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Blacksmiths of Central Texas

President's Corner...

February 2009

Howdy Folks... 2009 has started off great with some good demos by Larry Crawford and Aaron Tilton at Larry's Hammerfest Forge in Marble Falls. It was great to see several new faces, as well as the die-hard old-timers. I was happy to see that one of our new members, Laura Armstrong, was able to get plenty of notes from the info Larry and Aaron shared at the meeting. Others took lots of photos of the action and demo pieces. That is what Balcones Forge is all about. It's sharing tips and techniques, allowing folks to see how other smiths set their shops up, and good old camaraderie. We'd love to see more folks come and take advantage of this wealth of information Balcones Forge members have. Even if you are new to smithing and feel you may not have anything to share... you might be surprised. Come on out and add your version of the monthly trade item and your character to the mix.

The Balcones Forge Board of Directors has been working on preparations for the Bluebonnet Demo at the end of March. We will likely have a work-day at Lee Lanford's shop, in Manor, toward the end of February to help him prepare it for the event. Stay tuned and we'll give you more information as soon as it becomes available.

Balcones Forge has had several members that have worked tirelessly during their tenure as board members and officers. One of these folks is Rudy Billings, who did an outstanding job as President of the organization over the past two years. Now, as treasurer, he is still working just as hard. Thank you Rudy for preparing our annual submittals to keep the tax-man happy, for the effort you put into creating the Bluebonnet Demo flier and sign-up sheets, for helping us with our passwords and e-mail routing on the website, for opening the Zilker forge for folks on Sundays, and all the other things you do for the group. We really do appreciate you. Hopefully, others will be inspired by your efforts and will jump in to help keep our great organization successful and fun!

Sue Murray, President

MEETING DATE IS FEBRUARY 28

WWW.BALCONESFORGE.ORG

SECRETARY'S REPORT

January's meeting held in picturesque Marble Falls at the shop of Larry Crawford was both informative and cold. The temperature had dropped near the 20's but Larry had his propane heater running and combined with the coal forge we were comfortable enough to absorb the teachings of this talented blacksmith.

Sue opened the meeting with an announcement of the pending Bluebonnet Demo at Lee Lanford's shop East of Manor featuring Corrina Mensoff on the 28th and 29th of March, 2009. Her demo will feature sheet metal work as it pertains to blacksmith artistry.

She reported that Jerry Achterberg's absence was the result of his recovering from gall bladder surgery. Boy, I bet that is one happy gall bladder, free at last, free at last!!! All kidding aside, best wishes from us all for a rapid recovery, Jerry, we missed you.

After Larry Stevens made a brief report on the properties of hot metal, Larry Crawford started is demonstration of the making of a fireplace poker. The handle he made consisted of three twisted pairs of 1/4" round bar forge welded together at the end and then reverse twisted as a unit to make it appear as if it were braided. The shaft of the poker was made from 7/16" round bar, tapered on the end and then folded back on itself, forge welded together and then tapered. The folded back original taper became a tang for moving logs in the fire and the forge welded doubled back section became the point after tapering. The handle was then forge welded to the shaft. It was a very impressive piece and all were very impressed.

Aaron Tilton followed with a very nice demonstration of making a dragon head out of a 3/4" square bar. Two fullerings raised the eyes and nose out of the top of the piece, he then used two punches to hollow out the eyes and nostrils, and a chisel produced the mouth. It was all done in a very short period and was very impressive as well.

There were only 3 trade items this month made out of a piece of 42" 3/16" bar stock, a fork, a puzzle and a vial holder, all very well done and interesting pieces.

Tom Lupton, Secretary, Balcones Forge

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 HAS
EXPIRED!!**

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, per family!

TRADE ITEM

This month's meeting will be hosted by one of the area's best tool makers, therefore the trade item for February is a pair of tongs.

Here is your chance to make a pair of tongs that one of our members will use for years to come. Have you been paying attention at the meetings?

Remember, you gotta make one to take one!

MEETING INFO

The February meeting of Balcones Forge will be hosted by William Bastas at his personal shop (NOT at ACC). William's shop address is 121 Pickle Road.

The shop is in South Austin, off Congress (to the right if you're headed southbound) just before Ben

White. The street is a dead end and his shop will be on the left. There is a mechanic shop across from him. We drive up onto the dirt to park. His shop stands by itself.

