

# Rutherford County Blacksmiths Association

**Spring 2016**

RCBA, Inc.

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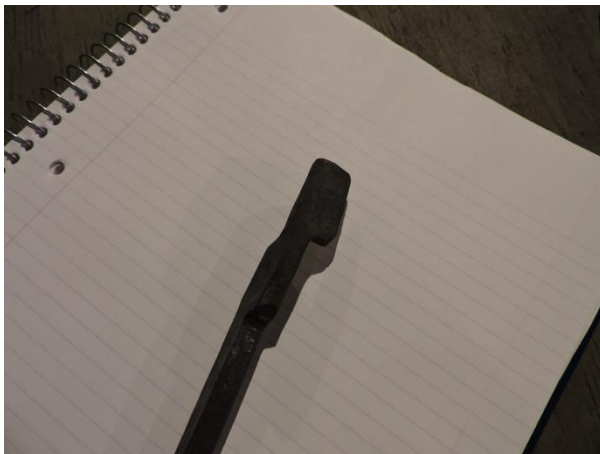
President: Clint 'Buzz' Busbee

## **April**

Thank you to Johnny Woolsey for demonstrating at our April meeting. Johnny showed us how to make tongs. Johnny has been very generous as well by making and donating tongs to the RCBA shop.



All blacksmiths need a good assistant. Thank you, Connor.



Here is the first half. Now make the other half just like it.

The finished product.

There are several different methods for making tongs, and there are several types of tongs you might want to make depending on what you are making and the size and shape of your stock. Look in

blacksmithing books to get ideas, detailed drawings, and instruction. There are several books in the RCBA library, which is located in the white cabinet in the McDonald Annex.

Demonstrations are a very important part of our monthly meetings. Sometimes an item you want to make for yourself is being demonstrated, and almost always, even if you do not plan to make that item, you learn a new technique or get an idea to incorporate into your own work. Please volunteer to demonstrate. Everyone, at any experience level, has something to teach others.

## **We have a very active group.**

Choo Choo Forge in Chattanooga held its annual AACB meeting on April 16. Several RCBA members attended. Jack Wheeler demonstrated how to make a three legged skillet. He found a well worn skillet in an antique shop and decided to see if he could reproduce it. Well, of course he could! Here is the result.



This just goes to show that ideas for projects can come from anywhere. Look carefully in those antique/junk stores.

Isn't this a handsome locomotive? The last time we went to Choo Choo it was in pieces all over the floor of the maintenance shop.



The very kind folks at the Tennessee Valley Railroad offered a free ride on the train for all the blacksmiths. Several of us took advantage of the offer.



This is one of my favorite pictures ever!! There is evidently an 'inside' joke at Choo Choo concerning putting water on the upset block before upsetting a piece of HOT metal on it. Jack agreed to demonstrate this method of upsetting. The picture shows half of the result. The other half cannot be photographed. It involves the very loud noise and Connor White's reaction.



Thanks to all members of Choo Choo Forge for your hospitality. We all had a great time. Choo Choo Forge would love to see you. They are always there on Thursdays.

Murfreesboro's Art Crawl takes place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of every other month. The RCBA shop has been added to the list of artists. Please come and demonstrate and bring your work to sell. Paul M, Josh, Connor, and Broomhead demonstrated at the April Art Crawl. The next Art Crawl will be in June.

Part of our agreement with the city is to demonstrate for school groups who come to Cannonsburgh to learn about the 'good ole days.' Thank you to Ron and Josh for demonstrating.

The Buttercup Festival is an annual event in Nolansville which benefits the Nolansville Historic District. Ron, Buzz, and Connor demonstrated this year. Put it on your calendar for next year. And plan to do a little shopping in the antique stores as well. If you get hungry, there is a wonderful 'meat and three' restaurant (whose name I can't remember but I can drive right to it) where you can get some really good fried catfish.

We have some new anvil stands. Our anvils have always been on the traditional tree stump, but several of them were split and falling apart. Thank you to Ron Nichols, John Couch, Buzz Busbee, Mark Webb, and John Woolsey for building new metal stands for the anvils in the Annex. They are sturdy and safe and easier to move around. Please get help if you plan to move an anvil more than a few inches! The anvils for the two main forges in the front shop will remain on tree stumps.

