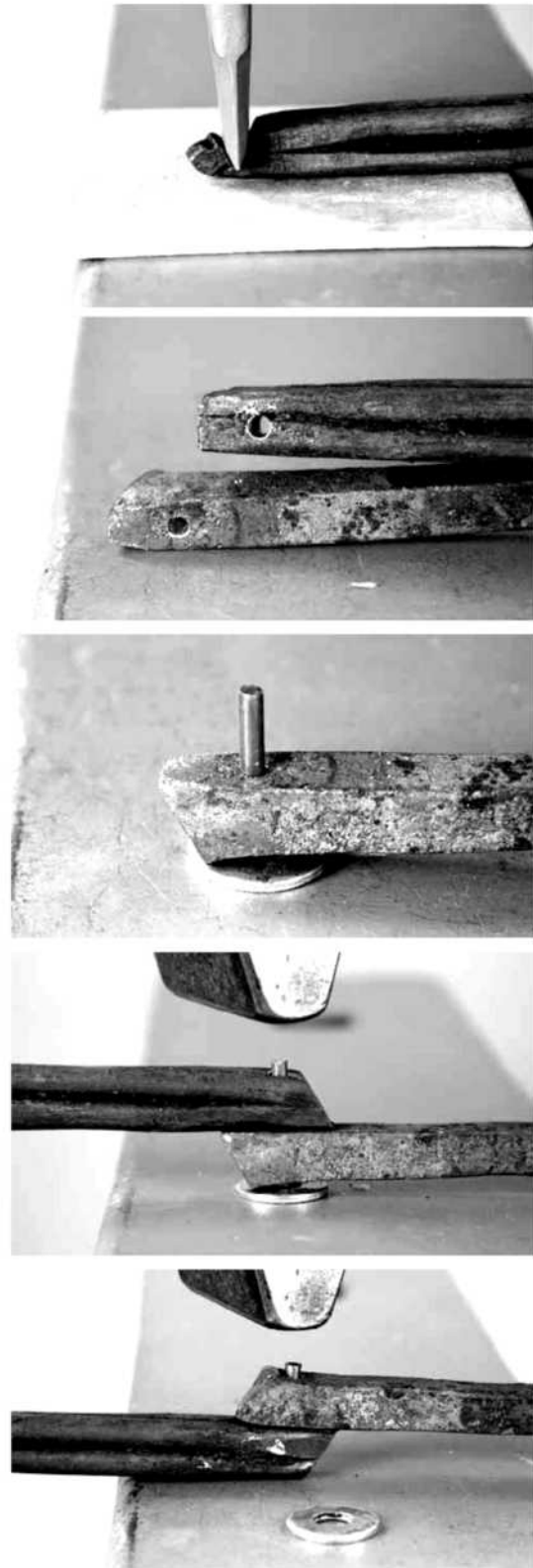
The idea of pinning two pieces together before welding is not new. It was used during the wrought iron era.

In the UK, you can find gates where leaves had been riveted on prior to forge welding - where the leaf has long since rusted away, leaving the hole for the rivet - which was not in a welding plane. - Mark Aspery.

Mark has a brand new Youtube video on this process:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNHSC0m7K0o>

Thanks Mark! - Editor



Saltfork Craftsmen Artist-Blacksmith Association

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This article reprinted from the April 2020 newsletter of the Salt Fork Craftsmen Artist-Blacksmith Association.



Artist-Blacksmith Association of North America

ABANA is widely recognized as the preeminent organization of blacksmithing in the world.
Visit us online at www.abana.org and like us on Facebook and Twitter.
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Early registration ends July 31, 2026.

The Arizona Artist Blacksmith Association is an affiliate of ABANA.

Classifieds

Classified ads are free to members and can be submitted by email to: editor@azblacksmiths.org. Ads will run for 3 issues. You can renew your ad if you need to run it after the third issue.

Please let the editor know when you no longer need to run the ad.

I am including photos, but, if space runs short, photos will be dropped as needed beginning with the oldest..

For Sale

2 hydraulic presses:
Enerpac horizontal 50 ton press with extra 50 ton cylinder, dies. \$2500 obo.

Vertical press, partially constructed-frame, Hydro-line cylinder and tank. \$700 obo.

Ira 520-780-9076 or circleofiron47@gmail.com

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Barry Denton, 928-442-3290 any day before 7:00 pm.

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206 lb. anvil, double horn, with Hofi-style stand. \$1,500.
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2-burner gas forge. \$75.
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MILLER DYNASTY 200 DX Tig/ Stick Welder. Includes TIG torch, stick stinger, variable foot control, cart, regulator, argon bottle, assorted tungsten's, diffusers and collets. Has been very lightly used by hobbyist, shows as new. \$3200.

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Richard Rozinski is offering gas forge building workshops in his shop in Gilbert. Two person minimum. Call Richard for scheduling and prices.
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Contact Geoff (text preferred)
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Titanium Tongs - All sizes and shapes, 50 pairs. Get them while they last. \$100 per pair.
Bernhard Heer, 715-205-8786

Basic blacksmithing and metal forming workshops

Richard Rozinski is offering basic Blacksmithing and metal shaping workshops in his studio in Gilbert Arizona. Class sizes and complexity vary. Class topics range from basic blacksmithing, copper vessel raising, pewter construction and abstract sculpture fabrication.

For details text or call
602-803-7255

For Sale

Argon botte, customer owned and partly filled, approximately 300 CF with flowmeter, \$300.
2" x 72" belt grinder, 4 speeds with five tooling arms on rolling cart, \$850 OBO.
Dozens of misc. punches, chisels, and files, \$1.00 each or 13 for \$10.00.
Misc. hammers \$5.00 each.
Pictures on request.

Jaime Escobedo,
928-978-3111 or
azoldwestforge@msn.com

Sources

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Steel, aluminum, stainless, copper and brass for sale by the pound. Open Monday - Friday 8 - 4:30. Also 1st and 3rd Saturdays 6:30 - 8 am. specifically for metal artists.
690 E. 36th St., Tucson
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AABA Membership

Benefits for members include:

Member discounts at vendors around the state including Vern Lewis Welding Supply and Industrial Metal Supply.

Reduced registration fees at demonstrations and workshops

A one year subscription to the bi-monthly newsletter, *The Anvil's Horn*

Connection to members throughout the state who can answer questions and give advice

Free classified ads in the *Anvil's Horn* and on the AABA web site.

email notices when event details change or new events are scheduled on short notice.

NOTE: AABA membership runs from January 1 to December 31 of each year — unless you join in the last 4 months of any given year in which case your membership will expire on December 31 of the following year.

AABA Membership Form: New Member or Renewal

Name _____
Address _____ Do not publish
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone (home) _____ (mobile) _____ Do not publish
Email _____ Do not publish

Professional blacksmith ___ Hobbyist ___ Farrier ___ Blade smith _____

Your main blacksmithing interest _____

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Please check one:

___ Individual or family membership with printed newsletter (\$50)

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The Anvil's Horn is the official newsletter of the Arizona Artist Blacksmith Association (AABA). Published every other month preceding the bimonthly meetings of the Association, the newsletter is oriented toward anyone interested in blacksmithing and related forms of metal work. Membership is available at the rate of \$35 for individuals, \$40 for families, and includes a subscription to the **The Anvil's Horn** for one year.

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For membership information or address change, contact:

AABA, c/o Steve Miller, 4727 E. Bell Rd., Suite 45-310, Phoenix, AZ 85032, 602-989-6505, stevemiller.az@cox.net

Not seeing good coverage of events at your shop?
Take some pictures, write up some text, and submit everything.

— The editor