



# Blacksmiths of Central Texas

## President's Corner

February 2010

One good meeting down, plenty more to come!

If you missed our January meeting at Conservation Plaza, you missed a good one! Tom Lupton gave an interesting leaf-making demo and a good sized group of blacksmiths proceeded to pound out some foliage. We had a sunny day and an inspiring location. Add in fresh donuts, hot chocolate, and our new Balcones propane heaters, and it worked out to a fine gathering, especially for those of us who made it down to Cooper's barbeque for a big fat pork chop!

We have a new twist for you this month; our first venture to a hot glass shop! Did you ever consider adding some molten glass to your ironwork? Here is your chance to explore the possibilities! The RC Hot Glass Shop will be the site of our February meeting. (Special thanks to Aaron Tilton for making the arrangements.)

Special rules for this meeting:

1. No open toed shoes. None. Not even your favorite hippie sandals. This is a chance to show off those fine old leather work boots in your closet.
2. No polyester. Leave your disco clothes at home. If you don't want your shirt and pants to melt into your skin, stick to good old cotton or wool.
3. Safety Glasses. You can't be here without safety glasses, folks. They really mean it, too. If you need me to bring you a pair, email me at [jac@sycamorecreekranch.net](mailto:jac@sycamorecreekranch.net). I will bring a pair with your name on them. (Then you'd better show up!).

Here's the tricky part:

We changed the date on you!

Yep. Believe it or not, we moved it to February 20th. I know, that's right now. The Saturday after Valentine's Day. Here it is, folks! Time to saddle up! *(continued on page 2)*



### Officers

#### President

**John Crouchet**

[jac@sycamorecreekranch.net](mailto:jac@sycamorecreekranch.net)  
830/798-3710

#### Vice-President

**Aaron Tilton**

[kilmorer@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kilmorer@sbcglobal.net)  
210/566-1028

#### Treasurer

**Rudy Billings**

[rudy@balconesforge.org](mailto:rudy@balconesforge.org)  
512/461-7375

#### Secretary

**Jim Elliot**

[oldjim@mac.com](mailto:oldjim@mac.com)  
512/863-4482



### Editor

#### Vince Herod

[spotteddogforge@yahoo.com](mailto:spotteddogforge@yahoo.com)  
512/253-6045

## **PRESIDENT'S CORNER** *Continued*

I know, it's a big surprise. You were planning to go visit Aunt Emmy Lou and Uncle George that day and you had promised to clean out the garage, too. Well, the relatives and the garage will just have to wait. We'll see you at the RC Hot Glass Shop at 9:30! WooHoo!!!!

John Crouchet



## **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

The January meeting of Balcones Forge took place on the 30th at Conservation Plaza in New Braunfels. The cold weather was kept at bay by the two new propane heaters that now belong to Balcones Forge. Thanks to Rudy Billings for procuring the heaters, they sure felt good.

New Library rules are now in place and are intended to help counter the continuing loss of materials. The library will be open until the meeting begins, then will closed for the duration of the meeting. Materials can only be checked in and out by the Librarian. Many new and replacement materials have been ordered.

The Balcones Forge Newsletter is written by the editor except as noted. Balcones Forge, it's officers, members, contributors, editors and writers specifically disclaim any responsibility, or liability for any damage, or injury as a result of the use of any information published in the newsletter or demonstrated at a meeting or conference. Every effort is made to insure the accuracy and safety of information provided but the use by our members and readers of any information published herein or provided at meetings is solely at the user's own risk.

The February meeting will be held at R C Hot Glass on February 20 at 9:30 am. Please note this is a week earlier than our typical meeting! The address is: East by Southeast Studios, 1406 Smith Road, Austin, TX. Our contact is Rebecca Cole, 512-632-0458.

Demonstrators are need from March 13 through 20 (not on 14th) at the Pioneer Museum in Fredericksburg. John Crouchet has a sign up sheet so if you would like to help out, please give him a call.

The March meeting of Balcones Forge will be held at Zilker Gardens in Austin. The date is Saturday March 27. Members can display their work but sales to the public are not allowed. Members can bring their own anvils and forges so we have more room to work.

