

FIRE & IRON

Northeast Blacksmiths Association

Spring-2026

Next Ashokan Hammer-In: Apr. 24th, 25th, 26th

Demonstrator:

Mark Sperry



Spring Forging Contest

The project for the
Spring is a
traditionally forged
“Door/Gate Latch”

Register Online At

[Northeast Blacksmiths Association
Spring 2026 Hammer-In](#)

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President's Message

2026 Spring: Northeast Blacksmiths Association

Hello everyone. I hope you and your loved ones are well and got through the winter. I'd like to start by thanking Tom Boucher of Greasy Luck Forge for wonderful job he did demonstrating for our group at the fall hammer-in. For those of you who couldn't attend, Tom's primary work is locksmithing and his demonstration was interesting and I can say not quite like any demonstration we've had. Tom has two books he's written and illustrated. The first is "Basic Handmade Padlock Patterns and Instructional Guide" and "Handmade Padlock II and the Ancient Technique of Forge Brazing." If you could not come to Tom's demonstration, I recommend you order copies of his book. They are beautifully illustrated and show his process step by step. They are for sale through his website. Tom provided our group with a padlock identical to the one he made in his demo that we will be auctioning off to help fund our scholarship program.

For our spring hammer-in our demonstrator will be Mark Sperry. Mark started blacksmithing in 1985 in his parent's backyard and hasn't slowed down yet. In the last forty years mark has worked in a wide range of different styles of work trying to make it all. For the last 27 years he has worked at colonial Williamsburg in the Anderson blacksmith shop doing reproduction iron-work. For the last four years he has served on the board of ABANA and is currently helping with the planning of the next conference.

Mark has spent most of his blacksmithing career doing traditional work. A lot of 18th century reproductions a fair amount of architectural iron work. Mark also enjoys making knives and other sharp objects from time to time. In his demonstrations in the past couple years mark has shown a project built as it would be figured out, focusing on the basics to build a more complex product, and built with a minimum amount of tooling. It should be interesting to watch or a train wreck, one of the two. The general theme of the demo will be some sort of architectural piece which might include punching, riveting, collaring, welding drawing out, bending right angles.

I am looking forward to the warmer weather and seeing you all at the hammer-in.

Kelly Anson

2026 Northeast Blacksmiths Spring Demo

Demonstrator: Mark Sperry



Mark Sperry started blacksmithing in 1985 and it has been his sole source of income for the last 24 years. You may recognize him as one of the journeyman blacksmiths employed at the Anderson Blacksmith Shop at Colonial Williamsburg. Mark's decision to serve on the ABANA Board of Directors was prompted by his wanting to give back to the organization from which he benefited during his career. His focus is on educational standards in the blacksmithing community and he's willing to help with any task put before him.

Credit: ABANA Board of Directors link

Here is some of 's Mark's work...



Our Past Hammer-In: Fall-2025

Our presenter for the Fall Hammer-in was **Tom Boucher**



Photo Credit: Jonathan Nedbor



Tom made a key for his lock and walked us through all the stages. Pictured here to the left, is a story board of those stages.

Here is a look at the finished product from the weekend demonstration. The lock and key sitting next to a copy of his published book on the topic. There are not too many people that can write a book on hand forged padlocks...Let alone make one!



The first *'Shokan 'Prentice* Scholarship award

Last Fall we awarded the first “Shokan ‘Prentice” Scholarship. MeLisa Moore received the award, allowing her to attend the Fall 2025 Hammer-In with the weekend’s expenses covered by the scholarship. MeLisa’s application included an outstanding artistic résumé, and came with a recommendation from former NBA president Jonathan Nedbor.

The scholarship was made possible by an anonymous donor, who incidentally received her introduction to blacksmithing at the Ashokan Field Campus nearly 50 years ago. She felt it was an appropriate way to recognize the upcoming 50th anniversary of the Northeast Blacksmiths Association’s history at Ashokan.

