



Blacksmiths of Central Texas

Sue Murray, President
smurray@balconesforge.org - 512/924-9030
Jerry Achterberg, Vice-President
treefarm@swbell.net - 210/661-3293
Rudy Billings, Treasurer
rudy@balconesforge.org - 512/461-7375
Tom Lupton, Secretary
tlupmach@gmail.com - 512/441-0000
Vince Herod, Editor
spotteddogforge@yahoo.com - 512/253-6045

November 2008

NOTE FROM THE PREZ:

Howdy members. Balcones Forge holds it's annual election for Board Members every October, during the monthly meeting. In this year's election, Jerry Whitley and I were voted onto the Board. The Board then decided that I would get to be your President this time around. So, I'd just like to say that I'm excited about this new opportunity and that I hope I can live up to the standards set by my predecessor, Rudy Billings, who did a fabulous job. Big shoes to fill!

We just had the Balcones Forge logo redesigned by our friend, and fellow member, Valerie Ostenak. She did a great job and the new logo is bright and eye-catching. We have made the new logo into patches, which are now available at 3 for \$10. The patches will be available at our monthly meetings along with caps and t-shirts. Get 'em while they're hot!

On Saturday, November 15th, Gordon Williams from Pieh Tool Co. will demonstrate for everyone and the demo will take the place of our normal monthly meeting. If you have a blacksmithing-related item you would like to donate for the auction we will hold during the demo, please bring it along. Auctions are how we are able to bring great smiths, like Gordon, to demonstrate for us. You can get more information about the demo on the Balcones Forge website and current members should have received e-mails. If you want to sign up, e-mail me soon at smurray@balconesforge.org.

Sue Murray, President

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

SEPTEMBER SECRETARY'S REPORT

Bob Phiel hosted the September meeting in Llano. There was a good crowd that made the nice, cool drive out to the Hill Country this month.

To start the meeting off, Larry Stevens, who came to the meeting on his new Honda Goldwing (large touring motorcycle), gave us a brief rundown on his trip to California where he visited Dorothy Steigler for several days. He brought photos of her house and shop to show us. He also donated a sack of railroad spikes to the group.

Rudy began the demonstrations by showing us a process using ferric nitrate to create an intentional rust finish. After brushing it on and letting it sit for a while, he uses acetone to neutralize it and stop the rusting process. He will then finish the piece with micro crystalline wax.

Next, Bob demoed how he makes feathers using angle iron. He also forges brass ties to wrap around the tops of the feathers. He uses a sharpened hammer pisen to do the feather texturing and hammers his brass ties out of brass round bar while the forge is heating up to make use of the lower heat.

After demonstrating the feather, Bob showed us how he makes his fireplace shovels. From there, we got a good look at his new wood shop and a fabulous mesquite and iron table he made. The mesquite top was just under 200 lbs and he made that himself. Bob has collected quite a stash of large pieces of mesquite, which he had milled from wood salvaged from trees blown over in high winds and that he has cut from a friend's ranch. For his tables, Bob does all the texturing of the flat bar he uses on the base by hand and he showed us the simple hardy tools he made to ensure that they stock stays even and straight along the edge of the anvil while he is beveling it. Thanks for hosting Bob. Love the addition to your shop.

The trade item for the month was a hot center

punch. Four items were traded. Bob also donated a marble table top to the group for iron-in-the-hat. Thanks for the donation!

The August meeting was held at the Austin Community College. Terry Ross gave a workshop on using 3D Sketchup, free design software that he created plug-ins for to allow us to design spirals and tapers and to figure out stock requirements for them. Terry said that as of the meeting, there had been at least 800 downloads of his plug-ins from 20 countries. Way to go Terry. You created something folks in the computer design world really need.

Jerry Achterberg let us know that Verl Underwood sent us a nice 3/4" square punch for our next big auction. The money raised from it will be donated to ABANA. Thank you Verl. Jerry also showed us all the different things that can be made out of slices of pool cue. Yes, from an older pool cue. When making a cross-section, there was a cross formed with dark wood and lighter wood. The slices with crosses in the middle were used for necklaces. The small end was used as a pointer and he said the large end makes a great hammer handle. May not work with new pool cues, but like with so many other things, older ones were made nicely and out of really good wood.

