

# **Handles and Hammers with Tom Scarsella**

## **From Tree to Tool**

### **Armand Bayou in Pasadena**

### **September 17, 2011**

Our September meeting will provide us with information and techniques for customizing and caring for something we use every day but hardly ever think about – the handles for our hammers and other tools. Without a handle a hammer is just a big lump of steel that is going to give me lumps and bruises if I try to use it.

Tom Scarsella will show us the tools and techniques for using them when making your own handles. This knowledge will allow you to customize your handles to your hands and style of forging – essential in mastering the art of hammer control.

### **Handle Demo and Presenter**

Tom is going lead us to a finished handle, starting with a piece of green log. We will split out spokes to replace the ones used. Seasoned spokes will be furnished. He is a long time volunteer at Armand Bayou Nature Center and has many talents; wood working and smithing are a couple and sells himself short with his “few words” below.

“I am a long term member of the Early American Industries Association and have actively collected and used antique woodworking tools for over 30 years. By the time I reached an age when I was allowed to handle my fathers’ power tools I was already quite proficient with hand tools and old tools usually come with some interesting history which is another of the subjects I’m keen on.”

### **Meeting outline**

Below is a list of the tools that I will bring for a demo and informal class on handle making: Included are a couple of links for some of the tools so if inclined you can make one to bring to the meeting with you.

Froe and froe club

Broad hatchets

Drawknife - <http://www.wkfinetools.com/tMaking/art/drawKnife/darwKnife-01.asp>

Spoke shave - <http://www.hocktools.com/teachshave/TEACHSHAVE.HTM>

Half-round wood files with different cuts of teeth

Paring chisel

Carving knife

Utility knife

A small backsaw

A small razor saw (good for making wooden wedges)

A small bow saw for cutting split stock to length

If any of the HABA members own any of these tools they are certainly welcome and encouraged to bring them along. I'll pre-sharpen mine and have stones with me if somebody has something that needs an edge.

What I would encourage those interested to bring is any “**hammer-size**” tool that needs a handle and/or tools with handles they particularly like and might want to copy. I don't have many things of my own that require handles right now though I can always come up with one for a demo. I own dozens of tools with my handles on them and will bring a bunch of them along for show and tell.

The choke point in this endeavor will be shaving horse availability but there are many work arounds for that. There are a few simple jigs that come to mind that work nearly as well and I'll cobble up enough of them for the demo ahead of time. Here is a link on how to make one - <http://www.greenwoodworking.com/ShavingHorsePlans>. Again, if you can make one before the meeting and bring it with you, great, but we will have alternatives to this for the demo so there should be enough for everyone to make a handle.

Below is picture of many of the tools we will be using.

From the top: An iron froe and well-used froe club. The froe handle and the club are both my work. Moving through these there is a broad hatchet, some files, bow saw, and drawknife. The bow saw is one that I made about 30 years ago. The little tool just under the bow saw is an all steel spoke shave, probably a Dixie but I'm not absolutely sure of that. The all steel ones are very easy to use and do nice work. There is a small backsaw and a razor saw next down. Both handy. The backsaw is good for cutting slots for the wooden wedge that goes into the top of the handle and the razor saw is a good tool for making that wedge. To the left of the saws is a thin paring chisel and a laminated steel carving knife for fitting up the handle to the eye of the tool. The bottom six tools are all ones that have handles I've made over the years. The broad hatchet in that group will certainly be used in September.



## Other Activities

In addition to the demo we will be doing **Iron in the Hat**. Bring something you have made and we will have raffle tickets and a drawing for them.

You can also bring your forges, anvils and tools and do free form forging.

You will be on your own for lunch and there are many choices a short drive away at Bay Area Blvd. and Space Center Drive. HABA will supply coffee, soda and water until it runs out.

