



Blacksmiths of Central Texas

President's Corner

May 2010

FORGING OUR OWN SUCCESS BALCONES FORGE ROLLS ON!

Well, partners, that was another great demo! Every year, I wonder whether we can really pull off one more big success and every year we do it again! We have put on these incredible annual Blacksmithing festivities now for over a decade. Fortunately, we have never had a "bomb". Every time, we make money to run Balcones Forge for another year and every time we have another terrific, inspiring demonstrator.

Special thanks to all who helped put on this extravaganza and everybody who made it a success by showing up to participate.

Start thinking about who we can bring in next year for another fantastic demo. Watch for truly exceptional demonstrators and blacksmiths and most of all, DREAM BIG! We have had the best in the world right here at Balcones Forge and we will do it again! Don't worry about how we will pay for it, just think it up. We can brainstorm the money problems and such later on. First, we need to start with a great idea or two.

Speaking of ideas, what can we do to make the big annual demo even better? We had a lot of success this year with a nice breakfast and snack layout, thanks to the hard work of Elise Garza and Dave Guerrero. Would you like to see that again? How was the coffee? You want scrambled eggs and pancakes next year? I'm serious, folks! Tell me what you want to see. Improvement takes effort.

continued on page 2

MEETING DAY IS MAY 15!!!



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And....speaking of effort, please make an effort to show up for our May 15th meeting on the town square in San Marcos during the Texas Swing Festival! We will set up forges and anvils and displays of blacksmithing work and we will proceed to hammer! This is a good opportunity to get some hands-on blacksmithing education. Want to learn how to make a certain hook? Just ask the blacksmith forging one to show you how. It really is that easy. Bring along a friend. We'll show your buddy how to forge, too!

John Crouchet
President



BALCONES FORGE MEETING

May 15 - 9:30 AM

San Marcos
Courthouse Square

Come out to our next meeting and enjoy the sounds of ringing anvils and Texas Western Swing music.

There will be food, crafts, fun, and plenty of entertainment!

Bring your hammer -- we will be forging under the huge shade trees on the lawn of the courthouse in downtown San Marcos.

Beginner members are encouraged to try their hand -- there will be plenty of help if you need it. This is a time to try out some of the things you learned from Gordon Williams.

If you have a forge and/or anvil you would like to bring, please do.

The more, the merrier!

See you there!

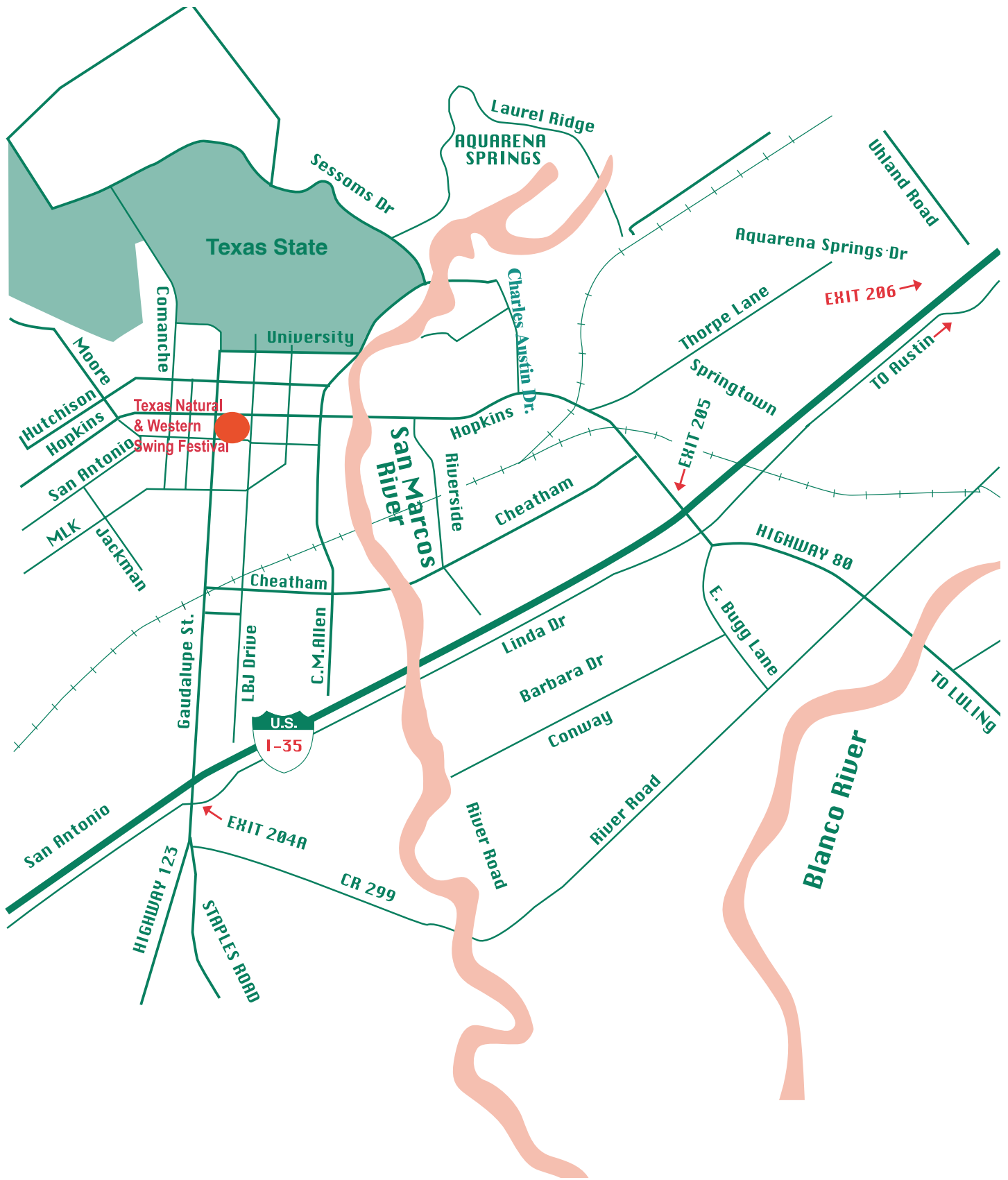
<http://www.ci.san-marcos.tx.us/departments/mainstreet/TexasNaturalFestival.htm>

