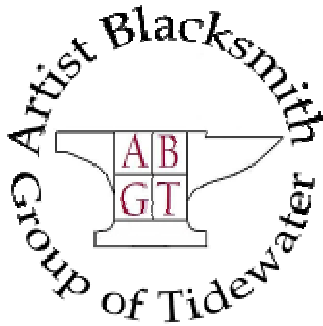


October 2011



# Hampton Roads Hammer

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## **Director's Holler:**

October was a pretty interesting month, for me at least. I returned from my vacation a day late and missed the first day of our demo at Newport News. It was a really nice event unfortunately it rained on and off all day. We still had a good time. Glad my boots were waterproof!

The following Saturday we had our meeting at my place and it was just perfect weather. We got to see a new face Joe Hagerman and an old face in the form of Nathan Walker. Glad you both could join us and hope you had a good enough time to come back, or at least keep in touch. ☺

At this writing October is half over and November is calling. There are two days of note in November the first being Veterans Day. I know these days you hear it every day; Thank a Vet. Well many of them have stories that they don't talk much about and a handshake and a Thank you means a lot to them. So... Thank a VET! That rolls us into Thanksgiving and the traditional kick off of the Holiday Season. The year is going fast, so try to get out in your forges and make something special for those who are special to you for this Christmas.

November's meeting will be hosted by Joe G. Plan on being there and bring some ideas for next years projects. We discussed and clarified where we want to go at the last meeting and I hope that helped focus some ideas. Remember the repousse project is due at the Nov. meeting!

Congratulations to Matt for being singled out by the Cool Material group; check out the website: <http://coolmaterial.com/home/willway-forge-blacksmith-bottle-openers/>

See ya at the Forge!

*Vince*

## ABANA 2012 Conference



Four really big Guys

No I am not making a political statement here. If you haven't heard you probably aren't an ABANA member, the 2012 Conference will be held in Rapid City, South Dakota, July 18<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>.

I have tickets for Iron in the Hat and will be selling them until after our May meeting. The reason to buy tickets; It's IRON IN THE HAT!!!! You can win stuff! What stuff? Blacksmith Stuff!!! Picky, Picky, Picky:

**1<sup>st</sup> Prize:** Tire Hammer by Mark & Mindy Gardner

**2<sup>nd</sup> Prize:** BAM Box with "Signature Tools" by Pat McCarty

**3<sup>rd</sup> Prize:** Nimba Titan 120lb Anvil by Nimba!

You don't even have to be there to win! That's why your buying tickets now from me or to diversify your ticket holdings (My broker always told me to diversify, diversify) to improve you chances of winning!

You can work out the shipping details if you win any of these awesome items, but who cares!!! It's a TIRE HAMMER, the BAM BOX and a 120LB NIMBA ANVIL!!!!

This Iron in the Hat is particularly important as it is the main source of funds for our ABANA scholarship programs. Check the requirements out on the ABANA website.

Soooooooo..... How Many Do You Want?

**October Meeting:** We had a really good meeting. Joe touched on the important issues of the Drawing out CHF lesson. Of particular note was the obvious disregard for keeping our pieces square and then turning them into an octagon, with even sides. Of course most of us have been doing drawing out for years and it's such a basic thing we don't really pay attention to it. Harhar. Developing the habit of keeping your work true and edges sharp as you go will make your next steps easier! Easier is better. It was a great reminder that we have all picked up bad habits and need to work towards correcting them to be even better than we are already!

We discussed the next year's project requirements and there appears to be at least two and maybe as many as 4 that we may tackle as a group Hopefully everyone will bring at least one rough sketch to November's meet so we can make a decision as to which projects we will take on.

We are decided that we will purchase some canvass and wood to make a 10' x 16' tent to use for our demos. It will keep us out of the sun and rain.

Matt Sieber was singled out by this really neat group who run the Cool Material website. Here's a link to it and Matt's Willway Forge Etsy site:

<http://coolmaterial.com/home/willway-forge-blacksmith-bottle-openers/>

Of course now Matt needs a new hat as his old one doesn't fit anymore. ☺ Only kidding.



How many tickets is it worth?



Joe providing mosquito control



Hey it's hot and bent too!!!



Nathan discussing processes with Joe H.

**The Saga of Stuart Smith:** I found this online at "The Forge" that's an open forum via ABANA of Blacksmiths talking about... Blacksmith and related topics, most of the time. Michael Spencer, Nova Scotia, Canada submitted this gem and I am passing it on to you.

