



President's Message  
Spring 2013

## **ABANA: 40 Years Young**

The seeds for ABANA were planted at Westville, Georgia in March 1973. Looking back by reading some of the first Anvil's Ring's, you can get a feel for where we started from and how far we have come. There were 22 paid members that weekend with four more sending their money in the following week. By September 1973, before the first Anvil's Ring was printed, there were 47 members. By January 1974, we had added 45 more for a total of 92 members. By October 1974, we had almost 300 members. We owe these early members a big THANK YOU.

In the first Anvil's Ring, Alex Bealer listed some some things that ABANA'S purpose might be. A couple of them were to provide communication between artist blacksmiths both professional and amateur. To encourage more and better training facilities in all parts of the country. Information and books were in such short supply that ABANA xeroxed 100 copies of Practical Blacksmithing by M. T. Richardson and had sold them all by October 1974 with orders for 50 more.

Things have changed a lot and yet still remain the same. Today, there are lots of books, information, schools, and local affiliates to help with education. The need for communication among smiths still exists and nothing beats a face-to-face meeting for this. I think that is one of the vital roles for the ABANA Conference. Our next Conference is in Harrington Delaware August 13-16, 2014. Come Make Connections there.

I think ABANA's mission statement is as relevant today as it was 40 years ago:

*"We understand that a blacksmith is one who shapes and forges iron with hammer and anvil. The artist-blacksmith does this so as to unite the functional with the aesthetic, realizing that the two are inseparable. We, the members of the Artist-Blacksmiths' Association of North America do join in our resolve to perpetuate the noble art of blacksmithing. With hammer and anvil, we will forge for mankind a richer life. We will preserve a meaningful bond with the past. We will serve the needs of the present, and we will forge a bridge to the future. Function and creativity is our purpose. Our task is great and so is our joy. Looking forward to the next 40 years."*

Sincerely,

David Hutchison