TRADE ITEM

12" piece of 1/2" square forged into anything you want -- be creative!

The Balcones Forge Newsletter is written by the editor except as noted. Balcones Forge, its 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.

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



Map to the May meeting



ABANA

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abana@abana.org
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Hello Affiliates!

We are so close to the conference that I can just about smell the coal smoke, hear the ringing of the anvils, and taste that Memphis style BBQ! Below are some things to keep in mind as far as the relationship between the affiliates and the conference:

The Affiliate Area: This area is located in the main dome of the AgriCenter next to the vendor area. This is where you can have the space to set up and promote yourselves and sell promotional items like T-shirts, videos, etc. If you are planning on selling anything you **MUST** have the proper forms filled out for state sales tax purposes. Just contact the Central Office for more details! This 10ft.x10ft. space is provided to you free of charge because the affiliates are so important to our organization, all you need is a paying attendee of the conference and your affiliate to be in charge of the table! If you need tables, chairs, and/or electricity they can all be rented from the AgriCenter. This is also perfect to hang you Banners and flags!!! Contact the Central Office to get your space today!!!

Affiliate Sessions at the Conference:

1. Representatives from the Affiliates will have the opportunity to meet with the full Board to express their concerns, ideas, etc. This will be a great chance to have your concerns voiced, and ask questions that you may want answered.
2. There will be an affiliate Representative Roundtable session to go over the data collected in our affiliate survey. We are hoping that finding possible solutions together will be the first step in better serving all the affiliates within ABANA. Come with your ideas and opinions!!! If you have not taken the survey then click here: <http://survey.constantcontact.com/survey/a07e2rn3s78g6awiq5d/start>
3. We will also have a session set aside specifically for the editors! This will be a great time to share story ideas, techniques, and possibly begin to ponder how to better bring the use of the internet and the newsletter exchange tradition together!

If you have any specific ideas, comments, or suggestions for these sessions please feel free to contact me and we can get a head start on them, and make sure they are covered when the time comes!

Other Conference Reminders:

1. **The Ring Project:** You still have time to get a ring made and sent in! And the rings that do not get used will be auctioned off with 50% of the money going BACK to the affiliate! Details click here: http://www.abana.org/membership/conference/Ring_Page.shtml
2. **BAM Box Tools:** We are still looking for tools to fill the box. If you have something for the box let us know ASAP!

3. **The Gallery:** The gallery space at this year's conference is big enough to hold a lot of well made pieces...well made pieces by your affiliate! How about bringing or shipping something in! Contact Steve for more info: sslw2@aol.com
4. **The Auction:** We are also on the lookout for donations to the auction! This is a great opportunity to not only gain some revenue for ABANA, but to also share your work with others who can truly appreciate it!

Other things to keep in mind:

1. **Bulk ABANA Memberships:** You can buy several memberships for discounted rates to give out as awards, auction items, Iron in the Hat, etc!!!

Package Prices:

5 pack \$160

10 Pack \$300

2. **Upcoming Elections!** This is the time when we need you the most! Put the word out within your group to find our next ABANA Board member! Here is the time line:

June 15, 2010: Nominations deadline for candidate's statements to be published in the election issue of the *Anvil's Ring*.