There was discussion concerning the need for Balcones Forge to more actively support and participate with Mission Espada, Zilker Gardens, Pioneer Museum, Rockdale and Conservation Plaza. The sites have a strong connection with our Blacksmithing heritage and are an excellent venue for education of the public and to further the tradition of Blacksmithing.

The ABANA conference will be held June 2-5, 2010 in Memphis, TN. Check out the ABANA website for more information.

David Guerro has volunteered to be in charge of the Balcones Forge hats and t-shirts. Thanks Dave!

Dues are DUE!!!!

Rudy Billings reports that he had a letter from Verl Underwood saying that his health is improving and things are looking better. We hope to see Verl at future meetings.

Speaking of dues; the cost of membership will increase to \$20 on April 1, 2010. The vote for this

increase was unanimous.

Balcones Forge has made a recent donation of approximately \$320 to the Waldorf School in the form of materials and supplies. Balcones Forge member Dan Smith runs that program and will be asked to do a short demo for the group when he can fit it into his school schedule.

Following discussion a motion was made by Jim Schmidt to place a striking hammer at the heritage sites supported by our organization. After a second by Dave Guerro, the motion passed unanimously.

Lorenzo Fortunato informed the group that there will be a series of classes at his shop on the first three weekends in April. There will be 5 students maximum and 16 hours per class. The cost is \$150. Skills taught will be forge welding and Damascus welding. Interested parties should call him at 512-376-4510 or send an e-mail to: [duca620000@yahoo.com](mailto:duca620000@yahoo.com).

The Bluebonnet Demo for 2010 will be held April 24 & 25 at John Crouchet's shop in Marble Falls. Don't miss Grodon Williams, our favorite cowboy demonstrator!

Welcome new member Leo Schener to the group.

Tom Lupton led an excellent demonstration on making his famous "grows all year" Lupton leaf. Tom discussed how he modifies hammers to use for texturing both the leaves and stems and showed how he uses a brass brush to color the leaves.

John Crouchet showed how he uses a veining jig devised by Gordon Williams. Both the jigs and leaf were later sold. An excellent demo by John, as usual!

Thanks to both Tom and John for their time and talent.

Following the demos other member tried their

hand at making leaves.

There were nine trade items; you guessed it..... leaves!

Iron in the Hat brought in \$100 this meeting.

See you in February.

Submitted by Jim Elliot.



# ABANA

Victoria Lonergan, Membership Services  
Artist-Blacksmith's Association of North America, Inc.  
15754 Widewater Drive, Dumfries, Virginia 22025  
Ph: 703.680.1632, Fax: 703.680.6222  
[www.abana.org](http://www.abana.org)

## **ABANA CONFERENCE**

**JUNE 2ND – 5TH**

The 2010 Artist Blacksmiths' Association of North America national conference is just four months away. This year's event will be in Memphis, Tennessee, home of the National Ornamental Metals Museum. I won't be stopping in to visit Elvis at Graceland, but you could if you wanted to!

A number of Balcones Forge members are planning to go to the conference. If there is enough interest, we may be able to form car pooling situations or catch-a-ride-situations or maybe Balcones could even rent one of the Dillo buses that Capital Metro just retired from downtown Austin!

However you plan to get there, now is the time to sign up. There are still discounts available for early sign ups. Check out the events, costs, and schedules at [www.abana.org](http://www.abana.org). This year promises to be a lot more like the old time conferences that made ABANA famous! Costs will be down, iron-pounding will be up! Attend a bunch of classes and demos, meet America's best blacksmiths, and see the finest ironwork being made in the USA!

## FEBRUARY MEETING INFO

The address is 1406 Smith Rd, Austin, TX 78721. When you get to the building, park out front and walk around back. You will see the garage door open and the hot shop.

For that day, we ask that everyone wear natural fibers and closed toed shoes. I would suggest leaving watches and bracelets at home. How many people are in the group? That will really determine what we do.

Here is the address for the R C Hotglass web-sight:

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

Start time is our standard 9:30am but please make note of the special date, Feb 20, 2010.

## TRADE ITEM

For February we are going to keep the trade item simple and hope that lots of our members will participate.....a hook. Yes, a hook!

Remember, you gotta make one to take one!