She also provided some “seed money” to kick start the scholarship fund, with the hope that it will be an ongoing opportunity for those who want to learn some basics or add to their forging skills in the blacksmith’s craft.

Please consider making a donation to this worthy cause. We are looking for additional ways of funding the scholarship account.

As a way to acknowledge what Ashokan has meant to you, we ask that you consider a contribution to build the Scholarship fund. Please contact treasurer [Tim Neu](#) to arrange your donation.



MeLisa Moore is the first recipient of our *'Shokan Prentice* Scholarship award.

Here is a picture of a meat flipper that she forged at the 2025 spring Hammer-in meeting.



Here is what MeLisa wrote about her scholarship experience:

“I had an a really beautiful experience at the hammer-in. I had a natural connection to blacksmithing before being given the scholarship and had done blacksmithing in other communities. The hammer-in was such an amazing way to be up close and personal with extremely skilled craftspeople through demos. I saw some things I never imagined, like specialized lock and key demo. The hammer-in was also at the same time as the New England Bladesmith Guild sword gathering and it was an unexpected surprise. The variety of integrative skills, art, and design work there was unbelievable and very much what I was looking for in an experience like this. People were really open and willing to share knowledge and information and it was so nice to be around others who speak the same language and understand the excitement of working with and honing metal. It was very special to get to learn more about forges and get to work with one everyday of the gathering. The instructors were helpful and supportive and I used this open studio area to make another meat/cooking tool and experimented with bracelet making. I loved the market where I got to see and learn about a variety of tools and equipment and also people willing to sell at fair prices and even do payment plans. I met some other craftspeople whom I resonated with as well, which was one of the most important parts for me.

I have deep gratitude for the woman who made the scholarship and have great respect for the depth knowledge, experience, and history that she made with being a woman in the world of blacksmithing at a time where there were none. I hope that the community continues to support more women and a wide diversity of people to connect with this craft. I also received a gift of a hammer from her, that for me was a metaphorical passing of the baton to continue the tradition. I highly recommend people who are new to the craft of blacksmithing and/or who want to connect with a really wonderful and highly skilled community, to apply for the scholarship, get involved, attend and dedicate to this incredible global, ancient, and special tradition.”

Our Iron-in-Hat is always a great way to contribute to the association and pick up some great stuff!



Picture titled "The Usual Suspects"

Credit: Jonathan Nedbor



Our open forge is a great opportunity to practice and learn new skills in a safe a friendly environment.

Our Fall 2025 Forging Contest was a “Forged Spatula/Kitchen utensil”. The winner of that contest was **Ted Knapp**. Pictured below is his kitchen set in Damascus.



Here is a list of craft schools that offer a range of blacksmithing courses. If you know of any others that should be on this list, please contact me lucas.patsch@gmail.com and I can update it for the next newsletter. Some of these schools offer internships and scholarships!

