

# FIRE & IRON

Northeast Blacksmiths Association

Spring -2022

**Next Ashokan Hammer-In April 22<sup>nd</sup>,23<sup>rd</sup>,24<sup>th</sup>**

**Demonstrator:**

**Ellen Durkan**



**Hands-On  
Workshop**  
Beginner and  
not so.

**Register  
Online**  
[https://  
northeast-  
blacksmiths.  
weebly.com/  
events.html](https://northeast-blacksmiths.weebly.com/events.html)

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## President's Message

### 2022 Northeast Blacksmiths President Message

Thinking of our Spring Hammer-In with the hope that spring will finally arrive here in the Hudson Valley. In mid-March, I did get a taste of early spring in Virginia. Colonial Williamsburg was the site for a small gathering of traditional smiths to share information and insights for producing traditional ironwork with period techniques. We also had the opportunity to tour the Jamestown Settlement site and museum (see pics in this newsletter). This trip to Virginia reminded me of how things "used to be", attending Hammer-Ins and conferences pre-Covid. It seems that we have weathered the worst and can now, with caution, pick up where we left off. I am anxious, as we all are, to resume the yearly cycle of social activities. With this in mind, taking a class at a Craft School or attending a Hammer-In, etc., offers a chance to clear out the cobwebs and up your skills.

We have a great demonstrator lined up for the Spring Meet at Ashokan, Ellen Durkan. Ellen has been a rising star in the blacksmithing world with her forged body pieces and gallery events. She also does more traditional smith work as well. Her demo should be an interesting opportunity to gain insight into her creative process as she forges beautifully shaped forms.

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## **President's message continued...**

If you haven't already, register now, for the weekend as the cut-off date for Early Registration is fast approaching.

We have been back at Ashokan now for a year and it is great to have this return to normal at our home base. The meet is fast approaching, so gather your items to donate to our thrilling Iron -in-the-Hat lottery, bring some of your latest work to display and make your plans to attend.

Hope to see you there,  
Jonathan

## **2022 Northeast Blacksmiths Spring Demo**

Our demonstrator for the Spring Hammer-In is Ellen Durkan from Wilmington, Delaware. In addition to her forge work, Ellen also teaches art at Delaware College of Art & Design. Her forge work at her shop, Iron Maiden Forge, runs from traditional functional ironwork to wearable “Forged Fashion” body wear art pieces. Ellen is a popular demonstrator and teacher and has a busy schedule leading forging workshops around the country.

About her “Forged Fashion”, Ellen states: “My metal work started as forged stationary “metal dresses” in which I would place a nude figure. My current body of work is still inspired by the human body, it is created to be worn and it is inspired by physical and emotional vulnerability. I enjoy creating pieces to fit the complex forms of the figure and how each piece takes on a new presence with a new wearer. I create forged work to decorate the body as visual and metaphorical armor.”

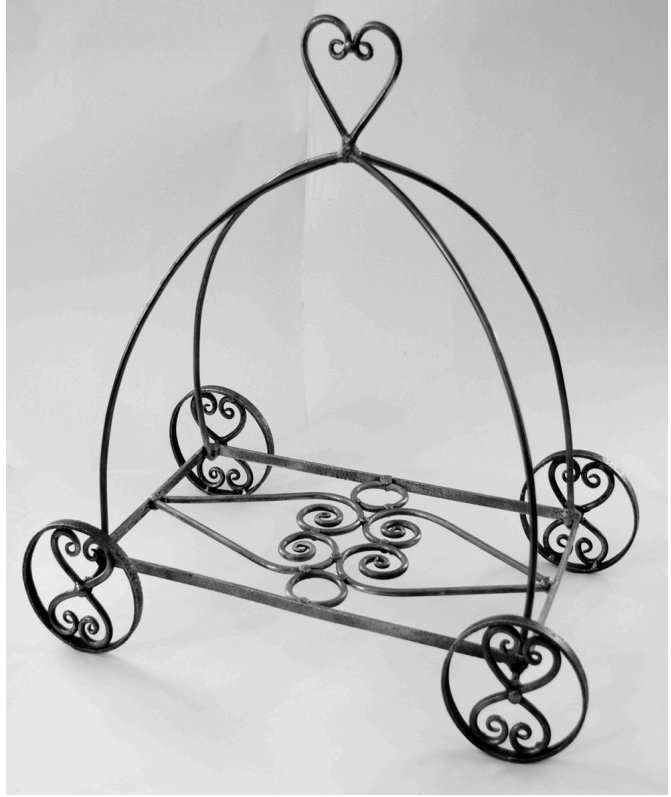
Ellen’s demo in our shop will focus on isolating masses on the anvil, asymmetrical forms, cross peening to create volume, riveting, fitting up parts, and assembly, resulting in a piece to fit someone’s upper body. Design, designing and process, and how it relates to her work will also be discussed.

