



Balcones Forge Dispatch

President's Corner

March 2015



Greetings!

We can only hope that winter is behind us, but don't count on it. We will probably see some more cool weather before we see spring, and then a week or two later we will ease into summer. You will know its spring when all the things that "sting" show

up. Besides the mosquitoes, the hornets and the yellow jackets, I hate the fire ants most of all. These bullies of the back yard like to hide in the grass and wait until you are covered with them before they start to sting. Then it's too late and you can't get them off fast enough.

I hate bug sprays and chemicals so I keep ant can near the forge, which is a 3 pound coffee can with a bail on it. I fill it half full of water and heat it in the forge when I see ant mounds in the yard. Once the water is boiling I just pour it over the mound and get some more water for the next mound. It kills them instantly (along with some of the grass, but it will be ok in a day or two) and leaves no residue.

I once had thousands of ants invade the river house after a sudden spring shower. The shop vac had them cleaned up in just a few minutes. I also put diatomaceous earth, which is a very fine powder, around the perimeter of the house and out buildings. It works all bugs with an exoskeleton by getting between their body joints and scratching them to death.

Lastly when the ants have invaded your shop and you don't have the shop vac handy, use that little propane torch to stop them in their tracks. Those trails of ants are stopped instantly and you don't have to put up with that ant killer order (besides that, it's kind of fun).

Continued on page 2

Demo Days are March 28 & 29



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President's Message continued

I want to thank the Lee Brothers for the best combo demo yet! You really went over the top to put this together. There was something for everybody and almost too much to see at one time. I didn't think you could top last year's event, but you did it and did it well. I can't wait till next year.

A special thanks to all who helped out. You made this a very special event!

It's almost time for the Bluebonnet Demo with Dorothy Stiegler, and the kicker is Dorothy is teaching a silicon bronze workshop. Just watching Dorothy at the anvil is something you never forget, but to learn from a master one on one is priceless. I don't think you will ever have this chance again and it is a bargain. There are a limited number of slots and they are going fast. Please contact Jim Elliott to secure a slot at 512-630-1293.

This year's demo promises to be as entertaining and enlightening as any we have ever had. I have only seen bronze attempted a couple of times and both were miserable failures. I will be watching closely

Don't forget the auction after dinner on Saturday. Besides being able to pick up a hand forged masterpiece or tool at a bargain, it's a good time to let your hair down and relax with friends over a few adult beverages.

As always, Balcones Forge is here for you. Our job is to help promote and preserve the art of blacksmithing by passing down our skills from one generation to another. Get involved, be part of the chain!

Keep in touch and be safe!

Jerry Achterberg
Balcones Forge President

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FEBRUARY SECRETARY'S REPORT



The Steep Hollow Forge meeting hosted by Alan & Jeff Lee in Bryan on February 21, 2015 was everything and anything for the large group of area blacksmiths that attended. Alan welcomed the crowd and the demonstrations began without delay. Larry House and John Perilloux began by forging hinge straps. Several methods for reaching the end result for a unique set of door hinges. A very helpful jig for bending the hinge point was explained and demonstrated, as well as how to form the bolt loop by hand. It was evident that these two blacksmiths had performed this task numerous times because the end results of several pairs of hinges were forged exceptionally well.

Before the auction began, Jerry Achterberg called a Balcones Board members meeting to order. Always trying to be proactive in the future for Balcones Forge, Alan Lee started submitting names for next year's Bluebonnet demonstrators. Several names were thrown into the hat for consideration and it was determined that the board will discuss these suggestions, as well as consideration for what members want and decisions will be announced at a later date.

The board readily approved Daniel Harrington as the new treasurer. He will succeed Rudy Billings

whose dynamic and exceptional handling of Balcones Forge treasury over the years has proven to provide success for everyone. I always admired the way Rudy noted the auctions and followed up in collecting the proceeds. It was amazing to me how quickly Rudy was able to identify what each individual member owed in dues and I never heard anyone comment negatively about the processes he had established. With great admiration for a job well done from such a respected individual member of the board, we all wish Rudy the best. I asked him what he was going to do with so much time on his hands and he pointed out that spending more time with his family as well as doing some traveling would be very nice. Good luck Rudy and welcome Daniel.

