

# [Guide for manufacturing charcoal](#)

Bob Patrick sent this in a while back, along with saying it was noteworthy and should be shared. So here is the share!

While the scale of this article is pretty large, the theory is sound and scales down if needed. Just think... almost no clinkers.. WOW! Well, unless you tend to burn up metal in the forge not that I know anyone that does that!

["http://www.instructables.com/id/Large-Scale-Charcoal-Production/?ALLSTEPS"](http://www.instructables.com/id/Large-Scale-Charcoal-Production/?ALLSTEPS)

- Tim Huddleston - BOA Webmaster

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## [April 2015 River Valley Chapter BOA Meeting](#)

Because the April meeting fell on Easter weekend, the River Valley chapter cancelled, so that the members could spend the time with friends and family.

Ross Wilkinson—RVBOA Secretary

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## [April 2015 Northwest Chapter BOA Meeting](#)

The Northwest Area BOA April meeting took place at Tired Iron, in Gentry. Ron Wells played chauffeur to Tom Bates, Harold Enlow, and yours truly. Ron brought along his repurposed Ford truck bed trailer loaded with the accoutrements necessary for a BOA demonstration. Tired Iron was rather soggy, having endured a steady rain for most of the morning.

BOA members in attendance at this April 18th meeting included Dale Custer, Ross Wilkinson, Harold Enlow, Ed Osoris, Clyde Foster, Bryan Parson, Wayne Bollman, Ron Wells, Jessy Parsons, Steve Low,

Hardy Todd, Cheryl Miskell, Tom Bates and Robin Grattidge. Guests included Neal Bollin, Daniel Wilkinson, A. R. Wilkinson, and Michelle Woodward.

Dale Custer called the meeting to order at midday.

Dale asked members to be sure to get packets of business cards to hand out. He also reminded members that Bob Patrick will be offering two classes at Eureka Springs School of the Arts. Bob is featured on the cover of the ESSA course catalog.

Next month's meeting is at Cheryl Miskell's home in Marble Falls. The trade item is a corkscrew. During this meeting, Mark Morrow (past president of BOA) will demonstrate how to make a cutlass. The June meeting will be at Rusty Wheels in Bellefonte. The trade item is a trivet.

Dale welcomed new member Robin Grattidge, and our guests (listed herein above).



Bob Lock is ready to hold the drawing for his anvil after the meeting. Ross Wilkinson has a bag of stainless steel rings to hand out.

Ron Wells discussed the sales table, noting that Tom Bates provided most of the items for this meeting. Ron encouraged all members to contribute items for the sales table. Ron also has a new, updated membership list, for anyone who wants a hard copy.

Cheryl Miskell, NWBOA Secretary

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## [April 2015 Northeast Chapter BOA Meeting](#)

We had 10 in attendance including two guests (Harold "Peanut" and Melanie Beck)

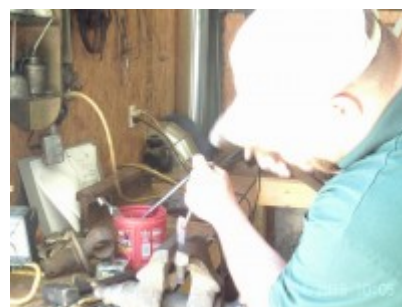
Members present were Jimmie Barnes, Dusty Elliot, Lloyd Clayton, John Johnson, Eddie Mullins, Matt Quinn, Rebecca and Jim Soehlman.

Thank you Melanie Beck for the AWESOME home made cinnamon rolls.

We grilled burgers for lunch and continued to enjoy the huge pan of cinnamon rolls.

Our forging today was kind of individual interest. Lloyd made a dragons head bottle opener, Eddie did some demonstrations to help Matt with his forging. Matt was pleased with his own improvements from the first time he tried his hand at the forge. John worked on a wall hook, I believe, as Dusty looked on. Dusty was making a steak turner.

The new portable forge was fired up and seems to be working fine. A hood would be an improvement however.



There were two trade items (forge welded rings) traded today.....ONLY TWO?? Well that's a statement of the fact that forge welding does give a lot of us some trouble.

