



Blacksmiths of Central Texas

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December 2007



THE PREZ SAYS:

Wow! Another year has come and gone. Can you believe it? For Balcones Forge, it has been a very good year! Dorothy Stiegler wowed us with her skills and knowledge at our Bluebonnet Workshop in March, and our own Dave Koenig showed us that we don't need to go far to find excellent talent. Each monthly meeting was a time to learn new things and to get together for some fun time. I dare say it would be hard to find a nicer group of folks.

As we jump into another year, I ask you to become more involved in some way. Your input and help can make a big difference. Here are a few ideas. I bet you can find time for a couple:

- Make more meetings.
- Call up someone close and carpool – it's more fun and helps with the gas.
- Write an article or book review for the newsletter.
- Resolve to make more trade items.
- Bring your family to the meetings.
- Make two items for the auction instead of one.
- Buy a t-shirt or hat.
- Give the Board your ideas on things you would be interested.
- Host a meeting.

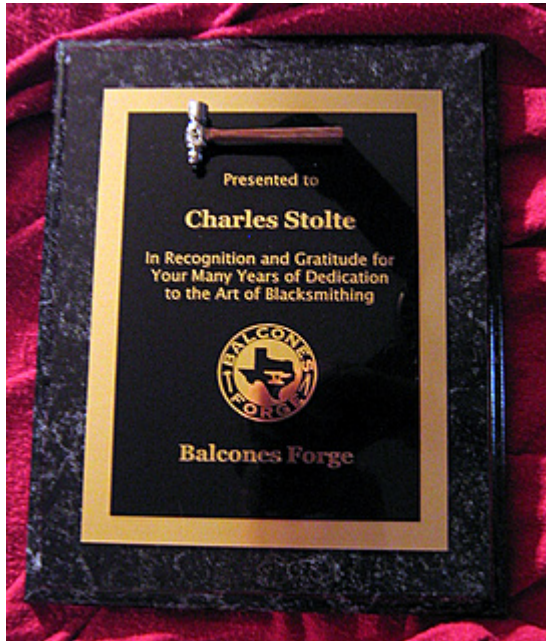
Thanks to all for making 2007 a successful year. From the whole organization to you, have a wonderful Christmas and prosperous New Year!

See you on the 29th,
Rudy

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

IN MEMORIAM
CHARLES HERMAN STOLTE
NOVEMBER 11, 1931-DECEMBER 10, 2007

It is with the deepest sadness that we say good bye to Mr. Charlie. He will be missed.



Mr. Charlie thanks the membership for his recent award at the October 2007 meeting of Balcones Forge.



Charlie Stolte photo by Harry Cabluck

MEETING INFO

Our host for the December 29th meeting, Roy Bellows, will demonstrate creating branding irons. Bring any you may have to the meeting for show-n-tell.

Roy had this to say, "Frank Turley once said that a blacksmith could earn a living by specializing in branding irons. I've never met anyone who did, but I have made my share of them. Done the old way they can be a real challenge to your forging skills. But however you make them it's fun to burn your initials into stuff so you can claim it. Kids love the idea, but so do business execs who put them on their mantlepieces as trophies."

"Bring any branding irons you may have for Show And Tell, and we'll talk about making them, "calling" them, registering them, etc."

Roy also writes, "For a trade item I would like to do any letter(s) of the alphabet, whether branding iron or not. Use your imagination. I wonder what word we will spell when they are all together?"

Great idea Roy. Can I buy a vowel?

The address for the meeting is:

111 N. Cedar St., Buda, TX 78610

Start time is 9:30am.

See you all at the last meeting of 2007.

Rudy

PS. The rumor mill says there will likely be some extra good snacks at this meeting!

A WORD TO THE WISE

The Balcones Forge Board has chosen an award-winning blacksmith to be our demonstrator for the 2008 Bluebonnet Workshop on March 29-30.

More info to come, but that is a busy time of year in Marble Falls, so you just might want to get your lodging reservations taken care of soon. It is bluebonnet time, wedding time, and a myriad of events all take place in this beautiful community by the lake at the end of March.

CAPS FOR KIDS

Centaur Forge is collecting caps and hats to distribute to kids at MD Anderson who are going through treatment and have lost their hair. Please donate your NEW caps. (You really don't need 47 caps!) Bring to any meeting and we will deliver them to Centaur Forge for this worthy project.