Consideration for an individual to take over the library is something the board has to vote on soon. Anyone interested?

Another topic of interest for Balcones Forge members to consider taking part in is the upcoming Pioneer museum demonstrations in Fredericksburg during spring break March 7 - 14. In order to promote this event and gain active blacksmith participation, the first 2 demonstrators that sign up will have their Bluebonnet participation fees paid for. Forges, coal, and anvils are already provided and in place - just bring your favorite hammer and tongs. The meeting was adjourned.

The doorknocker competition items displayed were beyond exceptional and Jeff Lee won first place. Great examples of individual artistry and forging techniques were demonstrated. Beautiful and crafty efforts were submitted by several talented blacksmiths. The bar gets raised each time a "competition" forged item is presented. I for one was very humbled.

The iron in the hat auction is always a special event for blacksmiths. There were many exceptional items donated and bidding wars were exceptional. The live auction as well as the silent auction summed \$6220 as reported by Rudy.

In order to spark interest in donating as well as attending I'd like to point out that a single forged piece brought \$1,000 -- you shudda been there. Great excitement!

At lunch, we enjoyed a terrific BBQ dinner with all the trimmings - delicious. Music during the lunch break was by the Joey McGee duo and Alan Lee couldn't get enough - he danced rather than eat (well it was more of a swing). It's always amazing to me how many people volunteer to assist such a large group and we all thank those unselfish individuals starting from the parking attendant, registration, auction, lunch, and those behind the scene. Tremendous effort that was greatly appreciated - thanks.

After lunch, Dana Flanders and John McGee began the forging demonstrations. Dana forged a unique coat hook and John forged an owl bottle opener as well as a trammel. It was very interesting to watch similar techniques to present such different and functional pieces. It was a lively presentation, to say the least; very informative and enjoyable.

The iron smelt according to Alan was running a little behind. The process is as much a learning process each time it is undertaken. Nevertheless, by overcoming unexpected problems that the group experienced, they were successful in smelting a bloom. It is noteworthy to mention, that those individuals have little opportunity to participate in any other event, except to devote their full attention to the smelt. Admirable devotion!

Many thanks to Jeff & Alan Lee for this great annual event. Everyone I talked to is looking forward to another spectacular presentation at Steep Hollow Forge.

Tim Tellander, Secretary
Balcones Forge

A GREAT DEAL

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

FUTURE BALCONES FORGE MEETINGS

March 2015

28 & 29 Bluebonnet - Marble Falls, TX
(Dorothy demos bronze)

April 25, 2015: James Helm

May 16, 2015- Swing Music Fest
San Marcos, TX

THE BALCONES FORGE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jerry Achterberg, President
Jerry Whitley, Vice President
Rudy Billings, Treasurer
Tim Tellander, Secretary

John Crouchet
Daniel Harrington, Librarian & Assistant Treasurer
Jim Elliot
Vince Herod, Editor
Alan Lee
Jeff Lee



Great music and food made for a fine lunch break at the February meeting. Joey McGee kept the crowd entertained and one of our hosts dancing.

It won't be long before the bluebonnets will be springing forth. And that means the annual Bluebonnet Demo is almost here. Dorothy will return for her third time. Yes -- she is that good! You won't want to miss.

Now, please do me and yourself a big favor. Send in your registration right away. I know the form says the deadline is March 15, but don't worry. Go ahead and print the form, write your check, and plop it in an envelope. A little bothersome, but you will appreciate the time you'll have looking at all the auction items instead of waiting in line getting registered. It also helps us with the catering and other planning.

Thanks and see you in Marble Falls!
Rudy

I just wanted to send a short not of THANKS to all of those that volunteered to work at Fredericksburg's, Pioneer Museum for Spring Break. I just spoke to Evelyn and they are very pleased with everyone that was there. Because different areas take their Spring Break at different times, they are looking into the possibility of adding a couple more days to next year's schedule. This should not be a problem, as the plan is to start working on a volunteer schedule in late January.

Pioneer Museum will be having their Founder's Day event on May 9, 2015 and will need someone to fire up the forge. I will let you know when I get more information.

