



Balcones Forge Dispatch

President's Corner

April 2013



What a great weekend. For some, it was more like a week but, we did have a great Bluebonnet Demo. Mark Aspery had workshops on Thursday and Friday. On Thursday, using 3/4" sucker rod, they made punches, drifts and chisels. After proper heat treating, they progressed to punching and drifting holes. Friday's class and in a

process of hot repousse, made an acanthus leaf. From there we progressed to actually making some of the tools needed from 3/4" sucker rod. The workshop each day had 10 students attending. Saturday took us into the Demo. I have never seen a turnout like we had at this one. The reception was so good that Mark Aspery has agreed to come back next year. The focus on next year's workshops is leaning towards forge welding and joinery. The dates are being worked on and we will let you know as soon as we can.

What is the definition of a Blacksmith?

Mark's answer was, a blacksmith should be capable of making their own tools. We may be able to beat hot metal but, we are not necessarily a blacksmith. When we are capable of making our own tools, we have earned the title.

What is the difference between an Apprentice and a Master?

Both make mistakes in their work. The Master recognizes the problem and makes the proper correction early on.

How is steel and Dinty Moore Beef Stew similar?

The explanation for this one was very long. The comparison mentioned many of the similarities and in the end, both are best when heated thoroughly and slowly.

Meeting Date is April 27

President's message continued on page 2



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Again, the Bluebonnet Demo was a great success. This success cannot be attributed to Mark Aspery or any other individual. This was a group effort that, without the work of all involved could have never happened. I would like to thank all of those that worked to make the demo what it was.

We have most of the year filled up.

April 27- Boerne Ag. Museum – Boerne, Texas
Joe Travieso – Demonstrator
Will forge & heat treat a Damascus blade.
Trade Item – Nutcracker

May 18- Texas Natural and Country Swing Music Festival – San Marcos, Texas
We are allowed to sell at this event.
Dress up if you have the clothes.
Trade Item – Repousse leaf or object, Mark Aspery style.

June 29- James Helm – Elmendorf, Texas
We will get you more details

July & August -Too hot to forge.
Suggestion -M.O. Ranch in Hunt, Texas
See the work of Eric Riesel, 1930s Blacksmith

September- Date will be October 5th in Oldenburg, Texas
This is another event where we will work with HABA and North Texas Blacksmiths.
The cupolas will be built and the charcoal made. We will have an iron smelt and each group should return home with 10 to 20 pounds of wrought iron from the bloom. This will be one that you do not want to miss.

October 26- Whitley's in Devine, Texas
I know it is far for many. We have room for those that may want to bring an RV or tent. It is okay to show up on Friday (might get some extra forge time in) and if the after party goes too long and strong, stay until Sunday. We are planning to barbeque again and maybe even take a field trip to Stroud's Blacksmith Shop in Devine.

November and December are still in the works.

President's message continued on page 3

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President's message continued from page 2

What would like to do?

Steel Mill in Seguin, Texas
Sculpture at TDS – Buda, Texas

Who would you like to see?

Dave Koenig
Pat McCarty
Jim Propelli
John and Becky Little – from Canada
Jeff James

Workshops-

Smithin Magician type tools
Gas Forge
Coal Forge – May need these for next
years workshops.

This isn't my organization. It is OURS. Let us know what you want to do and would like to see. Step up and give us a hand and together, we can make it happen.

Hope everyone had a great Easter,

Jerry Whitley
President, Balcones Forge

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TIME TO PAY

Your dues, that is!

\$20 per year if you want to get the newsletter electronically. For five dollars more, you can get print editions in the mail; your choice.



The newest Lifetime Member of Balcones Forge is William Bastas. Not only is he one of the founders of the organization, nearly everyone has benefited from his teaching.

