



Balcones Forge Dispatch

President's Corner

December 2013



A big thank you to Gary Hilton for a fantastic demo. The only downside of the whole event was the weather, which I'm sure was the reason for the lower turnout. Gary is an excellent-demonstrator, he had things laid out and gave great explanations at each step in the demo. I'm glad that I had the opportunity to attend and highly recommend attending any future demos that Gary may decide to pres-

ent. I'm hoping that Vince will be including the pictures of Gary's axe in this issue. And, may I suggest to Gary that an axe might go over well at the Bluebonnet auction if you have the time.

We have lots of upcoming events, December 14th we will be meeting at the Zilker park forge. This will be an open forge so bring your hammer and safety glasses. We've also been given the ok to set up a second forging station so if anyone has a portable forge they want to bring let me know. This is a great time for new smiths to come out and hit some hot metal while getting advice from more experienced members.

In January we will be meeting at Stevens Art Foundry, thank you Jerry Achterberg for the work on this one. The last weekend in January the American Bladesmiths Society expo is being held in San Antonio, this is a great event (and I really enjoy attending, so Jerry if we can make January an earlier meeting I'd appreciate it, hint hint).

February we will be at the Lee Brother's shop in Bryan for one of their fantastic demos.

Meeting Date is December 14

President's message continued on page 2



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President's message continued from page 1

March 29-30 we have Mark Aspery in again for the Bluebonnet demo. We will also have an annual Spring break event at Pioneer Museum so we need volunteers, I don't have the dates yet but it will be about mid March.

We are always looking for suggestions for meetings, so please let the board members know if you have any ideas.

I look forward to seeing you in December.

Matt Czosnek
President, Balcones Forge

MEETING REPORT FROM NOVEMBER

Meeting report for the November 23, 2013 meeting at Gary Hilton's Arctic enclave in Hunt, Texas

Cold.

Arctic Cold.

So cold it could turn your bones to powder; 32 degrees, for criminy's sake.

Such is the draw of one of the most talented members of our group, that 18 inhabitants of a semi-arid region of our country braved unfamiliar rain, ice and thrashing Arctic wind to attend a demonstration of how an ancient Nordic blacksmith would fashion from raw steel, a bearded war axe, unquestionably suited to be wielded with glee on any of the local weathermen. I looked it up, and it's not a felony.

Unfortunately the huge fire in Gary's coke forge did nothing to blunt the savage cold, but starting at 9:30 AM, did serve admirably well to put forging

heat into the ¾" X 2 ½" X 4 ½" piece of steel from which he hammered a Viking Bearded Axe. As an additional note of interest, Gary said this style of axe was in use during the Viking Age, 800-1100 AD.

The meeting opened with announcements of coming events by our newly elected President, Matt Czosnek and newly elected Vice President Jerry Achterberg. Matt informed us that the next meeting will be at Zilker Botanical Gardens in Zilker Park, Austin, Tx.

February's meeting will be hosted by the Lee brothers in Bryan. March's meeting will be the Bluebonnet Demo at John Crouchet's wonderful Texas Hill Country forge. If you haven't been there, go. If you are new to blacksmithing and want to learn about this fantastic practical artistic skill, do all you can to be there. You will not regret it.

Our Treasurer, Rudy Billings brought master blacksmith, Mark Asprey's new books for anyone to buy for \$50.00 a copy. It might seem like more than you want to spend, but it could take you years to gather this information by yourself; so in the long run, any money you spend on a blacksmith book, any blacksmith book, will be time gained, and money saved on many of your projects.

Matt reported that Centaur Forge, newly moved from New Braunfels to Ralph Ablenedo St. at South 1st in Austin, is very interested in hosting a meeting. This will definitely be on our schedule in the future. He also reported that our Balcones Forge group needs 10 hand-cranked blowers for the group to use in Balcones Forge sanctioned schools, as well as fire boxes, and related equipment. If you have any of these items and wish to make a tax deductible donation to Balcones Forge, please contact us through our website: www.balconesforge.com.