See sidebar for May meeting information. The June NEA BOA will be in Crowley's Ridge State Park , Saturday June 6th, from 8:am to 3 pm, with Jim Soehlman's shop as alternate location. The trade item will be a tomahawk (this should prove to be interesting)

I am not encouraged by the email communications that I have received from the staff at the state park. They want us to rent a site and if we were to sell any items at that demonstration, they would receive 20% of the sale. I am not as versed as some of you in setting up a demonstration, so I welcome any input. We do have the cost of coal, metal, transportation, etc. and I feel that a blacksmith demonstration is out of the ordinary.

Jim Soehlman—NEACBOA Secretary

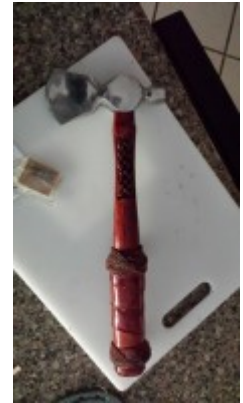
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## **April 2015 Central Chapter BOA Meeting**

The April, 2015 meeting of the Central Arkansas Chapter of the Blacksmith Organization of Arkansas (CACBOA) met at the forge of Dale Custer in West Little Rock. We had nine members in attendance, plus our hard-working intern and two guests.

In the morning, Dale trapped a couple members into helping him assemble his latest purchase, a

metal-cutting band saw. Very nice!. Robert Thompson worked off some pre-wedding jitters making a leaf key ring for a relative. Best wishes on your upcoming marriage, brother! Our intern, Julio Castillo, got lots of constructive advice as he finished up a no-weld bending fork for his beautiful little farrier's anvil. Most of us, if we were going to purchase a new anvil, would have gone for a London pattern, or such, but Julio has a straight-up farrier's anvil. However, Julio graduates from UCA this summer and has been accepted into Louisiana State University veterinary school. He may well be using that anvil professionally before we know it.



At noon Dale handed out more business cards and we exchanged trade items—a top set tool. Dale also passed around a book on the life of Francis Whitaker by George Dixon that is definitely going on my “want” list. Unfortunately, Dale says that the planned all-BOA conference for this summer is no longer going to happen.

I had to leave after lunch (Dawn's chili—yum), but I'm sure those who stayed had a great time free-forging that afternoon.

Robert Fox, CACBOA Secretary

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## [March 2015 River Valley Chapter BOA Meeting](#)

The March meeting was again held at Jerry's in Van Buren on a warm sunny day. The attendance was high with 18 people in total, including several visitors. Special guest, Dale Custer, was present and led a forge welding demonstration.

Jackie again cooked a wonderful lunch for the crew. Lunch was finished off with home made Reese's peanut butter cookies and brownies. We were all full and eager to get back to blacksmithing. We had two forges going to accommodate all the projects being made.

There will not be a River Valley meeting in April to allow members to enjoy the Easter Holiday weekend. Meetings will resume in May at Ross Wilkinson's (see sidebar for contact information) and the trade item will be a candleholder. The June meeting will again be held at Jerry and Jackie's place in Van Buren. The June trade item(s) will be a set of hooks, including, Drive, J, and S hooks.

Ross Wilkinson—RVBOA Secretary

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## March 2015 Northwest Chapter BOA Meeting

Our thanks to the Japczyk family for hosting the meeting. Brenda and Sabrina brought us some great food for our lunch. Mike and Stosh gave away some nice pieces of metal to those who needed or wanted some. I teased Mike about the car leaf springs and said I wanted a piece of Studebaker spring. He told me that I would have to settle for Oldsmobile. We had a laugh about that.

The shop is well stocked with all kinds of tools which we used and enjoyed. The forge is inside, so we could work even while it rained some.

This type of meeting is what BOA is all about. Several new members and visitors wanted to make objets d'art, and some of the long time members helped. I recall a spear head, some knives from railroad spikes and one pair of tongs. Buck Dahlstrom (Heidi's son) made the tongs from rebar and did a fine job. He's a pretty old feller at 13.

Steve Low brought two grandsons this time. He usually brings Nathan, but brought Max as well. Dale brought his girlfriend, Dawn. Everyone should be as friendly and sociable as she.

The April meeting will be at the tractor show at Gentry. Rather than the second Saturday, it will be on the 18th. It is a three day event, which includes Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The meeting part is on Saturday, of course, but you are welcome on the other days as well. We'll have a table for items to be sold to make a dollar or two for the club, so think about making something for that.

The trade piece for April is Smith's choice. The May meeting will be at Cheryl's place, which is on Highway 7 south of Harrison. It's at Mill Creek, which I think is considered a Marble Falls address (yes, it is!). Since this is a first, she will have to write instructions on how to get there from points East, West, North and South; or maybe even draw a map (will do!). The trade piece has not been announced yet (I'm leaning toward a corkscrew!).

