



Blacksmiths of Central Texas

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The Prez says:

If At First...

Don't know about you, but it seems when I try to create something for the very first time, it turns out this original is one of the best ones ever. Then the next one I attempt usually ends up in the scrap pile. Ever happen to you? Frustrating, isn't it? But the third, sixth, seventeenth one gets better and better. As John Crouchet says, "Make a hundred of anything, and you will be an expert (or at least really good at it)." So, if you are a blacksmithing novice, or a master trying something new, keep trying. You'll get there. If not, call John, or Harvey, or Charlie, or Jerry, or Roy, etc. Easier yet, just come to our next meeting for some expert advice -- you'll find it there.

Still forging ahead,

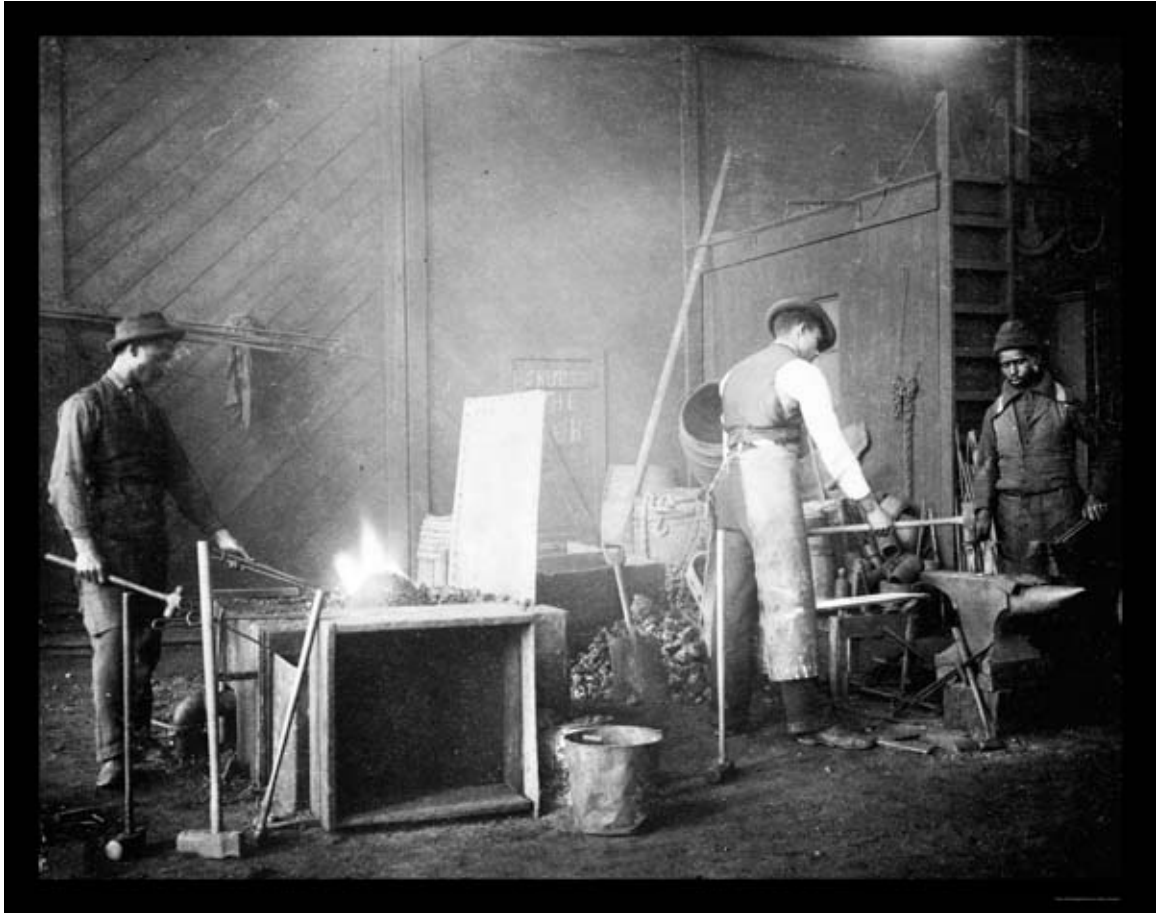
Rudy

I Wish I'd Said That...

The laborer uses his hands.

The craftsman uses his hands and head.

The artist uses his hands, head, and heart.



This photo is from about 100 years ago at a blacksmith shop in Newport News.

No safety glasses but those hats sure look nice!