FOR SALE

Ok guys, here's the final figure on my 25# LG, \$3,495, firm. This machine has been pretty well gone through, had 2 sets of dyes. I sent the moving parts off to Keri and Sid, and Sid personally delivered them back to me a few weeks later.

Call me at 830-278-1832 and leave a message please. I can help load, have forklift.

Also have 50, 100, and 250 # LG's.

Robert Hensarling

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SECRETARY'S REPORT

The November 2007 meeting was held on Saturday the 24th in the period blacksmith shop at Jourdan-Bachmann Pioneer Farms located at 10621 Pioneer Farms Drive in north Austin.

Pioneer Farms is an 80 acre living history museum owned by the Heritage Society of Austin and is wholly operated by volunteers. There is one original homestead on the property. Two other homesteads have been relocated there along with shops, barns and other buildings. They all are being built or restored to their original construction details and furnishings to be displayed in a community setting. Many thanks to our hosts Jim Schmidt and Robert Swim for their efforts on Saturday. They both generously donate their time every week demonstrating and working to make this location a place where anyone can visit and learn how people lived 150 years ago. You can sign up for classes in blacksmithing, woodworking, wood turning, spinning, knitting, quilting, weaving, candle making, cooking, leatherworking, rope making and much more by logging on to www.pioneerfarms.org. You can also sign up to donate your time as a volunteer.

Imagine a cold day with near freezing rain and mist with wind gusts strong enough to blow the horses out of the field, add 10 diehard mentally deficient hard core members, and you have a picture of the November meeting. It was the polar opposite of the weather we enjoyed for the meeting last month at Pheil Forge. This November meeting was meant to be a tour of the farm; but the inclement weather and resultant muddy roads limited our activities. In the blacksmith shop we huddled around the forge's meager fire, the heat of which was largely unfelt as it was blown from the firebox in wintry gusts. We held our meeting there and afterwards visited only the James Bell homestead and kitchen where it would have been great to have hot cider and cookies, but that was not the case.

There were no demonstrations planned for this meeting. Instead, the focus was on future meeting

places for Balcones Forge. Jerry Achterberg did show us his jig for making small Christmas Tree shaped ringers out of 3/16" steel round bar as well as a couple of beautifully done horseshoes with the arms of centered Frederick crosses split and wrapped around the horseshoe.

John Crouchet reported that most of the organizational details for the upcoming Bluebonnet Demonstration in March have been finalized. He reminded us that now is the time to start working on auction items for that meeting. We really appreciate John for his dedication and efforts.

The trade item for this month's meeting was something made from either non ferrous metals or a mixture of non ferrous and steel. Four members participated bringing: a Frederick cross of copper, a spatula of copper and steel, a copper feather and an art piece comprised of a copper bowl with a rising tapered steel feature. They were all impressive pieces demonstrating the continuing improvement in the expertise of Balcones Forge.

The meeting next month will be at Roy Bellows' new shop in Buda, Texas, south of Austin just off of Interstate Highway 35.

Tom Lupton
Balcones Forge Secretary

MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2008

So, which month would you like to host a meeting? Come on, show off the hard work you put into building your shop, or all the fantastic equipment you have. Besides, it's a great reason to clean up the place -- you just might find that tool you've been missing. Contact Vice President, Jerry Achterberg (treefarm@swbell.net). We have most of next year open at this time, so get your spot early.

We still need a January meeting!!!!

Scenes from
the October
meeting.

Photos by
Vince Herod



ABANA

When a friend is down and at a low point, that's when they need support the most.

ABANA seems to be ailing. A decrease in membership combined with a smaller attendance at their bi-annual conferences has put a dent into their revenue stream.

On the rumor circuit I hear whisperings of debt and board woes. I have seen web blogs dedicated to the discussion of creating another organization either within or outside of ABANA. Should we throw out the baby with the bath water or try and fix what we have?

What does ABANA do for me? I belong to the CBA, a strong organization with a good magazine and annual conferences. Do I need ABANA?

I believe that we (not just me) do need ABANA as the organization serves to facilitate and maintain a North American blacksmith network. Let's look at our CBA.