The annual meeting at Sedalia, MO is April 30 to May 3. I think it's a BAM conference get together, and is North of Springfield. Some of our members do attend that.

## March 2015 Northeast Chapter BOA Meeting

We had our March meeting on the 7th at Lloyd Clayton's shop. There were 9 in attendance: Lloyd Clayton and his wife, Tera, Dusty Elliot, Jimmie Barnes, Jacob Kirby (Lloyd's apprentice) Eddie Mullins, John Johnson, Adrian Hancock and Jim Soehlman.

We had good participation in the spoon trade item and enjoyed a wonderful Mexican styled meal that Tera prepared for us.

The main focus of the meeting seemed to be admiring Lloyd's nice little power hammer that I think Eddie is in love with. Eddie was drawing out a piece of metal that he said would have taken him two to three days. Also there was a lot of focus on forge welding and Lloyd gave us a demo of that by bending a bar into a circle and welding it together. I had been having no luck at all in forge welding until I saw the demo and then it was so easy.

It seems to be helping the skills of the group to have the trade items and use the knowledge gained at the meetings to make these items.

The trade item for the next meeting will be a ring that is forge welded....no other description, so it could be almost anything joined together, i.e. heart, ring, square, a trivet...the possibilities are endless.

The portable forge is coming along and should be ready soon for the upcoming public demos....

Jim Soehlman met with a staff member at Crowley's Ridge State Park and presented a proposal to demonstrate in the park this spring. It was received with much excitement. They want to tie this in to the early pioneer days on the Ridge. Since this chapter has not been involved in public demos before, it would be nice if some of the other chapters could join us in this. I will keep the group informed as to when this may happen. At this point we are looking at late April or sometime in May. Right now the interpreter for the park is working on allowing us to sell some of the items we make for fund raiser for our chapter. Note for other chapters....she introduced this idea to other park interpreters across the state and they are all on board to see how this works out so they can possibly schedule demos in their parks.

Jim Soehlman—NEACBOA Secretary

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## March 2015 Central Chapter BOA Meeting

The March, 2015 Central Arkansas BOA meeting was held at the forge of Herman Ginger in Pine Bluff. Herman's shop is always well worth the drive.

Per firmly established tradition, we brought our projects to Herman's place where we always find the right tool for any job, and plenty of help as long as we call our project a "demonstration."

Dale brought his master touchmark imprint, and tried several methods of making a rig to transfer the imprint to secondary, daily-use touchmark tools. I'm not sure we found the correct process for doing this, but we did discover several methods that didn't work at all, which is always an education in itself.

The trade item was "something made from a file or rasp." We had several excellent entries, including a snake forged from a file during the meeting by Gayle Wilkinson, Ross' better half. I won it in the trade, and now have a railroad spike snake forged by Ross, and a file snake forged by Gayle. Coincidence? I think not.

Just before lunch, Tim Huddleston embarrassed himself when he told Gayle that the file she was hammering on had gone too cold to work. Only, his exact words were "Gayle, you're not very hot." Never say that to any woman, Tim, especially when her blacksmith husband is in earshot. No coal for Tim this Christmas...

Robert Thompson, who I believe will be a married man when next we meet, brought a pair of fireplace tongs he has made for his father-in-law-to-be. Very impressive, and not just for their sheer size. The tongs had a spiral cage pistol-grip handle, squeeze-trigger action, and sturdy jaws, with multiple riveted joints and a wooden brace. Somebody is trying to make a good impression! See back cover for a picture.

We had eleven members present in all, with plenty of pizza and cookies to go around at lunch. We had a very short business meeting, just long enough to plan out our next few meetings and discuss a possible all-BOA conference some time this summer. We had plenty of suggestions, and lots of interest. I hope we hear more details soon! Summer will be here before we know it.

Robert Fox, CACBOA Secretary

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## **February 2015 River Valley Chapter BOA Meeting**

The February meeting was held at Gary Braswell's place in Lavaca. Gary fits in well with the crowd in the River Valley chapter as many are avid knife makers. Gary produces a wide variety of knives in his shop. He makes a really interesting flip and fold semi fixed blade knife. One of Gary's first projects was on display, a folding knife that was 10 times regular size.