The trade item was a scroll following the golden mean; however, we only had one, so this obviously hindered the trading process. Finally, we said goodbye to Valerie Ostenak, who just redesigned the Balcones Forge logo for us. After only a couple of years in Texas, she decided moved back to Arizona, where she was originally from and hadn't lived for many years. She'll be living very close to Pieh Tool, so we'll have two excuses for a visit to AZ. Valerie was presented with a tool bag carrying the old Balcones Forge logo. Hope you're enjoying your new digs Valerie and come on back for a visit anytime!

Sue Murray, Fill-in Secretary, Balcones Forge

OCTOBER SECRETARY'S REPORT

The meeting was held in San Antonio at Metalmorphosis, a large blacksmith shop owned by George Schroder.

Elections were held and Sue Murray was elected President, Jerry Whitely joins the Board of Directors as an at-large member, Joe Jelemsky will be the Lirarian and Rudy Billings will be the Treasurer. No one volunteered to take care of the coffee or tee-shirt sales any member who feels that they can do these jobs, please contact one of the officers in the club.

There were 7 trade items offered for trading in this months organic shape theme for something to put on a desk top.

A list of future meeting places was announced by Jerry Achterberg and he said that we still need a meeting place for February, 2009. If anyone can host this meeting, please contact one of the officers.

The demonstrations at the meeting included making a Fredrick Cross from a 2-1/2" square solid steel bar which was finished on a large press; shaping a 3/4" and a 1" picket in a large forging hammer and the operation of a Chambersburg air hammer.

There was only one "show and tell" item, a very nice wine rack made by new member Grayson Nance.

The scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors of Balcones Forge was not held.

Tom Lupton, Balcones Forge Secretary

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SAD NEWS

Fellow Blacksmiths, it is with a great sadness that I announce the passing of Tom Clark. Tom passed on November 8th, after a prolonged battle with cancer.

I am told that there will not be a funeral. A memorial Service will be held later.

The blacksmithing community has lost a major player and a great supporter of the craft.

The remainder of this message should encourage you to rejoin ABANA in support of the work Tom contributed so much to.

Rome Hutchings, ABANA Membership Services



Balcones Forge... a dynamic group of amateur, professional and beginning smiths, whose mission is to promote the art of blacksmithing. Offering monthly meetings, workshops, and demonstrations, Balcones Forge is an organization dedicated to helping anyone interested in blacksmithing learn and grow in skill and knowledge. Join us. www.BalconesForge.org

When one teaches, two learn.

Robert Half

WILD WEST DAYS DEMO

BY SUE MURRAY

On Saturday, October 18th, Jerry and Mike Achterberg, Aaron Tilton, Wayne Byrd and I demonstrated at Wild West Days outside of Boerne. The event was held at the Enchanted Springs Ranch. The ranch is an 86-acre family-owned ranch that includes an old west town, a herd of Longhorn, buffalo and exotic game.

The town has a smithy that Jerry has stocked with a forge, an anvil, and other equipment. We wore "period" clothing and we demonstrated for the public all day, while listening to canon-fire, gun-fire, and a live band playing in the saloon next door. We were allowed to sell our wares, which we laid out on burlap coffee sacks on top of big limestone rocks. We were also provided a really good BBQ lunch. The visitors enjoyed watching nails being made and we had several kids (girls included) that spent quite a bit of time with us.

If you have old-time clothes and would like to demonstrate at a place that makes you feel like you are in another time, they'd love to have us out more often. We had a great time and look forward to doing it again.

SAVE YOUR OIL

George Craig & Jerry Achterberg are making Biodiesel from used cooking oil. Please help reduce our dependency of foreign oil and lower emissions from fossil fuels. When you fry that turkey this Thanksgiving, think of us and save your oil. Jerry will take your oil at the Balcones meeting.

PATCHES

It's easy to show off the new, improved Balcones Forge logo. Iron-on patches are available 3-for-\$10.

CHECK THIS OUT

Interested in checking out a book or video from the Balcones Forge Library? It's easy. Make your choice from the list of titles either at the monthly meeting or click on the "Library" link at BalconesForge.org. You'll be surprised at the extensive selection. Fill out the request slip and give to our new librarian, Joe Jelemensky. He will have your selection at the next meeting. Joe will also have an assortment of popular books and videos in case you didn't get your request in.