Where do we go to find the demonstrators for our successful conferences? ABANA hosts a robust demonstrator list with per-diem costs and area of expertise. If that list went away, where now would we find the new up and coming demonstrators? If our conferences suffer because we can no longer get the 'new blood' demonstrators will the CBA suffer in the long term from the same blight as ABANA, decreased membership and poor conference attendance? Joe Koches did a good job at the Ferndale conference addressing spiraling conference costs, but we still need the demonstrator.

As an aspiring blacksmith and business owner I need to list myself in the demonstrator list on the ABANA web site. Where do you go if you want to see all the current blacksmith schools or other conferences listed on one page? The ABANA web site.

Where do the 'new blood' demonstrators go for their education? Where can they find someone who teaches them something new? The ABANA conference! The ability to observe and sit down and talk with a high concentration of accomplished smiths is a valuable resource.

Some ABANA affiliates do not have the membership to support the production of a good magazine and rely on ABANA publications for 'How To' articles, etc. If the ABANA magazines disappear, what then? How will trade advertisements for hand-tools, power hammers, books or courses be listed?

OK, so you might not be a member of ABANA now or ever have been. But when someone tells you of a product or a course, where did that information come from?

A good friend of mine may run for the ABANA board. I said that I would support him where I could. He told me that the first step was to re-join ABANA. I have re-joined and now I'm asking you to consider joining.

Yours, like mine, is the membership that ABANA needs and yours, like mine, is the input they desire both in terms of magazine content and organizational direction.

Mark Aspery.



Affiliate Letter November 2007

11/27/2007

The new Board and Officers of ABANA send their greetings. The 2008 Board met at the National Ornamental Metal Museum in Memphis on November 15 through 17, 2007. Many thanks are due to Jim Wallace of the NOMM for his excellent hospitality. We have a lot of work to do this year and we have the talents and energy to get it done.

ABANA has a new slate of Officers for 2008. Chris Winterstien is our new President. Dorothy Stiegler and Rome Hutchings are First and Second Vice Presidents respectively. Will Hightower is the new Treasurer and Eric Ryser continues as Secretary. The board has several new members as you have seen in the last Anvil's Ring. And we are always looking for help.

Your Affiliate Liaison Board Member is Paul Boulay, yours truly. I was appointed to fill the board seat of Dave Mudge who resigned after many years of service to ABANA and the Affiliate Liaison position. Dave will be sorely missed.

For over 30 years ABANA has been the center and the glue that propelled the re-emergence of blacksmithing as a vital craft and medium of expression. Over time the local groups became stronger and in many cases produce publications and conferences that are at least as compelling for many of their members as those of the national organization. However, affiliates come in all shapes and sizes. And the resources that ABANA makes available will vary considerably as well. ABANA's scholarship and grants programs are in place to assist individuals and affiliate groups in achieving educational objectives.

The attached note from Mark Aspery explains his view of the continuing value of ABANA to the craft. We will be focusing attention on the areas that Mark points out as of particular value to affiliates. (Note to newsletter editors: This was published the California Blacksmith Magazine Nov./Dec. 2007. Both the CBA Editor and Mark Aspery have given their gracious permission to reprint this content.)

Chris will make a President's letter available shortly with many more details on the board meeting and ABANA's plans as well as analysis of several issues from the recent past. In case you are wondering, the Board voted unanimously in support of the 2010 and future conferences.

ABANA is looking for the assistance of our affiliates to attract new members. Several of the board members including Chris Winterstein and Dorothy Stiegler are donating their services as demonstrators; some off-board blacksmiths including Dan Nauman are participating as well. Affiliates (or groups of affiliates meeting together) who have 15-20 new or returning paid-up ABANA members can take part. Chris is the lead demonstrator on this program. He will donate a full day of demonstrating at a weekend event anyplace within half a day's drive of his current locations in Pennsylvania or North Carolina. Full details and availability dates on application. Affiliates may offer to raffle off these demonstrator's services as private tutors as well.