Pioneer Days , aka Opening Days, took place on April 23. This is the official opening day for all city parks. Pioneer Days is one of three major event days for Cannonsburgh Village. There are crafts and demonstrations throughout the park. Thank you to Julia, Broomhead, Ted, Clyde, Mike, Rhea, Carola, Buzz, Paul M., Connor, and Alex for spending some time demonstrating. It was a beautiful day, and we had a steady stream of interested visitors until the very end.



Dan Broomhead has found a good way to stay comfortable in the shop. With the weather turning warmer we are all thinking about how to stay cool and comfortable while forging. While some of us forge in shorts in the hot months, it is important to remember to wear proper shoes and safety glasses. Drink lots of water, enjoy the popsicles (They are not just for Tuff.), and take breaks.



Check out our newest Green Coal graduates.



Clyde Cross



Wesley Barber



Connor White



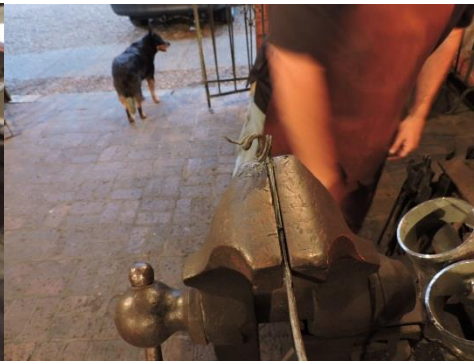
Billy McCullough won Project of the Month. He won with his snake head gun hooksssssss. Project of the Month for May is a wall mounted plant hanger.

## **MAY**

Our May meeting started with a demonstration by Buzz. Buzz was shopping in a local store when he spotted a wine rack. He decided he wanted to make one for himself – which he actually donated to the AACB Conference auction. He demonstrated how to make one of the sections, specifically how to make the tendrils.







A very useful skill is to learn how to make a coil. The coil itself can be very decorative, but if you pull/push it out and use some scrolling tongs to help with the shaping, you can have a very graceful detail added to your work. It's helpful, but not necessary, to have a handsome Blue Heeler watching your back.

Congratulations to Gary Brown for winning Project of the Month with his plant hooks.



These are very pretty! Project of the Month for June is a spoon and a fork. These should be separate utensils.

## AACB Conference

At the time of this meeting the conference was less than two weeks away. Buzz and Ron spoke about the conference in general – demonstrators, tailgate sales, registration, etc. There was also considerable discussion concerning details. Arrangements needed to be made for help setting up on Thursday afternoon as well as getting the village cleaned up on Sunday. Here are a few pictures of some of the things that took place in between.



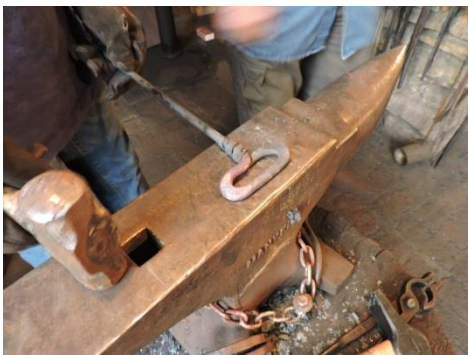
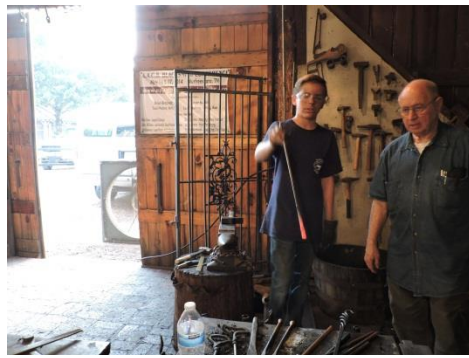


Susan Hutchinson, Mark Aspery, copper cup class with Jeff Mosley, Julie Clark, Bud Lamonica and John Woolsey at a very well attended forging contest, Samuel Stoner, some of Samuel Stoner's knives, and back to the forging contest. Not only did we have dozens of contestants, we had a large and enthusiastic crowd to cheer them on. This was a hugely successful conference. There were tailgate sales all around the driveway, vendors from well known blacksmith supply businesses, the largest Iron in the Hat I have ever seen, and an auction of examples of beautiful work from our very own AACB blacksmiths and their family members. The best part, though, was seeing old friends and meeting new friends. Hope to see all of you at the next conference. If you weren't able to attend this year, mark your calendar for 2018 (YIKES!). The planning has already begun.