Photo by Gerald Pollard

WWW.BALCONESFORGE.ORG

SECRETARY'S NOTES FOR MARCH 2013

Corporate Business:

- Iron Smelt demo at Oldenburg was discussed.
- Mark Aspery has been offered and has accepted the opportunity to return next year for the Bluebonnet Demo. The possibility of extra class days was put forth for consideration.
- Due to low turnout at the all volunteer Pioneer Days at the Pioneer Farm Museum, the enticement of a free pass for the Bluebonnet Demo registration fee was put forward and discussed.
- The building additional coal forges for the next demo was put forward by Jim Elliot; there was vigorous discussion as to the need for the expenditure of time, effort, and funds. As of the close of the meeting, there was no real consensus and the matter remains open for further discussion.
- In view of his busy schedule and inability to attend meetings, George Graham may step down from the Board, with his okay. Alan Lee has been contacted and has agreed to be his replacement should George resign.

Review of Classes and Demonstrations:

The weekend of the March 23-24 was the annual Bluebonnet Demo, this year our guest was Mark Aspery. Mark taught two workshops on the Thursday and Friday preceding the weekend. I was fortunate to attend the Friday workshop.

On Friday Mark taught a beginner's repousse class. We took a sheet metal acanthus leaf template and used a variety of chasing tools and hammers to create the three dimensional leaf often used to enhance large scale metal installations, such as gates. We also used sucker rod, a readily available resource, to create a chasing tool per Mark's instruction. After the tools were made, Mark embarked on a discussion of heat treatment and metallurgical information, which proved to be incredibly easy to understand and apply in the home forge. Mark was a wonderful instructor, I believe everyone had a great time and learned an incredible amount of useful information from this world-renowned blacksmith.

Saturday was dedicated to a demonstration for the general membership involving many of the techniques covered in the Thursday and Friday workshops. Mark is a very entertaining demonstrator and his relaxed approach kept everyone captivated. After the demonstration, we enjoyed a meal and the real fun began. Vince and his crew of runners launched the Annual Auction with humor and skill. Each item was carefully inspected and described by Vince whose dry humor made the audience roar with laughter and open their wallets. I believe every item offered received bids and found a new home, providing the group with funds for our next year of blacksmithing adventures.

Sunday found Mark demonstrating Colonial hardware, highlighting punching, drifting, welding and many other smithing skills. He discussed various methods for determining the proper amount of material needed to complete each piece. Once again he kept the audience entertained while providing a wealth of information to our general membership. He also discussed the heat-treating process and metallurgical information with regard to the home blacksmith.

Other Business:

There was no trade item this month.

Laurie Wicker
Secretary, Balcones Forge



Mark Aspery put on a great show for Balcones Forge. He demonstrated a deep knowledge of the skills of a hammer smith as well as exceptional teaching skills.



Mark forged a hot cut chisel from 3/4" sucker rod, heat treated it and then cut a piece of **cold** 1/8" flat. The edge of the chisel looked new when he was done.



Need a pair of tongs? Mark says you need to learn to make your own. He has been a smith since his teens and makes it look easy!





Above, Mark adds detail to an acanthus leaf.

Below, one of the leafing hammers Mark brought for the students to use.



Jerry Whitley celebrated his birthday during the Bluebonnet weekend and Ed bought a sheep at the auction. Who says blacksmiths don't know how to have fun?



Most photos by Vince Herod. Jerry Achterberg took the one above.



Join blacksmiths from around the world for [Forge300](#), an international blacksmithing event held in the reconstructed 17th century French [Fortress of Louisbourg](#), located on the stunning island of Cape Breton in Nova Scotia, Canada.

2013 marks the 300th anniversary of the Fortress of Louisbourg; the largest historical reconstruction project in North America. Louisbourg300, is a grand fête celebrating the founding of Ile Royale-modern day Cape Breton Island-with Louisbourg as its capital.

The [Cape Breton Blacksmiths Association](#) is partnering with the Fortress of Louisbourg Association and [Louisbourg300](#) to host Forge300, Cape Breton's first international blacksmithing event.

