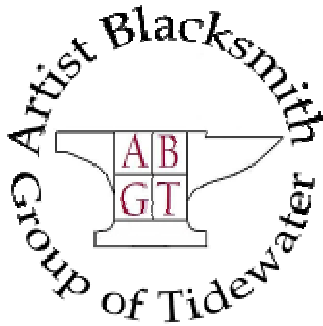


September 2011



Hampton Roads Hammer

In this Issue: * September Meeting * Coconuts * Cowboys *

Director's Holler: September is a busy month for us a demonstration in addition to our regular meeting. September 17th we are at the Waterman's Museum in Yorktown. October will be busy as well on the 1st and 2nd we are at the Newport News Fall Festival of Folklife in Newport News Park. Both of those are sure to be a good time. We have done the Waterman's Museum last year and the Newport News festival is a first for us. Remember to mark it on your calendar!

The repousse project still on going and it appears that everyone is participating in this adventure. That's great! Repousse is something that most of us have not done before and I think everyone is learning a lot about the use of copper and what it takes to make a copper relief.

We enjoyed the company of two new comers from Hampton Jay Mitton and his son William Morgan. Jay set his forging aside for a few years and he wants to restart. We hope he found our group interesting enough to come back, even if Hampton can be a bit of a trip because of the tourist traffic at the HRBT. Thanks for attending!

That's all the real business stuff. Our meeting went particularly well and was hosted by Matt Sieber. Thanks Matt had a great time.

A really big thank you to Matt's wife Terri, Mother-in-Law Tina and Sister-in-Law Elicia for preparing a wonderful meal for lunch. They cooked up some delicious Guamanian dishes for us with Kabobs, vegetables and rice dishes. There wasn't much left and there was a lot there when we started. Thanks again Terri, Tina and Elicia.

October's meeting will be at Happy Haven Forge. Hope to see you there.

See ya at the Forge!

Vince

September's Meeting: It was an interesting meeting with a lot going on actually. I did a quick refresher on making chisels out of a truck spring. Matt's Sister in law; Elicia and Mother in law; Tina showed us how to crack a coconut and how to get the maximum amount of meat out of it. One just never knows what kind of Goy they will find. What's a Goy? You guys don't know nuttin'. Hahaha. Read Matt's article below it will tell all. We had a great meal and a really good show and tell table as well as a great Iron in the Hat – I have added another 12 horseshoes to my collection. I must be the luckiest guy in VAB, my box is chock full of them! I will have to make something with them some day. Hahaha.

Thanks to everyone for bringing a dish and participating in our meeting. It's what makes them worthwhile. Remember to bring your ideas for projects and training for next year. I would like to have our plan for the entire year ready by January.



It is getting hot in here.

Tony appears to be the only one who understands that dark colors absorb heat.

Hey look its hot!!! Cool!!!



The chisel shaped and ready to be cleaned up & tempered.



This is a board mounted Goy see below for more info

So you want to open a Coconut!

By Matt Sieber



How does a coconut end up at a Blacksmiths meeting? Well believe it or not, island Blacksmiths came up with simple tools to aid in opening and harvesting the meat of the Coconuts for cooking, drinking and even making Coconut candy. We were fortunate to have family members visiting from the island of Guam with us, who were more than happy to demonstrate the fine art of Coconut opening and learn us of the tools required.

If you have ever tried to open one of these candy vaults, you well know that it is more work than one anticipated. Unless you are privy to the secret maneuver required to tackle such a feat. And the secret is (drum roll) Whack it with a machete! Coconuts have three little “eyes” on one end and a hard wood like shell. If you hold the Coconut in your left hand, with the eyes of the Coconut to your left (see photo), and with the blunt edge of the machete give the coconut a few cross grain whacks, rolling it slightly between each whack, it will simple open for you revealing its hidden treasure. With enough practice, you could perfect it enough to not make a splash and enable yourself to enjoy nature’s sports drink.



Traditionally in the islands, families will do thousands of Coconuts in a day. It’s a group effort, every one gathers the nuts, and in production line style, husks are removed, one group cuts them open and another with carve the interior. The leftover wooden shell and husk is then burned.