There were a couple of visitors to the meeting and they had a chance to get to the forge. Project of choice: you guessed it knives. Jerry was present along with his grandson Blake.

One of the more interesting tools in Gary's shop was a portable hand held Rockwell Hardness tester. Gary demonstrated the tester on a piece of steel for the group.

The next chapter meeting will again be held at Jerry Holmes in Van Buren on March 7th . The project will be a stand to hold the fire poker and shovel trade items of the last couple of months. The April meeting will be canceled due to Easter weekend. Meetings will resume in May at Ross Wilkinson's on May 2th. The trade item will be a candle holder.

Ross Wilkinson—RVBOA Secretary

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## **February 2015 Northwest Chapter BOA Meeting**

The Northwest Area BOA February meeting was hosted by Richard and Carol Ross. Ron Wells' trusty GPS took us straight to the Ross home, where Richard's nicely equipped shop was already packed with eager smiths. We smiths must be living right, because we were again graced with warm and sunny weather. Carol served a delicious and filling lunch of chili, beef soup and cornbread, with apple and razzleberry pie for dessert. YUM!

BOA members in attendance at this February 14th meeting included Dale Custer, Rob Meuser, Bob Patrick, Harold Enlow, Elmer Polston, Johnny Davis, Tammy Davis, Gary Lee, Hardy Todd, Mike Williamson, Cheryl Miskell, Clyde Foster, David Egan, Sam Hibbs, Tom Bates, Tyler Usrey, Robert Fox, Richard Ross, and Sonny Sartwell. Eddie Mullins and Dan Davis were visiting from the Northeast chapter.



Dale Custer called the meeting to order after lunch, beginning with a discussion of the iron smelt at ESSA. We had good weather during the smelt, and ESSA provided a great location and awesome support. (Peggy Kjelgaard, Executive Director, deserves a big thank you for her support!). Dale reported that although the smelt was great, the iron ore we used did not yield an appreciable or workable amount of iron. Hardy Todd can get more charcoal, and we will source better iron ore, tapping into the knowledge and expertise of our new resident metallurgist, Ross Wilkinson. Dale expects we can do another smelt in late spring or early summer. Better iron ore will smelt faster, and Dale will roast it in advance.

Robert Fox updated us on our first intern, Julio Castillo. We did have two interns, but Julio is our sole intern at present. Julio has made iron roses, and is writing a grant proposal to get a blacksmith station at the Faulkner County Museum.

T-shirt order forms will be submitted to a company in Harrison. Dale encouraged everyone to submit their t-shirt orders. Lee Burks is doing the shirts.

BOA will have a statewide conference with all chapters, possibly in July.

Ron Wells reports we have about \$12,000 in the treasury. All smelt receipts need to be given to Ron.

Dale noted that BOA has a February meeting tradition of conveying the Jack Smith Award to a member chosen for their outstanding service to our organization. Past recipients include Harold Enlow, Ron Wells, and Dale Custer. This year's recipient is Robert Fox. Congratulations to Robert! (And, a hearty thank you to Robert for ceding to the manipulative efforts of Some-Who-Should-Not-Be-Named to get him to attend the meeting!)

Dale welcomed and introduced the visitors to this meeting: Tyler Usrey, Gary Lee, Eddie Mullins (Northeast Steward), Dan Davis (new "old" member), and Elmer Polston. This meeting was Elmer's first.

Cheryl Miskell

NWAC BOA Secretary

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## **February 2015 Northeast Chapter BOA Meeting**

We had 13 members and guests come to the February meeting. The guests were: Herb Higgenbottom and Lloyd Clayton (guests of Danny Robb), Matt Quinn and Matt Roemer (guests of Jim Soehlman). Lloyd Clayton joined and Raymond Lylery had previously joined and also attended

the meeting.

Members present were Eddie Mullins, Dusty Elliot, Mark Brown, Jimmie Barnes, John Johnson, Danny Robb, Rebecca Slayton-Soehlman and Jim Soehlman. We had some members complete their trade items in the first part of the meeting and a total of seven wall hooks with leaf were traded.

In our January meeting we decided to start building a portable forge and material for that was brought to the meeting and more parts will come next meeting.

I've noticed that the guests always seem to be "coached" to learn how to crank the handle on the blower pretty quick. I think that's a part of an official welcoming to the club.....LOL. Raymond Lylerly I think you paid your dues on the blower last meeting.