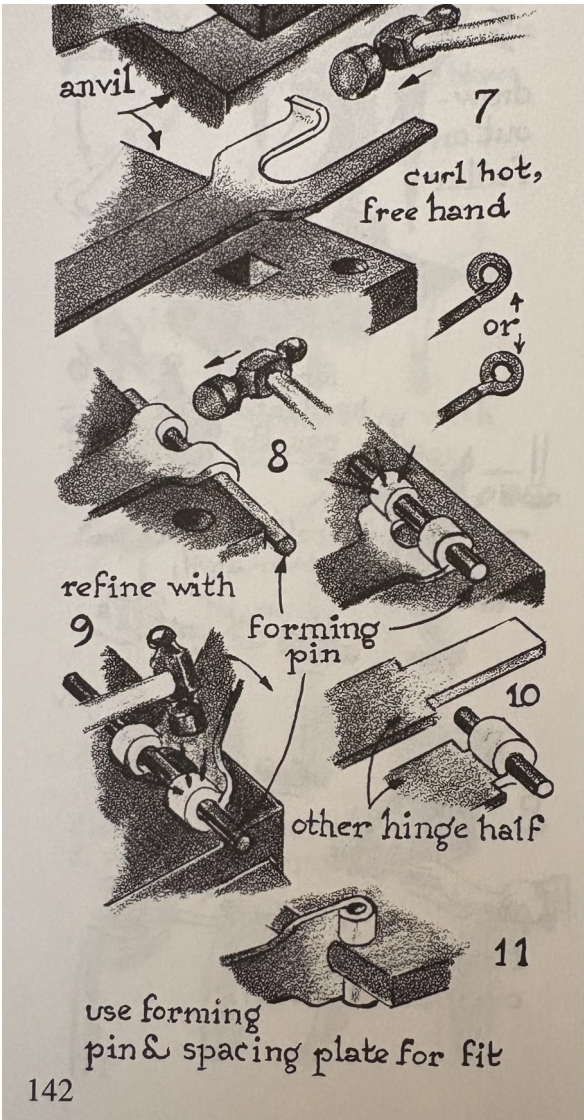
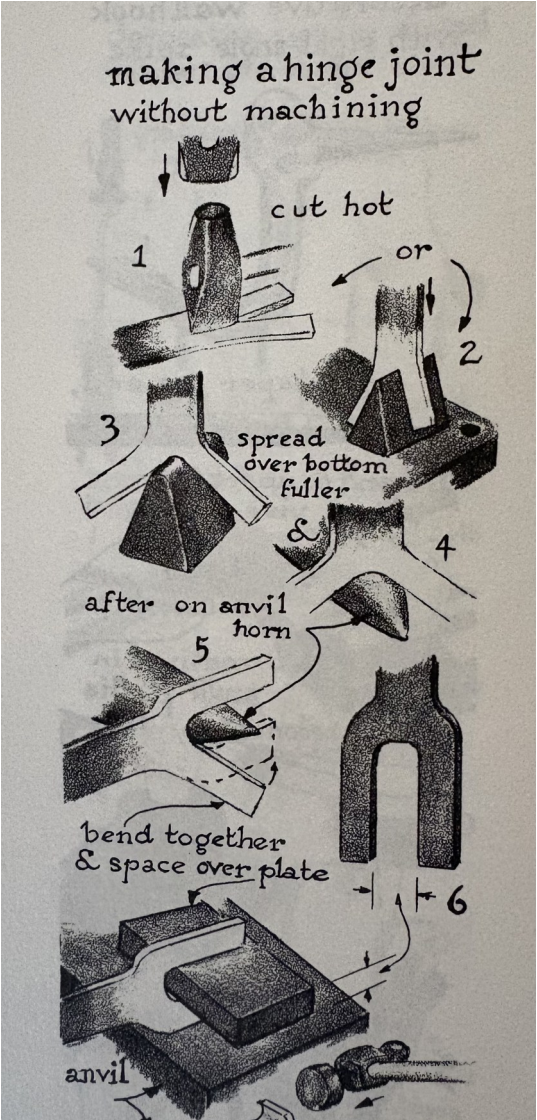
- Guilford Art Center, <https://guilfordartcenter.org>
- Brookfield Craft Center– www.brookfieldcraft.org
- Adirondack Folk School- <https://adirondackfolkschool.org>
- Penland School of Craft– <https://penland.org>
- Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts– www.arrowmont.org
- John C. Campell Folk School - [www,folkschool.org](http://www.folkschool.org)
- Arc and Flame Center– www.rocafc.com
- Center for Metal Arts– <https://centerformetalarts.org>
- New England School of Metalworkwork
<https://newenglandschoolofmetalwork.com>

Upcoming Events:

-Northeast Blacksmiths Spring Hammer-In: April 24th-26th, 2026

ABANA Conference 2026- Nov.11-14 (Bentonville, Arkansas)

-Try it Yourself-
Hand forged hinge joint



Credit: "The Complete Modern Blacksmith" by
 Alexander G. Weygers

Minutes of the [Northeast Blacksmiths Association](#)

Meeting on Saturday, October 4, 2025

Meeting brought to order 6:57 PM

Old Business

Treadle Hammer - Intention to auction off shelved due to it's being in pieces on Saturday night. Resolve to form a Friday night working party to assemble it in the Spring and mention same in the newsletter.