John Crouchet, above

Tom Lupton, below



## VOLUNTEER TIME....COMING UP!

Two good chances are coming your way in March to be part of our Balcones Forge community service efforts. We will be operating the Blacksmith Shop at the Pioneer Museum in Fredericksburg for Spring Break Celebration Days on Saturday, March 13 and on Monday, March 15 through Saturday, March 20. That is a total of seven days and we will need at least a couple of volunteers for each day. The following Balcones members have already signed up:

Saturday, March 13:	Carlos Gonzales and Rudy Billings
Monday, March 15:	MaryJo Emrick and Aaron Tilton
Tuesday, March 16:	David Walden
Wednesday, March 17:	Tom Leining and Bob McDonald
Thursday, March 18:	Dave Guerrero and Jim Schmidt
Friday, March 19:	Vacant
Saturday, March 20:	Carlos Gonzales

Please plan to sign up to help these members run the forge. We need at least two volunteers for each day. We should arrive at the Pioneer Museum by 9:30 am to fire up the forge. The public will come in starting at 10:00. Lunch will be provided by the Historical Society or you can walk across the street to Hondo's Restaurant for a Jalapeno Burger! This will be an interesting event. The Pioneer Museum will also have a chuck wagon cook, weavers, soap makers, rope makers, mountain men, and Native Americans, all explaining their crafts and demonstrating. To sign up, email John Crouchet at [jac@sycamorecreek ranch.net](mailto:jac@sycamorecreek ranch.net)

Balcones Forge will also be operating the Zilker Garden blacksmith shop in Austin's Zilker Park for the 53rd Annual Zilker Garden Festival on Saturday, March 27 and Sunday, March 28. Our regular March meeting will be there on Saturday. To volunteer for the rest of the day Saturday or to volunteer for Sunday, email Rudy Billings at [rudy@balconesforge.org](mailto:rudy@balconesforge.org).



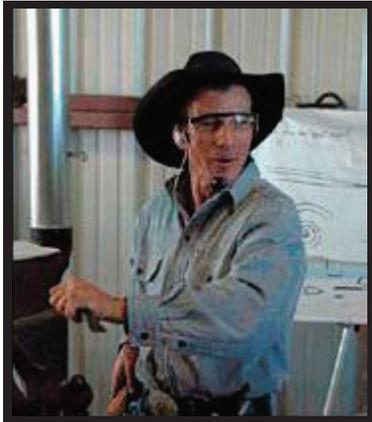
Photos by David Walden



# Balcones Forge Spring Workshop

featuring

## GORDON WILLIAMS



April 24-25, 2010

Marble Falls, Texas

**BALCONES FORGE** is pleased to bring everyone's favorite cowboy blacksmith **GORDON WILLIAMS** to central Texas for our 10th annual two-day demonstration. A dynamic demonstrator for many ABANA chapters across the country, Gordon has been blacksmithing since 1990. He is the resident instructor for the Blacksmithing classes at Pieh Tool Company in Camp Verde, Arizona. If you were lucky enough to be one of Gordon's students or saw his demonstration here in 2008, then you know how dynamic and knowledgeable he is. You'll come away with very practical blacksmithing techniques that will expand your skills and creativity.

The Balcones Forge Workshop will present a delicious BBQ dinner Saturday night, catered by our friends **ArtZ Rib House** from Austin. Dinner will be followed by our famous annual **Balcones Forge Auction!** Donate and bid on fantastic blacksmithing tools or maybe Gordon's latest creation!

**Times: Saturday:** 9:00–Noon – Morning Demo  
Noon–1:00 – Lunch: Since Marble Falls is about 20 minutes away, it is recommended to bring a sack lunch or order a Schlotzsky's sandwich for \$5. Drinks provided by Balcones Forge.  
1:00–5:00 – Afternoon Demo  
6:00 – Delicious ArtZ BBQ dinner, only \$15  
7:15 – If you do not attend the dinner, please join us at this time for the fantastic auction  
**Sunday:** 9:00–1:00+ – Demo

