

2007 ABANA Survey Results and Analysis



By: Peyton Anderson

Preface:

In the following pages the three separate survey groups (Expired members, Current members, and Homepage hits) have been totaled to find the averages among all the surveys that were taken electronically via the internet. The questions that contained areas for extra comments are expressed in charts (where applicable) to convey any common response types found in these “other” categories. There are also comments made by those on the Board who wanted to expound on their interpretations of the survey results.

Question Data for Question #1

1. How do you classify yourself?	Expired	Current	Home Page	Total	Percentage
Blacksmith	97	442	331	870	48.5
Metalsmith	23	125	74	222	12.4
Artist	37	125	63	225	12.6
Fabricator	14	41	36	91	5.1
Craftsman	18	73	50	141	7.9
Collector or Patron	0	8	7	15	0.8
Other (please specify)	36	112	80	228	12.7
<i>answered question</i>	225	926	641	1792	

Analysis of Repeated comments from all 3(Expired, Current, Home Page)

Comment Type	Total	Percentage
Bladesmith	18	7.9
Hobbyist/Amateur	60	26.3
Welder/Fabricator/Machinist	11	4.8
Sculptor/Artist Blacksmith	33	14.5
Teacher/Educator	8	3.5
Metalsmith	4	1.8
Business	3	1.3
Farrier	10	4.4
Student	3	1.3
All of the Above	6	2.6
TOTAL RESPONSES	228	

Personal Analysis of Data

Paul Boulay:

- Nearly a majority of the survey responders identify themselves as blacksmiths – which is to be expected but that means that over half the responders thought of themselves primarily as other than blacksmiths indicates that we are a diverse group.
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Question Data for Question #2

2. How would you classify your ability?	Expired	Current	Home Page	Total	Percentage
observer/Just interested	3	5	16	24	1.4
Beginner/Novice	21	111	107	239	13.4
Apprentice	71	271	161	503	28.3
Journeyman	90	337	218	645	36.3
Advanced	37	194	128	359	20.2
Patron/Collector	1	4	2	7	0.4
<i>answered question</i>	223	922	632	1777	

Personal Analysis of Data

Paul Boulay:

- Both members and non members span a broad spectrum of skill levels.
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Question Data for Question #3

3. Are you engaged in blacksmithing or related activities for a substantial part of your income?	Expired	Current	Home Page	Total	Percentage
Yes	79	364	246	689	38.6
No	146	562	390	1098	61.4
<i>answered question</i>	225	926	636	1787	

Personal Analysis of Data

Paul Boulay:

- This answer was the greatest surprise because the going-in assumption was that 90% of smiths are hobbyists. While this result doesn't necessarily contradict this assumption it certainly calls it into question.
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Question Data for Question #4

4. What are you interested in doing or learning about?	Expired	Current	Home Page	Total	Percentage
Forged household items, candlesticks, fireplace tools, etc.	85	410	283	778	44.4
Furniture, lighting, screens, larger scale built-in pieces	61	317	175	553	31.6
Tool making, hammers, chisels, blades, etc.	83	361	286	730	41.7
Raised vessels, repousse, armor, etc.	35	161	121	317	18.1
Architectural work, gates, railings, etc.	77	349	203	629	35.9
Artistic work, sculpture, etc	66	311	196	573	32.7
All of the above	101	417	261	779	44.5
Other	20	75	66	161	9.2
<i>answered question</i>	219	914	619	1752	

Analysis of Repeated comments from all 3(Expired, Current, Home Page)

Comment Type	Total	Percentage
Bladesmithing	21	
Jewelry	7	
Smelting/Casting	4	
Restorations/Colonial/Historic:	22	
Gunsmithing	2	
Weapons	3	
SCA(Renaissance Fairs):	2	
Mixed Media	9	
Tool Making(hand and power tools)	6	
Farm Repair	3	
Business/Technical management skills	9	
Teaching	2	
TOTAL RESPONSES	161	

Interesting/Unique Comments

From Survey: Expired

	Comment Text
7.	the technical information behind the metal and the procedure, what is happening at the molecule level

From Survey: Current

	Comment Text
36.	operation/ rebuilding little giant hammer . I have the manual and a book on rebuilding . Still I am facing repairs that are not covered . The references I have indicate " rebuild the guides . They do not say HOW to do so , what welding rods , how to surface or alternate means of getting the job done . I appreciate most the how to do it articles . The coverage of social events is of little use to me . I can see how it is important to those of you participating , it does little to further my abilities or build my own local network . Perhaps if you need a social component show us how to do something in a social environment . I can read about social events from a myriad of sources . Only one place for " how to do it info and networking "
56.	understanding how to obtain public art grants and awards

From Survey: Home Page

	Comment Text
37.	The above are training, which the ABANA Bylaws define as "education." Training and education are two different things. ABANA hasn't even done training well, so I've looked for and found it elsewhere.
60.	You spelled "repousse" wrong here, and below in question #5. If you wish to be professional, if you wish to be global, if you wish to get respect...you need to spell words correctly commonly used in the trade.

Personal Analysis of Data

Peyton Anderson:

- There is a great number of individuals who are interested in the techniques surrounding bladesmithing. Is it maybe time to contact the ABA and create some sort of partnership?
 - Those interested in historical restorations and/or reproductions is still very high within those who responded. I know I have not seen much of this covered in recent issues and articles. Maybe because the membership has been over saturated with it everywhere? Maybe our focus is solely on the artistic gallery side and not the functional art/historic side? I do not know...but would like to see work of those like Kim Thomas, Jerry Darnell, Colonial Williamsburg, and others showcased somewhere down the road.
 - There are a lot of SCA guys and gals out there roaming around smithing. Is it maybe time to recognize their efforts and work? Several of the SCA people I have spoken to have not had much good to say about ABANA due to the lack of coverage "Renn Fairs" get. May be several potential members lurking in Medieval clothes swinging hammers...
 - By the good number of people looking for some "professional development" in their comments it is time to look to our Professional smiths, and possibly POABA to put in place something like the "Controlled Hand Forged" lessons but for professionals to help in management, contracts, and other areas of suggested help. Maybe a new question in a survey just for the professional smith???
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Question Data for Question #5

5. What are you MOST interested in doing or learning about?	Expired	Current	Home Page	Total	Percentage
Forged household items, candlesticks, fireplace tools, etc.	35	158	123	316	18.2
Furniture, lighting, screens, larger scale built-in pieces	20	143	52	215	12.4
Tool making, hammers, chisels, blades, etc.	34	131	137	302	17.4
Raised vessels, repousse, armor, etc.	4	40	28	72	4.1
Architectural work, gates, railings, etc.	43	154	102	299	17.2
Artistic work, sculpture, etc	60	220	110	390	22.5
Other	20	67	58	145	8.3
answered question	216	913	608	1737	

Analysis of Repeated comments from all 3(Expired, Current, Home Page)

Comment Type	Total	Percentage
Bladesmithing	27	18.6
Damascus	3	2.1
All of the Above	31	21.4
Architectural/Design Work	12	8.3
Jewelry	3	2.1
Mixed Media	4	2.8
Restorations/Colonial/Historic	16	11
Same as #4	5	3.4
Demonstrating	2	1.4
Professional Development	6	4.1
Tool Making(hand and power tools)	3	2.1
Smelting/Casting	5	3.4
Chasing/Repousse	2	1.4
TOTAL RESPONSES	145	

Interesting/Unique Comments**From Survey: Expired**

	Comment Text
8.	overhead heliarc welding ca360 mechinable brass

From Survey: Current

	Comment Text
27.	business savvy - anecdotal information

From Survey: Home Page

	Comment Text
8.	Hydraulic Forging Press

	Comment Text
21.	chasing and repousse` and incorporating it inot other work such as furniture and other items
49.	all things are good when we pick one we lose

Personal Analysis of Data

Peyton Anderson:

- The dynamics of those out there is very closely represented in this question. The most “hits” are for either the artistic or the colonial side of the trade.
- There also seems to be a push for those interested in bladesmithing.
- I tend to assume that the data for the “All of the Above” and “Same as #4” to be together due to the close wording of the question. It made several people feel like this survey was quite redundant in places.
- The most interesting portion of this survey was those interested in architectural and design help. Something that I think most certainly needs some attention in upcoming publications and/or conference work.

Question Data for Question #6

6. Age Group	Expired	Current	Home Page	Total	Percentage
Under 20	2	5	22	29	1.6
20-30	9	29	49	87	4.9
30-40	32	110	85	227	12.9
40-50	62	198	149	409	23.2
50-60	65	329	191	585	33.2
60-70	45	194	100	339	19.3
70 plus	8	52	24	84	4.8
<i>answered question</i>	223	917	620	1760	

Personal Analysis of Data

Paul Boulay:

- It seems that we are in general a rather mature lot – this may reflect that those with free time for hobbies tend to be older. There may also be other forces at play – the baby boomer generation may be more receptive to work in the crafts than younger people. Clearly we need to reach out to the younger generations. However many of those people may be apartment dwellers in large cities where the traditional coal forge and the sounds generated by hammer on anvil may not be welcome.