TRADE AGREEMENT

What's a Trade Item? It is something you create and bring to the monthly meeting, then exchange it for another creation. Everyone learns what went into making it, and we get to see some beautiful, and sometimes unusual items. The trade item is usually suggested by the meeting host. (See -- another good reason to host besides getting your shop cleaned up.) You don't have to be an expert to participate -- beginners are welcome. It's a good nudge to try something new, and it's nice to have a fellow blacksmith's work on your mantel! Like Vince says, "To take one, you gotta make one."

DON'T BE SHY

We still have a couple of volunteer positions open. We are in need of a T-Shirt and Cap salesperson. They really sell themselves. This job consists of displaying the items, and collecting the money. The other position is our coffee/refreshment host/hostess. If you are a Starbucks fan, this is right up your alley. Make it easy -- partner up with someone and split the duties of either of these simple tasks. See a board member for more info.

CAN'T GET RID OF SOME PEOPLE

It has been an honor being your president for the past two years. Thanks to the members, volunteers, and board members, it has been an enjoyable time. As you can see, I didn't get far. Sue, you'll be great! See you around the forge,

Rudy



Scenes from the Wild West Days. Photos by Sue Murray.



**ANNOUNCING! BALCONES FORGE
SPECIAL DEMONSTRATION
NOVEMBER 15, 2009**

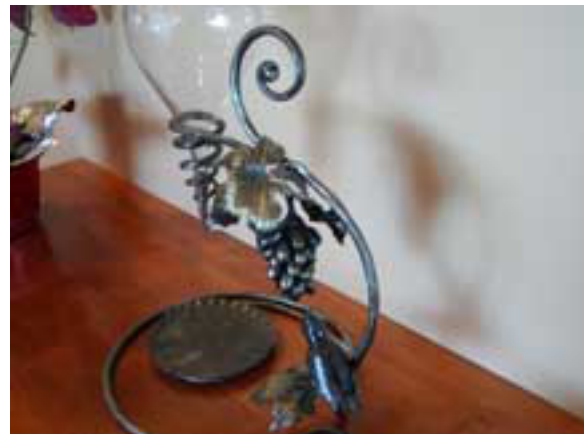
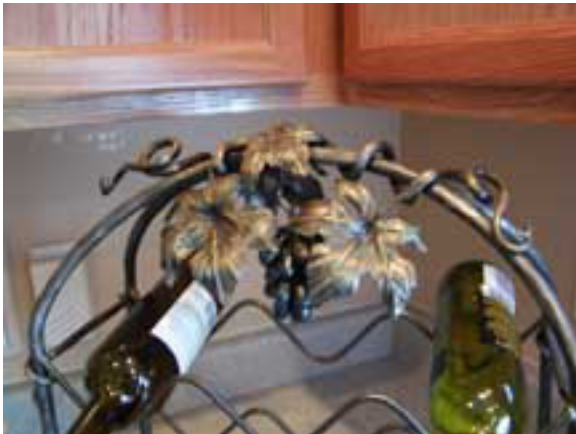
9:30 AM

Make that 9:00. Gordon has a lot to show us!

Exciting news! Balcones Forge is sponsoring a full-day blacksmithing demonstration with expert instructor Gordon Williams. Gordon is the resident instructor at Pieh Tool Company in Arizona and has years of experience. His seminars and classes are very popular and we are fortunate to have Gordon come to Texas.

Our November meeting will be held on Saturday, the 15th, with Gordon doing an all-day demonstration. Plus, we'll have an outstanding Balcones Forge auction, so please bring some great donations. This event is brought to you FREE by your organization -- Balcones Forge.

Check out our website for more information!!!!





Scenes from the October meeting.

Photos by Jerry Whitely



The November demo is at John Crouchet's Sycamore Creek Ranch, outside Marble Falls.

From south Austin: Take Hwy 71 north. Eventually you will come to the turnoff to the right to Marble Falls at Hwy 281.

From north Austin: Take Hwy 29 from Georgetown and head to Burnet. At Burnet, take Hwy 281 south to Marble Falls. In the middle of Marble, turn left (east) onto Ranch Road 1431 and head for our gate. See more info below.

From San Antonio, Take Hwy 281 North all the way to Marble Falls.

When you cross the Colorado River into Marble Falls, begin counting stoplights. The fifth stoplight you come to will be Ranch Road 1431. This is the biggest intersection in town. Turn right (east) onto Ranch Road 1431. (Check your odometer. You will go 5.5 more 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. You will cross four (count 'em...FOUR) cattleguards before you see the big metal shop on your left.

Lost? Need directions? Call John at 830-798-3710.

Return Service Requested

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