Our hosts are John and Carolyn Crouchet at their beautiful Sycamore Creek Ranch. **Directions: From Austin:** Hwy 71 northwest to Hwy 281. **From San Antonio:** Hwy 281 north to Marble Falls. Cross the Colorado River into Marble Falls, count 5 stoplights and turn right (east) at Ranch Road 1431. Check your odometer and go 5.6 miles to our gate. As you head out of Marble Falls on 1431, you will notice that you are on a winding, two lane blacktop road with no shoulders. At the top of a long, winding hill, the road changes and suddenly has shoulders. Go fifty yards further and turn left into our driveway between the red reflectors. (Look for the "Anvil" signs.) At our gate, you will see a large oak tree to the left and a small sign to the right that says, "Sycamore Creek Ranch, 5828 East Ranch Road 1431". If the gate is open, just drive on in. If the gate is closed, then there are cattle in this pasture, so please close the gate behind yourself once you enter. Continue on down our driveway for one mile, crossing 4 cattle guards before you see the big metal shop on your left. Welcome! Lost? Call John at 830-798-3710.

### For more info contact:

**John Crouchet**, 830-798-3710 or John@TexasWroughtIron.com

**Rudy Billings**, 512-461-7375 or Rudy@BalconesForge.com

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

### Hotel Accommodations:

Hampton Inn on the Lake, 704 First St., 830-798-1895

Quality Inn, 1206 Hwy 281, 830-693-7531

Best Western, 1403 Hwy 281, 830-693-5122, 800-528-1234

Hill Country Inn, 1101 Hwy 281, 830-693-3637

See the latest newsletter or website ([www.BalconesForge.org](http://www.BalconesForge.org)) for Registration Form.

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

# *ABANA Conference News*

**December 2009 - Vol. 1 Issue 4**

Mark Aspery, Darryl Nelson and Gerald Boggs will be facilitating these Workshops at the "Green Coal" teaching stations during the 2010 Conference in Memphis.

Mark Aspery works with both Darryl Nelson and Gerald Boggs on a regular basis, teaching twice a year at Darryl's school in Washington State and teaching with Gerald at some of the craft schools in the Eastern States on a somewhat regular basis.

Gerald will be handling the fundamentals classes and Darryl will be running the advanced classes. Mark Aspery will be manning the intermediate section with a basic forge welding class and a tool-making class.

Gerald's class will explore the basic tenets of blacksmithing using leaf-making as a vehicle. Hammers, hammer swings and types of blow along with tapers and spreading will get you well on your way as a beginning smith. Gerald's attention to detail and a seemingly unending supply of patience and a healthy sense of humor will be a boon to the new smith in this class.

Darryl will focus on two-dimensional animal heads and the related tooling for his classes. The steps used to complete an animal head in 2D are very similar to Darryl's 3D heads but are a little easier to complete given the time frame that we will be operating within. Darryl will be showing the larger three-dimensional heads during his demonstration at the conference.

Mark Aspery will be looking at forge-welding in the gas forge making a flux spoon and a BBQ fork for his first class and tool making for his second class. The tool-making class will focus on a section of his tool-making demonstration given during the conference. This will give some smiths a chance to try their hand at some of the things they may have seen at the demo.

If we have time, Mark might try to fit in an evening talk about basic heat treatment and offer a practical demonstration for those interested.

ABANA has arranged to borrow 'BAM's' well-provisioned equipment trailer to make up a section of the teaching station, along with the existing ABANA equipment the teaching area will be much larger than any past conference.

Many thanks to the BAM Board of Directors! We should have a mix of gas and coal forges and upwards of a dozen anvils at the teaching station.

Don't forget to bring your personal safety equipment if you would like to participate in the classes. We are planning to have some seating available at the teaching station for those that prefer to watch but not participate.

**Gallery Open to Public  
"Green Coal" Forges  
Memphis Style Banquet  
Top Demonstrators  
Tailgate Heaven  
Vendors for the Craft  
Lectures & Workshops**

**"We will preserve a meaningful bond with the past. We will serve the needs of the present, and we will forge a bridge to the future. Function and creativity is our purpose. Our task is great and so is our joy."**

**Dimitri Gerakaris, 1973**



**Agricenter  
International**

**Memphis  
Tennessee**

**June 2-5 2010**

Log on [ABANA.org](http://ABANA.org) website and sign-up for Constant Contact emails, email address in the box at the bottom of the home page, click on "Get ABANA Email". You will receive periodic ABANA 2010 Conference News.

