



### Officers

**President, Sue Murray**  
smurray@balconesforge.org  
512/924-9030

**Vice-President  
Jerry Achterberg**  
treefarm@swbell.net  
210/661-3293

**Treasurer, Rudy Billings**  
rudy@balconesforge.org  
512/461-7375

**Secretary, Tom Lupton**  
tlupmach@gmail.com  
512/441-0000

**Editor, Vince Herod**  
spotteddogforge@yahoo.com  
512/253-6045



# Blacksmiths of Central Texas

President's Corner...

December 2008

Well, we sure did have a great and successful workshop week with visiting blacksmith Gordon Williams. More than 30 members took advantage of this wonderful opportunity. We have received so many positive e-mails from folks who participated in the workshop and from those attending his demonstration the following Saturday. Gordon was fun, energetic, and very good at working with groups that included people with a broad range of skills. Not a minute was wasted with his ability to have us keep multiple irons in the fire. We will definitely have to do this again! This is the first time Balcones Forge has provided a training opportunity of this type, free for its members, and its success will certainly have us planning another one as we are able to. Thanks to all who donated equipment for the week and auction items, who helped during the workshop, who participated in the class, who helped organize for the demo and who helped clean up afterwards. Most importantly, thanks to John Crouchet who so generously lent us his shop for the event and Saturday demo, as well as making the arrangements with Gordon. Of course thanks also goes to Carolyn Crouchet who put up with us yet again and who picked up our tasty Saturday BBQ lunch.

Now that we have our successful workshop behind us, we are working on the annual Bluebonnet Demo, so keep your eyes and ears open and we'll pass along information as soon as we have some for you.

Sue Murray, President

**MEETING DATE IS DECEMBER 13**

## **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

The November meeting was held early this month, so that we would avoid the Thanksgiving holidays. We conducted a little business, then had a special treat, as Gordon Williams, who was here to give us a four-day workshop, stayed to do an all day demonstration for members.

On the business end, we have new t-shirts sporting the newly recreated Balcones Forge logo. They are black and white and come in all sizes, from small through XXXL. Caps are on the way. Get 'em while they're hot! We also have t-shirts and women's tank tops with the original logo in all sizes and in a variety of colors. It's getting cooler, but the ladies' tanks go great underneath flannel! New patches are also available in living color. If you come to meetings regularly and you would like to help out, we are looking for someone to be the t-shirt and cap custodian. I will guarantee you that we will only ask you to do it for a period of one year. Please think about it. One perk, you'll get first pick when new ones come in! We are also looking for someone to keep the coffee maker and to bring it and snacks to our big demos. Balcones Forge will reimburse the coffee custodian for the snacks and other coffee supplies. Please contact Sue Murray if you'd like to volunteer for either of these roles.

The Saturday demo was high-paced and action-packed. Gordon demonstrated an arrow and shaft, a wine rack with grape leaves, vines and tendrils, a Steer-head fireplace broom handle, a rasp snake, a yucca flower, melting a marble into a punched hole on a hook and a cowboy that looked just like Harvey! Many of these projects he worked on at the same time. He showed us a number of quick and easy techniques for texturizing, veining, fullering, scrolling, making leaves and other forging functions, some interesting jigs and tools he'd made for these projects, and he kept us entertained with his humor and tips.

During lunch, we held another successful auction. There was no trade item this month, as members were asked to donate an auction item instead.

Rudy Billings tried his hand at being auctioneer this time and did just fine, although I'm sure he'll be happy to have our fast-paced, down-to-business pro, Vince, back.

The meeting and demonstration lasted until about 4:30pm, then we helped John get his shop put back in working order, so he could pick back up where he left off the week before.

Sue Murray, Substitute Secretary

## **DUES ARE DUE**

The Balcones Forge fiscal year is Jan 1 through Dec 31. What does that mean???

Your dues are due!!!! Unless you have already paid for 2009 your membership will expire at the end of this month.

Our Secretary or Treasurer will be glad to accept your dues payment so keep those cards and letters coming their way.

Dues are still the bargain basement price of \$15.00 per year!

## **TRADE ITEM**

Our host for the December meeting, Lee Lanford, has chosen a spoon as the Trade Item for the month of December.

If you are new or just haven't been paying attention, the Trade Item is your chance to take home the work of one of your fellow Balcones Forge members. What's the catch???

All together now.....

**YOU GOTTA MAKE ONE TO TAKE ONE!**

So, make a spoon and bring it to the December meeting.

You will be glad you did.

## MEETING INFO

Lee Lanford will be the host of the December meeting. We will meet on the 13th to give us some distance from the holidays.

Lee's shop is called Heart of Texas Metalworks and is located at 14405 Kimbro West Rd, Manor, TX 78653 which is about 2 miles off Hwy 290 and about 5 past (East of) Manor.