Question Data for Question #7

7. Gender:	Expired	Current	Home Page	Total	Percentage
Male	191	846	573	1610	92.2
Female	29	64	43	136	7.8
<i>answered question</i>	220	910	616	1746	

Personal Analysis of Data

Paul Boulay:

- Clearly metalwork and blacksmithing in particular is a male dominated field. However, among the truly outstanding smiths the ratio is not as skewed. Again this result calls out for greater outreach to the less represented group.
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Question Data for Question #8

8. Are you a current member of ABANA?	Expired	Current	Home Page	Total	Percentage
Yes	24	915	241	1180	65.4
No	201	7	415	623	34.6
<i>answered question</i>	225	922	656	1803	

Personal Analysis of Data

Paul Boulay

The survey was

- sent by e-mail to expired members who generally would not be members – although about 10% of them might have been expired but are members again.
 - Sent by e-mail to the current membership – who would of course be members. And,
 - Collected from web site visitors and those who followed a link provided to affiliate newsletter editors.
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Question Data for Question #9

9. If you have been a member in the past, for how long, total?	Expired	Current	Home Page	Total	Percentage
Have not been an ABANA member	0	2	248	250	43
1-5 years	147	2	77	303	52.2
5-10 years	36	2	25	63	10.8
10-20 years	13	0	18	31	5.3
Longer than 20 years	4	0	7	11	1.9
<i>answered question</i>	200	6	375	581	

Question Data for Question #10

10. Which ABANA magazine do you appreciate the most?	Expired	Current	Home Page	Total	Percentage
Hammer's Blow	18	2	35	55	12.9
Anvil's Ring	21	0	36	57	13.4
I appreciate them both equally for different reasons	157	3	153	313	73.6
<i>answered question</i>	196	5	224	425	

Question Data for Question #11

11. Why are you not now an ABANA member?	expired	current	Home page	total	percentage
Cost of Membership	64	2	130	196	34
I can get most of the information from other sources	35	2	103	140	24.3
I don't relate to Anvil's Ring content – too advanced	11	0	16	27	4.7
Anvil's Ring has insufficient discernment or design quality	10	0	15	25	4.3
Hammer's Blow is not fulfilling my needs	10	1	9	20	3.5
Without a 2008 conference there's no need to be a member	25	0	27	52	9
Other	126	7	215	348	60.3
<i>answered question</i>	195	8	374	577	

Analysis of Repeated comments from all 3(Expired, Current, Home Page)

Comment Type	Total	Percentage
Forgot/no renewal reminder	54	15.5
Lacking Practical Information	18	5.2
Personal Finance Reasons	18	5.2

Physical Reasons	7	2
“Too Artsy”	12	3.5
Too political	19	5.5
Will join again	2	.6
No longer smithing	25	7.2
Traveling/lives out of country	15	4.3
Member of other group(s)	14	4
Moved away from Original Purpose	14	4
Too Expensive	6	1.7
Conference Issues	5	1.4
Never joined/heard of ABANA	42	12.1
No Benefit	4	1.1
Working in other mediums	3	.9
Anvil Shooting	2	.6
TOTAL RESPONSES	348	

Interesting/Unique Comments

From Survey: Expired

	Comment Text
11.	
61.	I have tried to rejoin twice with no response
70.	getting inspiration from other sources
99.	Main reason for membership was shop insurance rates, but there was so much red tape involved with the insurer that I got frustrated and chose to go elsewhere.

From Survey: Expired

	Comment Text
28.	you do not let the potential member know what the benefits are in a clear up front way on the member ship page.
51.	more mid level techniques needed
105.	cant subscribe on the internet, convenience I guess

Personal Analysis of Data

Peyton Anderson:

- There is some over lap with comments left in the “other” category and the listed choices. Taking this into consideration it seems that the cost of membership is a huge concern. This may be to a lack of benefits offered to the average member. We all want something for nothing, or at least something for a one year membership other than a magazine every

other month. There is no way for them to get back their dues in seeing pictures in a publication. It is important now for ABANA reach out to the non-members and expired members to show them the benefits: 25% discount on classes, discounts by suppliers, *Hammer's Blow* CD offer extended, Constant Contact list, etc.

- We need to investigate the past renewal notification procedure and see what (if any) modifications we can make to better notify the membership of their upcoming or past due membership renewal date. Several said they were never notified.
- Many also said they can get this information from other sources OR are members of other groups. Most said their affiliate gave them all or more information than ABANA could and in a better way.
- There were a good number of written responses saying they no longer smith, or due to physical reasons they are not involved with it any longer. This is not surprising when we look at the age data from question 6. 40+ years old is 80.5% of those surveyed.
- There are a large number of people out there who still have not heard of ABANA...we need to work outside of our bounds to promote ABANA in new ways. Via internet forums, Businesses that advertise in our publications, Professional smiths, etc. They need to know we are not only here, but here for them.

Question Data for Question #12

12. What is the MAIN reason you are not currently an ABANA member?	Expired	current	Home page	total	percentage
Cost of Membership	45	2	103	150	27.2
I can get most of the information from other sources	9	1	46	56	10.1
I don't relate to Anvil's Ring content – too advanced	6	0	8	14	2.5
Anvil's Ring has insufficient discernment or design quality	1	0	4	5	0.9
Hammer's Blow is not fulfilling my needs	0	0	1	1	0.2
Without a 2008 conference there's no need to be a member	12	0	12	24	4.3
Other	116	4	182	302	54.7
<i>answered question</i>	189	7	356	552	

Analysis of Repeated comments from all 3(Expired, Current, Home Page)

Comment Type	Total	Percentage
Same as #11	63	20.8
Forgot	19	6.3
Cost too much	6	2
Will renew/join	9	3
Too busy	11	3.6
Too Political	8	2.6
Conference issues	5	1.7
No renewal notice	2	.7
New/Unaware of ABANA	30	9.9
Moved from original purpose	9	3
Not smithing	9	3
Personal finance	10	3.3
Physical reasons	4	1.3
TOTAL RESPONSES	302	

Interesting/Unique Comments**From Survey: Expired**

	Comment Text
8.	See answer to # 11. This is no longer blacksmithing but you focus on the fringes of the members interest. ABANA has lost its focus in trying to be diverse and inclusive to the artist movement in lieu of the traditional smithing that led to ABANA getting started.
9.	I have tried to rejoin twice with no response
30.	I believe ABANA has become a commercial business. It has become an organization that only the rich can afford. The hands-on functions and meetings are located so far away from where I live, that ABANA may just as well just be a fairy tale to me. The associated costs for travel and lodging that is required to attend any of the ABANA functions is not affordable for myself and a large part of the population from where I live. Therefore, all I become is the recipient of a couple of magazines. ABANA does not represent me or many of my values. I feel that the only common bond between my self and the many interests that the ABANA organization represents is the love of the craft of blacksmithing.
69.	Again, you focused on up coming or past conferences, there wasn't enough, how to articles, or advice for up and coming blacksmiths
75.	three days before you raised prices I mailed a check you received it before the dead line but returned it anyhow....guess you wanted more....not from me, it ticked me off!!!
80.	Sloth, and I wasn't notified that my membership had expired.
83.	By ignoring the membership there was no need to remain a member
101.	As a demonstrator at the 2007 conference was very disappointed in lack of supplying my requests to do the demo
107.	The magazines are good, but sculpture magazine is better for my needs, not enough technical info, or

	Comment Text
	just not enough meat to the magazines in general
116.	Content is only for professionals. I am a hobbyist and not one of the "in crowd".

From Survey: Current

	Comment Text
3.	Who needs you? We have better groups locally.

From Survey: Home Page

	Comment Text
30.	Cost of membership in relation to perceived value is one. No one outside of the metalworking world knows what ABANA is and therefore being a member has not inherent value. Add to that, that most of the info I've seen in the periodicals can be found in other sources, I can't justify the annual expense. Again the fees for conferences is way out of proportion for the quantity and quality of information available. The \$1600 in fees for the Seattle conference would have been much better spent building my library and paying for classes.
100.	My immediate needs are better met by my local affiliate.-- ABANA seems to be having problems with , if it was a human family would be called "empty nest syndrome" as it redefines its purpose.
104.	Lack of interest in ho-key tricks and gimmicks. Real Ironwork needs focused individuals, fairly compensated, and dedicated to progress we could have the greatest organization in the world??????
108.	Instead of increasing benefits and perks to be a member your taking them away, so what is the point of me wasting my money.
131.	Study Yellin's speeches for problems and solutions.
138.	Never have my wallet when I think of joining at my computer. If you accept Paypal, it would make it easier to pay immediately. Thank you. Will join this week anyway.
180.	ABANA is a political org now days. It's lost it's focus on the things that made it great in the beginning. Why is BAM able to produce a conference so much cheaper than ABANA? You need to appeal to the beginner and intermediate non-artist types. Those people can take care of themselves. Go look at the attitudes and needs of the people who formed ABANA and there is your answer.
184.	Need to be reminded. Send me a bill. It's easier to forget that to remember.

Personal Analysis of Data

Peyton Anderson:

- The most alarming part of the data in this question is the number of people who were unaware of ABANA before they took the survey. This mean ABANA is only known to ABANA and not the blacksmithing world. Maybe it is time to extend the reach of awareness through new avenues.
- People are also responding that the cost of membership is too high. We have already taken good steps towards increasing the benefits of being a member of ABANA. The discounts are crucial to making the members feel like their money is making a good return for them not only in the publications but in the opportunities at cheaper classes and products. Maybe we should now begin to contact coal suppliers in the country that ship bagged coal.