Aaron Tilton, who is Balcones Forge's go-to guy

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for shirts and caps reported that our costs for t-shirts and caps will be increased to about \$15.00 each. The shirts are on the way to us, but we need to make a decision about how many caps to order. Balcones Forge officers will attend to that detail in the near future to insure availability.

The next item on the agenda was "Iron in the Hat", an auction of donated items, the proceeds of which benefit Balcones Forge. The \$128.00 collected from the auction will be utilized to further the dissemination of the art of blacksmithing in the community.

I will here omit the details of how Gary made the axe during the demonstration. The process is well documented in Balcones Forge's November 2013 newsletter which you can access on the Balcones Forge website. Suffice it to say that Gary Hilton's demonstration was very informative and entertaining to us all.

Thank you, Gary, for your time and enviable energy.

Tom Lupton
Balcones Forge Member

DECEMBER MEETING INFO

December 14
Zilker Blacksmith Shop
Zilker Botanical Garden
2220 Barton Springs Rd
Austin, Texas
9:30 - 2:00

Grab your favorite forging hammer and come out to the quaint little blacksmith shop in the heart of the Botanical Garden. We'll have the fire going and the fun flowing. Bring your favorite project.

Attention Centaur Forge Customers

**OUR TEXAS STORE *HAS MOVED* TO
SERVE YOU BETTER!!**

New address:
632 Ralph Ablanado Drive
Suite 200
Austin, TX 78748
888-229-8877

How to find us:
Traveling North on I-35, take Exit 227
toward Slaughter Ln.
Stay straight to go onto S I-35.
Turn left onto W Slaughter Ln.
Turn right onto S 1st St.
Take the first right onto Ralph Ablanado.
Centaur Forge is on the left.

All New and Existing Customers will receive 10% off all purchases during their first visit at the new Austin location.
Good through December 31st

THE NEW BALCONES FORGE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Matt Czosnek, President
Jerry Achterberg, Vice President
Rudy Billings, Treasurer
Laurie Wicker, Secretary

John Crouchet
Jim Elliot
Vince Herod, Editor
Alan Lee
Jeff Lee
Jerry Whitley

JANUARY MEETING INFO

Larry Stevens will host at Stevens Art Foundry on Saturday, January 25th.

Meeting start at 9:30a. Mostly show-n-tell right now, but working on a program.

<http://www.stevensartfoundry.com/>

Located at 31806 Bartels Rd, Bulverde, TX 78163

From Hwy 46, go about 4.5 miles South on Blanco Rd to Bartels.

From 1604, go about 12 miles North on Blanco Rd and turn left on Adams and then right on Bartels.

Larry has been casting for more than 40 years and now works exclusively in silicone bronze.

Be sure to bring your camera, lot of things to see.



PLAN NOW FOR THE 2014 BLUEBONNET DEMO!

Two Days of Great Demonstrations by Mark Aspery

March 29-30

Mark your Calendars!

Balcones Forge has Mark Aspery Books
All 3 volumes:

- I - Basic Blacksmithing
- II - Leafwork
- III - Joinery

\$50 each -- no tax, no shipping, normal price \$59
Send your requests to Rudy@BalconesForge.org





FINISHED AXE FROM THE NOVEMBER MEETING

photo by Gary Hilton

WWW.BALCONESFORGE.ORG

Bringing Back *Iron in the Hat*

Iron in the Hat is an old blacksmith tradition and it looks like its time has come again! At meetings of iron bangers across the country, expenses are often paid by auctioning off small tools, interesting bits of iron or tool steel, or even finished iron work, all donated by the very same blacksmiths who are bidding! Yes, it's a an odd tradition, but blacksmiths have never been known for doing things like everybody else does them!