Matt Quinn stuck around after the meeting and took advantage of the forge to learn a few basics. I think he's been bit by the bug now, so I expect to see him return and join in the future. The group enjoyed a large pot of venison stew for lunch.

After lunch Lloyd Clayton, who is a farrier by trade, enjoys blacksmithing other things as well. He competes in national farrier competition where you have to make your tongs, then make a horse shoe and then put it on a horse....all within one hour. So we asked if he minded showing some of his work. As you can see from some of the pictures he backed up a completely equipped truck to the shop and gave us a really nice show. We are excited to have him in our group. Each new member brings more ideas and knowledge to the table and our table is blessed with members that have a wealth of knowledge already.

We have an invitation to appear on a local television station for a short news story that should happen soon. We have also made contact with one of the staff at Crowley's Ridge State Park to do some demonstrations this spring.

Well I look forward to the next meeting, its good to get to together and have a good time doing what we enjoy.

Jim Soehlman—NEACBOA Secretary

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## **February 2015 Central Chapter BOA Meeting**

The February, 2015 Central Arkansas BOA meeting was held at the forge of Tim Huddleston in Benton. Or Bryant. Tim is apparently claimed by both cities.

At the forge, we had several members join forces to coach our intern, Julio Castillo, through the

arcane mysteries of forge welding. Tim's new forge hood really sucks—in the best possible way. My only issue was that, as large as it is, so many of us were using it on various projects that we had a difficult time getting close enough, and as bitterly cold as it was, even those who weren't forging wanted to gather around the fire.

At lunch we went up to the house for a great pot-luck. In our business meeting, we discussed the smelt results, the next few meetings, and the BOA trailer artwork. Dale passed on Ron's Treasurer's report and passed out fliers for the Eureka Springs School of Arts, featuring our very own Bob Patrick on the cover. We're all looking forward to a conference-wide BOA meeting sometime soon. The details aren't quite set yet, but Dale told us he would like to have a meeting in a central location where we can focus on BOA without having to be distracted by the public.

Outside, it was bitterly cold and damp, but surrounded by our fellow smiths, the day was wonderfully warm and cheery.

Robert Fox, CACBOA Secretary

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## January 2015 River Valley Chapter BOA Meeting

The Inaugural River Valley chapter meeting was hosted by Jerry Holmes and was well attended. Jerry always takes time to showcase his knife collection and help others in blacksmithing knives. There were two forges going and many knives were made. The trade item was a fire poker. The River Valley is going to do a series of trade items that will end up as a set, so we should have a nice tool set for tending fires by summer time.

Jerry has been practicing at forge welding and demonstrated it for us. He talked about building the proper fire and the flux he uses. He forge welded a handle to a set of tongs. A large number of the members are experienced at knife making and were impressed by this demonstration. 15 members were in attendance. There are a lot of kids in this chapter and at one time the kids outnumbered the adults. When you get a chance to, stop by a River Valley meeting and help train the next generation of blacksmiths.

Jerry's better half Jackie provided a great lunch for us. We had choices from chili, which was needed for working out in the cold, hot dogs, deli sandwiches and more. After lunch the meeting formed around the dinner table.

It was finally announced that the meeting was going. Jerry is going to be the steward and Ross Wilkinson will be the secretary. Gary Braswell volunteered to host the February meeting and the trade item will be a fire shovel. The new chapter was brought up to speed on the ore smelt project.

The meeting was adjourned to go have more fun on the forges and make some more knives.

Ross Wilkenson—RVBOA Secretary

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## January 2015 Northwest Chapter BOA Meeting

Thanks to Ed and Susan Osiris for hosting the meeting and providing a very nice lunch. There were over 30 attending which may have been our biggest meeting to date.

I enjoyed all the door knockers that were on the trade item table. Some of the knockers were very creative.

The iron smelt at Eureka Springs, is still a go. It will last for 4 days beginning January 21st. The whole project sounds very complicated. That, of course, will be over by the time this newsletter comes out. Hopefully, everything will work out just fine.

We have a new chapter at Fort Smith, which will be called the River Valley Chapter. It's amazing how the organization is growing.

The February meeting on the 14th will be at Richard Ross' forge in Rea Valley, which is near Flippin. You have your choice of a dragonfly or a hummingbird for a trade piece.

Our meeting for March will also be on the 14th and will be at the forge of Stosh Japczyk which is in Eureka Springs. I'm not sure about the trade item. Bob Lock said it will be a cannonball, but he was smiling when he said that.