Question Data for Question #13

13. Please grade ABANA with your satisfaction level?	Expired	Current	Home Page	Total	Percentage
Excellent	4	243	34	281	24.4
Good	11	487	107	205	17.8
Fair	5	157	59	221	19.2
Poor	2	23	20	45	3.9
<i>answered question</i>	22	910	220	1152	

Question Data for Question #14

14. Which magazine do you appreciate the most?	Expired	Current	Home Page	Total	Percentage
Hammer's Blow	2	94	23	119	10.5
Anvil's Ring	3	117	28	148	13.1
I appreciate them both equally for different reasons	16	694	157	867	76.4
<i>answered question</i>	21	905	208	1134	

Question Data for Question #15

15. How long have you been a member, in total?	Expired	Current	Home Page	Total	Percentage
One year or less	4	135	32	171	17.8
2-5 years	6	309	63	378	32.7
5-10 years	3	242	53	298	25.8
10-20 years	4	143	43	190	16.4
Longer than 20 years	5	85	29	119	10.3
<i>answered question</i>	22	914	220	1156	

Question Data for Question #16

16. Please indicate the areas that are most troubling to you.	Expired	Current	Home Page	Total	Percentage
Cost of Membership	2	90	28	120	10.6
I can get most of the information from other sources	2	101	38	141	12.5
I don't relate to Anvil's Ring content – too advanced	0	65	16	81	7.2
Anvil's Ring has insufficient discernment or design quality	3	67	28	98	8.7
Hammer's Blow is not fulfilling my needs	3	39	21	63	5.6
Without a 2008 conference there's no need to be a member	2	80	22	104	9.2
None of the above / ABANA is doing an acceptable job	13	483	87	583	51.5
Other	5	257	71	333	29.4
<i>answered question</i>	22	897	213	1132	

Analysis of Repeated comments from all 3(Expired, Current, Home Page)

Comment Type	Total	Percentage
Conference issues	89	26.7
Politics...	28	8.4
No Professional Support	12	3.6
No benefit	6	1.8
Web Site is lacking	9	2.7
Cost is too high	4	1.2
Lack of Educational Opportunities	11	3.3
No Foreign membership support	7	2.1
TOTAL RESPONSES	333	

Interesting/Unique Comments**From Survey: Expired**

	Comment Text
5.	workshops announced are either passed or full by time magazine out; not providing a network for cost of membership

From Survey: Current

	Comment Text
2.	Cost of membership is high, but OK if the value is there. The value is lacking in the focus of the organization, in my opinion. The major focus of the organization seems to be the "ARTIST" part of ABANA, rather than the "BLACKSMITH" part. There are many who are intersted in the artistic aspects of the craft - there are many MORE who are interested in the blacksmithing part of the craft. The organization should do it's best to appeal to the most potential members and has been run by a lot of "Artists" who have forgotten that there are a LOT of blacksmiths out there that could care less about the "ART" and care everything about the "CRAFT".
4.	Maybe an associate membership for foreigners who only get magazines
19.	easier access to videos from library, more videos,and more copies
24.	THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT THING THAT ABANA COULD DO NOW, URGENTLY, IS MAKE THE MEMBERSHIP LIST AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS SO THAT THEY CAN COMMUNICATE WITH EACH OTHER
33.	I would like to see more cooperation between affiliates and ABANA. Also more educational resources and opportunities for up and coming smiths.
41.	Abana appeals to the modern artist and not to the traditional blacksmith. It's become to eccentric.
52.	very disappointed in abana, not as educational as I had hoped for.(as a beginner to blacksmithing) Disappointed in anvil ring mag. Not truly satisfied with hammer blows. Not enough materials for the membership cost.
58.	Abana needs to remember it has overseas members too and not just the famous 'names'. I pay a high cost for membership and receive two publications for my fees. There aren't the options to purchse some of the materials that are available for hire yt US members (Demo videos), postage cost based on 50% of purchase price for goods is just way too high.
60.	I've been a member for 30 some years, worked 2 conferences and saw many changes over the years. This past year was my 22 year at Quad State in Troy, Ohio. I think you could learn a lot about how to run a conference by looking at their methods. Why someone would pay a thousand or more dollars to attend a (ABANA) conference and then spend all day at the "you forge area" is beyond me? I think the bottom line is you can't be everything for everyone. Lumpkin, Georgia, was basic forging and we have gone way pass our roots. I will stay a member of ABANA as long as we have ABANA. I wish you the best of luck in the future but know "luck" will have little to do with our survival.
72.	As a Canadian member access to tools and suppliers is restricted
79.	what does membership mean? or is it just a subscription
128.	I think that ABANA is doing it's job which I believe is to educate it's members on tools and techniques in an art that is being lost it needs to have more educational oportunities

	Comment Text
133.	board members are too interested in esoteric(hippie) pursuits. We should not be concerned with politics, lifestyle or artistic preferences, but only with the blacksmith trade.
152.	disappointed the conferences were cancelled: that needs fixing. Perhaps too much concentration on fluff around conference and not enough on blacksmithing.
153.	1) There has been little/no ABANA communications for the last year. It makes me think the only thing we get for our membership dues is two magazines.
154.	Anvil's Ring should describe construction of at least one project per issue
155.	I have contacted Claire and Dave Mudge about an idea for a web site that will greatly help ABANA in promoting existing works around the country. Unfortunately a family emergency has prevented me from following up on this - I will as soon as things settle down. I also would like to see ABANA help coordinate and sponsor two smaller regional shows a year.
162.	I would like to see ABANA run more like a profitable business, one with an eye on the bottom line. The organization needs to focus more attention on maintaining the current membership and then going after new members.(Its easier to keep members than to create new ones.) I believe retention is a problem because the excitement is lacking. I am absolutely amazed you cancelled the 2008 conference. There are so many creative ways that the conference could have been modified to be more economical and still have taken place. I feel that cancellation was a great loss of revenue for the organization. The chain of energy and anticipation was broken. ABANA, because of that myopic decision, has far diminished its presence in the minds of many. Decision making abilities seem also to be lacking. Seattle seemed to be a shining example of mismanagement. Looked like a government operation in that you were spending money like there was no end to it.
168.	I have no complaints with ABANA and your doing an excellent job
187.	I want to see inspiring work and hear the real story behind a maker's work- not the artspeak, but rather the joy and enthusiasm
206.	Family membership or shop membership
213.	While I appreciate local demos....watching someone do the same hammering for over an hour is a bit of a bore....I realize that time is essential but a demos the skills required for a particular project should be provided in shorter segments...I suggest demonstrators bring project in various states of completion to eliminate the need for long duration of the same task. Also Ive bought a dozen DVDs from different blacksmith groups....I enjoy them but wish they provided more close-ups ...it's tough to see the project being done from 19ft away....again, I thoroughly enjoy them...and understand amateur photographers are just learning....but they can improve and make a good demo even better. Thanks to all the demonstrators and volunteers.
222.	I have been a member since ABANA began and this organization has forgotten the highly skilled artist craftsmen, you offer little at the conferences and in the publications. There seems to be a shift to entertaining conference attendees rather than having lectures, discussion groups, business seminars, new technology (internet use). There has been a dumbing down to a level that I don't care to be involved in. The ABANA website is a disgrace!

From Survey: Home Page

	Comment Text
10.	ABANA seems to have forgotten new budding blacksmiths and geared everything more for the master smiths. The Conferences are way too expensive for the majority of the ones who would most benefit from going to one. Today's society seems to be geared more and more to the internet but most of the good smiths that I know have no link to the net nor the least desire to. I have web access but I find myself using it less and less. The internet is a great thing but the time that I spend online can be better spent either with my family or at the forge. The NET is not ABANA's answer to their problem. The magazines are excellent but do we really need two? Can't they be combined cheaper with advertising covering most of the cost? Maybe instead of one big conference every two years could the affiliates be supported in setting up smaller gatherings nationwide so everyone has equal opportunity to attend?
16.	The bickering among members who say that the Anvil's Ring is too advanced. I believe that this magazine should serve as a source of inspiration on what can be done with metal. With no inspiration how can anyone see or learn what can be done and then try to advance themselves? The Hammers Blow should be the magazine that teaches the techniques necessary to create items of metal and should also answer how to questions for the members. There should be a members only section on the ABANA web site for members to ask questions of more experienced smiths and also a beginning page with info on how to start a fire on up. ABANA has to serve all of its members from the beginner to the advanced smith and there are ways of doing so. By not showing advanced work in the Ring how is anyone to realize what can be done? Pardon the poor spelling...
31.	Both magazines are good, but more projects that span a larger size and skill range ie: some small beginner level projects as well as intermediate skill and master level work. The thing I think is that in each issue there should be photos, and articles that smiths of all levels can learn from. Sometimes it seems only expert work is shown but if we only show entry level work we lose the masters due to boredom. Perhaps we could start another magazine called something like master smith and have really advanced work in it. Perhaps some of the "Masters" in our organization would like to take on submitting some articles for a publication of this sort. The Hammers Blow is great for newer smiths and doing a great job at that. P.S. I think you guys are doing a great job! Keep up the good work!
76.	I wish ABANA would award more money in Scholarships.

Personal Analysis of Data

Peyton Anderson:

- It is very apparent that the conference is a main issue for a majority of those surveyed. The comments ranged from not being happy about the cancellation of the NY conference to concerns on the high cost to attend and the over inflation of goings on at the conference itself. Whether or not these people are able to attend the conference it is extremely important to them and their membership dues that one takes place. I think the wording in the choice "Without a 2008 conference there's no need to be a member" was too extreme of a choice which compelled several people to express their conference concerns in the "other" category.
- "Politics" was also a common comment made by several individuals. There was a common theme dealing with a "lack of leadership" or a "lack of communication" with those outside of the Board's circle of friends. I think we have already dispelled this one!