## **So, now it's June**

Mark Aspery stayed in Murfreesboro for an additional week and hosted a workshop for a dozen or so blacksmiths. One of those blacksmiths was RCBA's own Connor White. Connor is one of our youngest Green Coal graduates, and he is well on his way to becoming a very accomplished blacksmith. Not everyone can attend workshops, so we ask those who can attend to demonstrate what they learned to a larger group. This is exactly what Connor did at our June meeting. Connor enlisted the help of his BBF (Best Blacksmith Friend) Billy McCullough (who Connor is sure hung the Moon) to be his assistant. Together they showed us how to make a Mark Aspery style flathead screwdriver. After the demonstration, Connor could be seen munching on chocolate chip cookies provided by Gabby McCullough (who hung the stars). Here are some pictures.





I love this picture, but do not love the sound!!! Thank you Connor and Billy. Mark Aspery should be proud. I am inspired to make a flathead screwdriver for myself. Connor, it's time to go wash your face☺



Let there be light!!! Have you noticed the lights in the McDonald Annex? Finally, we are able to see. Thank you to John Woolsey for organizing this project.

**TOOLS** – Blacksmiths are all about tools, right? Anvils, hammers, and tongs of course! Well, sometimes we need regular old tools such as screwdrivers, wrenches, and claw hammers. We are in the process of filling a maintenance and repair toolbox full of everyday tools. All donations are welcome. As you go from yard sale to yard sale, please keep a lookout for pliers, screwdrivers, hammers, wrenches, etc.

**Lookin' Good** – While clothes don't necessarily make the man, they sure do a lot of good for a blacksmith who has been sweating over the forge all day long. That includes the lady blacksmiths – who glow instead sweat. We will soon have available official RCBA t-shirts and hats. Your choices include: medium grey patch pocket t-shirts with the RCBA logo on the pocket and on the back, navy patch pocket t-shirts with the RCBA logo on the pocket and on the back, Navy Summer and Winter weight hat with the RCBA logo embroidered in color on the front. T-shirts and hat will both be priced at \$15. Shirts and hats have been ordered. Those who attended the June business meeting had the opportunity to order the size and color you wanted. That order will be set aside to assure you get what you wanted. Extras were ordered, so if you could not attend the meeting, you will also have the opportunity to have a t-shirt or hat. It will not be difficult to place an order for more t-shirts and hats if necessary.

RCBA is using Ideas Tees for t-shirts and hats.

If you want a shirt, hat, patch with an embroidered logo, you may order it yourself. There is no minimum order for embroidered items. Ideas Tees recommends that you order a shirt or hat from their catalog. If you bring an article of clothing you bought yourself you run the risk of their sewing machine tearing a hole in that article of clothing. If you order from Ideas, they will assume the cost of the ruined article. A catalog will be placed in the RCBA shop. Please see Julia if you have any questions about individual orders. Ideas Tees does not generally make patches, but they will embroider a patch for you if you bring in a piece of cloth.

While we can't quite imagine it right now, it is going to get cold again in a few months. We are going to want long sleeved shirts and sweat shirts. Think about what you might want.

Ideas Tees does not make decals and stickers, but they told me where we might have these made. I'm not sure how much interest there is. We have a few stickers for sale in the shop. Some are black and stick onto the outside of a window. A couple are black and stick to the



inside of a window. There are two sizes of white stickers that stick to the outside of windows. I'll get some estimates. Here is a picture.