Little Giant tune-up – postponed until Spring.

New Trailer - has been purchased and is on site. Will be used in conjunction with the old trailer and will also be parked at Tim Neu's (in spite of the flat tire on his tractor). It looks to suit our needs. Price was \$5700, 1/3 to be borne by the bladesmiths.

Old Trailer – much speculation about cause of cambered wheel, conclusion that it doesn't matter in view of the short trip it takes twice a year.

New Leg Vices – for green coal were mounted on stands by Tim Miller and Chris Doherty and delivered by Tim, are on site and in use. \$50 in materials.

Audio Gear – to be stored in trailer instead of barn

Liability Insurance Issue – to be pursued by Tim Neu

1099 Issue – we will file this year, Tim Neu where's your phone will do so.

Digital Bylaws – not ready, Tim Neu and Kelly will do.

Some debate about first blacksmith meeting at Ashokan, 1975 with Peter Ross? Maybe not? Issue left up to the interested student.

New Business

Scholarship by anonymous contributor awarded to NAME MeLIS A Moore. We would like to do this on an ongoing basis.

A MOTION by Johnathan Nedbour to continue the scholarship and solicit donations thereto passed unanimously.

A MOTION by Kelly to donate remaining small and medium anniversary Tee Shirts to Brookfield Craft Center to be given to home schooled and other child students thereof passed by acclamation.

A MOTION by Chris Doherty to spend \$40 on MIG pliers (to be modified and used as scrolling tongs) for green coal was passed unanimously. Chris will buy and be reimbursed in Spring.

Treasurers Report

Spring Meeting 2025 began with \$13,132 in bank and, after a donation (\$500), Iron in the Hat (\$607), Merch (\$568), and pure Iron sales(\$260), along with meeting income minus expenses ended up with \$15,485. Leaving us well positioned to buy the new trailer, which we did.

Fall 2025 Meeting

Expenses

- \$930 for new merch
- \$153 for Hats
- \$3833 for new Trailer
- \$70 Steel for green coal
- \$50 Steel for vice stands

Income

- \$450 Iron in the hat
- \$210 Merch?

Further details and balances available after meeting end

A MOTION by Frank to accept treasurers report passed by acclamation.

The meeting thanks Tim Miller for mounting the new vises and Andy Chapman and Chris Doherty for the Green Coal program.

Lock donated to us by Thomas Boucher (Fall 2025 demonstrator) to be auctioned, perhaps online, we await his valuation of same.

Spring Meeting to be April 24 – 25, demonstrator discussed but nothing definite yet
Dan Maragni in hospital, we are signing bladesmiths card, word is that he is doing well.

A Motion by Tim Miller to adjourn was passed unanimously.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 7:47

Tradition and Lore

THE SONG OF THE ANVIL

*“ for thou shalt learn
The wisdom early to discern
True beauty in utility;
As great Pythagoras of yore,
Standing beside the blacksmith's door,
And hearing the hammers, as they smote
The anvils with a different note,
Stole from the varying tones, that hung
Vibrant on every iron tongue,
The secret of the sounding wire.
And formed the seven-chorded lyre. “*

-Longfellow: *To a Child*.

“ there is no orchestral instrument, the origin of which can definitely be attributed to the sound of the hammer on the anvil. The nearest approaches are the triangle, the xylophone and the bells; the triangle, however, is descended from the systum of the Egyptian priests, which has no apparent connection with the smithy, and the xylophone is too modern to be attributed to such a source by descent. The music of the bells, though, has a distinct connection with the forge. The earliest bells were made of wrought-iron plates laid over on another and riveted together—the work of the blacksmith—and there can be little doubt that the whole idea of bell music was suggested by the sound of hammer upon anvil: early bells were, indeed, rung with a hammer. The bellows of the organ, too, introduced into Western Europe music about the eighth century A.D., seems obviously to have been taken from the bellows of the forge.”