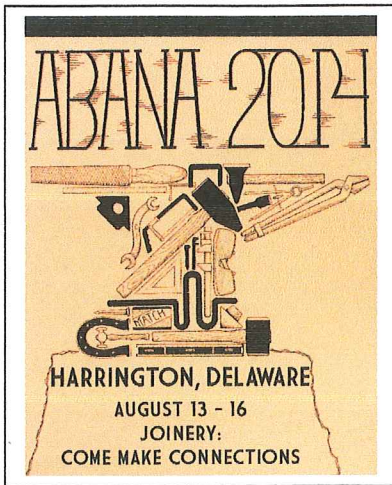
If you have been to any Balcones Forge meetings lately, then you are well aware that our major focus has been on building up a set of ten coal forges, anvils, leg vises, and hand-cranked blowers to use for our annual Bluebonnet Demo hands-on seminars and for teaching and demonstrating anywhere and everywhere throughout the year. Our immediate goal is to have ten coal forges ready to go in time for the triumphant return of Mark Aspery this coming April.

Mark has graciously agreed to conduct all-day, hands-on blacksmithing classes in the days before the big demo, teaching the fine points and techniques of joinery and coal forge operation. Of course, this is a fantastic opportunity for us all to learn from a true master!

Ten new forges is a tall order. We expect to spend some serious money in the next few months in order to get this done. We have a plan, and now we need some MONEY!

Oh, yeah, that brings us back to Iron in the Hat. Please bring something for the auction to each meeting. (Yes, we will do this every meeting.) Also, bring a little pocket money. You never know what goodies may appear! If we all get behind this, we can raise some real cash and make some of these blacksmithing dreams come true. Keep us in mind and THANKS!

John Crouchet



2014 CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

August 13-16, 2014, Harrington, Delaware

Registration for the ABANA 2014 Conference is now open! Use this form or call 423-913-1022 to register. **Until 1/15/2014**, full conference registration is \$125 for current ABANA members. Non member registration is \$175.

I plan to tailgate * yes no *The Central Office will contact you with more information.
 I plan to camp * yes no

Name: _____ ABANA ID # _____
 Street: _____
 City: _____ State/Prov: _____
 Zip/Postal Code: _____ Country _____
 Phone: _____ E-mail (confirmation only) _____

2014 REGISTRATION (PER PERSON): BEFORE 1/15/2014 \$175-NON MEMBER, \$125-MEMBER
2014 REGISTRATION (PER PERSON): 1/16 to 6/30/2014 \$225-NON MEMBER, \$175-MEMBER
2014 REGISTRATION (PER PERSON): AFTER 7/1/2014 \$275-NON MEMBER, \$225-MEMBER

Family Conference Passes: Allows family members to accompany a full conference registrant at a much-reduced rate. A family is defined as a head-of-household plus his/her partner living at the same address and their children up to age 17.
Conference T-shirts included in registration fee, and can be picked up at the registration desk at the Conference. Shirts are **adult only**, pocket, in the following sizes: Small, Medium, Large, Extra-large, 2-X large, and 3-X large.

T-shirt Size _____ (S,M,L,XL,XXI,XXXL) \$ _____

NAME OF FAMILY MEMBER: _____ Size _____ (\$40 EACH) \$ _____
 NAME OF FAMILY MEMBER: _____ Size _____ (\$40 EACH) \$ _____
 NAME OF FAMILY MEMBER: _____ Size _____ (\$40 EACH) \$ _____

Conference Day Passes: Good for all activities on a specific day. ABANA membership not required.
Color-coded passes at \$75 per day will be available at the Registration Desk.

