



# Blacksmiths of Central Texas

Rudy Billings, President  
rudy@redhotironworks.com- 512/461-7375  
Harvey P. Wise, Vice-President  
hpw@tconline.net- 979/823-0813  
Smokey Thompson, Treasurer  
swthompson@aol.com- 512/694-9772  
Sue Murray, Secretary  
suraiyam@earthlink.net- 512/929-0416  
Vince Herod, Editor  
spotteddogforge@yahoo.com - 512/253-6045

## March 2007

Lately I seem to be getting many calls and emails from folks with blacksmith-related questions, comments, or just to say "Hi." After having a fun conversation with someone I don't even know from somewhere across the country recently, something came to mind -- with blacksmiths, there are no strangers, and there are no secrets. If you have been a member any length of time, you know how true that is. You are part of an amazing group. "Blacksmiths -- No Secrets, No Strangers." Not a bad slogan.

The Bluebonnet Workshop with Dorothy Stiegler is here! You won't want to miss it. Kinda tired of forging iron? Want to add something special to your forgings? Dorothy will be showing how to forge bronze along with many other techniques. You won't be disappointed. Don't forget -- we start at 9:00 each day. Hopefully you will join us for the yummy dinner on Saturday evening but if you can't, you are invited to join us for the Balcones Auction and Dorothy's presentation of her gallery of work. Dinner at 6:00, auction at 7:25 and Dorothy's presentation will follow.

As you know, the yearly auction is the main fundraiser for Balcones Forge. So bring good items to place in the auction, and when you bid, bid often and generously. The auction is an entertaining event where you can come home with some good additions to your shop.

PLEASE REGISTER NOW! Don't wait until the day of the event to register. Please do your officers a favor by sending in your registration so they can enjoy the workshop and we can get started on time. Your help in this will be greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Congratulations to each of you for being in the right place at the right time with the right group of people, that's Marble Falls, Texas -- March 31-April 1 -- Balcones Forge!

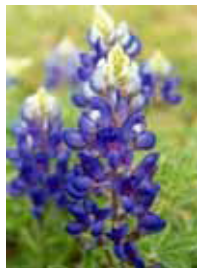
No secrets, no strangers,

Rudy

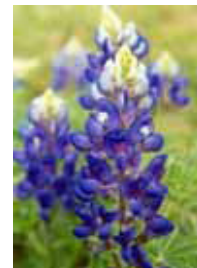
PS. A registration form is included in this newsletter. (Hint, hint!)

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

# Balcones Forge ~~Winter~~ Bluebonnet



## Workshop featuring **DOROTHY STIEGLER**



March 31-April 1, 2007      Marble Falls, Texas

**Balcones Forge** is delighted to present a dynamic and entertaining two-day team demonstration by world famous blacksmith **Dorothy Stiegler** and her very accomplished apprentice, **Jake Hill**. This very special exhibition will include a wide array of Dorothy's own practical and productive forging secrets and tricks of the trade, as well as exciting displays of team forging. Learn to add value and artistic interest to your forged work with Dorothy's special demonstrations of bronze forging. As Dorothy says, "It looks old, it feels old."

Dorothy Stiegler is renowned for her artistic work in both iron and bronze. She has received the Alex Bealer Award, the highest honor that ABANA can bestow. She has served for many years on the ABANA Board of Directors and has worked with many of the finest blacksmiths of the past, present and future! Her demonstrations are packed with learning and laughter and she makes new friends wherever she goes! Come join us for a wonderful weekend in the Texas Hill Country and meet our friend, Dorothy Stiegler!

The Balcones Forge Workshop will present a wonderful dinner on Saturday night, catered by our friends at **The Jamin' House**, the finest restaurant in Marble Falls. Dinner will be followed by our famous annual **Balcones Auction!** Buy yourself a new (or old) blacksmithing hammer, maybe a forge or anvil, some smithing books, or maybe Dorothy's latest creation, or just enjoy our rousing, old-time auction! We will finish Saturday night with Dorothy's entertaining **slide show**, featuring the intricate and fascinating bronze work she and Jake have forged over the last three years.

The Balcones Workshop will be held March 31 and April 1. Here in the **Texas Hill Country**, folks, that is **Bluebonnet Time!** Plan to ride some of our scenic country back roads and enjoy the finest display of wildflowers in America! We are located right in the middle of Texas' best bluebonnet area! Whether you ride the back roads on your trusty motorcycle or by automobile, it is a sight you will not want to miss!