- The professionals are still giving their very consistent responses and representation in this survey by asking for more support and professional development.
- Website concerns consisted of everything that has been, or is being fixed. The lack of updates to the site and the calendar is where almost all the comments were centered.
- A surprising development came out of the membership outside of the United States. Several people from Canada and Australia responded saying their membership did not get them any support other than the subscription. I can understand that statement from someone NOT on the North American continent. But the Canadians who were saying this raise a serious concern about our true representation of the whole and not just the United States.

Question Data for Question #17

17. Please indicate the ONE area that is most troubling to you.	Expired	Current	Home Page	Total	Percentage
Cost of Membership	0	62	20	82	7.4
I can get most of the information from other sources	2	56	14	72	6.5
I don't relate to Anvil's Ring content – too advanced	0	37	10	47	4.2
Anvil's Ring has insufficient discernment or design quality	1	28	5	34	3
Hammer's Blow is not fulfilling my needs	1	18	6	24	2.2
Without a 2008 conference there's no need to be a member	1	52	16	69	6.2
None of the above / ABANA is doing an acceptable job	13	422	76	511	46.2
Other	3	207	57	267	24.1
<i>answered question</i>	21	882	204	1107	

Analysis of Repeated comments from all 3(Expired, Current, Home Page)

Comment Type	Total	Percentage
Conference issues...	69	25.8
Same as #16	32	12
Too Political	18	6.7
Too Artsy	7	2.6
Lacking on educational opportunities	7	2.6
Lacking in professional development	6	2.2
Website lacking	5	1.9
TOTAL RESPONSES	267	

Interesting/Unique Comments

From Survey: Current

	Comment Text
1.	The major focus of the organization seems to be the "ARTIST" part of ABANA, rather than the "BLACKSMITH" part. There are many who are intersted in the artistic aspects of the craft - there are many MORE who are interested in the blacksmithing part of the craft. The organization should do it's best to appeal to the most potential members and has been run by a lot of "Artists" who have forgotten that there are a LOT of blacksmiths out there that could care less about the "ART" and care everything about the "CRAFT".
2.	would like the magazine back issues on disk - that can be purchased
55.	The direction that the craft movement is taking, you appear to be leaving out the starting smiths, and the move silly side of smithing, this is supposd to be fun right?
67.	I would like photos on the website, and a quick how-to link that will draw me to your site to learn something (next qu doesn't allow for comments on web)
104.	No representation in Canada or Québec. We do have an association based in Montreal
107.	Having never been to a conference for various reasons; cost, shedualing conflict,travel distance, etc,I primarily use the magazines as my only input.I like the Anvil's Ring the most.Its inspirational. I use it as a bench mark. I have often said after finishing a particularly nice piece,"this could be the front cover of Anvil's Ring". I would like to see a little more of us up and comers highed, instead of seeing some of the great masters with multupal write up. The photos are great keep it coming.
130.	I WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE GET TOGETHERS IN MORE LOCATIONS
156.	lack of affiliate involvement
157.	Live in Australia, so can't take full advantage of my memebrship
166.	the events advertised in each issue are over before i receive the publication
173.	The fact that the highly skilled, master craftsmens needs are completely ignored. I am ashamed to say that Nomma is an organization that addresses those needs much more than ABANA. There are times over the past ten years that work chosen to be emphasized in the " Ring" has embarassed me and made me refrain from sending in pics and writing from probably 20 major commissions. I might consider doing it now that some New thinking is starting. We did some conferances in the begining where real sharing of knowledge was the norm, and it didn't cost 1/4 of that disaster in Seattle.
178.	Same as above, this also causes too much bickering, badmouthing, and positioning. Abana Conferences can't be everything for everyone. The Organization as a Whole has done an EXQUISITE job over the years and I Praise all of You for the endless dedicated work! Maybe just keep up the good work, keep it simple, and leave the "Big Time" Showcase to a separate venue, that way the members that desire a Prestige Event can support the higher costs.
203.	need to constantly encourage and reaffirm the essentials and mind set of what the whole smithing movement is all about., ie. committment to hard work, beautiful work, high quality craftsmanship and integrity of the smith in an otherwise soft and cutthroat society. QUIT ACCEPTING ADVIRTIZING FROM PREMADE CATALOG FORGED PARTS AS THIS FLIES IN THE FACE OF EVERYTHING WE STAND FOR AS SMITHS. THIS IS NOT OUR WORK, IT IS NOT ART AND MOST OF IT IS MADE BY EXPLOITED PEOPLE IS THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES. STOP IT NOW!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

	Comment Text
206.	term limits should be applied to board participation. Serve no more than two consecutive terms, then out for at least two terms.
207.	Chapters did a better job on national meets

From Survey: Home Page

	Comment Text
16.	Please do not censor members ideas. Listen, talk to the members and work with them. They are ABANA. I believe that this has been a problem in the past and with the new board I hope that it remains a problem of the past.
48.	Given the problems ABANA is experiencing with regard to membership, finances, reputation, and given the make-up of the present Executive Committee (i.e. all but one member being long-serving board members) it is reasonable to expect a similar level of thought to that which got ABANA into its present state.

Personal Analysis of Data

Peyton Anderson

- The issues surrounding the conference were once again a driving force in the data for this question.
- Questions 16 and 17 were too similar to draw any new information...

Question Data for Question #18

18. Do you have a computer with Internet access?	Expired	Current	Home Page	Total	Percentage
Yes	189	904	590	1683	97.5
No	31	5	8	44	2.5
<i>answered question</i>	220	909	598		

Question Data for Question #19

19. If your e-mail address were kept confidential would you like to receive communications from ABANA?	Expired	Current	Home Page	Total	Percentage
Yes	189	827	487	1503	87.7
No	31	74	103	208	12.1
I do not have a computer or email access	0	1	2	3	0.2
<i>answered question</i>	220	902	592	1714	

Question Data for Question #20

20. If you have a computer, how often do you visit ABANA's website?	Expired	Current	Home Page	Total	Percentage
Often (Once a week or more)	10	76	108	194	11.3
Occasionally (Roughly once a month)	53	375	198	626	36.4
Rarely (A few times a year)	132	424	228	784	45.6
Never	28	33	54	115	6.7
<i>answered question</i>	223	908	588	1719	

Question Data for Question #21

21. Rate ABANA's Web site on access to information you want and need?	Expired	Current	Home Page	Total	Percentage
Excellent	23	78	58	159	10.2
Good	91	428	213	732	46.9
Fair	55	285	184	524	33.6
Poor	29	51	66	146	9.4
<i>answered question</i>	198	842	521	1561	

Question Data for Question #22

22. If you have Internet access, would you be interested in receiving the Anvil's Ring and/or the Hammer's Blow by the Internet?	Expired	Current	Home Page	Total	Percentage
Yes	80	100	246	426	24.9
Yes, but only for the Hammer's Blow	6	53	18	77	4.5
Yes, but only for the Anvil's Ring	3	5	1	9	0.5
No, I prefer hard copies	129	752	315	1196	70
<i>answered question</i>	218	910	580	1708	

Question Data for Question #23

23. Would you like to see the Journeyman Program revitalized?	Expired	Current	Home Page	Total	Percentage
Yes, and I am willing to help	25	152	114	291	20.6
Yes, but I cannot help	82	327	187	596	42.2
No	3	25	18	46	3.3
Don't care	69	250	159	478	33.9
<i>answered question</i>	179	754	478	1411	

Question Data for Question #24

24. What do you think of the Scholarship/Grant Programs of ABANA?	Expired	Current	Home Page	Total	Percentage
OK as they are	46	300	127	473	32.3
Too restricted, difficult to get, etc	27	93	61	181	12.4
Did not know ABANA had a Scholarship/Grant Program	107	351	276	734	50.1
Needs changes	6	46	24	76	5.2
<i>answered question</i>	186	790	488	1464	

Question Data for Question #25

25. Should ABANA Board Members have term limits?	Expired	Current	Home Page	Total	Percentage
No	27	173	85	285	17.3
Yes	102	399	277	778	47.1
Does not matter	87	316	185	588	35.6
<i>answered question</i>	216	888	547	1651	

Question Data for Question #26

26. Are you a member of an ABANA affiliate?	Expired	Current	Home Page	Total	Percentage
Yes	95	189	335	619	36.6
No	123	705	245	1073	63.4
<i>answered question</i>	218	894	580	1692	

Question Data for Question #27

27. Are you a member of any other (not affiliated with ABANA) organization, guild, association, etc. that is involved in blacksmithing?	Expired	Current	Home Page	Total	Percentage
Yes	40	189	145	374	22.3
No	180	705	420	1305	77.7
<i>answered question</i>	220	894	565	1679	

Question Data for Question #28

28. If you are a member of a group that is not an Affiliate, why have they not applied to become an ABANA Affiliate?	Expired	Current	Home Page	Total	Percentage
Uncertain of the benefits of being an Affiliate	23	60	62	145	25.5
They function well as they are	20	90	77	187	32.9
Other	27	125	85	237	41.7
<i>answered question</i>	70	275	224	569	

Analysis of Repeated comments from all 3(Expired, Current, Home Page)