Held within the awesome Fortress of Louisbourg, from July 4-7, 2013, [Forge300](#) will bring together top professional blacksmiths from around the world to celebrate the craft and culture of traditional and contemporary blacksmithing during the Louisbourg300 celebration. Blacksmiths from near and far will be travelling to Cape Breton to participate and some of the demonstrating smiths include: Lorelei Sims, Michael Budd, Peer Meering and John Mason.

Already being touted as "the place to visit in Canada in 2013" by [vacay.ca](#), Louisbourg300 is going to be a grand celebration where "vibrant cultures meet diverse heritage and awe-inspiring vistas in a celebration of sea and stories, music and military, community and cuisine".

To register for the event or to obtain more information please visit [www.cbblacksmiths.com](#) or contact the Cape Breton Blacksmiths Association at 902 756 4766 or [info@cbblacksmiths.com](#)

APRIL MEETING DIRECTIONS

Directions from San Antonio: Take I-10 West to Boerne. Exit Highway 46 (towards New Braunfels) and follow Hwy 46 East to City Park Road. Turn right onto City Park Road. The Museum entrance is on the right at 102 City Park Road.

Directions from Austin: Take I-35 South towards New Braunfels. Turn onto Hwy 46 West towards Boerne. Take a left onto City Park Road. The Museum entrance is on the left just past the Kendall County Fairgrounds.

See the map on the backpage of this newsletter or check out the museum website at:

[www.agmuseum.us](#)

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



Jim Elliot is the man with the plan. Next time you see Jim be sure to thank him for all the hard work he does in organizing the Bluebonnet Demo and classes.

photo by Vince Herod

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

Norm Larson ~ 1935 - 2013

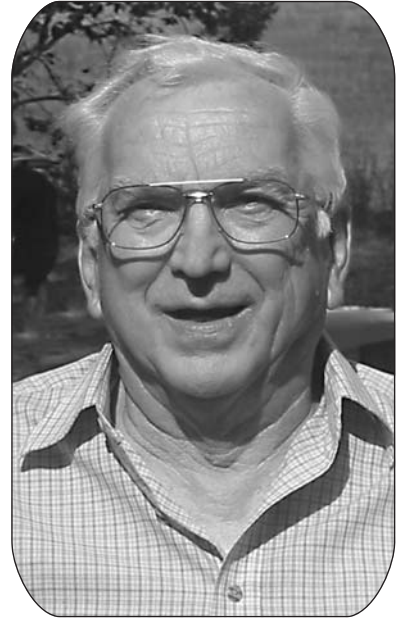
Norman August Larson died peacefully after a sudden illness on January 4 this year at Marian Regional Medical Center in Santa Maria. He was 77 years old.

For over thirty years, he ran Norm Larson Books, which specializes in blacksmithing and metalworking books. He traveled the country attending blacksmithing conferences and making many friends along the way.

A man of many talents, Norm enjoyed blacksmithing, beekeeping, reading and general tinkering. He loved travel and cooking, developing a near obsession with Thai food. He lived a full and happy life. Norm was a much-loved husband, a wonderful father, a doting papa, a caring brother, a loyal friend and a truly good man. We will miss him greatly.

Norm Larson was one of us who were at all the CBA events and talked about how it was when it all started 35 years or so ago. And like most things, with time the deeds we did get grander with the telling over time.

In Norm's case, what he did for CBA and blacksmiths in America did get grander with time. He influenced more blacksmiths on a regular daily basis than anyone else: many blacksmiths spend way more hours looking over their book collections for ideas and inspiration than at demos. Norm was really the first guy to nationally sell blacksmithing books. He was before the web, Amazon and all the tool dealers who carry books now. He loved blacksmithing and the community of people who make up CBA. He and his wife Nancy were always the friendly face at our get-togethers. It is Norm's type of selfless enthusiasm, interest and sharing that has brought blacksmithing to where it is today. We will miss Norm and will think of him every time we look at our books.



