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ON THE COVER:
Container by Mark Herndon, Corinth, Texas. Mark says, “This container was made by adapting old gunsmithing and silversmithing techniques. The title of it is Space Vessel #3. It is pattern-welded Damascus steel and brass. Dimensions: 3” diameter and 4” high.”

Detail of sign bracket. Forged steel. See Page 22, Interview with Dereck Glaser.

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DEAR EDITOR,

With the fires extinguished on the 3rd annual Hot Iron Muster in Queensland, Australia, we would like to say a sincere ‘Thank You’ for the support received from the U.S. blacksmithing community:

- to all the Affiliates for spreading the word about our event in their newsletters,
- to the Appalachian Area Chapter for their gift of t-shirts and hat pins for some lucky participants,
- to the administration of ABANA for arming our visiting instructor, Steve Williamson, with videos from the library, copies of The Anvil’s Ring and Hammer’s Blow and ABANA hat pins.
- to the members who expressed their interest in visiting Australia and participating in future events.

Such encouragement for our remote endeavours highlights the spirit of goodwill and cooperation that is fostered—and indeed made possible—by the extensive network of ABANA.

To Steve and Vicky Williamson, we say thank you not only for Steve’s expert leadership and willingness to share his experiences in the work shop, but also for the warm friendship, good humor, and good company throughout their stay.

We hope to continue to welcome international smiths to our annual event, and look forward to making new friends while building on our current links and participation in future events.

Yours sincerely, Alan & Helen Ball

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employees, called the “Atelier.” Mr. Yellin had them drawing various things. I have some of Dayton’s drawings of The Philadelphia Art Museum, The Bryn Athyn Cathedra, National Cathedral and Mr. Yellin’s residence. His skill at drawing led to a job on the shop floor, recording the “as-built” details of the flowers and heads for the full-size drawings. While working in close proximity to Mr. Yellin, he became a valued and trusted employee. When Mr. and Mrs. Yellin went out in the evening, they asked him to look after their son Harvey. If they were gone overnight, he spent the night sleeping in Mr. Yellin’s demo-crested bed. He also tutored Harvey in drawing, all the while developing a strong, lifelong friendship.

He was working at Yellin’s when Mr. Yellin passed away in 1940 and saw son Harvey join the army and go to war. During the war Dayton worked at Cramp’s Shipyard in Philadelphia, helping build ships and submarines. When the war ended, Harvey came home from the army to take over the shop. Demand for the type of work Yellin’s shop produced had dropped and jobs were scarce. Some of work Yellin’s shop produced had been for the Air Force Academy Chapel and the aluminum cross for the Air Force Academy Chapel are among them. I am sure there are many more out there: baptismal fonts, Bible stands, and others, wrought by his hands. In retirement he pursued his interests in antiques, books and the crafts. He took classes and dubbed in stained glass, tin smithing, and oil painting, and other varied things. He made a few miniature rooms with furnishings and one, an antique shop, won first prize in a state-wide competition. He suffered a stroke which paralyzed his right side in 1993 and his health continued to deteriorate. My grandfather passed away on Saturday, October 3, 2002.

Dear Editor,

Thank you for sending me Rich’s lovely letter commemorating his grandfather, Dayton Froelich. Dayton was a valued employee of my grandfather and father. He worked hard throughout his career and his loyalty to Samuel and Harvey held fast over many decades. Dayton had many talents, but he did not talk about them; his modesty prevented that. The letter will be a good addition to The Anvil’s Ring.

Thanks, Claire Yellin, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania

Dear Editor,

Hello from Canada! I just want to say how much I enjoy your publications, the Hammer’s Blow and The Anvil’s Ring. They are such an inspiration. Just when I’m sometimes feeling that I am losing my metal arts inspiration, one of the magazines arrives in the mail; I throw up a nice hot cup of coffee and set myself down in my easy chair by the fire. In a short while I’m feeling great and ready to fire up the forge.

Thank you! Rick Hamilton, Thornton, ON, Canada

ABANA BUSINESS

ABANA CONTRACTS OPEN FOR BID

The contract for the ABANA Central Office Administrator is reviewed yearly. Contact Jerry Kagle, 616 E. Rockwood Blvd., Spokane, WA 99203. 509/624-0001 or e-mail: kaglejr@aol.com to request an information packet.

The Anvil’s Ring contract was reviewed in November, 2001 and extends until 2004. The Hawker’s Blue contract was reviewed in November, 2001 and extends until 2003.

Any parties interested in bidding for the editors’ positions can submit a resume any time to: Dorothy Stiegler, 18023 Shake Ridge Road, Sutter Creek, CA 95685. 209/296-6471. E-mail: anvilart@jps.net.

CANADIAN MAILING

ABANA Canadian members are now being mailed the Hammer’s Blow and The Anvil’s Ring through the same company that has been handling our overseas mailing. This should result in better service to our Canadian members.

Please let Board member Dorothy Stiegler know whether your delivery service has improved or not. Contact her, 18023 Shake Ridge Road, Sutter Creek, CA 95685. 209/296-6471. E-mail: anvilart@jps.net.

ELECTION TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Artist-Blacksmith’s Association of North America, Inc. (ABANA) is run by a board of 15 directors elected by the membership. These elected volunteers serve as officers, committee chairpersons and members of committees. Five of the 15 directors are elected each year for a three-year term. To run for election, one is required to be an ABANA member in good standing and provide the following:

A nominating petition signed by at least 10 ABANA members submitted with photograph and candidate statement to the central office by June 15 of the election year.