Comment Type	Total	Percentage
N/A	71	30
Did not know you could be...	2	.8
Too small	3	1.3
Do not know if they are...	5	2.1
College or Business	4	1.7
No incentive or benefit	4	1.7
Not a member of any	22	9.3
“Too Political”	4	1.7
TOTAL RESPONSES	237	

Interesting/Unique Comments

From Survey: Current

	Comment Text
1.	See the comment above - they do not want to be ruled by ultimatums and like they are bad children. They have not learned about the "New" ABANA, but that would probably not matter as they have long memories.
52.	I think they have applied. Burnaby Heritage Blacksmith Association - British Columbia, Canada
64.	The issue has never been raised. Perhaps we should investigate. I am currently a director.
65.	need a professional smiths affiliate
74.	We should discuss how that would work we think it might be useful, I know we advertise with the ring
115.	Why has ABANA not applied to become their Affiliate? Since the death of Leonard Masters, ABANA never looks to the rest of the world. The members are living in their home garden

Survey: Home Page

	Comment Text
30.	We had talked about trying to become an affiliate but since there are so few of us is it possible?
69.	not ready yet, we will soon.
71.	They are really just a web community
83.	I'm not sure Berkshire has applied

Personal Analysis of Data

Peyton Anderson:

- The large number of “N/A” responses tends to say that there were not enough choices OR the individual had no idea what the reason was.
- There is some **EXTREMELY** interesting data here lying in the wings awaiting our attention on the use of colleges, schools, businesses, and internet blacksmith communities. It is now time to extend the affiliate status to more than just guilds that are keeping this trade alive. There were several instructors, Professionals, and “cyber smiths” who took time to let us know they are out there. **IT IS TIME TO ESTABLISH NEW AFFILIATE CATEGORIES!!!** Listed below are 3 very rough ideas that came to me while looking at everything.
 1. **“Educational Affiliate”**: Universities, colleges, Vo-Tech centers, craft schools, etc. Will be given an affiliate status and given an opportunity to join ABANA for the benefits of the publications being made available to the students. Discounts from suppliers for shop/class materials, etc... This would also increase our

awareness level to those just starting out and looking for more information and creative outlets in the furthering of their study.

2. **“Cyber Affiliate”**: There are several forums out there with common formats that could potentially allow an ABANA section for “us” to post any information or answer/ask questions from the other forum members.
3. **“Business Affiliate”**: This would allow any business to become an affiliate. The benefit here would be having their company listed and referenced to any and all who were looking for commission work, supplies, tools, etc. Does there needs to be a fee to gain this advantage? I don’t know. NOMMA would be a good place to look for some direction with this. I also understand the position of POABA, and understand this may have already been discussed but why not have POABA be this affiliate and run/organize this ring? ABANA could allocate pieces and parts of the funds(paid by those interested in being affiliated) to POABA so they can provide support to the businesses and be an intermediary and partner with ABANA. Just a thought...I do realize I may have offended some by saying make POABA a part of ABANA.....but aren’t we all a part of something bigger for the Big Picture of blacksmithing?
 - There is no real benefit or incentive to being an affiliate right now other than having their information listed on the website. Is it time to begin offering voluntary classifications based on their level of activity with ABANA? I have sent along to Rome my ideas n this subject for him to use within the proper division at his discretion.
 - Several people also responded they were not a member of any...this leads us directly into the next question analysis to follow.

Question Data for Question #29

29. If you are not a member of any blacksmithing group, why not?	expired	current	Home page	total	percentage
I live too far away	32	88	64	184	27.5
I don't like groups	5	17	20	42	6.3
I like learning on my own	12	26	22	60	9
Other	67	178	137	382	57.2
answered question	116	309	243	668	

Analysis of Repeated comments from all 3(Expired, Current, Home Page)

Comment Type	Total	Percentage
No Practical help/information...	6	1.6
Too Busy	95	24.9
“Too Political”	7	1.8
N/A or “I don’t know”	43	11.3
Unaware of any in area...	35	9.2
Too Expensive/limited finances	6	1.6

Physical Reasons	4	1.1
Too Restricted(only forging)	2	.8
Professor/Teacher	3	.8
No interest	5	1.3
No benefit	5	1.3
Travel/Too far...	28	7.3
TOTAL RESPONSES	382	

Interesting/Unique Comments

From Survey: Home Page

	Comment Text
23.	no real benefits for the money. I tend to lean from experiance and other smiths for free which is the way it should be. Most groups tend to be exclusive (not a member tough shit) I hate this attitude and it prevented me from swinging a hammer years before I decided to screw the attitude and start on my own. Tools and shop space are expensive and hard to come by so I had to do it all myself as I was teaching myself now I'm delivering reproductions to customers here in the USA and Europe. I would like to belong but most smiths need to pull stick out of their asses!

Personal Analysis of Data

Peyton Anderson:

- It is apparent that the blacksmithing world is extremely busy! ☺ 95 comments, a total of almost 25% that responded with being “too busy”...
- The biggest surprise for me was that several people responded that they are not aware of any in their area. This will lend itself well to opening the “affiliate doors” to include the educational centers, businesses, and the cyber community. This will help increase the chances of there being something somewhere that can help. This will also help those who responded that travel and having meetings that are “too far” out of the equation and open more opportunities for them. The way I see it is that by doing this and we reach a handful of new smiths hungry for help then we have done our job! But think the impact will be much greater than a few...the potential is only limited by our own scope.
- The points made in the data of Question 28 are still very relevant here as well. I sometimes feel very content when looking at the 70+ affiliates and imagining how many total members there are between their roll sheets and ours. This is making me know understand and forcibly see there are at least that many out there looking hard to find something. We need to evaluate our methods on reaching out and open some doors to these individuals who are responding “I don’t know”, “Not sure”, “Unaware...”.
- By incorporating educational centers and professionals into the affiliate scope we may be tapping into a way to increase participation and the resurrection of the journeyman program by those who are teaching and doing it for a living.

Question Data for Question #30

30. Do you think ABANA conferences should:	expired	current	Home page	total	percentage
Continue as before with different locations every two years.	143	629	319	1091	83.4
Continue as before, every two years, but have one central location.	30	108	79	217	16.6
Other	45	205	135	385	29.4
answered question	173	737	398	1308	

Analysis of Repeated comments from all 3(Expired, Current, Home Page)

Comment Type	Total	Percentage
Sponsor Affiliate events	24	6.2
Don't Know	6	1.6
Never Attended	17	4.4
Lower Cost	36	9.4
Central location	22	5.7
Move location around	18	4.7
Downsize(Trim the fat)	19	4.9
TOTAL RESPONSES	385	

Interesting/Unique Comments

From Survey: Expired

	Comment Text
18.	The only problem is that I know the "central" location will be out east.
26.	Chose more camp ground style where there will be more socializing and blacksmithing for that matter
36.	Be more Internationally focused
45.	After a journeymanhip in Europe, and visiting many "conferences" in the USA and Europe I prefer the European style conf. in that it is more a juried competition and not demonstrations in a classroom environment. I would rather use my hands and get dirty than take notes.

From Survey: Current

	Comment Text
18.	Maybe ABANA should sponsor local/regional groups to organize and hold their own events (as BABA does) - whether a huge country like the USA can support regular national events is debatable. However, if ABANA does not, what is it for, except for publishing 'Anvil's Ring'?

	Comment Text
24.	local area meetings are more doable-ex. regional, four or five states. People could drive to these, costs are going up everywhere. However i do like one central location, finding places for blacksmithing probably is a challenge. The same location would eliminate finding a new location every couple of years. You can't make everyone happy. Forget all this moving around so you can concentrate on the quality program you want to have.
44.	Perhaps there could be at least one annual event that travels around- hosted by the various regional affiliate groups. These may not be colossal events, but nonetheless would build a more involved membership and strengthen the network of all smiths.
49.	3 to 6 permanent locations rotated every two years
52.	With a permanent location you can have other events in the off times and save lots of money by not having reinvent the wheel for every conference.
64.	Just focus on blacksmithing. Forget the hula dancers.
80.	Return to roots... Carbondale, IL
88.	It seems obvious that to continue to do as we have, then we have to find a way to reduce the cost to ABANA and the membership. It may be that meeting less often than every other year, while finding a way to reduce cost to ABANA and the membership must be explored. Have we explored (1) corporate sponsorship, (2) Federal and/or state/regional area grants, or (3) having ABANA sponsor/contribute to successful, well organized, well attended annual AFFILIATE conferences.
95.	The conferences, as noted elsewhere, need to be re-focused on what ABANA can do that affiliates cannot do.
103.	could there be paid conference organizers who remain relatively consistent over the years?
106.	Fewer demonstrators, but shorter demos... more per day
109.	I think the conferences are important - different locations would be best, but having them at one central location would be better than not at all. I think it is important to keep the costs down however. I have attended a couple and my impression is that they were pretty expensive. You certainly can't attract casual attendees who are potential members or potential newcomers to the field at the prices that were charged. I realize you can't do it for free, but a compromise has to be made somehow to keep it reasonable. Perhaps the expensive demonstrators or other expensive items should be reserved for special gatherings for advanced ABANA members - maybe "reserved" is not a good word, but oriented towards advanced members, but not part of the general conferences.
132.	I like the idea of a longer conference with specific topics every day or two. Architectural work for 2 days, repousse and hollow ware for a day, sculpture for a couple of days. The only trick would be scheduling so people with multiple interests could attend multiple topics. Hmmm.
158.	Have been to 3 conferences. Need less demonstrators but more opportunities to see them - ie each demonstrator should hold multiple sessions.
168.	One location, such as in Mo. or Tenn. Purchase about 30 acres and build our own show case art center and have a location that we can host teaching events and. If we have a permanent home spot, the cost of providing a conference would drop over the years and with a HOME, we can ask for grants from groups that support the arts.
177.	It is hard for alot of people to travel long distances. Would two or three smaller conferences be possible? Spread out around the country.