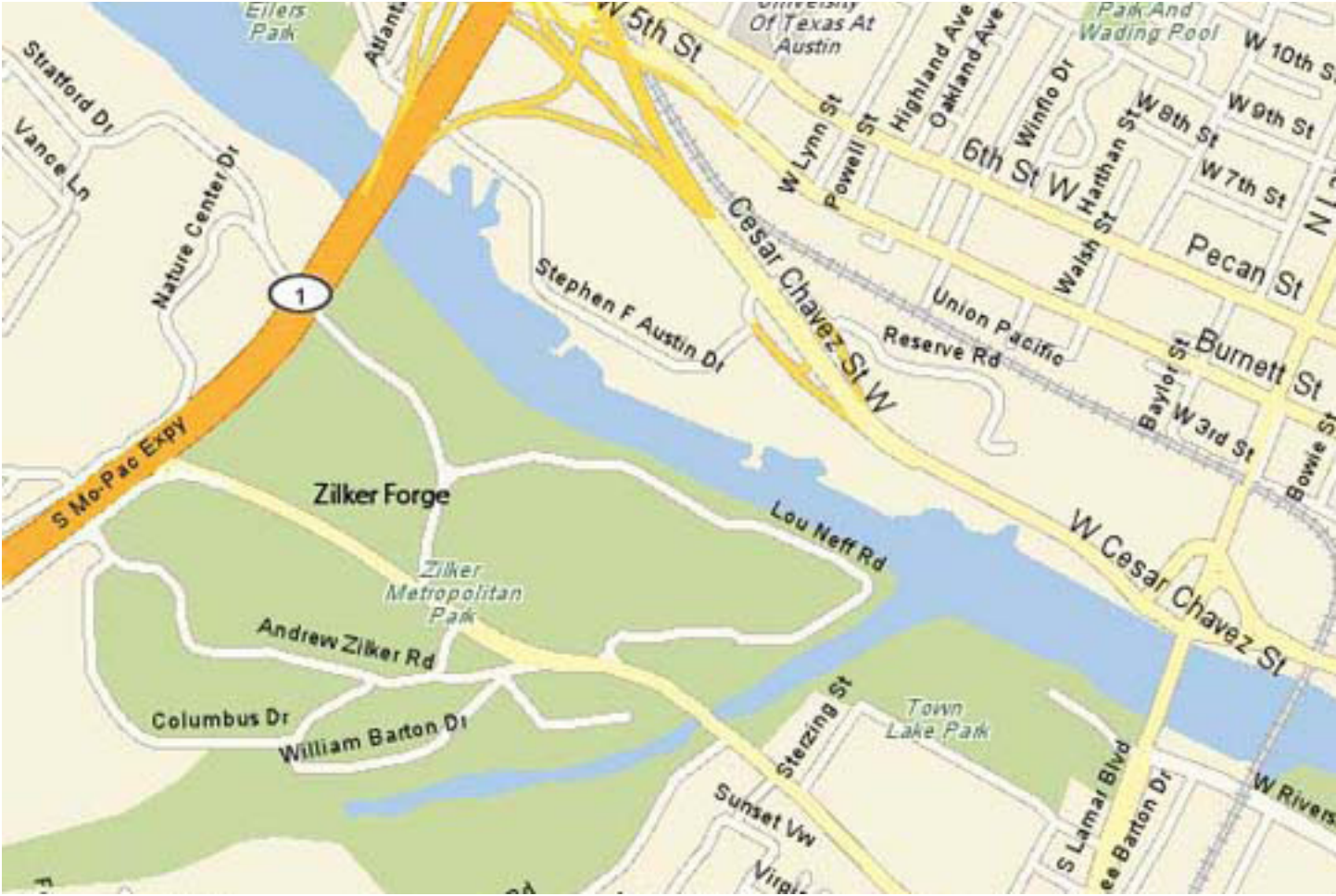
Total Price includes Saturday Evening Dinner and Conference T-shirt **TOTAL** \$ _____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND ASSUMPTION OF RISK REQUIRED
 Each Person will be required to sign an Acknowledge and Assumption of Risk in order to be admitted to the Conference (including minors through a parent or guardian).
I acknowledge that blacksmithing and related activities are inherently dangerous and involve risks and dangers to participants and spectators that may result in serious injury or death. In deciding to attend the ABANA 2014 Conference, I have considered these risks and I knowingly assume them. I agree that I am responsible for my own safety during the Conference, including wearing appropriate clothing and protective gear and remaining a safe distance from all dangerous activities. I agree to hold ABANA, Delaware State Fairgrounds, and others involved in the Conference harmless from liability and expenses arising from my own actions or omissions. I agree that my admission to the Conference constitutes consideration for this acknowledgment.

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____
 SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____
 SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____
 SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

EVERY REGISTRANT MUST SIGN THIS FORM!

Credit card orders (Visa/MC/Disc) can be faxed or mailed; be sure to sign this form. Fax: 423-913-1023
 Credit Card Number _____ Exp Date ____/____ CVVS _____



Return Service Requested

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Spotted Dog Forge
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