Ron Wells collected dues from quite a few members at the meeting. I'm sure that I saw him signing up some new members, as well.

Guests were: Joe Martin, Gary Lee, Joseph Young, Will Lockard and Ron Shierry. One guest, Sandy Mabry, had a few blacksmith items for sale. The day was kind of chilly but we were all dressed for the weather. There may have been a few cold toes.

Until next time!

Harold Enlow

BOA Secretary

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## January 2015 Northeast Chapter BOA Meeting

The January meeting was held at my shop and we had an awesome turn out. We had three guests that signed up as members (John Johnson, Barry Barkley and Luke Barkley). John also says he has a son that wants to join next meeting. In addition to the new members we had some members that we hadn't seen in awhile come to the meeting.

It was really good to see Tim Ryan, Danny Robb, Sr., Adrian Hancock, and Jimmie Barnes. Ron Wells visited and brought us coal and will be getting signs and cards for us in the near future. Thanks Ron, we really appreciate what you do for us. We had a total of eleven members in attendance which also included Eddie Mullins, Rebecca Slayton-Soehlman, and Jim Soehlman. Dusty Elliot, we missed you, sorry for the communication break down.

There was not only talk but plans put into place for the chapter to build a portable forge so we can get out in the community and demonstrate what BOA is all about. Since the meeting, I have had metal wheels and plate steel donated toward the project. I know that we have more materials coming, i.e. brake drums, pipe and angle iron.

Our next meeting will be held at Jim Soehlman's shop, which by the way needs a good name (I haven't thought of one yet), on February 7th, (we have adopted the first Saturday of the month), 8:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.

We are making progress, WE HAVE A TRADE ITEM, Yeah!! The trade item will be a wall hook with a leaf. Our next step is to set advanced meeting places. Which leads into.....

We have made contact with another fellow in the area that is a farrier that we are told has a very nice shop and contact has made and an invite to our meeting was made and I'm told accepted with enthusiasm. He said he wants to join and host.

Lots of enthusiastic talk between Eddie Mullins and Danny Robb about constructing a power hammer and maybe a hydraulic press. More to come on that.

A big thanks to Rebecca for getting the pizza and drinks for us. "J & B Eggplant" is a play on words, which means Jim and Becca have chickens, LOL. They have recently discovered how to lay eggs and we're getting close to a dozen a day and running out of refrigerator space.....so, 8 dozen eggs had to go to a few of the smiths at the meeting.

We were blessed with good friends, new friends, good coal and fellowship around the fire.

Jim Soehlman—NEACBOA Secretary

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## January 2015 Central Chapter BOA Meeting

The January meeting of the Blacksmith Organization of Arkansas (BOA) was held in “Sheridan” at the home of Larry and Scooter Layne. I put Sheridan in quotes, because they actually live deep in the back of beyond. As they say, it’s not the end of the world, but you can see it from there.

That said, Larry’s shop is definitely worth the trip. It’s a living museum packed full of early-American iron and woodworking tools, and Larry knows the history of each and every one of them. Put it this way, Larry has a beautiful brick forge, a large, pristine anvil, and two fantastic swage blocks, yet all of us blacksmiths spent most of the morning wandering around the shop asking about this or that tool. I was particularly interested in Larry’s traditional metal engraving tools. That’s something I would love to try on a knife or axe.

Our two interns, Nic Hunter and Julio Castillo, joined us. Dale took them to the fire and walked each through making a small bottle opener than involved tapering, scrolling, twisting, spreading, and bending a small piece of metal. This was an excellent way to teach the young men several smithing techniques. Thanks, Dale!

I had brought a beautiful flint striker that I had made from an old file that, for some reason, did not work at all. I had never been able to draw a single spark from it. Larry not only showed me what I did wrong, he went on to show us how to make char cloth and how to use it with the flint and striker to start a fire. It’s easy to see why Larry was asked to be the demonstrating smith at the Grant County Museum.

Together, the making of the flint steel, the making of char cloth, and the striking techniques made such an interesting demonstration that I plan to write it up for an upcoming newsletter, so all of you can benefit from my failed striker.

While recovering from an amazing lunch spread of smoked meats and salad, we had a short business meeting to discuss the (then) upcoming smelt, and arranged for the next few meeting hosts.