~ contributed by Michael Bondi and Norm's daughter, Brenda

March/April 2013

www.calsmith.org

California Blacksmith 3

Here is a link to a DIY Micro Forge:

<http://makeprojects.com/Project/-30-Micro-Forge/65/1#.UTjcKjfld8E>

Does anyone have some pictures from the December 2012 meeting that they would like to share with the unfortunate souls who were unable to attend? If so, please send them to your editor!

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

The Side Draught Flue. Mark Aspery.

The flue was made from 10-inch ID 1/8 wall pipe.

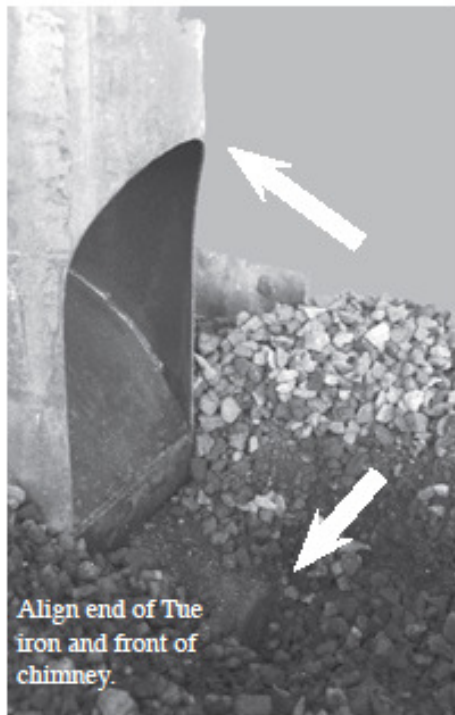
A smoke shelf of 1/4-inch plate was added at approx. 45 degrees.

The dimensions of the flue opening are approx 14-inches tall and 7 1/2-inches wide.

A two inch step was welded in at the bottom of the opening.

Shown is a 13 foot tall chimney.

This chimney has been fitted to a Side Blast forge. The forward edge of the chimney is level with the tip of the Tue. Iron in the forge pan.



Editor's note: This article was submitted by Mark Thomas. Original article published on iforgeiron.com

Kropa, Radovljica

The following information about the village of Kropa is from Wikipedia, the free on-line encyclopedia

Located in Slovenia (Coordinates: 46°17'30.25" N 14°12'18.58"E) and having a population of 839 (from the 2002 census), Kropa is a settlement in the Municipality of Radovljica in the Upper Carniola region of Slovenia. It is known for its traditional smithies which produce a variety of decorative metal fittings.

Metalworking has an ancient tradition in Kropa with evidence of metalworks from Celtic times in the wider area and the earliest furnaces actually in Kropa from the 14th century onwards.



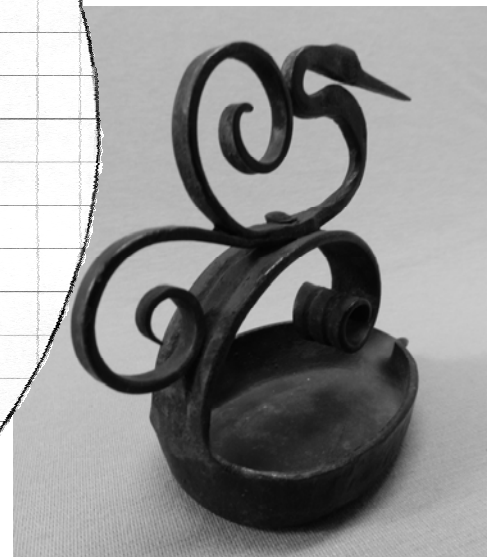
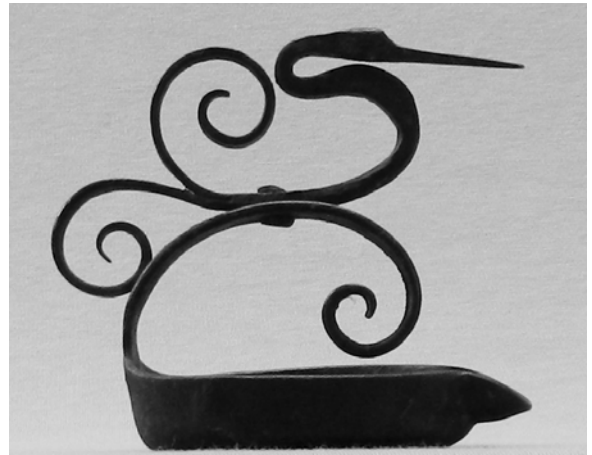
Kropa in 1689, note the diverted river that runs past the buildings in the lower left corner of the picture.