If you have been around Balcones Forge for any time at all then you know not to miss a meeting with William. He has forgotten more about our craft than many of us will ever know and is genuine in his desire to share his knowledge.

Monthly meetings start at 9:30 am. Bring a chair and your notepad and you will learn something new.

Map to William's Shop - www.tinyurl.com/William-Map

SPRING BREAK AT PIONEER MUSEUM MARCH 9-14

The Pioneer Museum in Fredericksburg is again hosting their annual frontier days event the week of Spring Break. Balcones Forge has been a part of this for many years, and it is always a fun event for everyone involved. Once again, volunteers of all levels, from experienced blacksmiths to helpers are needed to man the forge.

Ideally, it is best to have at least two people each day. If you are new to blacksmithing, this is a good way to get your hands dirty and learn some of the basics.

The Museum will provide lunch each day for the volunteers.

Currently we need volunteers for Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

Please call or email Rudy, if you can volunteer or would like more information.

Rudy@BalconesForge.org -- 512-461-7375

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To learn more about the event, go to www.pioneermuseum.com/xSpringbreak.htm You'll get to see a nice photo of Gary Hilton too.

ON THE WEB

Have you checked out the links on the Balcones Forge website lately? You could learn how to make a treadle torch or, if you have the time, read 106 years of Popular Mechanics. There is also a nice list of suppliers. And be sure to check out the websites of several members.

FAMOUS AGAIN

Did you get to see our own Larry Crawford's work in the latest Anvil's Ring? One of Larry's beautiful fireplace screens is featured. Way to go, Larry!

By the way, the only way to get the excellent Anvil's Ring and the information-packed Hammer's Blow is to be a member of ABANA. For more info, go to ABANA.org. It's well worth it, and your organization needs your support.

Rudy Billings, Treasurer



ABANA AFFILIATE LIAISON LETTER 1/28/2009

What is ABANA and what can it do for us?

ABANA is the Artist Blacksmith Association of North America. It is an organization that helps unite artist-blacksmiths from over 75 affiliated groups in the United States and other countries.

ABANA is an important resource for a wealth of artist-blacksmithing information from around the world. This information is passed on to its members via its two quarterly publications The Anvil's Ring which presents feature articles on many blacksmithing topics, affiliate news and many other subjects and the Hammer's Blow which features technical tips and techniques for the amateur and professional smiths. ABANA has a very extensive and usually current web site. In addition to being an information resource, the web site allows affiliates and ABANA members to post a link to their own web sites and to post announcements of their conferences, exhibits and other events. ABANA's web site is also open to the public and has been very effective in reaching and educating the general public about what the artist-blacksmith can do.

ABANA is planning to resume its biennial national conference in June 2010 with a grand effort. It will be a gathering of international artist-blacksmiths from around the world with a sharing of their ideas and techniques. Coinciding with the conference is a National Ornamental Metal Museum international contemporary blacksmithing exhibit which will tour the US for two years after the conference.

ABANA's Scholarship Program provides financial assistance to its members for educational workshops or for extended study such as journeyman programs.

ABANA's Affiliate Grant Program provides financial support to ABANA Affiliates sponsoring a visiting artist for educational conferences or workshops.

ABANA members receive a 5 to 10% discount when shopping with blacksmith merchants supporting ABANA.

ABANA members can obtain affordable health insurance through Transamerica and Amerits; including limited medical and hospital, disability, dental and vision coverage.

These are but a few of the benefits ABANA offers blacksmiths. ABANA is continually seeking ways to benefit its membership, such as in obtaining affordable health insurance for the self-employed smith or for the recently laid off hobbyist who could not afford a COBRA or private insurance plan. ABANA is also working to soon have catastrophic medical and property and causality insurance available to members.

The economy right now is terrifying and it is predicted to get worse before it recovers. And it will recover, however for now, millions of good workers have lost their jobs and many companies have shut their plants down permanently. Not since the great depression in the 1930's has the economy's outlook been so bleak. In the middle of all this mess are professional smiths who are trying hard to make a decent living from an honest day's work. There are amateur smiths, now unemployed because of plant closings, who are doing all they can to survive and turn their hobby into a fledging business and get through these rough times. And they can do it. For, unlike during the depression, today's artist-blacksmithing community has the resources and networking available to help them successfully compete in today's turbulent business world. And ABANA with its affiliates is at the center.