He's still finishing up his office and hopes to have his sign ready by then.

Wait, a waterjet cutting machine and no sign.....go figure. He must be too busy with work!

He will demo his very serious water jet machine and will have hot forge ready for anyone who is willing to share what they learned at the Gordon Williams classes or demonstration.

We will need two or three 20-minute demonstrations. With 32 people who just completed a full-day hands-on workshop with Gordon Williams, we should have no trouble filling these spots. Just show us part of what you learned. Pick a particular technique and show your stuff. Contact Jerry Achterberg (treefarm@swbell.net) to sign up.

The meeting will begin at our standard time of 9:30am.

Check out the website at:

[www.hotmetalworks.com](http://www.hotmetalworks.com)



## PATCHES FOR SALE

If you can't get enough of the great new (and in color) Balcones Forge logo, here is your chance for more. We now have patches for sale!!

Add one to you favorite letter jacket and you will be the coolest kid in school.

## DEFINITION

**DRILL PRESS:** A tall upright machine useful for suddenly snatching flat metal bar stock out of your hands so that it smacks you in the chest and flings your coffee across the room, splattering it against that freshly painted part you were drying.

You can walk with a plastic leg.  
You can work with a plastic arm.  
You CAN'T see with a plastic eye!  
Wear those safety glasses.....

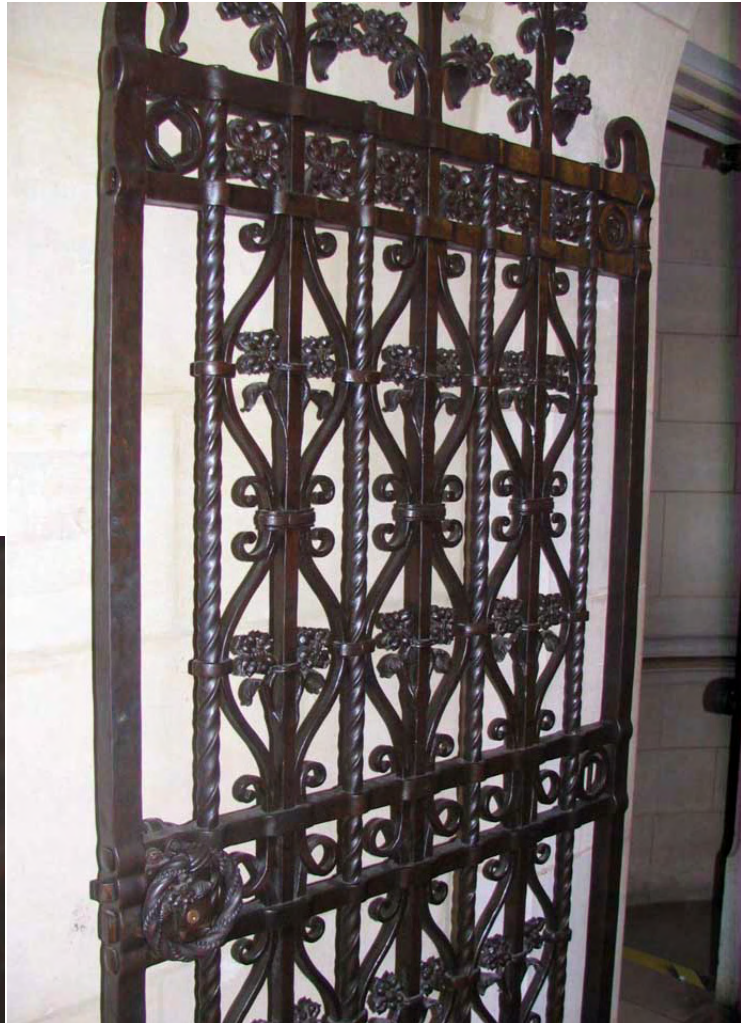
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W W W . B A L C O N E S F O R G E . O R G



Gordon Williams

photo by Gerald Pollard



Recently the dreaded “real job” took me to our nation’s capital. While in DC I had the great fortune to find my way to the National Cathedral.

The ironwork is beyond belief with the majority of the work credited to Samuel Yellin and Nol Putnam.

Pictures are not allowed in the sanctuary but no one said I couldn’t shoot in the lobby!

If you are ever in Washington, make time to see this amazing work for yourself.

Vince Herod, Editor



## **AFFILIATE LETTER NOVEMBER 2008**

**11/20/2008**

Hello ABANA Affiliate Members,

My name is Bruce Woodward. I am a new ABANA Board Member from Ohio and your new Affiliate Liaison member. I am the new kid on the block. Actually I am no kid. I am one of the gray beards but I still swing a mean hammer. One of the silver tops who, based on ABANA's survey, make up well over half of the blacksmiths in the US. My Board candidacy was based on attracting new people into blacksmithing. Evidently there are a lot of blacksmiths out there who feel the same as I do and took the time to vote for me. I thank you for that. Presently there are many very talented young smiths but not near enough. The veteran and established smiths are the core and stability of our affiliate groups. However attrition is taking far too many dedicated smiths lately. Local and international smiths who had once given so much of their time and efforts to the continuation and advancement of blacksmithing and asked for so very little in return. They asked us to just "pass it on". Well, as the man once said, "it is time to stand up and be counted". Our past and present ABANA Presidents Chris Winterstein and Rome Hutchings have said to find something you care about and work for it. I believe your rewards will be great.