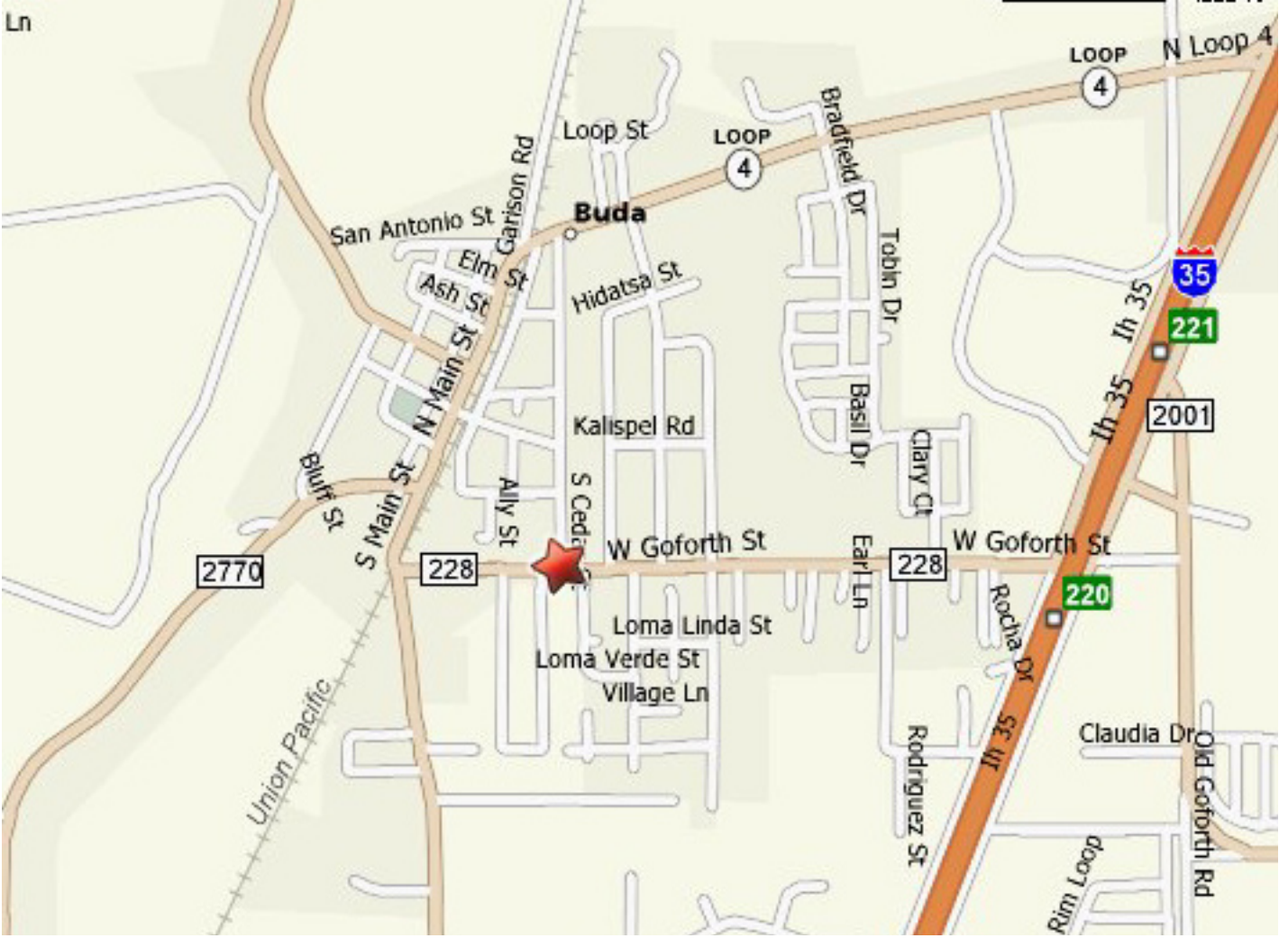
ABANA is actively looking for ways to serve its members better. To that end we have created a membership survey to better understand the characteristics and needs of our members - this includes affiliate members who are not currently ABANA members. This is ready today as an Internet survey instrument. To take the survey, use this link with your web browser:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=tY9bZ9u_2f5lIPBVLm041k7w_3d_3d

We will also make the survey available as a paper document that can be mailed back to the ABANA central office. The survey will also be printed in the ABANA publications in order to cover those that don't have convenient Internet access. (Note to newsletter editors: the survey is available as a word file that you can insert in your publication if you desire.)

I welcome your feedback and look forward to working with all ABANA affiliates.

Best Regards,
Paul Boulay
ABANA Affiliate Relations Board Member



Vincent Herod
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