

ABANA is the Artist Blacksmith Association of North America. It is an organization that helps unite artist-blacksmiths from over 75 affiliated groups in the United States and other countries.

ABANA is an important resource for a wealth of artist-blacksmithing information from around the world. This information is passed on to its members via its two quarterly publications The Anvil's Ring which presents feature articles on many blacksmithing topics, affiliate news and many other subjects and the Hammer's Blow which features technical tips and techniques for the amateur and professional smiths.

ABANA has a very extensive and usually current web site. In addition to being an information resource, the web site allows affiliates and ABANA members to post a link to their own web sites and to post announcements of their conferences, exhibits and other events. ABANA's web site is also open to the public and has been very effective in reaching and educating the general public about what the artist-blacksmith can do.

ABANA is planning to resume its biennial national conference in June 2010 with a grand effort. It will be a gathering of international artist-blacksmiths from around the world with a sharing of their ideas and techniques. Coinciding with the conference is a National Ornamental Metal Museum international contemporary blacksmithing exhibit which will tour the US for two years after the conference.

ABANA's Scholarship Program provides financial assistance to its members for educational workshops or for extended study such as journeyman programs.

ABANA's Affiliate Grant Program provides financial support to ABANA Affiliates sponsoring a visiting artist for educational conferences or workshops.

ABANA members receive a 5 to 10% discount when shopping with blacksmith merchants supporting ABANA.

ABANA members can obtain affordable health insurance through Transamerica and Ameritis; including limited medical and hospital, disability, dental and vision coverage.

These are but a few of the benefits ABANA offers blacksmiths. ABANA is continually seeking ways to benefit its membership, such as in obtaining affordable health insurance for the self-employed smith or for the recently laid off hobbyist who could not afford a COBRA or private insurance plan. ABANA is also working to soon have catastrophic medical and property and casualty insurance available to members.

The economy right now is terrifying and it is predicted to get worse before it recovers. And it will recover, however for now, millions of good workers have lost their jobs and many companies have shut their plants down permanently. Not since the great depression in the 1930's has the economy's outlook been so bleak. In the middle of all this mess are professional smiths who are trying hard to make a decent living from an honest day's work. There are amateur smiths, now unemployed because of plant closings, who are doing all they can to survive and turn their hobby into a fledging business and get through these rough times. And they can do it. For, unlike during the depression, today's artist-blacksmithing community has the resources and networking available to help them successfully compete in today's turbulent business world. And ABANA with its affiliates is at the center.

Some of our affiliates have been around a long time. Some of them were formed as local chapters of ABANA soon after ABANA was formed. Well, they have grown up. They are big boys now and no longer need the guidance and the direction and the assistance of their parent. And they really have done a great job of it. They have extensive workshops, great grant and scholarship programs, sponsor and promote artist-blacksmith exhibits, coordinate extensive demonstrations and conferences and the list goes on. ABANA is a very proud parent, and I am sure our founding fathers would heartily agree. As in any family, we have had our disagreements and conflicts, but we are all part of the family of blacksmiths and that's the way it is.

ABANA was begun many years ago with a gathering of blacksmiths to share ideas and methods. Demonstrate one and learn a dozen more. This marvelous method of sharing of knowledge was carried to Europe by British and German smiths and has since spread over the world. At the founding of ABANA, Dimitri Gerakaris said "Our task is great and so is our joy". And the joy of a proud parent is a wonderful thing indeed.

If you are a member of ABANA, we thank you.

If you are going to become a member of ABANA, we welcome you.

If blacksmithing is important to you but what ABANA can do for you is not enough, will you become an ABANA member for what ABANA can do for blacksmithing?

Bruce Woodward
ABANA Affiliate Relations Committee Chair
woodwardiron1@roadrunner.com

ABANA
Central Office
15754 Widewater Dr
Dumfries, VA 22025-1212

ABANA News:

Wayne Coe has retired from the ABANA Board of Directors, but not from blacksmithing. His white hat, mischievous grin and country lawyer wit will be found at smithing events for a long time to come.

We welcome Len Ledet and Lance Davis as new members of ABANA's Board of Directors. Len, from Scottsdale, Arizona, will fill the seat vacated by Kim Saliba. Lance, from Jonesborough, Tennessee, will fill the seat vacated by Wayne Coe.