July 1, 2010: Nominations deadline date, submitted to the ABANA Central Office, 15754 Widewater Drive, Dumfries, VA 22025-1212

September, 2010: Ballot mailing

October, 2010: Postmark deadline for completed ballots

October, 2010: Notification to elected Board members

Notifications will be made as soon as possible.

November, 2010: Board Meeting starts at the Metal Museum in Memphis.

New Board members assume their duties.

See you at the conference!

Forge On!

Peyton Anderson

ABANA Affiliate Representative

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Amelia VA 23002

GREETINGS FROM ABANA!

Notice: Call for 2010 Conference Gallery Submissions!

2010 ABANA Conference will host an open to the public Gallery event in conjunction with the Memphis conference. This is your call for Gallery submissions. The conference Gallery will host an opening reception, inviting the public to an evening event and the opportunity to meet the artists.

We invite you to consider donating your Gallery items for the conference auction. Funds raised by the conference auction go to support the mission of your association and are gratefully accepted.

Please be sure to indicate whether your Gallery item is for "Display Only", "Auction Item", or "For Sale by Artist". Please Contact Steve Williamson for Gallery Submissions

Not attending the 2010 Conference? Well there is still a way for you to display your item(s) in the Gallery and/or donate an item for the Auction. Contact Steve Williamson to find out how!

Gallery Submissions Coordinator

Steve Williamson
3434 Pulaski Hwy
Columbia, TN 38401
H: 931-381-7910
Cell: 931-374-1190
sslw2@aol.com

The ABANA 2010 conference will be held at the AgriCenter International in Memphis, Tennessee. Opening ceremonies will be on Wednesday, June 2, 2010. Thursday through Saturday will be full days of forging demo's and excitement ABANA style.

Saturday will conclude with a pay as you go Memphis BBQ banquet and the conference auction.

The theme of the conference is to be "ABANA's Greatest Hits" in keeping with Memphis' musical heritage. The ticket price will turn the clock back at least 8 years...

The site is within a few miles of thousands of reasonably priced hotel rooms. Camping and RV hook-ups and hot showers will be available on site.

AgriCenter International is 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.

**ABANA PUBLICATIONS - CALL
FOR ARTICLES
THE HAMMER'S BLOW WANTS
YOUR ARTICLES!!
GET YOUR "HOW TO" ARTICLES
PUBLISHED!!**

Do you have an idea for an article? Are you interested in or know of someone that may be interested in writing articles for the Hammer's Blow? Then the ABANA Publications Committee wants to hear from you!! Our publications are the definitive journals of the craft and in order to make continuous improvements the ABANA Publications Committee is soliciting the membership for articles.

This is your chance to stand out in the crowd and get published! Even if you are not interested in writing an article yourself, you can get together with fellow smiths and work on an article as a group.

If you belong to one or more ABANA Affiliate groups and see great "How To" and Shop Tip articles published in the Affiliate Newsletters - Be our scouts and tell us about the articles in your group's newsletter that you think deserves widespread distribution and fame!

How to Submit an Article for Publication in the Hammer's Blow.

Here is what you need to know. First of all, make contact with the Publications Committee by using the email address provided below and let them know you are interested.

Publications Committee Email:
publications@abana.org

Next select a topic, a recent personal project, a recent workshop tip you learned, a "How To" or anything that you feel would make a great article for the Hammer's Blow.

This is your opportunity to "Get Published"!!

If your interest is in "How To Articles" for the Hammer's Blow, and you have found a "new" useful tip, tool you made and want to share how it's made, a new idea on an old technique, step by step process for forging something that is not easily understood or any other ideas you may have on something you think "should be published" in the Hammer's Blow.....then this is your opportunity to "Get Published"!!

Whatever your interest is in an article for the Hammer's Blow, contact the Publications Committee by using the email address provided. - Email: publications@abana.org

You can find all the information you will need to get published at these links:

<http://www.abana.org/membership/publications/index.shtml>

<http://www.abana.org/membership/publications/hb/index.shtml>

<http://www.abana.org/downloads/writersguidelines.pdf>

Publication Deadline Schedule for 2010

HAMMER'S BLOW - TIME LINE - 2010

WINTER ISSUE: Copy deadline January 31st,
Publication date March 15th

SPRING ISSUE: Copy deadline April 28th,
Publication date June 15th

SUMMER ISSUE: Copy deadline July 30th,
Publication date September 15th

FALL ISSUE: Copy deadline November 3rd,
Publication date December 15th

Who to Contact for Submitting an Article for
Publication In the Hammer's Blow?