The ABANA 2010 Conference will be held at the Agricenter International in Memphis, TN. Located at 7777 Walnut Grove Road, from I-240, on the east side of Memphis, take Exit 13 and drive east on Walnut Grove Road approximately 4.2 miles to Farm Road and turn south, go .1 mile.



Artist-Blacksmith's Association of North America, Inc.  
15754 Widewater Dr  
Dumfries, VA 22025-1212 USA  
Tel: 703.680.1632 Fax: 703.680.6222  
abana@abana.org  
[www.abana.org](http://www.abana.org)

Happy New Year!

Being the New Year, and keeping in line with the time-honored tradition of New Year's resolutions, I would like to share with everyone how ABANA is focusing our attention on our affiliates and membership. Below I have listed a few points of interest regarding publicity, participation, and prosperity within our organization.

1. We want to give our affiliates more coverage, both on the internet and in our publications. So, here are two FREE things you can do to spread your affiliate out to the masses:
  - A. ABANA website: There are a couple of things the ABANA website can do for you other than simply having your affiliate information listed. We want to know what you are doing! Send us the dates and general information of your events so we can add them to the Events Calendar.  
There is also banner space available at the top of the website. This is for you to advertise your hammer-ins, conferences and bigger events to anyone and everyone who visits the website. All you need to do is create a banner to meet these requirements to put yours into rotation with the others –390 x 57 pixels as either a jpg or gif file – and we will get it going. Try not to put too much in the ad – just enough to get the attention of the visitor to click on the ad! Please make sure you also send along a link to attach to the banner so people can be directed to your website for more information!
  - B. I want to ask each of you to write an article about YOUR organization. It can be on anything your affiliate would like to share with us. Here are some example topics:
    1. History of the guild
    2. Veteran member recognition/special award presentation
    3. Meeting place (some of you meet at historical villages, etc.)
    4. Meeting or Special event
    5. Community service projects
    6. How-To (anything on planning an event to projects, tips, etc.)
    7. Group projects
    8. Anything else you can think of!!

I am also on the Publications and Internet Committees, so contact me with your events to be posted, banners to be added, and articles to be published!!!

2. The time is NOW to start planning for the 2010 ABANA Conference in Memphis. There are a few things that are being done specifically for the affiliates:
  - A. There will actually be three ring projects! These rings can be submitted by individuals or groups. This is a great opportunity to get together and make something great. (...and possibly even write an article on it too!) Please see the attached pages for more ring instructions and info. Something new for this year is that the proceeds will be split 50/50 with participating affiliates. This means that this great tradition is now a fundraiser for everyone involved!

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

- B. There will be a designated area in the gallery for YOU to display your banners and forged banner stands. If you do not have one yet, then get busy planning a group project to make one.
  - C. There will also be free vendor space for the affiliates. You may use this area to set up an informational table so that others may learn more about your organization. The space is free, but you will have to pay for electrical plug-ins and table/chair rental if you do not bring your own. Selling of merchandise is prohibited unless you file for a vendor license. This is indoor space, so there is no worry of weather getting in the way of your display! The vendor area is also open to the public, so you will be able to get some exposure to the general public as well as fellow blacksmiths.
  - D. It is also not too late to sponsor an area, demonstrator, etc. at the conference. There are still a number of things that need sponsorship. So far the following affiliates have stepped up: Louisiana Metalsmiths Association, The Blacksmith Guild of Virginia, Balcones Forge, Mid-Atlantic Smiths Association, California Blacksmith Association, Saltfork Craftsmen, Guild of Metalsmiths, Central Virginia Blacksmith Guild and Dakota Artist Blacksmith Association. How about you? There are sponsorship opportunities still for demonstrators, support crews, gallery, and more ranging from \$500.00 up to \$1,500.00. Those who are sponsoring parts of the conference will have signs posted for all to know who is helping make it a great conference!
  - E. The daily Iron in the Hat drawings are going to be for donated tools and items. This is also a GREAT place for the affiliates to get involved!
3. There is a need to revitalize the ABANA Affiliate Liaison program to become something that can serve everyone involved. To date, the Liaison program has been a more or less one way street that allows ABANA an avenue to disseminate information. I think it is time to allow ideas and discussion flow not only back to ABANA, but directly with other affiliates as well. What I want to do is create a blog for the liaisons to "meet" and discuss any ideas and/or issues, ask questions, give advice, or communicate anything else that may be helpful to others. For ABANA to become a better organization, we need a direct link to our members and affiliates. Choosing the liaison is completely up to the individual affiliate. It can be the President, Editor, or any member you feel can best represent your organization. This is not something that is mandatory, but the more involved we all are, the better we can all become. Please send me the person's name and contact information when your liaison is chosen.

