



Balcones Forge Dispatch

President's Corner

Jan 2023

Greetings!

We had a great turn out for the December meeting at the Furniture Museum in New Braunfels. We were able to get some new members in the forge. Joe Sisson was able to get several Boy Scouts started toward their Metalsmithing Badge. We had three participants in the trade item competition. Joe Sisson's "S" hook was picked as the winner so he got to pick the January trade item which is a bottle opener.

January's meeting will be on the 28th in LaGrange at the Texas Blacksmith Conference. This a great show! We will have a table set up with t-shirts and hats available.

Here is how the trade item works as mentioned earlier January's trade item is a bottle opener. Bring your hand forged bottle opener to the meeting. After all the entrants are judged we draw numbers and you take someone else's bottle opener home. The winner gets to pick the next month's trade item. Hope to see y'all in LaGrange.

Aaron

Arron Tilton
Balcones Forge President

Meeting is on Jan 28

Start time is 9:30



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Above:
Trade item trio



Left:
The young man pays
close attention as Presi-
dent Tilton shows him
“how its done”!

More info in the two Balcones Forge Facebook pages. (You can check out the posts without having a Facebook account.)

<https://www.facebook.com/BFCTB/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/688735415468063>

W W W . B A L C O N E S F O R G E . O R G

SECRETARY'S DECEMBER MEETING NOTES

The December meeting was a great success. Aaron brought back the trade item and Joe Sisson worked with Boy Scouts on a merit badge. Other members were busy in the forges helping new members and teaching some of the old members new tricks. I meet some long-time members that I hadn't met before. Smokey Thompson shared a lot of info on making flint strikers.

As Aaron said we have another trade item for the January meeting at the Texas Blacksmithing Conference. The trade item will be a bottle opener. We are going to have a demonstration from Mark Sperry, a fellow who works at the Colonial Williamsburg forge. This should be a great conference; the first two were awesome and well attended.

It's time to renew your membership. The website has information as how to do this by mail but if you come to the meeting in January, we will gladly sign you up. Look for our table along with the signup we will have merchandise to sell. We want to thank the Texas Blacksmithing Conference for allowing us to participate in the event.

Regards,

Lance Jensen
Balcones Forge Secretary

UPCOMING MEETINGS

February 11 at the Furniture Museum in New Braunfels

March 18 at the Pioneer Museum in Fredericksburg

TRADE ITEM DETAILS

The trade item for January is a bottle opener. To participate, simply make the item chosen for the month. Sometimes there are detailed instructions and sometimes you get to make what ever your imagination tells you. Bring it to the meeting, participate in the trade and you will walk away with another smith's version of the item.

Remember, you gotta make one to take one!

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Texas Blacksmithing Conference 2023

Hosted with The Hume L. Baker
Texas Antique Gas Engine Reunion

Texas Czech Heritage & Cultural Center
Saturday, January 28th, 2023

250 West Fair Grounds Rd., La Grange, TX 78945

8 am - 5 pm

Proceeds benefit the TCHCC Blacksmith Shop Project

- Demonstrations
- Iron Smelt
- Vendors
- Food & Drinks
- Engine Show
- Onsite camping
- Auction



Week Day Classes

- 1/25- Hand Tools \$150
(Chisels, Punches, Fullers, etc.)
- 1/26- Trivet Making \$150
(Scrolling and Collaring)
- 1/27- Hammer Making \$175
(Cross Peen)

Find us on Facebook @
"The Texas
Blacksmithing Conference"
and Instagram
@texasblacksmithingconference





Scenes from the December meeting.

Photos by the Editor.



January 2023: Happy New Year!
Joe Humble Award Winner: Mike McLaughlin
Blacksmith Association of Missouri

“That’s just crazy talk right there!” declared Mike McLaughlin. Mike was clearly surprised when it was announced that he had won the Joe Humble Newsletter Editor of the Year Award. The announcement was made via live stream in an awards ceremony that prefaced the BAM box raffle drawing during the annual meeting of the ABANA Board of Directors in Johnstown, PA.

Mike has been a member of the Blacksmith Association of Missouri (BAM) for 16 years and a member of ABANA for 15 years. He says that blacksmithing was something he was interested in for a long time, but he never really knew how to get started. A friend told him about BAM and then he ran into Ed Harper, the 2nd Vice President of BAM at the time, at a steam show a few weeks later. Mike went to his first BAM meeting a few weeks later and the rest is history. He signed up at Tom Clark’s Ozark School of Blacksmithing and took the beginning class with Tsur Sudan. He’s been forging items ever since!

When asked about his time as Editor, Mike said, “My goal is to give the membership information from the meeting that will help them learn a new skill or process. I include a lot of the member’s work. Meeting trade items are a highlight. The different ideas will hopefully spark more creativity. BAM’s goal is education for the members and the public.”

A committee comprised of the past five Humble Award winners is responsible for nominating, deliberating, and eventually selecting the next Newsletter Editor of the Year. When his time comes to nominate another editor, Mike says he’ll be looking for someone who represents their group well and who shares both new and old ideas. We asked what advice he would give to a brand-new editor.

“Record the meeting and take pictures if you can. It gives you a timeline and an order to the processes you are writing about. I am horrible at taking notes. Focus on what the members are doing. Remember that you have members just starting out so don’t forget to include the basic skills.”

For now, Mike is enjoying being an editor and hopes everyone gets something meaningful from every issue. He also points out that he is lucky to have a great support staff that helps with pictures and articles.

Both the fire poker and shovel were forged as trade items for BAM meetings.





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