Some of our affiliates have been around a long time. Some of them were formed as local chapters of ABANA soon after ABANA was formed. Well, they have grown up. They are big boys now and no longer need the guidance and the direction and the assistance of their parent. And they really have done a great job of it. They have extensive workshops, great grant and scholarship programs, sponsor and promote artist-blacksmith exhibits, coordinate extensive demonstrations and conferences and the list goes on. ABANA is a very proud parent, and I am sure our founding fathers would heartily agree. As in any family, we have had our disagreements and conflicts, but we are all part of the family of blacksmiths and that's the way it is.

ABANA was begun many years ago with a gathering of blacksmiths to share ideas and methods. Demonstrate one and learn a dozen more. This marvelous method of sharing of knowledge was carried to Europe by British and German smiths and has since spread over the world. At the founding of ABANA, Dimitri Gerakaris said "Our task is great and so is our joy". And the joy of a proud parent is a wonderful thing indeed.

If you are a member of ABANA, we thank you.

If you are going to become a member of ABANA, we welcome you.

If blacksmithing is important to you but what ABANA can do for you is not enough, will you become an ABANA member for what ABANA can do for blacksmithing?

Bruce Woodward
ABANA Affiliate Relations Committee Chair
woodwardiron1@roadrunner.com

TEJAS ART, BOOK, AND CULTURAL FAIR - MARCH 7

The Rockdale Historical Society here in Rockdale is planning an event that we would like the Balcones Forge Members to participate in. The event will be the Tejas Art, Book, and Cultural Fair to be held Saturday March 7, from 10 am til 4 PM on the grounds of the Rockdale I&GN Depot Museum. This is the same event that we held last year, which several Balcones Forge members participated in. What we did was to set up several anvils and forges on the museum grounds and the blacksmiths demonstrated the craft. Also, the blacksmiths will be allowed to set up a table and sell their wares to the public at no charge. All the museum asks if at all possible the demonstrators be dressed as near to period (overalls, aprons, etc) as possible. Other events will include a antique car show, art show, authors and their books, tractor show, model train display, and others. We are located about 60 miles North East of Austin on US 79, at 11 North Main St in downtown Rockdale.

I am the contact person for the blacksmiths, and would like to have each person wanting a space to contact me by email bldeaglerail@sbcglobal.net, or phone 512 446 6023. Last year we had a large crowd, and from the feedback that we received, they all enjoyed the blacksmith demonstration. This led us to the decision to construct a working blacksmith shop on the museum grounds here, sort of like in Zilker Park. Construction has not started on this shop yet, but materials have been collected and are on site (more on this later). If you have any additional questions, please contact me.

Bert Dockall
Eagle Iron Works (Balcones Forge Member)
Director I&GN Depot Museum

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



Scenes from the January meeting.
Photos by David Walden

Balcones Forge Bluebonnet Workshop

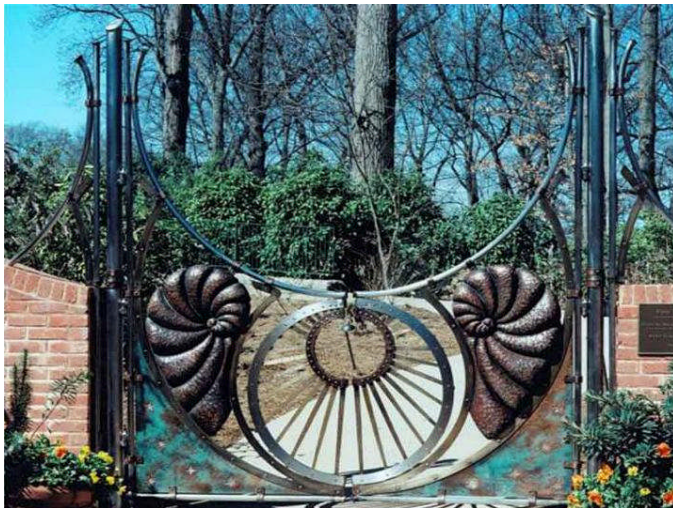
featuring

CORRINA MENSOFF

March 28-29, 2009 Manor, Texas



BALCONES FORGE is pleased to bring award-winning artist-blacksmith **CORRINA MENSOFF** to Texas for its annual two-day demonstration event. Corrina began her lifelong interest in metalworking at the age of five in her father's shop. She received her BFA in Sculpture and Metalsmithing from Massachusetts College of Art in Boston, and her MFA in Fine Arts and Sculpture from Georgia State University.