**Times: Saturday:** 9:00-Noon – Morning Demo  
Noon-1:00 – Lunch: Drinks provided; bring a sack lunch or there are numerous places to eat nearby  
1:00 – 5:00 – Afternoon Demo  
6:00 – Tasty catered dinner, only \$15  
7:25 – If you do not attend the dinner, please join us at this time for the Old Time Auction and Dorothy's slide show

**Sunday:** 9:00-1:00 – Demo

Our host is Larry Crawford at his Hammerfest Forge, 2401 Commerce St. Directions: **From Burnet on Hwy 281**, State Street will be the second traffic light once you enter Marble Falls. You will turn left (East) onto State Street. **From San Antonio or Hwy 71**, start counting traffic lights once you cross the Colorado River into town. State Street will be the eighth traffic light and you will turn right (East) onto State Street. **From Ranch Road 1431**, you will turn right (North) onto Hwy 281. State Street will be the third traffic light once you are on Hwy 281. You will turn right (East) onto State Street. **Everybody:** Go one block to the end of State Street. Turn left and go twenty feet. Turn right into Larry's driveway. Lost? Just call John Crouchet for directions at 830-798-3710. Web map: [maps.citysearch.com/map/view/10195073](http://maps.citysearch.com/map/view/10195073)

#### For more info contact:

**Rudy Billings**, 512-461-7375 or [Rudy@RedHotIronWorks.com](mailto:Rudy@RedHotIronWorks.com)

**John Crouchet**, 830-798-3710 or [John@TexasWroughtIron.com](mailto:John@TexasWroughtIron.com)

**Jerry Achterberg**, 210-661-3293 or [treefarm@swbell.net](mailto:treefarm@swbell.net)

#### Hotel Accommodations:

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

Ramada Limited, 1206 Hwy 281, 830-693-5731

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.

**REGISTER EARLY!**

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

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

The February Balcones Forge meeting was hosted by John Van Strien in his really nice new shop in South Austin. We had at least 28 people attend.

John got to travel to Europe in 2004 and while there, he took many photos of the Art Nouveau architecture. His first presentation was a good slide show of architectural work by Antonio Gaudi, of Barcelona, and Victor Horta, of Brussels. There were some extremely intricate and some really wild buildings, gates and other architectural structures created by them. John had lots of slides, so he took a break from the show half way through to present information on new types of lighting that will be valuable for artists.

John, who has an electrical engineering background, has been working with new ways to show off his work or incorporate lighting into it. He began the lighting discussion with a basic demonstration on safely wiring up lights and measuring volts and amps with a dimmer switch. Then, he let us know that the future of lighting will be the LEDs. They are much more efficient than incandescent lighting. Although LEDs have been around for 20-30 years, manufacturers have just recently been able to make them brighter, warmer and cheaper. You can even get replacements for incandescent bulbs. John showed us several cool types of LED light products, but the product that created the biggest stir was a very flat, flexible light made by Ceelite. It looked like a thin sheet of plastic, but emitted light. The flat panel made long-time photographer, Harry Cabluck, drool (Harry, I mean that in a good way!!) One other interesting product was electroluminescent wire in multi-colored plastic coating. All kinds of new options!

For anyone interested in checking out or purchasing LED lighting products, you can check superbrightleds.com or ledtronics.com. Ceelite, the manufacturer of the flat panels does not appear to sell the product on their website, seelite.com; however, you can buy them in Texas from TXlite.flatlightcreations.com.

The monthly trade item was "something riveted". We had six items: a nutcracker, two crosses, a spatula, an open-top box, and a heart. Just think, if you'd have brought in something riveted...you'd have been able to take one of these cool items home with you!

The big annual demo is coming up at the end of March, so don't forget to forge something for the auction or donate a tool you don't use. Get your registration forms in early so you're sure to have a seat. Time's-a-tickin'!

Finally, we have several members that have been dealing with serious health issues recently. We sure hope you guys feel better soon and just know that we're thinking of you and we're sending all the positive thoughts we can muster your way!

See you at the demo!

Sue Murray - Balcones Forge Secretary

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.