For more info and pics:

<http://www.ellendurkan.com/about-me.html>

*Don’t forget to bring items (shop related or not) for the Iron-in-the-Hat Lottery, our after lunch fundraiser. If you can take the time, make an entry for the Forging Contest. And also, bring some examples of your work for the display table. Remember that it is about sharing your joy of shaping steel and making things, so all levels of work are welcome.*

Here is some of Ellen's work...





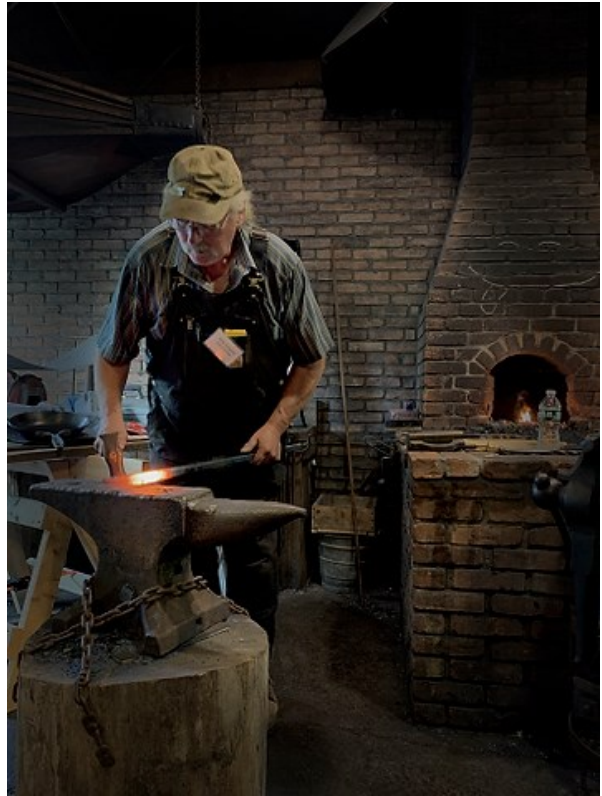
## Fall Hammer-

In : 2021

Our presenter for the Fall Hammer-in was Dick Sargent.



Dick is seen here connecting to the audience, which he did a lot of during the weekend. During his demonstrations, he continuously shared his expertise and knowledge of forging as well as some creative layout and measurement techniques. He had many tricks and tips to share which he has acquired during his many hours behind the anvil.



Photos courtesy of **Clive Russ**



Tools of the trade for sale at our tailgating section!



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





## Article on Jamestown by Jonathan Nedbor

I recently spent some time in Virginia, attending a gathering of smiths at Colonial Williamsburg. The group spent part of a day touring the Jamestown Colony settlement. The site of the first blacksmith shop in the settlement has been identified by archaeological evidence. There is also the Memorial Church, built in 1907 on the site of the original church built by the early settlers. A museum displaying many of the artifacts discovered on the site offered an interesting picture of the life and struggles of these first colonists.



*Recreation of the basic structure of the blacksmith workshop at Jamestown Settlement, including what is thought to be the style of timber framing used. This structure is on the footprint of the original workshop.*



*The Memorial Church*



*View of the site overlooking the James River*





*Jamestown Colony, Virginia, recreated armor. In Jamestown, this type of protective garment was made from worn out armor shipped from England and then cut up into small squares. A hole was punched in the center of each square and then sewn into these protective “armored” jackets which were more suited to life in the wilderness. Regular “plate” armor was heavier, restricted movement, was hot to wear and required assistance and time to suit up. Plus, the colonist found that with plate armor, the Natives arrow points would still cause serious injury even though the points rarely penetrated their plate armor. The stone arrow points would often be deflected by the curved plate armor and could enter at the arms, neck, face or groin. The arrow and spear points could also shatter when they hit the iron plate armor, causing shrapnel like injuries to unprotected areas. The cloth layers of the sewn armor absorbed some of the shock from the arrows and the layer of iron armor pieces would prevent the point from penetrating further. This adaption of armor was developed for the hot, densely wooded environment that the settlers of this remote colony found themselves in.*





*Plate armor typical of what some of the settlers had, found on site.*

*A display illustrating how these items were found in an abandoned water well. Their wells often became contaminated and were then abandoned. Many objects found their way into the abandoned wells, which eventually filled in with sand and soil, preserving many of the artifacts.*



## Other Upcoming Events

### Center for Metal Arts



**Cambria  
Iron  
Conference**  
*September 17th 2022  
at Center for Metal Arts  
Johnstown PA*  
**Registration**  
[www.centerformetalarts.org](http://www.centerformetalarts.org)

**Featured Demonstrator**  
**Zack Noble**  
*On the 3000# Chambersburg*

**Additional Demonstrators**  
*Nate Weiss, Erika Broas & Tim Lucas*

**from CORE to SURFACE  
Juried Exhibition**

**Food Provided by Iron St Grill**

**@centerformetalarts  
#cambriaironconference**

Image: Jarrod Bunk

Folks can register at the website, [www.centerformetalarts.org](http://www.centerformetalarts.org). All are welcome to attend and there is an early registration period open now for a discounted rate.