In 1997, Corrina established Phoenix Metalworks of Atlanta, Georgia, a business specializing in sculpture, furniture, and architectural works. Corrina has been a highly sought-after demonstrator for blacksmithing events around the globe. You will come away with an abundance of good, practical knowledge and the inspiration to go home and hammer it out yourself!

The Balcones Workshop will be held March 28-29 in Manor, Texas, just 20 minutes east of Austin. That means **Bluebonnet time** here in **Central Texas!** Plan to ride some of our scenic country back roads and enjoy the finest display of wildflowers in America!

Balcones Forge will present a tasty catered dinner on Saturday evening. Dinner will be followed by our famous annual **Balcones Auction!** Donate a tool, book, or other blacksmithing item and then win yourself a new (or old) blacksmithing hammer, maybe a forge or anvil, some smithing books, or maybe Corrina's latest creation!

Times: Saturday: 9:00–Noon – Morning Demo
Noon–1:00 – Lunch and drinks will be provided for \$6.00, or bring your own lunch, or hurry to the town of Manor 10 minutes away (Cafe 290 and Sonic Drive-In)
1:00–5:00 – Afternoon Demo
6:00 – Tasty catered dinner, only \$15
7:15 – If you do not attend the dinner, please join us at this time for the Auction

Sunday: 9:00–1:00 – Demo

Our host is Lee Lanford at his Heart of Texas Forge in Manor, Texas. Address: 14405 Kimbro West Rd, Manor, TX. Directions: From Austin (I-35) take Hwy 290 east approximately 4 miles from the town of Manor to FM-1100. Turn left and travel 1.6 miles to Kimbro West Rd. Turn left and travel 0.5 mile to Lee's shop on the left. Please park along side the long driveway. Lost? Call Lee for directions at 512-731-6414. Web map: www.tinyurl.com/d6ch7y

For more info contact:

Rudy Billings, 512-461-7375 or Rudy@BalconesForge.org

Sue Murray, SMurray@BalconesForge.org

Jerry Achterberg 210-661-3293 or treefarm@swbell.net

Hotel Accommodations:

Quality Inns & Suites

11301 Hwy. 290 East

Manor, Texas

(512) 272-9373

See the latest newsletter or website (www.BalconesForge.org) for Registration Form.

\$45 - REGISTER BY MARCH 10 – WORKSHOP FEE HIGHER AT THE DOOR

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

Balcones Forge 2009 Bluebonnet Workshop

featuring **Corinna Mensoff - March 28-29 - Manor, TX**

Please print clearly

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Yes, I prefer the electronic version of the newsletter. (You will be notified by email when the latest newsletter has been posted.)

Current Member \$45 _____
\$50 at the door

2009 Membership if unpaid. \$15 _____

Non-member \$60 _____

Yes, I wish to become a BF member

Saturday Lunch..... \$ 6 _____

Saturday Evening Meal .. \$15 _____

Total _____

Make check payable to **Balcones Forge.**

Send to Rudy Billings,

1906 Rampart Circle, Austin, TX 78727

PLEASE READ AND COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING RELEASE FORM: FORM MUST BE SIGNED AND DATED BY EACH MEMBER, GUEST AND PARENT OR GUARDIAN OF ANY MINOR IN ATTENDANCE.

In consideration of the Balcones Forge Blacksmith Association providing demonstrators and making these demonstrations available and granting permission to enter the area of said demonstration, I, individually and as parent or guardian of the minor child attending such demonstration, hereby waive all claims for damage and/or loss to my person or property, or the person or property of such minor child, which may be caused by an act, or failure to act of the Balcones Forge Blacksmith Association, its officers, directors, agents or employees and the hosts and demonstrators. I understand that there are inherent dangers in blacksmithing and I assume all risk of all dangerous conditions in and about such demonstration and waive any and all specific notice of the existence of such conditions. By signing this waiver, I acknowledge that I have read and understand this waiver.

X

Date

Vincent Herod
Spotted Dog Forge
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