

Blacksmithing, one of my classmates told me on numerous occasions about the Southeastern Conference. He even came to visit me and helped with a demo at a local craft fair and I was further indoctrinated about the Southeastern Conference. This year it was a "must do" on our schedule so the travel trailer was packed and my wife and I were off to Madison, Georgia.

The tail gate sales was huge and always the first thing to catch a "blacksmith bargain hunter's" attention. It was obvious that bargain hunting is part of our genes as many potential buyers were scouring for bargains even before the owners got them properly displayed. On Friday and Saturday, the tail gate sales got bigger as more items were brought in. One blacksmith talegate seller said "I sell stuff, spend the money to buy stuff, keep that stuff until next time and sell it and buy more stuff". A rain on Friday afternoon only dampened sales and activity for a bit and then it was time to put tent flies back up and get back to business.

The demonstrators did a super job, as expected, and always had a crowd of folks watching and admiring their skills. Peter Happny was one of the demonstrators. I met him at the Metals Museum at Repair Days two years ago and even wrote an article about his ability to hammer with both hands. Unfortunately I did not check the spelling of Peter's name in the final draft and his last name was misspelled. I did not remind him of that at Madison.

Both the auction and the anvil shoot were big events and Tim Ryan was the center of attention for those events. Tim was at his best with a mix of humor and badgering comments to increase the bids, all for the good of the association. The anvil shoot went off with out a hitch, except that Tim forgot to bring the shield he puts around the anvils to protect the observers. He was going to purchase bags of sand until he lifted one and decided that perhaps bags of lava rock would do as well.

The anvil shoot was dedicated to Floyd and Cordelia Daniel. Floyd was Tim's mentor for anvil shooting and regarded by most to be the master anvil shooter. Tim gave memorial comment for Cordelia, who is deceased and asked for prayers and get well wishes for Floyd who was in the hospital.

The next Southeastern Conference is in 2007. Hope to see you there, you will not be disappointed and you will see and make friends from many places. One man came up to me and said "remember me?", suddenly at a loss, I said "sure, you live right down the street from me". He laughed and said "no we were classmates at John C. Campbell in the class by Clay and Allan". My memory tracks were covered!

FABA's October Conference
Steve Kalb

October is fast approaching and our conference is coming up. This is the single most important event we have each year due to the fact it is our major fund raiser which keeps

the education running. I am responsible this year for handling the food for the conference. I do not take this lightly, for the food has always been wonderful before and this is a tough act to follow! I am asking for help from our group to enlist folks to serve some time with the prep and serving of the food. Kitchen help will be greatly needed, and ultimately the end result on the table will be the amount of quality help is given. I would like to get people to help for an hour or two so they can still enjoy the conference Please contact me so I can schedule names that are willing to help..I will be attending Penland for a two week class in August. So if it takes me a bit to get back to you, I will be blissfully forging in the mountains!!!!

On another note, I want to thank Jerry Wolfe and the people in the SW region for all their hard work on keeping the ball rolling. This organization runs on volunteer help solely and your work is appreciated!

Building a Gas Forge?

One of the first decisions you will have to make is the refractory material - from castable (heavy, hard-to-heat but lots of heat capacity, tough) to ceramic fiber (light, east-to-heat, low heat capacity, fragile). Intermediate om almost all these categories are fire bricks - not the hard/yellow ones from the brick yard but the 2800-3000F refractory bricks from places like Atlantic Firebrick in Jacksonville (~\$100 for a case of 32 bricks, last time I bought any). These bricks are relatively soft, can be worked with a hack-saw or an old rasp. If you are building a dome or lining a pipe, you will want to shape the bricks to some pre-set angle so they nestle together. While you can do the shaping by hand, the unit pictured below will save you time and effort. Set the back plane to the correct angle and start scrapping - but remember to wear your dusk mask - refractory dust (of any kind) is not your friend!