There is information on the Kropa ironwork museum on the internet. Photos of other "Kropa ironwork" can also be seen by doing an image search.

This Kropa oil lamp is 3-7/8" tall, 4-1/4" wide and 2-1/4" deep. The base has a depth of about 3/4" and because it's worked, measures between a 12 & 14 gauge sheet steel thickness. The bird material is 3/16" x 3/32" at the tail, 5/32" square at the neck and 5/16" x 3/32" in the rivet area. The handle is 12 gauge and is 5/8" wide – and is integral to the flat pattern of the base. The scroll is 13/16" at the end of the fishtail.

Pattern for
oil lamp base
includes handle

1 square=1/4"





Jenny and I were lucky enough to visit O'ahu in February. While we didn't see a lot of forged iron work, we did see these fine metal gates, some great sunsets and we learned about the Blacksmith Plover. Did you know there was a bird named after us blacksmiths?

Blacksmith Plover
Vanellus armatus



Metallic 'tink, tink, tink' call
This plover's alarm call suggests a blacksmith's hammer striking an anvil. Like all plovers, it is a bird of open spaces, even nesting on a simple scrape on bare ground near lakes, waterholes, rivers and marshes.

The foraging style of plovers is "watch-run-peck-stop." Their Hawaiian cousin, the Pacific golden plover (kolea) does the same. Kolea migrate to Hawai'i seasonally, but the blacksmith plover in Africa only migrates locally in response to seasonal rainfall.

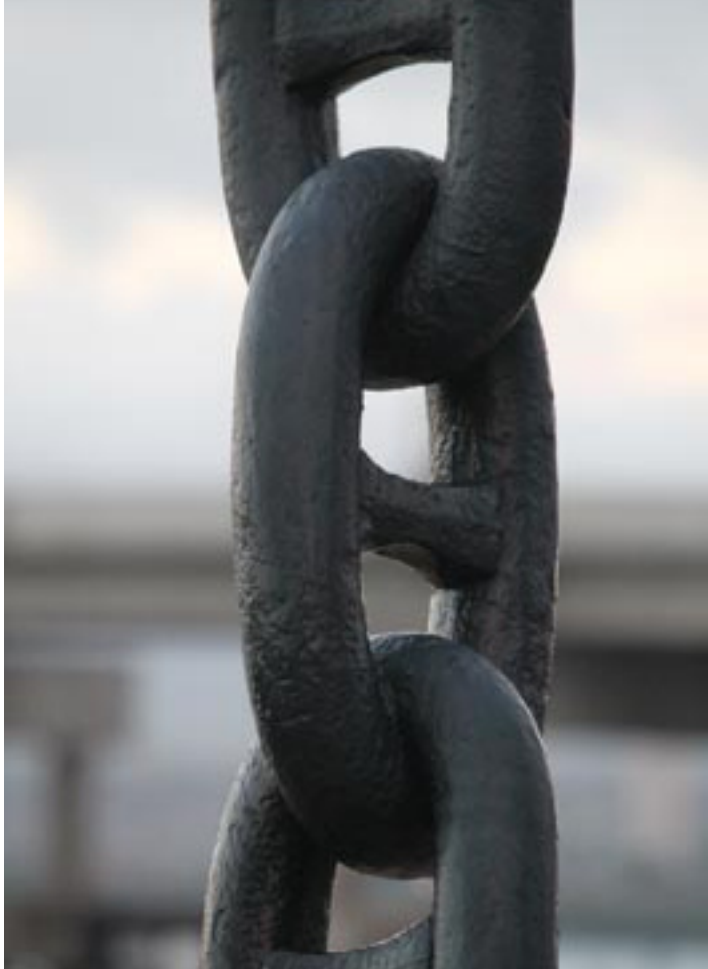
Disruptive coloration
Blacksmith plovers have a color pattern that help conceal them from predators along muddy shores. The pattern causes visual disruption because it does not coincide with the shape and outline of the animal's body. The eggs are also camouflaged. Note the two eggs circled to the left of the foraging female pictured here.