## When:

Saturday, September 17:

The schedule looks like this for Saturday morning:

- 8:00 AM: Sign in and setup
- 9:00 AM: HABA Meeting and Announcements
- 9:30 AM: Begin Demo
- 11:00 AM: Begin Workshop
- 12:00 PM: Break for Lunch
- 1:00 PM: Continue Workshop
- 4:00 PM: Conclude and clean up

The gates will open at 7:30 AM and close at 5:00 PM

## **Where:**

Armand Bayou Nature Center at 8500 Bay Area Boulevard in Pasadena, TX

## **Directions to Armand Bayou**

Armand Bayou is easy to find. Exit I-45 at Bay Area Boulevard and head east. The entrance to Armand Bayou will be on the right about five miles down the road. When you cross Middlebrook Drive, you will have about a mile to go. If you find yourself at Red Bluff Road, you just passed the Nature Center entrance. The web site for Armand Bayou is: <http://www.abnc.org/>.

The following link will get you a Google map:

[http://maps.google.com/maps?hl=en&safe=off&biw=1175&bih=824&um=1&ie=UTF-8&q=armand+bayou&fb=1&gl=us&hq=armand+bayou&hnear=0x86408323cd6cb1b3:0x14dec35f5a4064d6,League+City,+TX&ei=KjU\\_TrmeMpSztwegvvnsAg&sa=X&oi=local\\_result&ct=image&ved=0CAQQtgM&cid=0,0,9274310725211214610](http://maps.google.com/maps?hl=en&safe=off&biw=1175&bih=824&um=1&ie=UTF-8&q=armand+bayou&fb=1&gl=us&hq=armand+bayou&hnear=0x86408323cd6cb1b3:0x14dec35f5a4064d6,League+City,+TX&ei=KjU_TrmeMpSztwegvvnsAg&sa=X&oi=local_result&ct=image&ved=0CAQQtgM&cid=0,0,9274310725211214610).

HABA will be meeting in the area around #11, corral, and #12, so please drive in the road toward the farm and unload in our area. We will be parking behind the Implement Building. Take the road from the parking lot back to the Interpretive Center and there will be a gravel path off to the Implement Building. Here is a link to the grounds map:

<http://www.habairon.org/Aug07/AB%20MAP.pdf>.

Here is a series of pictures that show you the way:



**Figure 1 Go Straight**



**Figure 2 Turn Left**



**Figure 3 Continue On**



**Figure 4 Demo area in front of small bldg**



**Figure 5 Demo set up area**



**Figure 6 Road on to Implement shed**



**Figure 7 Area behind Implement shed**



**Figure 8 Implement Shed**

## **Armand Bayou Nature Center**

<http://www.abnc.org/>

### **Background**

ABNC was founded in 1974 as a result of efforts begun by an environmental visionary, Armand Yramategui. Armand foresaw the urban growth around Armand Bayou and strove to have this land remain a wilderness. Armand's tragic death in 1970 inspired a local, regional and national coalition of people and organizations to acquire the 2500 acres of land now preserved as ABNC. ABNC is a non-profit organization that was established with the mission preservation and environmental education.

### **Stewardship & Education Programs**

ABNC is one of the largest urban wildlife refuge in the United States. The Center's stewardship programs ensure that future generations have the opportunity to experience a wilderness close to home. ABNC's educational programs promote the value of preservation and conservation of natural resources. These programs also encourage everyone to incorporate ecological concepts into their daily lives.

### **The Center's Features**

The Center's core consists of a boardwalk through the forest and marshes, live animal displays, educational signage, bison and prairie platforms, butterfly gardens and a 1800's farm site. These venues are part of the Center's vision of a "Discovery Loop" educational tour of ABNC, its habitats and Texas cultural history. ABNC also has the Martyn, Karankawa, Marsh, Lady Bird and Prairie trails that allow you to see and learn about the forest, prairie, marsh and natural bayou habitats once common in the Houston/Galveston area.

### **What to Bring**

Bring safety glasses with side shields. This is a requirement!

Bring your forges and tools. A number of forges will be available.

Plan to bring a lunch or eat at a local restaurant.

Bring a chair to sit in.

*You do not have to be a member to attend our meetings! Bring a Guest!*

Bring your Membership Dues if you want to work at a forge and are not a current Member !

Minors are welcome but must be accompanied by a responsible adult.