Robert Fox, CACBOA Secretary

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# December 2014 Northwest Chapter BOA Meeting

The Northwest Area BOA December meeting was hosted by Clyde and Connie Foster. Clyde provided some rather clever signage to guide members to his home, and had two forges ready for a great day of smithing. The day was beautiful, warm and sunny. This meeting was well attended, with a number of guests and potential new members watching the working blacksmiths. Connie and Clyde served up a delicious lunch of chili, hot dogs, and chips, with fragrant, from-scratch peach dumplings and Christmas sugar cookies for dessert. The Fosters' beautifully decorated living/dining room was filled to the brim with hungry blacksmiths!

BOA members in attendance at this December 8 meeting included Dale Custer, Joe Doster, Harold Enlow, Clyde Foster, Sam Hibbs, Jerry Holmes, Drew Janes, Betty Jones, Bob Lock, Nathan Low, Steve Low, Heidi McLaughlin, Robert Meuser, Cheryl Miskell, Ed Osoris, Jimmy Owen, John Petersen, Luke Roberts, Richard Ross, Judi Sartwell, Sonny Sartwell, Hardy Todd, Ron Wells, and Ross Wilkinson. Guests included Brennan and Jacey High, a young couple who may join BOA; Craig Foster, Clyde and Connie's son; Blake Holmes, Jerry Holmes grandson; Ira Collins, Clyde's friend; and Albert Wilkinson, Walter Wilkinson and Daniel Wilkinson, Ross' sons. This total of thirty-two attendees certainly supports our group's primary functions: educating our members and exposing the public to the art of blacksmithing.

Dale Custer called the meeting to order after lunch, first thanking Clyde and Connie for hosting this meeting.

Old Business: Dale discussed the upcoming smelt at length. The Saturday after Christmas, participating members will "roast" the ore. Roasting the ore removes water, drives off volatiles like sulfur, and allows for smashing up the ore.

January 21-24 is when the smelt will occur, at the Eureka Springs School of the Arts (ESSA). Peggy Kjelgaard, Executive Director, is our contact there. Ms. Kjelgaard has agreed to allow people to "camp" on campus, and will provide sinks and toilets. Participating BOA members can have a bonfire (and can imbibe beer around said bonfire). Eight BOA members plan to be there for all four days, and five will be there for Saturday only. "Consolidating the bloom" on Saturday will require LARGE sledge hammers, and COORDINATED sledge hammer work.

Per Dale, we're in good shape with the charcoal required for the smelt. Hardy and Clyde have provided the amount necessary. Participants in the smelt will have to make sure the charcoal is the correct size, to insure the iron stays solid, and the slag can be removed.

The smelt requires specific steps over the four days allotted: 1) build the platform, 2) prepare the clay, 3) fire the "bloomary furnace," and 4) fire the inside of the furnace, cutting the tap arch and poking a hole for the "tuyere" (French for "iron pipe"). Our tuyere will be copper. It is twelve inches long and 3/8 inch thick, with an inside diameter of 3/4 inch and an outside diameter of 1 and 3/4 inches.

Keith Heffelfinger has made two of the "pokers" necessary for the smelt. Hardy Todd is providing the fulcrum for the pokers. Herman Ginger is providing a blower. Steve Low is providing a charcoal

bucket. Sam Hibbs has some wood and Ron Wells has agreed to get it to Eureka Springs. Sonny Sartwell suggests that participating members bring extra hand-held hatchets to split up the wood.

Joe Doster suggested that we archive this event. Jerry Holmes suggested using Fred McClure, a friend of his.

Dale asked when members had received their hard copy of the newsletter. Clyde, Hardy, and Ross received their hard copies yesterday, December 12.

Dale passed out the new business cards. Everyone received a bundle to pass out. Membership application information is on the back of each card.

BOA has the new sandwich signs. Steve Low picked up the signs. Each of the three chapters of BOA will have two signs. Herman Ginger will do the frames for the Central Chapter. We will have to find someone else to do the others.

Regarding the BOA trailer: Sonny and Judi Sartwell got new tires for the trailer, and kept the best old tire for a spare. The spare is inside the trailer. Sonny suggested adding a couple of more metal screws on the fender, to make sure it stays put. Tim Huddleston will come up with a design for the signage on the sides of the trailer. Per Sam Hibbs, this signage will be a vinyl "sticker," produced with a process similar to a CDC. The process makes "BIG vinyl stickers," 3' X 3' on the sides and 2' X 2' on the back. The signage can be white on black, or black on white.