**Safety glasses are required
when watching demonstrations.**

Please bring your own pair.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

We didn't send out a newsletter after the April meeting because the May meeting was a special event that fell so soon after it; so, here is a summary of both meetings for your reading pleasure.

In April, we met at Mission Espada, in San Antonio. We had about 15 people join us at the old forge there. We had a special ringing of the anvil for long-time member, Jim Galish, who had just passed away. Father Jerome, from the mission, said a special prayer for Jim, who had made and donated many period-correct items to the mission.

After the anvil-ringing, Jerry Achterberg showed the group an easier way of making even cross-arms on a Frederick Cross when they are to be tapered, split and then scrolled. He tapers his ends prior to making his initial cuts, so the arm pieces end up the same length when the cross is opened up. Smart! Gary Evensen showed the group a tomahawk pipe he made from a 3/4" square. After the demos, Ranger Barbara Mason took members who had not seen the mission on a tour, as well as offering to take folks to San Juan Mission for a tour.

The trade items for April were actually house-warming gifts for Ruth Carter, who finally moved into her new house near John and Carolyn Crouchet in Marble Falls. Some of the things made for Ruth were a banana rack, a chopper, a hook, a key rack and a cross. I gave her a toilet paper holder ahead of time during the Bluebonnet Demo. Ruth's fabulous country house was built by Balcones Forge member Jim Elliott, who sure did a great job. Congratulations to Ruth for getting moved in and to Jim for getting it done.

For the May meeting, we were asked to demonstrate at the Pioneer Museum in Fredericksberg

for their Founders Day event. We didn't have a trade item, since it was so soon after the previous meeting. We did, however, have Iron-in-the-Hat this time. An ABANA hat, and two leaf springs were auctioned off. Then, several forges members brought with them, as well as the stationary forge in the Blacksmith Shop on-site, were fired up. Sixteen members and guests attended the event. Steve Tharpe, a friend of Roy Bellows', brought out a set-up for sharpening saw blades. He also gave us a demonstration on how to make a "spork", a one-piece utensil with a fork at one end and a spoon at the other. Tee Hines, from HABA also came out to forge. New member, "Squeezebox Charlie" (Chuck Hamsa) came out for a little while with his family and brought his accordion. He even played us a few tunes. It was a really nice day, weather and all!

Sue Murray - Balcones Forge Secretary

SPECIAL THANKS

This year's auction at the spring demo was a major success. Have you ever wondered why are dues are so low? Well, it is because our own members donate so generously to the auction.

But wait.....

This year we had a couple of important corporate sponsors that also made generous donations to the auction.

Please give your thanks and support to:

Airgas
and
Matheson Trigas

Many thanks y'all!

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JUNE MEETING INFO

No details on the demonstration at press time, but the June meeting will be on the last Saturday (our normal day) which this month is the 30th. Meetings start at 9:30am unless otherwise announced.

Balcones Forge will meet at the New Braunfels location of Centaur Forge and Mike Chambers (he runs the place) will once again be our host.

The address for Centaur Forge is:
1367-B Industrial Drive
New Braunfels, TX 78130
1-888-229-8877

A map is on the back page for your driving pleasure.

NEW T-SHIRTS AND CAPS

We have a new crop of T-shirts and caps with some very popular colors. Large sizes too. Get some at the next meeting -- just \$10 each.

ZILKER BLACKSMITH SHOP GATE PANELS

How are your panels coming? If you would like to make a panel, see Rudy Billings.

YOU COULD WIN....

Enter to Win a \$500 Scholarship!

Blacksmith Supply is giving away a \$500 scholarship. Nothing to purchase – just go to their website (www.BlacksmithSupply.com) and fill out the entry form. Winner selected by random drawing on Nov 15, 2007.

Only one entry per person per month.



Charlie Stolte, Tom Lupton and Harvey P. Wise



Ruth Carter, Sue Murray and Carolyn Crouchet



John Crouchet and Ruth Carter

Scenes from the May meeting.

Photos by Helen Wise

TRADE ITEM

Harvey Wise has declared that the trade item for the June meeting is a hook made with/from a horseshoe. So get one of those old (or new) shoes that is laying around the shop and turn it into a hook. Any kind of hook!

Remember, you gotta make one to take one!

For the new folks in the group, the monthly trade item is a chance to make something you might not try otherwise. Bring what you made to the meeting and trade for something made by another member of the group.

Participating in the trade item lets you see how your friends tackle the same task and you get to add other smiths work to your collection!