The white one looks great on my cell phone case. (I owe RCBA \$1.50.) I have two of the stickers that go on the inside of a window on the back window of my truck. Over the years they have slid down from where I originally put them, but they are still stuck fast.

The small stickers are about 2 ½ X 2 ½. The large ones are 6 X 6.

Here is an inventory of what I have been able to find.

Small black for outside of window – 1

Small black for inside of window – 6

Small white for outside of window – 4

Large white for outside of window – 2

## More Green Coal Graduates



**Gary Brown**

**Paul Smithson**

**Josh Liddell**

**Ron Nichols  
(Long overdue!)**

**John Woolsey  
(Long overdue!)**



## Project of the Month

Our Project of the Month winner for June is Paul Smithson – a brand new Green Coal graduate!!!



Here is Paul's entry for a spoon and a fork. Very nicely done, Paul.

Project of the Month for July is a 'staybible.' This consists of one or more pieces balanced on a base. See your last newsletter for photos of Armand Bussell's January demonstration. Better yet, see Armand's website – [ArmandAnvil.com](http://ArmandAnvil.com). He may have pictures, and if he doesn't it is still a nice website.

## Some Things to Look Forward to



Ron Nichols offers a wonderful workshop for recent Green Coal graduates (and also for those who have not been able to attend in the past).

There are several traditional elements in this sample piece: traditional corner, scroll, curves, and traditional joinery.

Ron hopes to offer this workshop starting the first week in August. There will be a sign-up sheet in the shop. There will be a limit of eight

students.

Other possible workshops in the coming months include making tomahawks, brooms, and knives. Buzz will be organizing these workshops. Details, as they become available, will be in the newsletter, on the website, in emails, and discussed at monthly business meetings.

Buzz also hopes to organize several shop visits. There is a lot to learn from seeing how other blacksmiths organize their shops. It's also a lot of fun to spend a day with friends. Details will be given as they become available.

## Uncle Dave Macon Days

Uncle Dave Macon Days takes place on June 8 and 9. We need to have the shop staffed on Friday from 11:30AM(gates open) – 8:00PM, and on Saturday from 9:00AM(gates open) – 8:00PM. The shop will be open at about 6:00 AM on both days for your forging pleasure.



The shop can stay open past 8:00, but at least one approved adult must be present to close the shop. UDMD will not have a Sunday program this year. If you plan to demonstrate, please put your name on the general sign-up sheet. You do not have to pay admission if you demonstrate. You do have to pay to park unless you park in the city garage, which is still free to my knowledge. This list has to be turned in by June 21. Also, please commit to a time that you will demonstrate. We need at least one person demonstrating during the times listed above. You may demonstrate as much as you want as long as there are forges available. Please consider staying to close up the shop. There is a sign-up sheet for this in the shop as well. We also need people to help sell water and watch over the tables displaying items for sale.

If you plan to demonstrate, it is a very good idea to bring your tools and materials into the shop earlier in the week. We can lock it up in the back. Please label your things well so they don't get mixed in with shop tools and materials. Everyone, please do not use tools or stock if you are not absolutely sure you know they are generally available.

You are welcome to sell your own creations at UDMD. It works out best if you keep your things close to you and take care of sales yourself. While there is some display space in the shop, you might want to bring a small table for your items. If you cannot stay at the shop after your demonstration time, we will try to manage the sale of your items. Please make sure they are tagged clearly with prices and your name.

I spoke to Kathy at Cannonsburgh Village today. She said that UDMD is going to try to set a Guinness World Record for square dancing. This will take place on the square in Murfreesboro Thursday night. If you would like to participate, please see the UDMD website for information. You don't have to be experienced, but they prefer you attend a rehearsal. The shop will be open if your feet are more dangerous than an open fire.

## **Elections and Dues**

DUES ARE DUE IN JUNE!!! Thank you to all who have already paid their dues.

Annual elections are also held at the June meeting. The results are as follows:

President: Mark Webb

Vice President: Ron Nichols

Secretary/Treasurer: Julia Harris

At large Board Member: Buzz Busbee – 2016 – 2018

At large Board Member: Jeff Haselden's term is active through June 2017