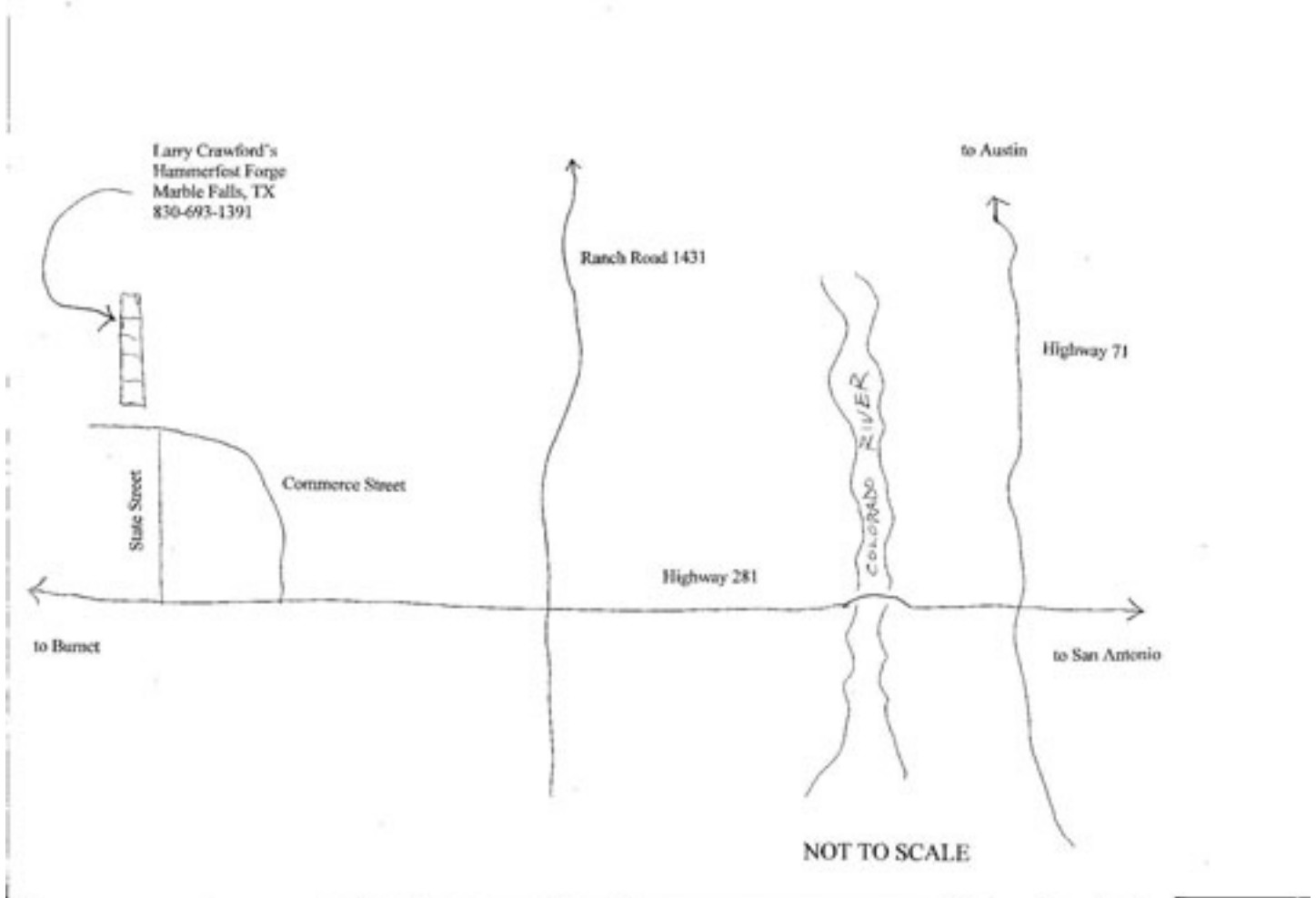


Harvey Wise resting at home with one of the Grand kids.

## HARVEY IS HOME!

Balcones Forge Vice President Harvey Wise is at home and getting some rest after a serious visit to the hospital. Several of our members have not been feeling as well as we all would like so please send your best thoughts out to:

Harvey Wise  
Jim Galish  
Alan Lee  
Tandy Turner  
Mr. Charlie Stolte



Follow the map above to the big doins in Marble Falls



## **A CALL TO AUCTION**

Now that you all have your calendars marked for the big event at the end of March, it is time for you to get out in your shop and create an item to donate to the auction.

Out of all the various fund raising activities spread through out the year the auction at the big demo is the one to attend. The truth is, without the auction, the big annual demo would lose money. Balcones Forge tries hard as an organization to keep the cost of membership low and keep the demos affordable.....and I think we do a good job!

So take some time in the next month or so to make an item or perhaps do a bit of shop cleaning and pass an unused piece of equipment along to someone who needs it to get going in the craft. Anything related to the craft will help. And don't forget, the auction is a family affair so make something for them as well.

Remember this is YOUR organization and it is up to YOU to help out .

Vince Herod, Editor

## **BAND SAW BLUES?**

Do you have a small bandsaw that needs attention? Check out this site:

[www.tinyisland.com/4x6bsFAQ.html](http://www.tinyisland.com/4x6bsFAQ.html)

Submitted by Rudy Billings

## **READY TO HOST A MEETING?**

We have a few spots still open for 2007. Contact our VP, Harvey Wise at [hpw@tconline.net](mailto:hpw@tconline.net) if you're interested.

## **YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER**

That's right folks; this could be your last newsletter.....that is unless you have re-newed your membership!

Do not miss an issue. Re-new NOW!

## **WHAT'S NEW WITH YOU?**

Has your email address changed recently?