	Comment Text
185.	The conference is necessary. But ABANA has to look how to do. There are some examples in europe (IFGS, European Ring of Blacksmith Cities: Stia, Kolbermoor and so on.)

From Survey: Home page

	Comment Text
3.	I think you need to break down into six or eight districts and have larger meets with the affiliates in those areas. It will allow more participation and keep costs down.
67.	Central in terms of what? Geography? Membership? However you define central, such a conference will become regional, not national, and there are already several good regional conferences.
68.	Continue in two central locations (East and West of the Mississippi) with rotation between. Sites should be chosen with consideration to travel distances being reasonable for all 48 contiguous states members to reasonably attend. The site should have adequate demonstration facilities with adequate camping and tailing gating sites with demonstrators and other costs limited to reasonable "fees" we do not require an elite demonstrator, or facilities or elaborate and unnecessary appointments. Everyday blacksmiths are not looking for amenities but for information and tips to ply in their "vocation" and ability to peruse and purchase supplies, equipment and antiques from their fellow blacksmiths (i.e. tailgating)! The annual September SOFA Conference is a good model!
100.	Abana shuldn't do conferences, you should work with the reginals and act as the umbrella for education and blacksmithskill level accreditation
117.	The ABANA Board needs to cease giving conferences, and go back to having the affiliates sponsor them. This is much more efficiaent when the local people can get together frequently to put on the conference. trying to do it by e-mail, phone, etc. is a waist of time, and inefficient. Every conference chair since the board took on the job has threatened to quit, and one did (Bill Fiorini essentially dropped the ball accidentally on purpose). Does that tell you something?
137.	A low-cost, rural, fairground-type location, plenty of parking, camping, etc.
138.	work with half dozen or so regional events
139.	Continue EVERY year alternating with one "Nothern" location for a summer gathering and one "Southern" location for a winter gathering
140.	3-4 major mid usa cities with good access, facilities, and then rotate every 2 years

Personal Analysis of Data

Peyton Anderson:

- While breaking down the individual comments I found the answers to be in basically one of two categories. People wanted the conference to be mobile or central.
- Several people wanted to see more focus put into the affiliates in helping plan and possibly underwriting things going on with their events. This is not a national conference. This would turn into the other 70 or so affiliates crying foul and picking favorites. The ABANA Conference needs to be put on by ABANA for ABANA.

- Several people also wanted to see the format simplified or downsized in a more manageable and focused manor. There were a few mentions of the infamous hula dancers and the beer garden. Two things they would like to see done away with. I am a BIG fan of taking away these types of “fluff”. ABANA is about blacksmithing not beer gardens and hula dancers.
- There is some over lap within the results from the question and the comments. In the question answers the data shows the majority wants the site to stay mobile while the comments show the two being very close to each other. This is explained in the additional comments and motivation behind the individuals who commented. The variations are everything from several stated locations rotated out each year in the east, central, and west portions of the country to setting up one location to hold conferences and other ABANA events. The question was too general for those who took the survey. But keeping it generalized achieved the best and most reliable outcome. Bottom line is to move it around the country...
- There was a resounding number of people who mentioned SOFA and BAM as examples. I can attest to SOFA. I have been two years in a row. And set up selling and did a one hour demo at Quad State. Everything is surrounded around blacksmithing and nothing else.
- Another major concern is the price. It seems from the comments people interested in attending are okay with a fairgrounds atmosphere where camping is available. This is a neat thing at Quad State. Guys sit around camp fires at night watching UMBA videos and slide shows from demonstrations...I will be camping this upcoming year for that reason.
- The overwhelming majority is saying “give me a conference”. So let’s give them the best one to have ever come around!!!
- The Conference outline listed on abana.org seems to be right on target with what the surveyed population is asking for in this specific question.

Question Data for Question #31

31. In addition to galleries and domestic demonstrators, the ABANA conference should include:	expired	current	Home page	total	percentage
International demonstrators	118	536	307	961	63.3
Professional development lectures	125	535	305	965	63.6
Teaching stations	167	674	402	1243	81.9
Open forges	121	465	322	908	59.9
Other	20	135	87	242	16
<i>answered question</i>	200	827	490	1517	

Analysis of Repeated comments from all 3(Expired, Current, Home Page)

Comment Type	Total	Percentage
Vendors/Tailgaters	5	2.1
Open Forges	6	2.5
Lessen the # of demonstrators	30	12.4
Never/won't attend	13	5.4
All of the above	7	2.9
Teaching Stations	8	3.3
Night Events	3	1.2
Public Galleries	5	2.1
Beer Garden/Social area	3	1.2
TOTAL RESPONSES	242	

Interesting/Unique Comments

From Survey: Expired

	Comment Text
8.	Think of how much money you would make off of the members if you had teaching stations.
20.	European conferances have forging stations set up for competitions...exp. Bring your own tools/material, teams (1 or 2 people) get 2-3 hours to work, and ABANA supplies forge (gas and or coal) anvil and post vice. I believe this shows more individual ability and showcases more artisans. This combined with large juried galleries makes for more exchanges of ideas/knowledge.

From Survey: Current

	Comment Text
1.	There should be a LIMITED NUMBER of demonstrators but a variety none-the-less. The Madison Conference tries to get the BEST smiths in the WORLD to demonstrate - but only have four or five. They have bladesmiths, artists, tool makers, architectural, repousse, sculptural, and traditional smiths - but at different times (years). This keeps the cost down, an allows participants to see varied work, and still be able to get to the tailgate sale, vendor and workshop (teaching station) venues. Teaching stations will become a bigger focus for future conferences, I believe.
10.	confrences should include,comfort for members,a convension type setting ,learning materials of all kinds,in a class type form,open forges and so are old school,an awards ceremony for products produced in the previous year voted on by all members at conference,make it more like an awards show for retailers and member to attract high end company's,supplier's, and members.suppliers will jump at the chance to have a conference booth ?
12.	Sponcored booths. Example Welding equipment companys.
13.	International demonstrators should have TRANSLATORS! Demonstrators and assistants should act professionally when demonstrating...assistants shouldn't burn the demonstrator's work. Galleries should be more professional (ie well labelled and displayed). The general public should be invited to participate in some aspects of the conference if possible...perhaps public galleries, and certainly the auction. A full time director could handle most of the general organization relieving the chapters from a lot of work.

	Comment Text
14.	All these things are essential (plus a well-displayed exhibition, and controlled public access) to a successful event. The huge problem/fault of all national ABANA conferences I've been to (and I've been to 15 since 1975) has been too much going on at one time, so that you automatically miss most of the action, frequently things that, with hindsight, would have been most useful/interesting/inspiring. The smaller scale of BABA (600 approx members) has been that at major events attended by perhaps 300 people, everyone can attend everything (almost).
16.	the program has always been too large and/or diverse to get your moneys worth. Nobody likes paying for 25 or 30 demonstrators that they dont have a chance of seeing. Variety is wonderful but 7 stations at a time with no repeats is just frustrating, I feel like the victim of some cruel joke. Given the sampling of conferences I've been to I defiantly believe less would be more.
18.	All of the above but more public access, promotion and education. The more people see the more they will be involved whether it be by employing a smith to build wine doors or send their kids off for some schooling. Make it easier to access for the general public. Get the local arts community involved.
48.	Forget the open forges. No one travels to an ABANA conference who does not have a forge at home. Forget "International" demonstrators---that is like having quotas for women, blacks, etc. It is the skill of the demonstrator that counts---both at blacksmithing and at enthusiastic teaching---that counts.
52.	You should invite ABANA members to give presentations. I would likely learn more from a fellow member than from paid demonstrators. Furthermore, this way, a considerably higher number of techniques are demonstrated, making it very worth-while for a beginner or novice to come. You could even group the presentations by topic and give each demonstrator about an hour. If too many members apply for a presentation, you can use a peer-evaluation process to screen them. If you would like learn more about this proposal, please email me: wollowski@rose-hulman.edu
59.	More public relations to promote the conferences, NPR, local TV, etc....there should be a day to let the public in at a reduced rate and the public should definitely be encouraged to attend the auction. Plus the auction should be promoted at least a year before the conference and get rid of the stupid and boring Ring project...do something different
61.	Cap the payments to demonstrators.
67.	All of the above bring value to a Conference, but, at what cost? I do not know who pays for transportation and per diem for International demonstrators? Is there a charge for those learning at Teaching stations and for those at Open forges. Should there be?
70.	Open Forges could be after demonstrations only
82.	move-up stuff aimed at intermediates; outreach to local teachers (art, science, history, shop), acknowledgement and encouragement for under-age 'smiths.
87.	have contests between members
97.	Web Cam broadcast, tailgate, vendors, editor's meeting, slide shows, midnight madness, auction, family programs, tours of local ironwork / sculpture
108.	Family programs
110.	Perhaps a viewing area with DVDs from various blacksmithing groups.
114.	Demonstrators are what make a conference a conference. The number of them should be limited. I should not have to choose between so many great demonstrators at one time. It leaves the feeling of having missed out and having paid for more demonstrators than can possibly be seen.