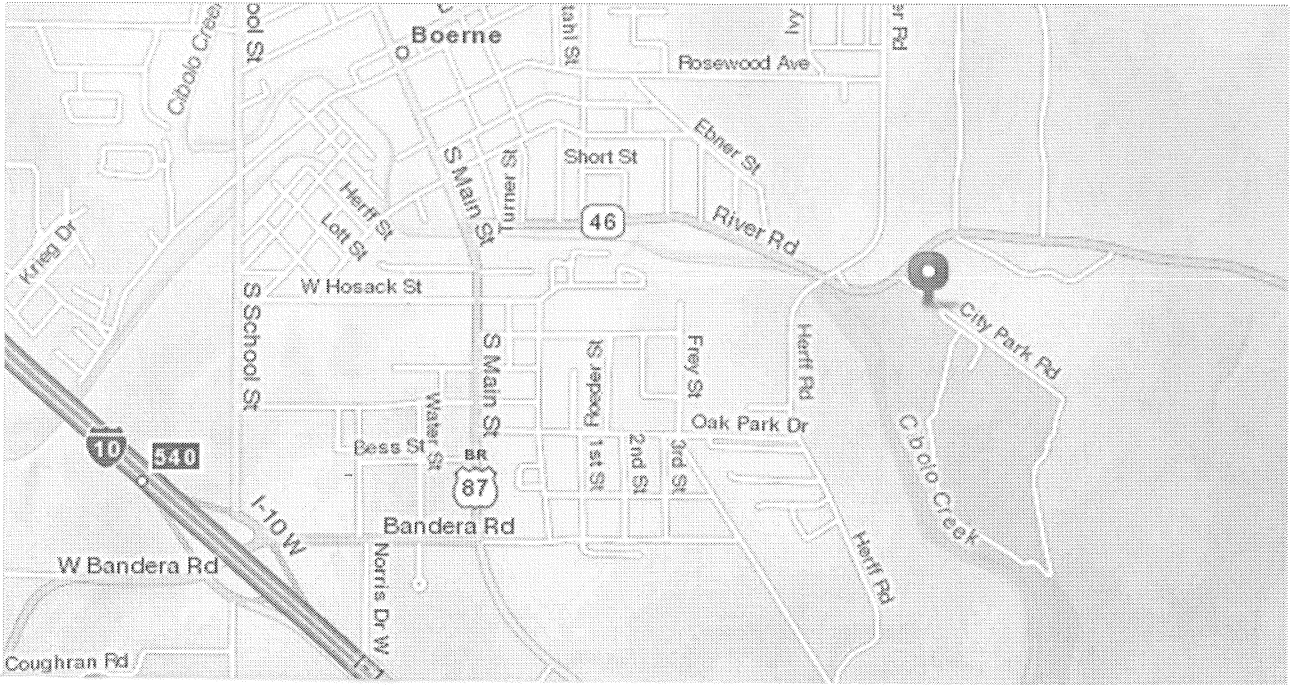




How would you like to forge a chain like the one used on the Arizona? In fact, if you look close at the picture below, you can see there were three anchors. One was used in calm waters, two in rough and the third was a spare.

photos by Vince Herod





Map to the Ag Museum in Boerne. Look for directions inside on page 9.

Return Service Requested

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