“The Smith; The traditions and lore of an ancient craft”

By Frederick W. Robins

*Re-post from Fall 2022 Newsletter

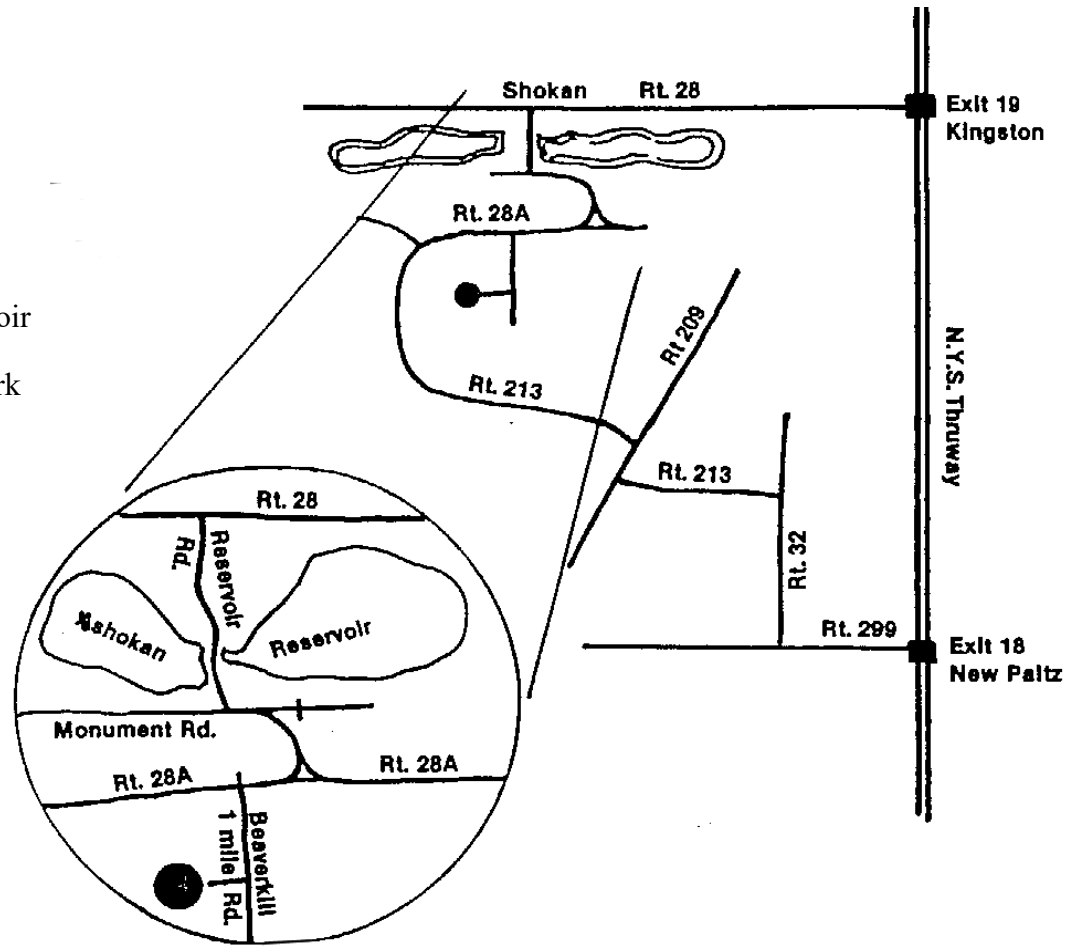


For Registration information for our
Spring Hammer-In Apr. 24th, 25th, 26th visit
<https://northeastblacksmiths.weebly.com>

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