Stuart Smith had a long-established blacksmith shop in Chester, NS, a heritage landmark on the main highway from the South Shore to Halifax, where he had worked since mustering out of the armed forces in 1945. It was located just opposite the stem of a T intersection. Behind the shop was a 30' drop to a paved space where some kind of mill had once stood. The stem of the T descended a long, rather gentle grade but the turn was within feet of the shop door.

One night in the early 70s during an ice storm, a fully loaded plough/sander truck came creeping, sanding down the grade and tried to make a left turn and Failed! It drove straight through the blacksmith shop, taking the handle off the crank blower but leaving the blower and forge in place. Out the back wall and 30' down, taking most of the shop contents with it.

Nobody was hurt. But the Province of Nova Scotia was self-insured against such things so for the next fortnight, a crew of highway guys were down in the holler, picking up and sorting individual rivets, nuts, bolts, tools, gaffs, anchors, horseshoes and all the detritus of a century of blacksmithing. They built him a new shop the size of a two-car garage next to his house half a mile away, delivered everything there and demolished the remains of the old building. Too bad, as it was a really nice old shop.

The up-side, of course, is that Stuart wasn't at the anvil when it happened. Had he been, he would have gone out the back wall along with the blower handle and ended up under the truck.

\*\*\*\*\*



Joe G. & Joe H. (Old Joe)

## Andy Pomorski

Picton, Ontario, Canada  
Andy Pomorski Blacksmithing  
[www.andypomorski.com](http://www.andypomorski.com)



My first blacksmithing experience was probably as a kid on a school trip to Lang Pioneer Village, near Peterborough Ontario. What significance, if any that has to where I am now I don't know. My first "real" Blacksmithing experience was my first day in the Artist Blacksmith program at the Haliburton School of the Arts. I remember my arms were like Jell-O for the first week or so.

*1. When did you decide that you wanted to be a Blacksmith?*

I think it was shortly after I had completed my formal arts training and people began to approach me with projects, I thought this could be a good foundation or primary discipline for me as an artist.

*2. What made you decide you wanted to make a living as a Blacksmith?*

Well I think at first I wasn't convinced that this was my medium, I was fresh out of art school and wanted to experiment with different materials and processes however, the more I worked with iron, the more I began to favor it.

*3. There is often much discussion about traditional methods versus modern methods and the merits that go with both. How do you, personally define the difference?*

I personally believe that an understanding and respect of both is vital for an artist to realize their full creative potential.

*4. This is a question with several parts on some of your favorite tools if you have one or several. Which hammer style do you prefer and why do you prefer it? What style and size anvil do you use and what would you prefer if different than what you have?*

I generally prefer a French style cross pein of about 4-½ lbs but occasionally use a smaller Swedish type cross pein for finer work. I find that these hammer types easiest to control and produce an excellent surface quality. The anvil I use most in my shop is apparently American made with a tool steel top. I do not know the manufacturer. It is about 150lbs + or - . It has been a great little anvil however I could use something 2 to 3 times larger.



5. *What is your favorite and least favorite item to make? What is your favorite operation in the shop?*

Lately, my favorite pieces have been collaborative sculptures with other artists, combining different materials such as stone and glass. My favorite operation in the shop is fabrication and seeing the design materialize before me. I'm not too keen on making weapons.

6. *Who has had the most significant impact on your work in the last 5 to 10 years? What about their work made the largest impression?*

Sandra Dunn has made a huge impression on my work. As both an instructor and employer, she has helped sharpen and focus my skills in so many ways. I have great respect for Sandra's uncompromising attention to detail and high standard of quality. This is something that is very important to me and my practice.

7. *What was your most challenging project(s) in the recent past, say 5 years?*

I recently completed a semi-circular staircase that proved to be quite challenging. The stairs were mostly fabricated on site and required some additional hands and special equipment. I would say it has been my largest project to date.



8. *Where do you think the current market situation leaves the Blacksmithing community in your area and at large?*

I believe that even with the current economic turbulence there will always be a demand for the work of the artist blacksmith.

9. *What is your advice or recommendations to Smiths thinking about going full time?*

Well, as a somewhat emerging artist, I am still accepting such advice. However, one thing I can say is to trust your gut.

10. *Has there been a defining moment for you as a Blacksmith?*

As I say, I consider myself quite new to blacksmithing, having only practiced since 2005. Still, I would say some highlights for me would include my artist residency at The Red Barns: An Artisans Playground in Picton, Ontario and a recent acceptance into a juried, Metal Arts Guild of Canada show.



*11. What do you; personally get out of being a Blacksmith?*

Blacksmithing is very rewarding. To see directly how pleased and excited people can be about the things I make; both the purely sensory and functional objects, is truly priceless. Also, I cannot deny, and I'm sure many blacksmiths agree that being able to perpetuate a 5000 year old craft brings with it great honor and pride and a heightened valuing of tradition.