Publications Committee Email: publications@
abana.org

A CHANCE TO BRAINSTORM FOR BALCONES

We need some new ideas for meeting places and meeting agendas here at Balcones Forge. Our April meeting —of course—is the big demo, held at Sycamore Creek Ranch in Marble Falls. The May meeting will be held early, on Saturday, May 15, at the Texas Natural and Swing Music Festival on the courthouse square in San Marcos. We will be entertaining ourselves and the public with a bit of "old-time blacksmithing" while we listen to the music and eat a few corndogs!

We are looking for a meeting place and an interesting agenda for our June meeting. (This is where you come in!) Our vice-president, Aaron Tilton, is in charge of meetings, but he could use your help on this one. Think up a good spot to hold our June meeting or think up a really interesting activity or demo you would like to see. Then email Aaron at: kilmorer@sbcglobal.net and share your vision!

Our meetings are only as good as we make them.

Blacksmithing in China

SW Smokey Thompson

A few months ago (November 2007) I had the opportunity to go over to China to help some local blacksmiths improve their tolerance management on forged balusters. Below are a couple of thoughts on the journey.

Getting to the final location in deep China was a pretty long trip. I flew from Houston to Newark N.J. and then from there to Beijing and the route took us right over the pole, nothing but snow and ice for hours. From Beijing a 90 minute flight to Xingdao and from there a 3 hour car ride to Rengen. From there we were only 45 minutes or so out in the country to the factory. The factory was a very interesting setup, they had about 20 Angyang power hammers set up with about another 30 or so sitting idle. At each hammer was a small coal forge and a two man team, helper and hammer smith. They were very very very frugal with their coal, very small fire. No safety equipment, I passed out a bunch of ear plugs, they used them for about 5 minutes out of courtesy I believe.



Check out the anvil in the very foreground

The really interesting thing about the smithing setup was that there was a small “village” near to the main factory and next to the dorm for the factory workers. Within the village were several mom and pop 2 person blacksmith shops. Each one had the identical setup to the main factory, power hammer, forge, stick welder, a couple of pairs of tongs and a light bulb hanging down in the middle of the concrete shop, that was pretty much it. Plus a large stack of 1.5 inch square bar which they hammered out at a rate, accuracy and tumble technique which even William Bastas would approve.

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



Smokey on the hammer, forged baluster on length sizing rack in foreground

The hammer of choice is the Angyang (or local equivalent) hammer in the 33lb, 88 lb and 165 lb categories. Additionally the mom and pop subcontractors use the 88 lb Angyang.. The ability of the smiths to hand forge to dimensions of $\pm 0.2\text{mm}$ (yep that's right and I measured plenty of them) is really impressive, given the complex shape demands and length requirements. There is great uniformity of tooling (hammers and forges) both within the main company and among their subcontractors. Same hammers, same coal, same forges, same chimneys, same combination hammer dies, no variation!

My goal was to generate an improved set of sizing and screening die for the shops to use for their manufacturing processes The firm had an on-site die maker with EDM (electrical discharge machining) which provided truly unique capability for fast and accurate changes and development of unique die in rapid time. I was able to generate several iterations of tool steel die every 12 hours for about 1 week. We were able to make changes test the results, and roll out to the shops very rapidly.

HAMMER MODEL	C41-15	C41-40	C41-75
HAMMER WEIGHT RATING	33 lbs.	88 lbs.	165 lbs.
MINIMUM Hit energy	118+ ft. lbs.	391+ ft. lbs.	736 ft. lbs.
HITS PER MINUTE	240	210	210
FORGES WORK Steel	1 3/16 square	2 5/32 in. square	2 9/16 in. square
FORGES WORK Steel	1 3/8 round	2 7/8 in. round	3 7/8 in. round
MOTOR 240V 60hz 3 PHASE	Single phase	Included	Included
MAGNETIC STARTER	Included (Mechanical Switch)	Included	Included



Using a kiss block on the combination die

The factory also had RF induction heaters for part of their stamping operation as well as automatic twisters and some 50 ton hydraulic presses. Labor is certainly cheap with an experienced smith making about \$1000 a year on a piece part basis. I think the worst job I saw in the factory was the poor guy sitting on a low stool which was about a foot off the ground in front of a chop saw with a huge pile of bar stock behind him cutting it up into 18 inch lengths, all day long he ran that chop saw, seemed pretty happy though, always had a smile on his face and a happy hello. The guys working in the galvanizing plant weren't quite so happy, not a nice place to work, for sure.

The people were really wonderful, very friendly, and the nice thing about working with the smiths was the universal language of chalk drawings on a metal surface. The hotel was very nice, but the driving conditions (especially at night) are pretty hairy, seems as though no one believes in rear lights on their vehicles (at least where I was at) which makes for some pretty exciting driving in the frequently foggy nights.

All in all it was a great experience and a lot was learned. Next time I'm taking a camera.

This one has been in "the files" for too long. Thanks for waiting! Ed.



Photos
by
J e r r y
Whitley





Return Service Requested

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