Thanks to Jerry, there are at least fifteen new members since the last meeting. Ron contends at least sixteen. Dale welcomed the new members present, Heidi McLaughlin and Betty Jones.

New Business: A group around Ft. Smith wants to form a new chapter, called the "River Valley Chapter." The BOA Board will have to vote on this issue.

UCA wants BOA to sponsor a blacksmith "intern." The intern will have to participate in blacksmithing activities for six to nine hours a week, write two articles, and make a "capstone project" (something forged) and submit a draft grant proposal for a forge at the Faulkner County Museum in Conway. Robert Fox will be the intern's mentor.

Ron Wells needs members to call or email him if they want coal. This is the only way you can insure that you will get coal at a meeting, because "first come, first serve" doesn't help those who arrive after the last bag is sold.

Ron expressed deep gratitude for the money that was sent to him for his son, Jacob. Ron wrote a check for the Friends of the Library in Newton County to fund a "Dolly Parton Imagination Library" for the youngest readers in Newton County. This non-profit initiative sends one book per month to all children ages 1-5, so each child will receive sixty books through this amazing program. Ron shared that this is a program that Jacob funded generously. The program is close to Bertie's heart, and they are honored to get to help the children of Newton County.

Speaking of children, Ron observed that BOA has a few new members that were not mentioned earlier. Justin and Ashlee Jones welcomed new member Elizabeth Jones, born on November 14, 2014. David and Traci Snyder welcomed new member Daniel Lee Snyder, born on December 11, 2014. Stosh and Sabrina Japczynk welcomed new member Townes, born five months ago. Sam and



Laura Stephens' son Leif was born six months ago. Congratulations, all, on the births of these new members! (I wonder if they make baby sledges...)

The January 3rd meeting of the River Valley Chapter will be in Jan and Jerry Holmes' home at 1604 Daugherty Rd, in Van Buren.

The meeting was adjourned.

Cheryl Miskell, NWACBOA Secretary

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## **December 2014 North East Chapter BOA Meeting**

We had our meeting on the 13th. Dusty Elliot and Jim Soehlman were in attendance. Dusty made a sprinkler can for her forge. Jim made a wall hook and a steak turner for Dusty. Rebecca Soehlman made chili that we enjoyed for lunch. We discussed how we are going to start promoting our local monthly meetings in the Jonesboro Sun and any local free papers that run, in order to raise more awareness.

Also we are going to start displaying signs in our yard and possibly at the intersections nearby. When spring gets closer, we are going to try and perform demos at the 2 local state parks, also to draw an interest in people that may be unaware we have a local group. Looking forward to getting the two signs. The NEA group wishes everyone a safe and happy holiday season.

Merry Christmas

Eddie Mullins will be sending out a reminder email to all the group of the next meeting.

Eddie Mullins—NEACBOA Steward.

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## **December 2014 Central Chapter BOA Meeting**

The December meeting of Central Arkansas Chapter of the Blacksmith Organization of Arkansas (CACBOA) was held on Saturday, December 20th in Pine Bluff at the home of BOA member Herman Ginger.

This was our second annual CACBOA Christmas party. Instead of our usual 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, we met from 3:00 pm to 9:00 pm. Suzanne prepared a Christmas feast, for which Herman attempted to take credit (we all knew better). There were twelve of us there, including four spouses and significant others. It was very pleasant to see the better halves of our members!

Dale Custer brought a copy of the Ore to Axe DVD, and we watched the sections on ore collection, ore preparation, building the furnace, firing the furnace, and extracting and dividing the bloom, pausing the video frequently to discuss and explain the various aspects of our upcoming ore roast and smelt.

The trade item this month was a forged gift, wrapped for trading. We opened them after supper and admired our handiwork. I was especially impressed by Dale's new touchmark, which he had used on the top set cutting tool of his that I drew. The touchmark was a joint development effort between Dale and Harold Enlow.

In our brief business meeting, Dale talked about the proposal to form a new "River Valley" BOA chapter in the Fort Smith area, and about the proposal to sponsor a blacksmith internship program for UCA, both of which will go before the board on December 22nd.

In our usual meetings, we spend hours standing around the forge swapping stories, but the Christmas Party meeting is quite different. At this meeting, we sit around a table of food for hours swapping stories. Entirely different!

Thanks again to Herman, and especially to Suzanne for hosting what is now a firmly established CACBOA tradition!

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