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### **New Jersey Blacksmiths Association NJBA**

Jonathan Nedbor will be holding a demonstration at East Jersey Olde Towne Village, focused on colonial hardware.

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### **12th Annual New England Bladesmithing Symposium -(Jul.15-17)**

[American Bladesmithing Society](http://www.americanbladesmithing.com)

## NBA Safety and Shop Needs – Discussed at the Fall 2021 business meeting.

Please consider bringing items on this list for use in the Teaching Program and in the blacksmith shop. We need to have a good selection of tools for repair and maintenance. The tools don't have to be new, clean and usable is good.

Fire Extinguishers, Types A, B & C, good to have 2 of each.  
10# size would be good,  
5# would be OK

Wire Brushes – wood block handles: wire brushes and wire strip Butcher Block brushes. Need at least 2 of each.

Oil – 2 quarts, minimum, light machine oil - 30W Non-Detergent

Wrenches – large box end wrenches, adjustable crescents, socket sets. Could use some larger combination wrenches (open and box end) as well as socket sets in 1/2' & 3/8" drive. Several adjustable crescent wrenches and Allen Wrench set, would also be good to have in our tool kit.

We also need basic materials for the Teaching Program:

Mild steel, square and round – 1/4", 3/8", 1/2" & 1/4"x 3/4"

1084 Tool Steel – 3/16"x 1" x 24'

These can be in random lengths, 12" or longer.





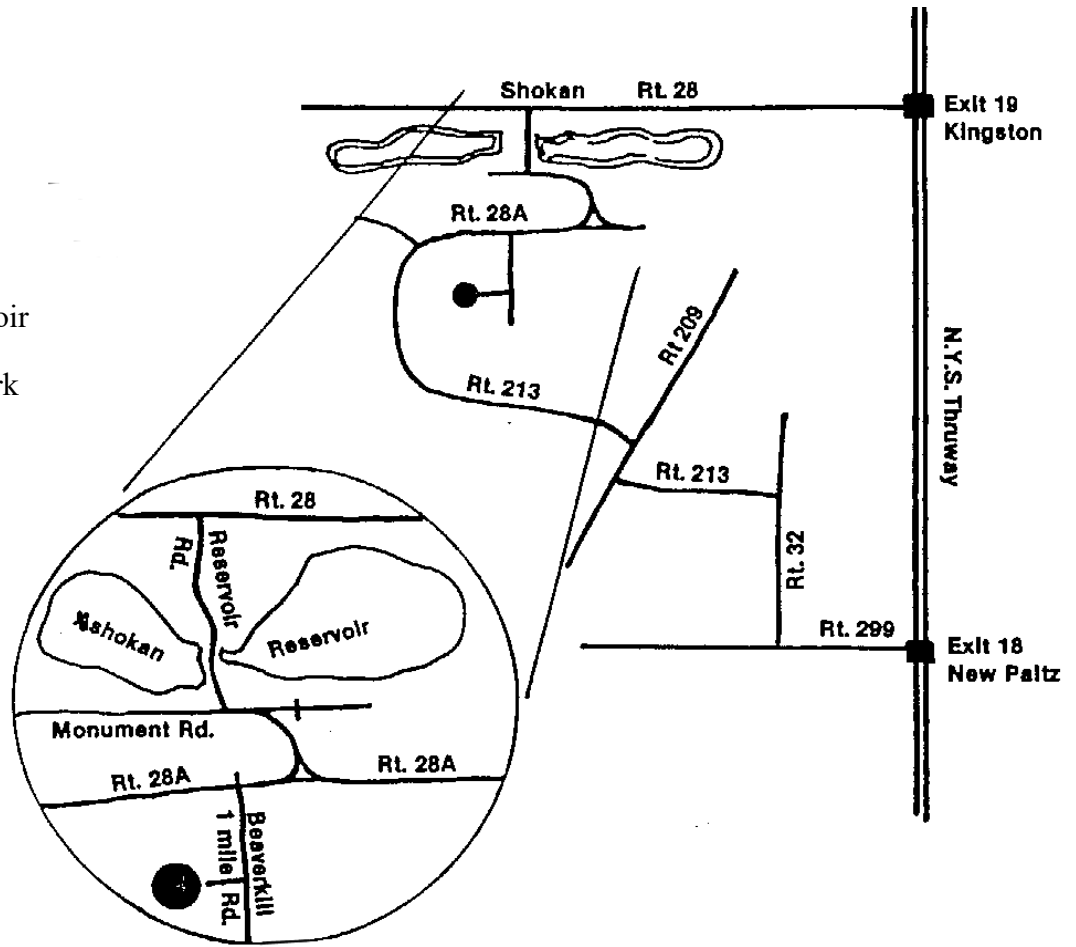
For Registration information for our  
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visit

<https://northeastblacksmiths.weebly.com/events.html>

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