<http://pioneermuseum.net/founders-day.php>

Once again, thank you to all of the volunteers for helping Balcones Forge fulfill their mission.

Jerry Whitley, VP



Condolences to our good friend, James Honig

Janet "Janie" Honig, age 76, of Hondo passed away Monday, Jan. 19, 2015, after a battle with cancer.

Janie was born May 14, 1938, in Louisville, KY, the daughter of Benjamin and Mary Loring Potter and grew up on the family farm in Connecticut. She graduated from Plainfield High School and completed the Baccus Hospital nursing program.

She joined the U.S. Air Force in 1962 as a registered nurse and served in Thailand, Germany and at various locations in the United States.

While stationed in San Antonio, she met James Honig at a square dance in Hondo and they were married Dec. 28, 1974. She continued her education, earning a Master's degree in Nursing from Incarnate Word College. James worked at his welding shop in Hondo.

Janie was stationed in Thailand as a nurse during "Operation Freedom", transporting Thai and Vietnamese refugees to the Philippine Islands. She was the RN on the C-141 transport planes.

Later, she was stationed at Del Rio. James commuted while she was the charge nurse in labor and delivery. She helped pioneer many programs, such as fathers in the delivery room and older children being allowed to visit their new siblings, which were instituted worldwide by the Air Force.

At Wilford Hall, Janie was in charge of labor and delivery, in charge of eight wards and more than 300 staff. At Moody AFB, GA, she was the base hospital's, chief nurse.

After 20 years service, in 1982 she retired with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. She then worked as chief nurse of Air Force Village II for 12 years. Her nursing career spanned more than 50 years.

In retirement she continued to help people, looking after James' aunt Anita, his mother and father, her aunt Ruth, and her cousin Francis for 18 months. Her nursing skills were of great help.

Janie enjoyed helping James in the shop and even learned how to weld. They enjoyed being together, She also helped with haying, working the cattle and the dogs.

She was an excellent quilter, making many quilts for the nieces and nephews, which they all treasure. Her last quilt was made with James' mother, Leona, as a wedding gift for nephew Keith and Jennifer Honig. It was signed: Leona Honig, age 100, Janie Honig, age 76.

Janie loved her church. She worked with the Altar Guild and cleaned the church and fellowship hall for many years.

She was courageous in her battle with cancer. She never lost her faith in God and knew He was with her through all the surgeries.

Janie was preceded in death by her parents; her father-in-law, William Honig; brother-in-law, Emanuel Honig; and her cousin, Francis Anton.

Survivors are her husband of 40 years, James Honig; mother-in-law, Leona Honig of Hondo; brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, Paul and Faye Honig of San Antonio, Weldon and Marilyn Honig of Kenedy and Carol Honig of Las Alamos NM; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Memorials may be made to Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Quihi, or Guiding Eyes for the Blind, 611 Granite Springs Road, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598.



Combo-Demo demonstrators (clockwise from top left)

John Perilloux, Larry House, Lyle Wynn, Alan Lee,
Jeff Lee, Dana Flanders and John Magee.

Hello Balcones Forge members —

Your opinions are needed, please, regarding the silent auction at the Bluebonnet Demo this March 28.

If you're unfamiliar with a silent auction, this is an opportunity to bid throughout the day without any time pressure, revisiting items you're interested in and writing down a higher bid if need be.

In addition to a silent auction for tangible items like anvils or tongs, **we'd like to gauge interest on bidding for a donated 'service' (also called an 'in-kind' donation).**

What would YOU as a Balcones Forge member want? Examples include working with an expert on...:

- Anvil rebuilding
- Making an anvil stand or a leg vise stand
- Making flypress tooling
- A lesson on forging chain
- A basic forging lesson
- Making plant hangers
- Making a Frederic Cross
- Patina lesson
- Making chisels and punches
- In short, when you were last in your shop and needed help with a task or making something, what was that?? Please let us know!

Please respond back to this e-mail with suggestions for services/in-kind donations you'd like to see offered. In turn, we'll try to arrange for a fellow 'smith to donate that service. You can then bid on that service during the silent auction throughout the day.

I look forward to hearing back from you!

