



President's Message  
Winter 2016

## Changing of the Guard

Before ABANA was formed, blacksmiths had trade secrets that they did not share. The late Bill Gichner grew up and worked in his father's shop, Gichner Iron Works, in the Washington, D.C. area. This shop was a contemporary and competitor of the Yellin shop. Bill told me that there was a smith who worked in the shop that when given a complex job that needed special tooling, would make the tooling, do the job, and then destroy the tooling. Except for his helper, he did not even let the other smiths in the shop see it. These were trade secrets.

In another discussion, I was told a similar story by a different smith. While at one of ABANA's early conferences, he was in the gallery looking at a piece that had a special twist in it. While standing there, an older smith came up and asked him if he knew how the twist was done. The young smith said yes, and then explained how it was done. The older smith then left mad because someone had told the younger smith a trade secret.

Trade secrets were not shared in the past. It was a competitive edge. I believe that has changed in the current blacksmithing world and do not think being secretive happens much anymore. ABANA has had a major role in changing that, with our commitment to education, our publications, our conferences, and the willingness of our members to teach. As we pass on information to the next generation, our craft will get better and better. This is what will keep smithing alive. Look at the changes since ABANA was formed in 1973. There were few books available, few blacksmith associations, few classes to take, and information was hard to come by. Today, all that has changed. There are many excellent books available. Many affiliates have yearly events and monthly classes. Some experienced blacksmiths regularly hold classes in their shop. There are companies that supply tools, and the power hammers are remarkable and prevalent. We have the internet, out-of-print articles, new articles, blogs, Facebook, YouTube, and much more. It is like a candy store, loaded with old and new ideas.

ABANA is moving forward to use the internet as one of its major priorities. We are using Facebook as the major means to keep you up-to-date with the events planned for the ABANA conference in Salt Lake City next July 13-16, 2016. ABANA has also teamed with Victoria Patti at BlacksmithHer.com to accomplish several goals, including interviewing blacksmiths with something of interest to say to our community. Victoria is also now posting narrated sessions that elaborate on some of the articles in the Hammer's Blow. I have watched them and think that they are very well done and very educational. Check it out. There is one more notable change that has taken place in ABANA. Mark Aspery is retiring as editor of the Hammer's Blow. Mark has done an outstanding job for us. Mark, Thank You for your years of service. I hope that you will continue your deep commitment to education and to the mission of ABANA.

I am also pleased to announce that we have found the blacksmith who can maintain the high standards that Mark has set. Dan Nauman has agreed to take over the duties as editor of the Hammer's Blow. Dan is well known to many of you and, like Mark, also shares a deep commitment to education and excellence in blacksmithing. As no surprise, Dan has some ideas about how to improve the Hammer's Blow even more and I am looking forward to seeing his changes. Dan, welcome aboard and thank you for undertaking this important role as editor.

This is my last President's message, my term on the board is ending. I consider it an honor to have been able to serve ABANA. I would like to thank all who have helped me through the years with advice, support, and sweat. The list would be too long to print here and would take up the rest of the magazine. Thank You is not enough, but it will have to do.

So in looking forward, I would like to welcome Eddie as the new president.

David Hutchison

It is an honor to be elected as the next ABANA President. I am humbled that the board has placed their faith and trust in me. This is a responsibility that I do not take lightly, and I will endeavor to represent the membership with the utmost transparency and boldness. I would like to thank David Hutchison for his endorsement, support, and his perspectives in the future of our organization. I pledge to do my best to meet the high standard set by those who have preceded me.

I have come to hold enormous respect for ABANA: its purposes, its members, and its publications. ABANA has been a source of knowledge, inspiration, and entertainment, as well as many friendships. I commence my duties as president with the realization that they play an important role in the continuance of a strong professional association. We have been very fortunate over the years to have had dedicated leaders to bring the organization to where it is today.

Eddie K. Rainey, President