I am so excited about this upcoming conference year for us all. This is just the beginning of highlighting our great affiliates and what it is you all do! Please feel free to contact me with any questions or ideas you may have!

Forge On!  
Peyton Anderson  
ABANA Affiliate Representative  
[peyton@abana.org](mailto:peyton@abana.org)  
434-390-6203  
6720 Military Rd.  
Amelia VA 23002

## Ring Project Info:

### THE THREE THEMES ARE:

#### National Ornamental Metal Museum

The rings and framework of this piece will acknowledge the important presence of the National Ornamental Metal Museum in Memphis, Tennessee and classical ornamental metal work in general. Ring submissions might draw their inspiration from American or European mastersmiths.

#### Mississippi River

These rings will acknowledge the importance of the Mississippi River from the headwaters of Lake Itasca in northern Minnesota to the Mississippi River delta in New Orleans. Rings might include flora, fauna, fish, birds, boats, river towns, and history associated with the river.

#### Memphis Music

These rings will acknowledge the Memphis music scene. Rings might reference musicians (Elvis Presley), music (Beale Street blues), instruments (Gibson guitars), etc.

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this undertaking is to promote friendly competition for blacksmiths and metalsmiths, to raise revenue for ABANA, and for fun and camaraderie.

### CALL FOR RINGS

Anyone interested in submitting a ring (or rings) is encouraged to make and send his or her best work for possible inclusion into one of the frameworks.

Commitments are requested by November 30, 2009; however all rings are welcome at the ABANA conference. Rings must be handed in by noon June 3, 2010. To commit, contact project coordinator Rome Hutchings, The Prairie Forge, 13633 Ferman Avenue NW, Clearwater, MN 55320, 763-878-1694. E-mail: [forge@theprairieismygarden.com](mailto:forge@theprairieismygarden.com).

Rings received before the conference may be used for photo opportunities advertising the conference, a great incentive to contact the project coordinator and get those rings in early!

### SPECIFICATIONS FOR MAKING THE RINGS

- Ring size is 10" O.D. (outside diameter, and must be accurate) made from ¼" x 1" steel flat stock bent the hard way.
- Each ring needs space left at the 12 o'clock, 3 o'clock, 6 o'clock, and 9 o'clock positions with a minimum of 5 minutes (using the clock analogy) on either side of these positions for mounting. Refer to the sketch below.
- Materials inside the ring can be ferrous or nonferrous metals.
- All rings are offset from the framework 1/2" (ring construction cannot protrude greater than 1/2" towards the back side).

Selection will be based on: interpretation of theme, quality of execution using traditional forging techniques (chiseling, forge welds, rivet joinery etc.), and meeting specifications.

Twelve rings will be selected, four for each theme, from all the rings submitted.