With the economy of the world going into the pits, money is extremely tight for everyone. At the November ABANA Board Meeting of this year, the Board was very concerned with fiscal responsibility. We tried to cut costs where ever and whenever possible without drastically cutting services. Such as, you will notice a change in packaging and mailing of the Anvil's Ring. Even though we have slightly altered the AR, the ABANA Board is very protective of our publications. They are, along with the ABANA Conference, our flagships and our window to the world.

With the economy sour, it is very important, now more than ever before, for blacksmithing to be in the forefront of the general public's thoughts. Every blacksmith demonstration, every blacksmith exhibit, every blacksmith article is so important to remind the potential blacksmith customer that "Yes we can do your project and Yes we can do it well and Yes we will take only our share of what money is available".

We all know how much time and energy and expense goes into efforts to attract prospective blacksmiths from the general public, often with rather discouraging results. However there are a few groups, like the Boy Scouts through their Metalwork Merit Badge Program, who already have a beginning interest in blacksmithing. An interest that with encouragement and nurturing could grow into a lifelong passion. This program is an open door for blacksmithing to 3 million Scouts and 1 million adult advisors. Some of you are already certified Boy Scout Merit Badge Counselors or you have demonstrated at Scout events. I applaud you. However there is room for many more counselors. If this appeals to you, contact your local Boy Scout Council. Again, you may find it very rewarding. I would like to know just how many of our affiliate members are BSA Metalwork Merit Badge Counselors. If you are a counselor please send an email or letter to me stating also your affiliate and your local BSA council.

ABANA Board Member Kim Saliba has recently resigned from the Board for serious health reasons. Her energetic support at the past ABANA and Canlron Conferences will be greatly missed. We wish her Godspeed and safe journey.

ABANA has a number of new programs for its members this year such as health insurance. Check it out on our web site or contact ABANA's Central Office.

ABANA will also have a great Conference for all in June 2010 at Memphis, TN. The Conference is indeed ABANA's Window to the World. We mean to do it right. World renowned demonstrators, environmentally friendly tent camping, fiscally sound business workshops, universally acclaimed Affiliates Area, tantalizing tailgating, etc, etc. Details to follow in future installments.

For the past year, the ABANA Affiliate Letter has been written by Paul Boulay. He left some pretty big foot prints for me to follow in, however with Paul at my elbow for guidance and to keep me out of trouble and with your suggestions, we will do just fine.

Please stay in contact, Bruce Woodward

ABANA Affiliate Liaison Member  
Bruce Woodward  
6374 Lake Road West  
Madison, OH 44057  
woodwardiron1@roadrunner.com

ABANA Central Office  
15754 Widewater Drive  
Dumfries, VA 22025-1212  
abana@abana.org

## **OPENING ON THE ABANA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Date: Tue, 25 Nov 2008 22:44:08 -0600

I am contacting all of the ABANA Affiliates in regard to the vacancy on the Board of Directors due to the recent resignation of Kim Saliba.

We, the ABANA Board of Directors have contacted those who ran for board in the last election, of those three individuals, none are available at this time for nomination and appointment to the board.

At this time we open the nomination to the membership at large. If you know of an individual who is willing to serve on the ABANA Board of Directors to fill the remaining term of the vacancy which runs until November of 2010, please contact myself or any board member.

Better yet, any current ABANA member may contact myself or any board member to express their interest.

What does it take to serve on the board? Primarily, a computer with internet access via email and 4 hours a week. What other experience would be useful? Any experience in Organization, Business Management, Policy and Procedure, Financial/Budget, Grant Writing, Graphics, Publications, Internet Technology or Education are the most desirable skills we seek.

Thanks in advance for your assistance in helping your organization grow and prosper. The future of ABANA is the strength of our membership.

Best Regards,

Rome H. Hutchings, Chairman

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

**USE MAPQUEST OR  
GOOGLE MAPS TO  
FIND YOUR WAY TO  
THE DECEMBER 13  
MEETING!**

**I COULDN'T GET THEM TO COPY!**

PRESORTED  
FIRST-CLASS MAIL  
US POSTAGE PAID  
AUSTIN TX  
PERMIT NO. 45

Return Service Requested

Vincent Herod  
Spotted Dog Forge  
166 Granite Road  
Paige, TX 78659-4922