	Comment Text
115.	Either improve the galleries or you won't get any professional master craftsmen to send anything to you. That gallery set-up in Seattle was a joke, the building was pathetic and it made all of our work look amateurish to both members and the public. At past conferences the gallery show was one of the most important aspects of the entire event. That gallery show has to have a evening opening which everyone attends and the craftsmen should be at their pieces to discuss them with the members. Open it to the public the next day. Sell wine and beer there and you could make all the money you want.
118.	OPEN FORGES WAS ONE OF THE MOST FUN PARTS OF THE FIRST FLAGSTAFF CONFERENCE WHERE I WAS UP TILL 2AM EVERY NITE WATCHING PEOPLE WORK AND AS A NEOPHYTE GETTING IN THE FIRES AND GETTING SOME OPPORTUNITY TO TRY SOME OF THE THINGS I JUST SAW THAT DAY. ... ALSO GOOD CHEEP FOOD ... NOT HOT DOGS OR MEAT LOAF
121.	As much as I enjoy the demonstrators from other countries, I feel as our name implies "North America" we have some of the finest smiths in the world in our club. I think we could save alot of money and get back to what ABANA is all about by using a variety of our own very talented people as demonstrators. Some of the international demonstrators I have seen are great and very talented smiths but are very poor demonstrators, most of the time a lot gets lost if they have to use interpreter also.
122.	It is not the first thing to look for a program. ABANA should not think: "what can we give you", ABANA should ask: "what can you bring to our conference"
125.	Beer Garden -- a space for networking. Slide shows and poster sessions. BOF -- "birds of a feather" sessions
129.	Better introduction of affiliates to "loose" members

From Survey: Home Page

	Comment Text
25.	Sign ups for volunteer 90 minute demo's with volunteers recieving free entry in the following years conference
26.	I would think that I would be an honor to demo at an ABANA conference. No fee shouldbe paid to demonstrators, only expenses.
36.	Ask a few of us old farts to demo, teach, mentor, stop by , sit in, I'm the last U.S. Military Black smith! to be given, the highest status of Master. After I'm gone, It's just History !!
44.	I was quite disappointed with Kentucky conference inasmuch as after approximately 5:00 nothing was scheduled...most of the attendant were from out-of-town so some type of evening program/social activity should be planned...really did not want to go back to the motel room that early
57.	how about a trading library for gently used magazines & techniques?
58.	NO hula dancers, rock bands, beer gardens, ...
71.	A competition similar to NOMMA's that gives awards to the best ironwork at the conference. There could be several divisions, and an Gold, silver, a nd bronze awarded in each category.
73.	More lectures on the history of technology.
78.	INTERNATIONAL DEMOS ARE OVER PLAYED VERY GOOD 'HOME' DEMONSTRATORS WHY WOULD A EASTERN US MEMBER PAY A FORTUNE TO GO TO THE WEST COAST - ABANA NEVER ACKNOWLEDGED THE FOOD POISONING THAT I AND SERVAL OTHERS CONTRACTED FROM THE SEATTLE CONFERENCE FOOD - ONLY COST ME 1.5 days

	Comment Text
87.	A "green coal" area open to the public. Let them try their hand at blacksmithing. Our green coal area (in Northern MA) was regularly attended by patrons from as far away as Maryland. Draw the public IN!!! Forget about POTENTIAL liability. Remember LIFE is a risk; no one get out alive!
88.	Open Market where members can sell their stuff
89.	Skills testing and certification Blacksmith Competitions

Personal Analysis of Data

Peyton Anderson:

- The data seems to suggest a push towards a more interactive style of conference. There is a large number of responses that want to see teaching stations and open forging areas. There is also some responses pushing towards having featured demonstrators working with others in an interactive style of demo where the spectators can work along through the project being presented. This may be possibly with extra fees and a “first come, first served” basis to not only respond to the membership to also potentially pay for the demonstrator in “Interactive demo fees” paid by the attendees.
 - There is also an overwhelming response to please lessen the number of demonstrators, and to also focus more on the domestic demonstrators. I can agree with “quality not quantity”. As a whole people will have more opportunities if the demonstrators offer multiple sessions where individuals can spread themselves out to see and learn more instead of paying to only decide on a limited amount to see. There should be some international demonstrators, but should focus on our continent for the majority of demonstrators. The challenge comes in finding those that have not been widely seen.
 - Tailgating and vendors are also very important to those who have responded. I would suggest making the tailgating area free(no extra charge), but charging a “vendor fee” for suppliers and businesses to set up(i.e. Centaur Forge, Blacksmith Supply, and others) This fee can be two fold. One is a set up fee to just sell their goods, and the other can be a “live” fee for those who demo their items (i.e. Big Blu, Chile Forge, Kayne & Son, etc...)
 - There was also a lot of mention of going to a “fairgrounds” style event...but think this will be better addressed in a later analysis of a future question.
 - There also seems to be a divide between those who are in favor of and against the “beer garden”. Honestly it is a choice to attend it or not. Just make it be a cost...
 - Again, I think we are on the right track already and this is just fuel to the fire!!!
-

Question Data for Question #32

32. To help ABANA plan conferences, what is the maximum Conference admission fee you are willing to pay?	Current	Expired	Home Page	Total	Percentage
\$100 to \$200	119	401	288	808	56.9
\$200 to \$300	48	310	119	477	33.6
\$300 to \$500	12	86	36	134	9.4
Other	37	129	97	263	18.5
answered question	179	797	443	1419	

Analysis of Repeated comments from all 3(Expired, Current, Home Page)

Comment Type	Total	Percentage
\$0-100	66	25.1
\$500-1,000	6	2.3
Lower cost for Spouse/family	11	4.2
TOTAL RESPONSES	263	

Interesting/Unique Comments**From Survey: Current**

	Comment Text
10.	I think that the overall cost (admission, housing, food, travel...) would need to be considered when assessing admission fees. For example, if there ways to minimize housing costs, more could be spent on admission.
31.	Perhaps ther should be a scale based upon a percentage of your income level- especially that portion earned through metalsmithing! That might motivate ABANA to EMPHASIZE the business side of these activities. WE ALL NEED TO BE IN BUSINESS - to reward us properly for our long dedication to these living skills.
46.	less is always better. SNAG has come up with a lot of corporate sponsorship to offset some costs.
77.	Conference cost small cost compared to airfare and accomidation, Could ABANA arrange for staying with other blacksmiths for overseas attendees to minamise costs?
92.	or if there were volunteer jobs, or sliding scale admissions, creative accounting techniques or something
93.	dependent on content. If I'm going to pay \$300 to \$500 if better be well worth it. On the other hand, if I pay \$100 and get nothing more than camaraderie that's ok. It's all about Price/Value
94.	cost should include spouse admission
119.	OFFER WORK PROGRAMS TO DEFER COSTS
120.	For myself if I really WANT to go to a conference The admission price is not the deciding factor however a lot of people are on limited budgets

	Comment Text
121.	Even though a conference is another "tool in the forge shop", it should not be a luxury.
122.	It better have that much value, and be focused on metal more than entertainment. It isn't a party, we can do that on our own.

From Survey: Homepage

	Comment Text
16.	I would prefer it to be less that \$100 with a smaller number of overpriced demonstrators and more volunteer (transportation, room & board) type). And if you have more vendor demo you could save a lot. At several conference I have been to (ABANA's and SOFA's in particular) the vendor demo have drawn almost as many people as the paid demonstrators (i.e. Big Blue, Kick-Ass, Tom Clark and others), Besides providing demos they have the tools you need to do what they did right there to purchase and go home to try for yourself.
48.	SOFA charges \$50.00, why should it be necessary for ABANA to charge more? Selection of "a central location" possible sharing the facilities and equipment of a regional or local forge would allow the costs to be spread over several organization(s) and/or years without accruing transportation (and minimizing storage) costs!
73.	compared to other trade conferences the cost has always been cheap. Maybe it is time to have a two tiered system, proffesional and hobbyist
74.	How about 2 prices. One for a weekend of demos and slide shows. A higher proffesional fee for an extention of that weekend with 3 days of interactive gatherings on proffesional production and design.

Personal Analysis of Data

Peyton Anderson

- There is no real surprise that 25% of the comments wanted somewhere in the range of free to 100 dollars max for an admission fee. It seems to me that several of those who wanted this price range were comparing it to SOFA. This may be a good idea. For about 2 ½ days the cost is in this price range...for a week long conference the comparable price would be double that...somewhere around \$200-400???
 - There were several responses of individuals who said it depended on what was being offered, the location, travel expenses, if food and lodging is included, etc.
-

Question Data for Question #33

33. Conference planning should provide?	expired	current	Home page	total	percentage
A room and board package	117	526	262	905	59.9
Camping on-site	111	442	308	861	56.9
Camping and motel/hotel directions	135	612	374	1121	74.1
A meal package	73	362	208	643	42.5
On-site food vendors	138	577	333	1048	69.3
One banquet style dinner	62	344	197	603	39.9
Other	20	134	69	223	14.7
answered question	197	833	482	1512	

Interesting/Unique Comments**From Survey: Expired**

	Comment Text
3.	Blacksmiths are usually quite self-sufficient and do not need everything packaged. Also, it is a huge burden on the conference planners when too much must be arranged for and provided, especially if it may not be self supporting. Keeping it as simple as possible will suffice.
4.	I think the all or nothing meal package that was at Seattle was a bad thing. I also feel the all or nothing weekend admission is a bad thing if you're trying to get people interested in joining ABANA. It should cost a bit more per day than per all weekend pass to give the all weekenders a price break but let the people who can't afford the full total price or not as committed to blacksmithing but are interested in seeing some demonstrators a chance to get their interest perked.
6.	Camping within walking distance of conference
12.	Shelter from rain with heating-facilities for cold, shower-facilities, decent meal
13.	Food on site keeps everybody focused on the conference, not distracted with the need to get fed.
17.	on site equipment vendors. we are all adults, we can find a place to stay and eat.
20.	free showers.