Cheers —

Laura Armstrong
Volunteer, Bluebonnet Demo

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Laura@TurtleOnARockStudio.com
www.TurtleOnARockStudio.com

Balcones Forge Bluebonnet Demo

featuring

DOROTHY STIEGLER



March 28-29, 2015

Marble Falls, Texas



Dorothy (stieglermetaldesign.com) returns to Texas for our two-day demo and to teach four one-day workshops on bronze forging. Do not miss this opportunity to learn from a master! Classes run Tuesday-Friday (24-27), \$135/members, \$155/non-members. See Jim Elliott or call (512) 630-1293 for openings, then send your check (Balcones Forge) to 1102 Walnut Street, Georgetown TX 78626. Space is limited -- first come, first served -- only paid spots will be held. Registration for the demo is separate.

Free camping spots are available all week around the pond on beautiful Sycamore Creek. Bring your tent or trailer and your fishing pole! Spring is a great time to be out in the Texas Hill Country under starry skies!

Don't miss the barbeque dinner Saturday night followed by our famous annual **Balcones Forge Auction**. Please create items and find unused tools to donate and prepare to bid on fantastic creations and blacksmithing tools -- maybe one of Dorothy's latest creations!

Demo Times: **Saturday:** 9:00–Noon – Morning Demo
Noon–1:00 Lunch: *Since Marble Falls is about 20 minutes away, it is recommended to order a sandwich, chips and drink for \$7 or bring a sack lunch.*
1:00–5:00 Afternoon Demo
6:00 Dinner -- only \$15
7:15 If not attending 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. Go 5.6 miles and look for the "Anvil" signs. At our gate, you will see a small sign to the right that says, "Sycamore Creek Ranch, 5828 East Ranch Road 1431." If the gate is open, just drive in. If the gate is closed, there are cattle in this pasture, so please close the gate behind you. Continue 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

Jerry Achterberg 210-842-3049 or treefarm@swbell.net

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

Hotel Accommodations:

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

Quality Inn, 1206 Hwy 281 North, (866) 307-2224

Best Western, 1403 N Hwy 281, 830-693-5122

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

La Quinta Inn, 501 W. FM 2147, 830-798-2020

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

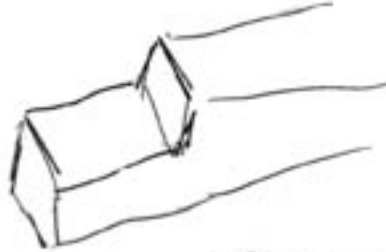
DON'T FORGET YOUR SAFETY GLASSES AND CUSHION. HELP US BY REGISTERING EARLY!!!

Randy McDaniel Demonstration

By Bob Ehrenberger

Randy did a lot of character forms. I'm going to describe what he called his simple dragon. He did a more elaborate dragon later when I was elsewhere.

Use half face blows to establish the transition between the nose and the head.



A hollow eye punch is used to make the eyes and sockets.



A ball punch is used to make the nostrils.



A straight chisel is used to open up the mouth, make it pretty deep.



Use another chisel to make the teeth.



The ears are lifted up with a chisel. And then shaped with a ball punch.



Randy McDaniel demo.

The back of the neck is tapered to start the scales.

The scale affect was achieved by working the back of the neck over the edge of the anvil.

Finally the head is positioned using bending forks.



Finished dragon.

Left, side view

Right, head on



Randy also taught the Sunday morning bonus class. Where he helped 10 lucky members make a colonial meat fork.



Balcones Forge Bluebonnet Demo

featuring **Dorothy Stiegler - March 28-29**

Please print clearly

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Yes, I prefer a hard-copy of the monthly newsletter mailed to me. I have added \$5 to the normal \$20 annual membership fee.

Current Member	\$45	_____
2015 Membership if unpaid.	\$20	_____
if you wish newsletter mailed	\$25	_____
Non-member	\$65	_____
Saturday Lunch	\$ 7	_____
Saturday Evening Meal...	\$15	_____
	Total \$	_____

****Please register by March 15****

Make check payable to **Balcones Forge**.
Send to Rudy Billings,
12302 Indian Mound, Austin, TX 78758

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 workshops and making these events available and granting permission to enter the area of said event, I, individually and as parent or guardian of the minor child attending such event, 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 workshop 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 _____