FOR SALE

Ray Clontz Tire Hammer Plans by Clay Spencer. These plans are for a 50 lb. power hammer that uses the rear axle and hub from a front drive car and emergency spare tire and weighs about 700 lbs. It is powered by a 1 hp, 1750 rpm electric motor, 120 or 240 volts, runs about 250 blows per minute and uses a spring toggle mechanism similar to Little Giant hammers. The anvil is 6" solid round (minimum size) by 36" high and the frame is 5" square tubing. The plans are 40 pages, printed front and back on 20 sheets that include parts list, detail and assembly drawings, sources, notes, installation, adjustments and maintenance. Over 200 hammers have been built using these plans. Price is \$30US including postage to US and Canada, \$32US to other countries. Send check or money order to Clay Spencer, 934 Partridge Lane, Murphy, NC 28906. E-mail clayms@brmemc.net for info.

Also, lead workshops for chapters or groups to build 15 to 20 hammers and have Tire Hammers for sale, \$2000.

ANVILS FOR SALE

The premium quality German made ERNST REFFLINGHAUS ANVIL is now available in the U.S.A. through the Shady Grove Blacksmith Shop, Grand Island, Nebraska.

The Refflinghaus family has been producing premium anvils in the same location since 1886. There are over 100 sizes and styles available ranging in size from 77lb. to 1250lb. One of their most popular anvils in both Europe and the US is the double horn anvil with upsetting block and side shelf. Their anvil face is guaranteed hard at RC59.

Thank you for your consideration,

Dick Nietfeld
Shady Grove Blacksmith Shop
www.blksmth.com
308 384 1088

GET PUBLISHED

As a Balcones Forge member you are eligible for a Gallery page on www.balconesforge.org to show off your work.

Just send photos (preferably in digital format) to Scott Little (little@earthtech.org). Your gallery page will be more interesting if you write some descriptive captions for your photos to explain how you made the piece, what kind of stock you used, what it does, etc.

SAFETY FIRST

Have a designated area, such as under the forge, for hot articles.

This way no one is apt to pick them up and get burned.



This beautiful bronze leaf will be auctioned off at the July meeting of Balcones Forge. This piece was created by Dorothy and Jake at the Spring Demo in March.

Be sure and plan to spend the 28th of July in Marble Falls, Texas at John Crouchet's shop on the beautiful Sycamore Creek Ranch.

The special guest demonstrator for the July meeting will be Dave Koenig of Tudor Forge. Dave will be demonstrating forging with aluminum.

This special demo is open to all members of Balcones Forge as well as guests.

Photo by Rudy Billings.



Lupe Urdailes designed this pair of tongs so he could pickup large and small objects.

Photo by Gary Evensen.

HELP ME WRITE THIS LETTER!

By John Crouchet

There is trouble in Paradise! As most of you know, our biannual ABANA national blacksmithing conferences have become too big, way too expensive, too hard to plan, and much too hard to execute. Things are so out-of-control that the ABANA Board of Directors cancelled our 2008 conference to give the organization a chance to get its act together.

This is a problem that concerns me. I served as Vendor Coordinator at the last conference in Seattle and I saw a number of ways we could financially improve that part of the conference. After I got back to Texas, I spoke with my friend Doug Klunder, who was President of the Arizona Blacksmiths Association when they put on the wonderful Flagstaff conference. I spoke to our own Dave Koenig who directed and did the heavy lifting for the Kentucky conference. And, most importantly, I spoke to many of you, both those who attended some of the ABANA conferences and some who could not afford to attend the conferences due to the ever increasing prices!

Clair Yellin, the President of ABANA, has asked for our input on future conferences and I intend to write her a letter. I would like your help with that. Send me an email at john@texaswroughtiron.com and let me know what would get YOU to future conferences!!!

Topics you might want to consider include:

Housing at the conference: Are you willing to pay for dorm rooms? Do you want ABANA to make your room arrangements or just stay out of it? Is camping an option?

Food at the conference: How do you think we should handle meals at the conference?

Demonstrators at the conference: What type of demonstrations do you want to see? Are you interested in seeing European, Japanese, African, Australian, and English blacksmiths? Are you willing to pay for that? Do you want more basic demonstrations? More advanced demonstrations? More emphasis on the "business" side of blacksmithing? More emphasis on the "art" side of blacksmithing.

Galleries at the conference: What do you think about the Members Gallery at the conferences? Other galleries?