Do you have a new home?

We get returned mail -- both types -- quite often.

Please update Sue or any officer when something changes.

We like to keep in touch!

PS. PAY YOUR DUES!

# Why We Volunteer

## by John Crouchet

In a week or so, we will all (I hope) be partying it up at our annual winter demo. Every year, Balcones Forge invites the best blacksmith we can find to come show us the tricks of the trade; the secrets of the fire. We will have a big dinner together, drink a few beers and spend a couple of golden days with our friends. For many of us, this is the best time of the year, and, while we welcome new folks and outsiders, the real truth is that this is OUR party. We do this one for US.

Our monthly meetings are usually set up the same way. We love to see a new person interested in the craft, but we really put on those meetings for our own instruction and benefit.

However, that is not the only side of Balcones Forge. We also exist to serve the public and we do this by exposing the public to the art of blacksmithing. Surprising as it may seem, we can do a great public service by just showing up to hammer out a nail or a hook.

That does not seem like much, but it can have a lot of impact.

We have all laughed about the city kids who think milk comes from the grocery store. Really, those are just children who have never laid eyes on a cow. In the same way, most children (and many adults) have never seen anything being made from iron or steel. Think about that. These are people who live in a world where EVERYTHING is held together by iron and steel and they know NOTHING about it. It is no wonder that these people, in their ignorance, are not concerned that our nation is losing its steel factories. They have no idea what steel means to this country. It is not a surprise that they do not care when a historical building is bulldozed to make way for the next Walmart. They have no clue how much effort their ancestors put into building each and every piece of that building. Their ignorance of ironwork negatively affects America in many different ways.

We can help change that. We can plant the seeds of awareness by just standing there in public and forging a nail. The child you hand that nail to will always be aware that nails are made by someone, that there is effort and thought in something as simple as a door hinge, and that iron is something to be considered and valued. Hopefully, that child's parents will take that notion away with them also.

The blacksmiths of Balcones Forge work in front of the public at the Pioneer Museum in Fredericksburg, at Mission Espada in San Antonio, and at the blacksmith shop at the botanical gardens in Zilker Park in Austin. I hope you will make a real effort to help us. We are making a difference.

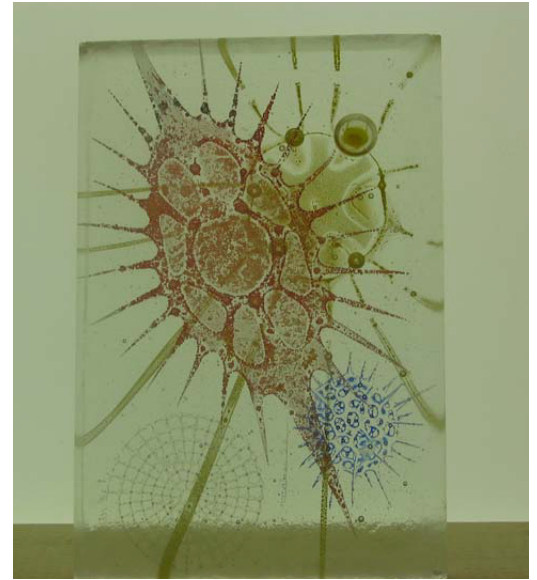
### **A FAVOR PLEASE...**

To allow your officers, especially your Treasurer and Secretary, to enjoy the Bluebonnet Workshop also, please do not wait until that day to bring in your registration. Take the time now to send your registration form and check to Sue at the address on the form. It is important to inform the caterer how many will be attending the dinner, so we cannot wait until the day of the dinner.

Please do it today. Thanks!



Scenes from the February meeting.



Photos by Vince Herod

THIS JUST IN.....

REGISTER EARLY TO BE IN OUR DRAWING FOR A  
\*\*\*\*FREE\*\*\*\* WILLIAM BASTAS HAMMER!!!!

THAT'S RIGHT, FOLKS!!!! ONE OF OUR EARLY  
REGISTRANTS WILL WALK AWAY WITH A GENUINE  
BASTAS HAMMER FOR FREE!!!

DRAWING IS OPEN ONLY TO  
EARLY REGISTRANTS, SO SEND IN YOUR REGISTRATION  
NOW!!!!!!

WWW.BALCONESFORGE.ORG

# Balcones Forge Bluebonnet Workshop

featuring **Dorothy Stiegler - March 31-April 1**

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 \_\_\_\_\_

2007 Membership ..... \$15 \_\_\_\_\_

Non-member..... \$60 \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I wish to become a BF member

Saturday Evening Meal ... \$15 \_\_\_\_\_

**Total** \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to **Balcones Forge**.

Send to Sue Murray, Secretary,

5112 Cloverdale Lane, Austin, TX 78723

**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

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