OK, so where do the Blacksmiths come in besides the big Machete? Now we move on to a tool called a “Goy” or “Kamy.” This is a Blacksmith made tool used to harvest the meat of the Coconut in the familiar little stringy bits we all associate with “Coconut.” These are often

mounted to a small bench, wood stump, or simply on a plank of wood to sit on. The user straddles the tool and holds the split Coconut with both hands. A receptacle is placed under the tool to collect the cuttings from Coconut as they fall. The split Coconut is rolled over the end of the tool until all of the meat is removed.



To make the Goy, I used a piece of flat stock, 1.5" wide, 1/4" thick and 10" long. I formed a decorative scroll to the end, however not necessary. The cutting end is simply flattened out, rounded and dished slightly. Filed and a cutting tool were used to create the teeth. Ideally the teeth should be long and thin, about 1/8" x 3/8". Heat treatment/tempering are not necessary as the Coconut meat is soft and removes easily.



This was a fun tool to make and even more rewarding was the end result which is fresh Coconut milk and rind. Keep this in mind next time you are thinking of cooking shrimp or clams, nothing beats fresh Coconut.



So you want to be a Cowboy



Tiny Cowboy Hats are a lot of fun, simple and quick to make. Just a couple basic tools and away you go. They start life as sheet steel. I cut the roughly 1.5" circle blanks with a bench mounted (Beverly) shear. I get sheet steel from left over metals via 55 gal. Drums or whatever mild steel sheet available. I then trace a 5/8" nut from a standard 4" grinder to lay out the circle pattern on the sheet steel. Be sure to make several because these hats are quick to make and you will soon be looking for more blanks. It's a good idea to clean up all the edges of your blanks at this time, as it would be difficult once the hat is formed. A couple other items you will need for this process will be a punch with a 1/2" ball end. A short piece of 1" black pipe with the interior edges rounded over so not to bite into the sheet metal. I have mounted my piece of black pipe inside of a solid gear I happen to have lying around. This makes it easy to use right on the anvil as opposed to vice mounted. It also serves as a good surface to flatten the brim as you work. A punch or simply a straight piece of round stock about 3/8" in diameter to form the crease in the top of the hat. A brass brush may not be required, but it does provide some nice color and perhaps even a little magic to the finished piece.



Now that we have all the necessary items together, let's get started. It doesn't take a lot of heat to get the tiny blanks up to temperature in the fire. Perhaps the most difficult step in this process is getting the crown of the hat well centered on the first hit. There are several simple ways to ensure you end up centered, I have marked the gear with a paint pen as you can see in the picture. If you are just using the pipe mounted in the vice, the pipe will draw the heat from the blank, leaving a nice distinctive circle showing you centered placement (or not). Sinking the crown; you will be tempted to beat the life out of you blank to get it to sink as far as possible as quickly as possible

(do not do this). Stick to 3 or 4 good whacks then get it back into the heat. The thin sheet and small size cools quickly and you risk tearing it. As long as you have good heat and stick with 3 or 4 whacks you will get a nice tall crown. You will need to sink your crown 1/2" to 5/8" to get a good looking hat. The brim will become wavy like a potato chip while you are sinking the crown, hammer the brim flat prior to reheating every time. Once you are happy with the height of the crown, place the heated hat on the anvil and sink the crease in the top with your 3/8" round stock. A nice little tap with a light hammer will do. Then use the 1/2" ball punch to sink the "pinches" on the sides. Almost done; Get a little more heat and roll the brim sides inward slightly, gentle taps with a light hammer will do just fine. Finally, shape to your liking and for that last touch of magic; scrub it down with the brass brush for some color.

**Hat making 101,
Matt Sieber**



Matt we made you work this month – hosting the meeting and writing the bulk of this newsletter. Thanks! Due to time being short for me I will have my article next month on chisels. I know you are all heartbroken, have quick blow in your hankie and it will all be better. ☺

Till next month.
Vince

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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