From Survey: Current

	Comment Text
1.	The banquet style dinners I have attended are more of a time to feed those helping to set up the conference and to introduce the demonstrators and other significant participants. The meal itself is a convenience to get and keep everyone together for the other purposes of the get-together, in my opinion.
6.	Locating lodging and food is essential, on-site activities should focus on ABANA, seminars, open discussions, expositions, learning and camaraderie - continental breakfast (on site) and maybe a near by off location happy-hour sponsored by a local Association (may be, maybe not). Area sights to see are very worth while for family and attendants. This may be a listing with directions, brochures or maybe an organized bus etc.

	Comment Text
12.	Too numerous and in some cases obvious to mention. I learned a huge amount about conference organization from Jim Wallace (who was a key team member for the ground-breaking Carbondale 1976 conference) in advance of the Hereford 1979/1980 international conferences that really got things going in the UK. However, there's too much re-inventing of the wheel, and repeated, avoidable mistakes and omissions every time there's a conference: there should be a Conference Manual collated with wisdom from many old hands distilled and put into one bottle. Am I volunteering??
16.	-List of demonstrators with bio, demonstration content, and skill level -List of area attractions beyond the conference
17.	Bathrooms and shuttle from camping/hotel areas.
40.	vendors are nice. perhaps local merchants could advertise in the booklet and conference members could get a discount at the merchant i.e. local restaurants or things to see.
44.	As few frills as possible, this should be a working mans\womans event
51.	At least one 3 or 4 star hotel as an option (Marriott, Hilton, Radisson, etc.).
61.	I am vegan, so I cannot even eat most of the food offered at these events. This is my thing and I don't expect to have things changed just for me, but I wonder how many vegetarians or vegans exist in the blacksmithing community??? Hmm...
66.	(1)Camping on-site requires too much space which makes it more costly and difficult to locate and negotiate with a prospective site. (2)I think most would prefer to find their own eating provider. (3)At the end of a Conference day, I would prefer to dine at the restaurant of my choice.
73.	Again here is an opportunity to build community. Have one banquet style dinner at the end of the conference to encourage folks to stay through the end of the conference. Have door prizes of items made and donated by the presenters. Have an auction at the end of donated items and tools.
75.	Transportation and help for disabled and elderly members.
86.	Most important are 1, 2, and 5.
93.	I am not a camper, but I know many of the blacksmiths do, so camping would be a nice. One problem I have seen in smaller conferences is how to handle the spouse who also attends, but is not a blacksmith. This can be a problem because if the spouse has to pay full price for everything, then this might prohibit many from attending.
95.	I thought Seattle was a great conference to see demos, but the amenities were totally lacking. Restaurants, or caterers would PAY ABANA for the right to set up at the conference. We were so starving at Seattle that we almost mobbed the hapless Good humor man that showed up by accident! (Note: the beer tent was fantastic, and beyond criticism. I think Scott Lankton was in charge of that.) I think if you tell the attendees that food and drinks will be limited to save money, then we can plan on providing our own. The problem in Seattle was that everyone expected to be able to eat without buying into the (ridiculously over-priced) meal plan. I guess it boils down to controlling our expectations.
103.	ABANA Store, Conference Store, inside & outside vendors, tailgate sales, door prizes
118.	Use the K.I.S.S. Approach. Many beginning smiths as well as more advanced and even professionals can't justify high cost admission, after the cost of travel and time away from work. Especially when the Conference Schedule is so full, a person can't possibly see a fraction of what is available.
120.	Make all of these " add on " options to the cost of the conf. So some one can pick and choose what fits for them and their pocket book. After the food poisoning in Seattle I don't care if we ever have another

	Comment Text
	banquet. There is always some kind of a problem with a banquet.
121.	site with wireless internet access
134.	name tags with locations, info about the area where the conference is being held, group rates at nearby hotels

From Survey: Homepage

	Comment Text
43.	The beer garden in Seattle was offensive as I was with my daughter (age 16). Previously we had attended Asheville and Kentucky with a much more pleasant experience.
45.	Activities for wives.
71.	plenty of tailgating and product vendors with reasonable booth fees. Let it all center around blacksmithing and metal art- no polynesian dancers AND NO BEER GARDEN. Also, like the Flagstaff Conference it was nice to have things for the wives and kids to do.
72.	GOOD BATHROOM Facilities

Question Data for Question #34

34. A reasonable budget for accommodations and meals for an ABANA Conference?	Expired	Current	Home page	total	percentage
\$100	24	73	86	183	13
\$200	60	190	129	379	26.9
\$300	60	269	153	482	34.3
\$400	21	168	62	251	17.8
\$500 and up	11	81	20	112	8
<i>answered question</i>	176	781	450	1407	

Overall Observations:

- There is still a strong division between the “artist” and the “traditionalist”. Throughout the whole survey comments and responses range in varying degrees for and against these two areas. The artists are calling for more exposure, and the traditional guys calling for less “artsy” stuff...
- The conference, to me, took center stage in this survey. All of the concern and worry seems to be rooted in the decision of cancelling the '08 conference, and the format of the '06 conference. All members whether they have or ever could attend a conference feel it is important to have one. Almost everyone is calling for a more pragmatic approach with less frills and more blacksmithing. I suppose the point here is “quality and not quantity”. I think we are in a great position here. We are making efforts to bring back, what several consider, the keystone of ABANA...the conference.
- Representation: It was alarming how many people did not know if their guild was an affiliate, or that there were such things as affiliates. We need to offer the affiliates some opportunities to become more involved and gain some diversity within the association. That would potentially gain us more members by having their local guilds taking more active roles. There is a challenge of trying to represent the foreign members we have...some suggested having a reduced membership fee for those over seas to just cover the publications. The most alarming fact was the number of Canadian members who felt as if they were not being represented by ABANA. I am not sure about Mexico due to the fact no one pointed it out in any of the written comments within the survey.
- Are they paying for a membership or subscription? Many are feeling their dues are for the publications and wondering or not whether it is worth it. Linda has already taken huge steps towards making their membership be worth something other than 8 mailings. The class, and vendor discounts will help those in limbo hopefully renew or join to gain those benefits. It seems the CD offer has also been a good driving force in helping people make the decision to join! What else can we do here?
- There was a lot of mention to the BABA publications being an example we should strive to achieve with our publications...along with a lot of comments on there being too much advertising in the Ring for fabricated and casted items.
- It is extremely important to keep the dynamics of ability in mind that has been expressed here. The data in Question #2 states that 79.4% of those who took the survey consider themselves between being an observer-journeyman. What does this mean? Well if you are a professional blacksmith/artist it means that there are 20% of the population not being recognized, and if you are one in the 80% you are thinking that ABANA only caters to the professional/artist. Which is right? None. The most important thing to gain from this is there are enough professionals to create a professional affiliate (POABA) that is part of ABANA to help serve those in need of professional development, business management, etc...It also means that focusing on the educational side of things for all

levels from beginner to journeyman would benefit not only the individuals but ultimately POABA as well. How is it the professionals gained their knowledge? Shouldn't we be a resource for anyone and everyone? The issues here are not black and white...there is a lot of gray area in between where working together we can serve ABANA members as a whole and not the professionals or the beginners. The POABA division can truly take on a leadership role in training and helping create the proper "lesson plans" for those who want to learn. Who else would we turn to for help than those who do it for a living. ABANA is a collaborative organization and should act that way for the betterment of blacksmithing no matter what.

- Being one of the "younger generation" in ABANA I feel we should try very hard to gain new membership in the younger guys and gals out there. The membership right now is a majority of older individuals who have a lot of knowledge that would be lost without efforts to preserve them. How do we do that?
- The membership has a very bad taste in its mouth with past occurrences involving several mentioned issues from shooting anvils to the conference and to the impression of ABANA being "too political". These things ideas of being "too political" come from, in my opinion, a lack of communication between the Board and the membership. The Constant Contact emails, website revitalization, and other efforts will help dispel this stereotype.

Future Surveys:

We have paid the web survey service and should consider using it to our advantage to pinpoint some areas where the membership could steer us in the right direction. Here are some specific "themes" for future surveys if we feel they are needed.

- **Affiliate Expectations:** Send out to only affiliates (presidents, editors, and liaisons) to get feedback on what they are looking to get from ABANA. And more importantly establishing some things they would be willing to do to help ABANA.
- **Professional Needs:** For the POABA division to be successful and represent them properly there needs to be an opportunity to see what it is they need on a large scale. I understand and have read the POABA blog, but that only seems to represent a small number of those who do this for a living...
- **Conference:** The only way I can see to help the conference get off the ground is to cater to the membership...There could be areas for lecture topics, demonstration themes, gallery themes, price, location (areas), etc. The last 5 questions in this survey were a great start to see what everyone is looking for.
- **Membership:** This could be an annual questionnaire on how the membership feels solely on the publications, membership fees, library, etc. This would help keep the doors of communication open for members to express their concerns.