Conference venues: Where could we hold our conferences? College campuses are very expensive.

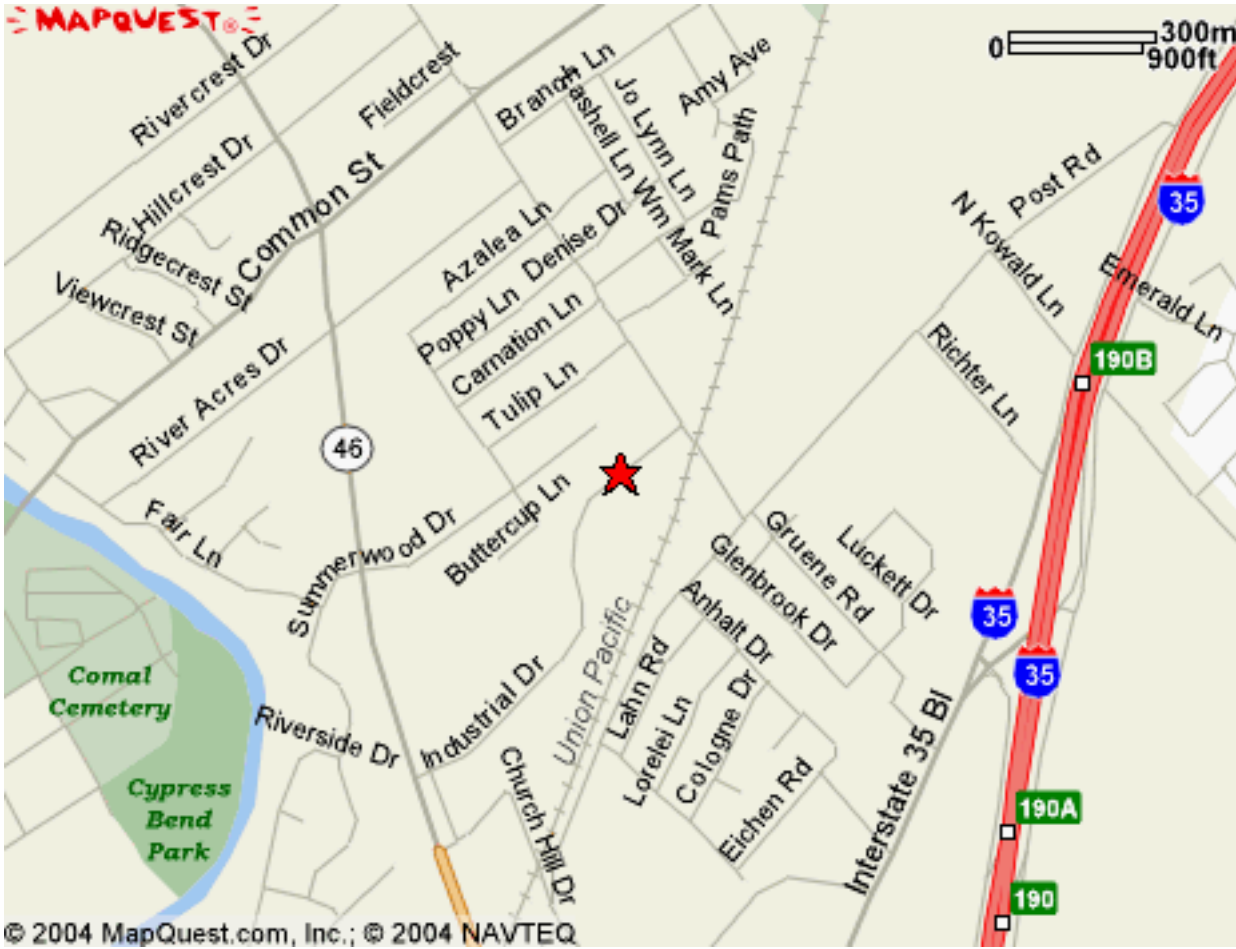
Locations: Is a conference in Seattle just too far away from Texas? How about New York? How about San Antonio? Somebody winds up traveling anywhere we put it. How do we handle that?

And most importantly: What were the best, most important parts of the conferences you have attended? What was most memorable and what made it all "worth it"?????

I want to know: **WHAT WOULD IT TAKE TO GET YOU TO THE NEXT ABANA CONFERENCE????**

Thanks for your help. John Crouchet

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



The June 30 meeting of Balcones Forge will be at Centuar Forge in New Braunfels.

Get all the info inside!

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