*12. How has Blacksmithing changed since you started?*

Once again, in the grand scheme of blacksmithing history, I do feel like a grain of sand. However, blacksmithing seems to be gaining popularity with leaps and bounds and appears to be much more accessible, especially with the rich blacksmithing resources now available on the internet.

*13. Here in America one problem that Blacksmiths have is the impression that all we do is Farrier work. Is it the same in your country?*

I get that all the time and it drives me nuts. I have great respect for the Farrier but it is something that never interested me.

*14. How did you decide on the name of your forge?*

It is quite unimaginative really. I just wanted to be straight forward. Perhaps I will adopt a more clever name down the road.



## Ginkgo Style Leaves

By ODBSA VP of Education  
Master Blacksmith Dale Morse

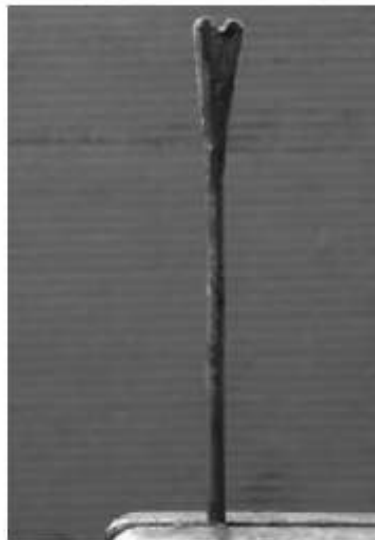
Leaves are a very common form in modern blacksmithing, especially in this country. Most, as in nature, are pointed on the end. A few are not. One of my favorite non-pointy leaves to reproduce in steel is a ginkgo style leaf. There are a couple of ways to approach this form and the one I use the most is illustrated here. Feel free, if you try this form, to experiment and see if you can manipulate and improve the shape.

**Step one:** Choose a material. Here I have used 3/8" round bar. Give it a slight flat taper about an inch long on the end.

**Step two:** Lock it vertically in a vise and using a chisel, notch the taper slightly on the end. See the first photograph.



**Step three:** Draw down your stem. Try to draw it down a good ways to a narrow cross section. The more you do this, the larger the contrast between the size of the leaf and the size of the stem, and hence, the more dramatic the effect. Taper the base of the leaf down to the cross section of the stem. See the second photograph.



**Step four:** Using a blunt peen on a cross peen hammer, start thinning out the leaf. Always move the material under the hammer, not moving the hammer around, to affect the shape. Try to get the peen to radius the spread from the stem out in a fan like form. The amount of spread is quite surprising. See the third photograph were half the leaf is drawn part way down.



**Step five:** Continue to spread the leaf and manipulate the shape to the way you like it. On subsequent beats, be very careful not to scorch the thin edges of the leaf. This leaf is easily easily welded in series to create branches. One leaf usually takes under five minutes once you get the hang of it. Note the texture in the last photograph, which enhances the form. Good luck and have fun!



### Mission Statement

*We are an Artisan group that has joined together to make the most of our diverse skills and outlooks. It is our sincere desire to promote, encourage and show the public and other interested persons the tremendous contributions and skill of the traditional Blacksmith and the relevance of their contributions in the modern world. We provide continuing skills training for our members, along with a place to develop their artistic skills with like-minded persons, regardless of the modern or traditional expression.*

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## **Artist Blacksmith Association of North America**

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

### **Virginia Institute of Blacksmithing**

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

Operated by Dale Morse who is featured in American Blacksmiths on pg. 29.  
200 Twelfth St. Waynesboro, VA 22980, 434-960-9718, [www.vablacksmithing.org](http://www.vablacksmithing.org).

**Happy Haven Forge**  
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[www.jganvil.com](http://www.jganvil.com)

**Willway Forge**  
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**TransAmerican Antiques, Inc.** [Usnbear2@cox.net](mailto:Usnbear2@cox.net) or call **757-343-3422**

Contact Eric Hinckley if you are looking for something Blacksmith related or need to sell you blacksmith items. Eric is our go to guy when we are looking for anything – He and his wife travel quite a bit doing Estate Sales and Antique Shows so they are able to acquire all kinds of stuff and he usually is willing to give you a better deal if you're a Blacksmith. So...if you need it "ASK ERIC First"!

**Remember; as an ABANA member you are eligible for discounts through ABANA at Grainger, Artistian Ideas and others. As well as group discounts for shop and health insurance. Thanks ABANA !! Support those organizations that support us.**

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