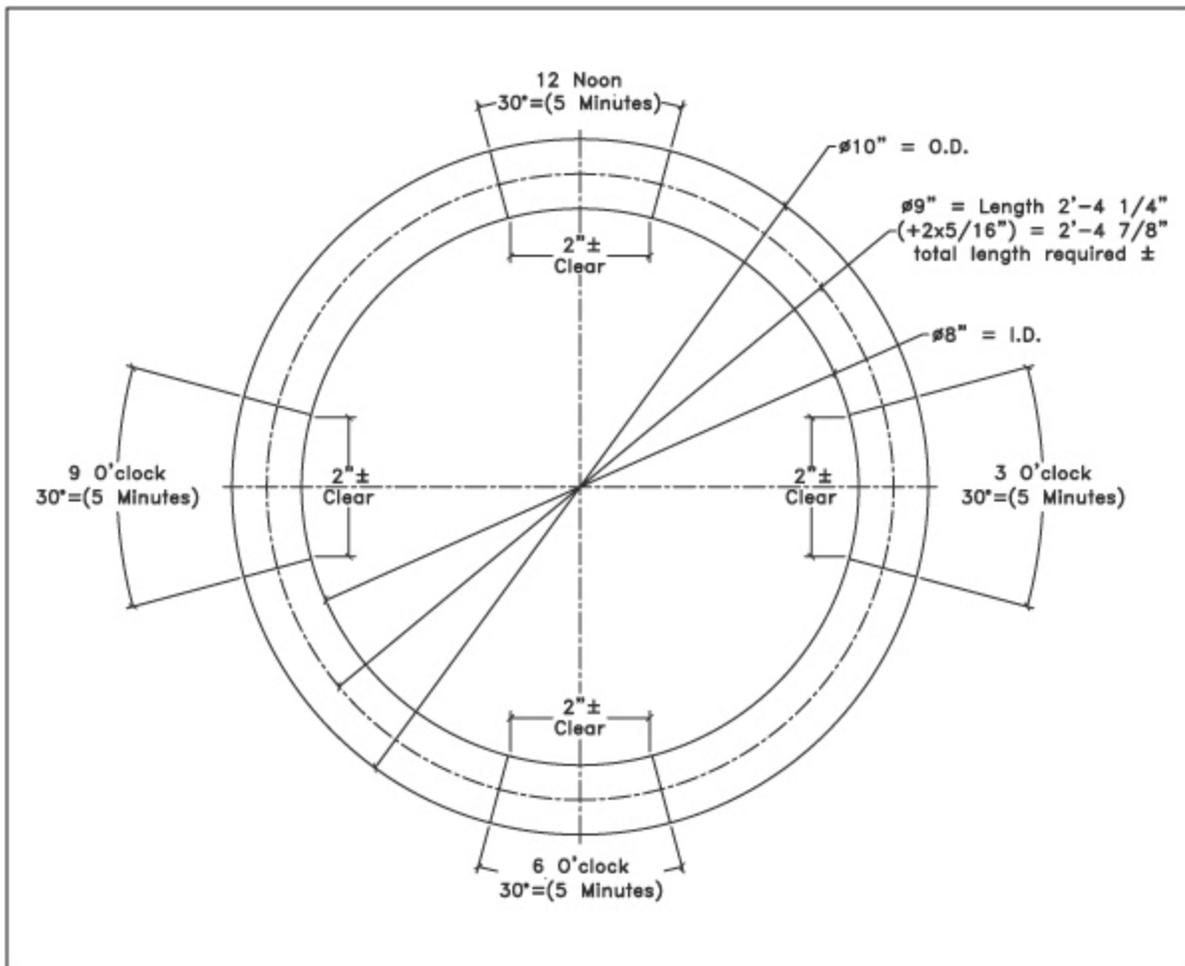
The funds raised from the ABANA 2010 Ring Project will help offset conference costs and support the educational mission of ABANA, grants, scholarships to individuals, and special projects of an educational nature. Those ring makers whose rings are selected for one of the three frameworks will receive 50% of the net auction proceeds. All other rings not selected for the project will be auctioned individually and the maker will receive 50% of the proceeds.

To view past ring projects hosted by ABANA, visit:

<http://www.photoworks.com> and click on "my photoworks." Login as [blacksmithblacksmith@hotmail.com](mailto:blacksmithblacksmith@hotmail.com) and enter password: anvil. After you login, click on "My albums" or the "Choose album" box. Photos are in folders titled: Ring Project "Ring of Fire" and BAM Conference Ring Project.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to the ring framework design and construction team: Bill Krawczeski, Charlie Bateman, Myron Hanson, Marty Hicks, Nick Hinen, Tom Latane, Rob Murray, Chris Rand, Ann Schroeder, Bob Walsh, Anna Yust, and John Yust.

## Ring Areas That Need to Remain Clear for Mounting





## HEY DUDE, DUES ARE DUE

The Balcones Forge membership runs from January through December, which means if you haven't paid lately, you'll be missing out. It's that privilege thing again. \$15 (until April) covers you and your entire family. Dues increase to \$20 April 1st. What a deal! See Rudy at the next meeting, or send to:

Balcones Forge  
1906 Rampart Circle  
Austin, TX 78727

Remember to make your check out to  
"Balcones Forge"

Return Service Requested

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