2003 ELECTION TIMETABLE:

May 1, 2003: Notice of election published in the Spring issue of The Anvil’s Ring.

June 15, 2003: Nominations deadline date, submitted to the ABANA Central Office, P.O. Box 816, Farmington, GA 30638.

See ABANA Business on page 7

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Mail cont. from 6

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The election chairman shall set a schedule that will start with a call for nominations four months before the annual election and provide election results in advance of the fall meeting. Results of the election shall be provided to the president for notification of the new directors.

Section 3

Election Procedures: The election chairman shall solicit the nominations and provide them to the executive secretary. The executive secretary shall prepare and mail out the ballot form and mailed to the last recorded address of each member. Upon voting, members will mail their marked ballots to the election chairman. The list of nominees shall be in ballot form and mailed to the last recorded address of each member. Upon voting, members will mail their marked ballots to the executive secretary’s office. A count of the completed ballots shall be made by the election chairman and the Board shall, upon election, immediately enter into the performance of their duties and tasks. But most of all we need members who are qualified as a candidate. The chapter will then support a campaign for this person who is qualified as a candidate. The chapter will then support a campaign for this person who is qualified as a candidate. The chapter will then support a campaign for this person who is qualified as a candidate. The chapter will then support a campaign for this person who is qualified as a candidate.

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The Southern Illinois University Board of Trustees has named the Southern Illinois University Carbondale blacksmithing facility, located behind Pulliam Hall, the L. Brent Kington Smithy.

Kington, the founder of SIUC’s blacksmithing program, taught in the SIUC School of Art and Design from 1961 until his retirement in 1997, having served as the school’s director from 1981 to 1992.

“It is really quite an honor,” said Kington, who noted that SIUC is the only university in the nation to offer a master of fine arts degree in blacksmithing. “Southern gave me an opportunity to get started as a young artist and faculty member and I’m very proud to have been part of the growth of the university’s blacksmithing program.”

Known for his forged metal sculptures, Kington’s artistic endeavors first gained international attention through work that reintroduced baroque esthetics and design concepts to modern art and craft disciplines. His body of work has achieved a great deal of attention and accolades, including a feature article in Craft Horizons magazine in conjunction with a one-person show in 1969 at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts (now the American Craft Museum) in New York.

Kington’s works are also part of permanent collections at the Renwick Gallery, the National Museum of American Art, the Smithsonian Institution and the Johnson Collection, among others.

His creations have appeared at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and the Vatican Museum in Rome. Other shows have toured Canada, Mexico, South America, Asia, Africa, Japan, Korea and Europe.

A Kansas native, Kington earned his bachelor of arts degree from the University of Kansas in 1957 and a master of fine arts degree from Cranbrook Academy of Art in Michigan in 1961.

Brent is now retired from the university, but continues his artistic work at home.
My interest in chasing and repoussé began in 1997 after watching George Dixon’s demonstration at the Upper Midwest Regional Blacksmithing Conference in Pontiac, Illinois. George used a treadle hammer to do most of his work, which I found fascinating, not to mention the wonderful practice pieces that George displays during his demonstration.

After that conference my husband Mark built a treadle hammer and we played around with it some. It is much harder to stand on one leg and work than it appears! In 1998 Mark and I purchased an old blacksmith shop in Farmer City, Illinois, and began restoring it. In 1999 I re-read my notes from the 1997 conference and tried the treadle hammer again, using it to make leaves of 16-gauge steel. I soon became obsessed with the treadle hammer, as well as chasing and repoussé, often spending 12 hours a day practicing and experimenting. A hammer really can stand like a flamingo for long periods of time!

In 1999 I was accepted into the Illinois Artisans Program in both metals and mixed media. I also do wood carving and incorporate metal into my carvings.

At the 2001 Illinois State Fair where we were demonstrating in the Artisans Village, Carolyn Patterson, the director of the Illinois Artisans Program, asked me if my name could be put on a list of Illinois artists to possibly make an ornament for the State of Illinois to give to the White House or to a dignitary. Of course I said that would be great and figured that I would never hear from them again. Was I wrong!

The White House contacts the governor’s office in all fifty states for artists to create the ornaments. In Illinois the Governor’s office then contacts the Illinois Artisans Program for a list of artists they feel are qualified to do the work. The names are then sent to the Governor’s office and then to the White House.

In early August 2002 I received a letter from the office of Governor Ryan’s wife, inviting me to represent the State of Illinois in creating a handcrafted ornament for the White House Christmas tree. The letter went on to say, “This year, First Lady Laura Bush is continuing the rich tradition of adorning the White House Christmas tree with local ornaments from each of the 50 states. Mrs. Bush has selected the theme of the event to be ‘All Creatures Great and Small.’”

Along with the invitation to participate was a list of guidelines for the artists and requirements for participation. Included were subject matter restrictions of the ornament, weight and height restrictions, and how the ornament was to hang or sit on the tree. The ornament, if you chose to participate, would become part of the White House’s permanent ornament collection and cannot be reproduced or replicated for sale or advertised as “designed for the White House.” Artists were not to speak to the media until after Mrs. Bush made the announcement the first week of December. Each artist would receive an invitation to a reception at the White House and would be allowed to bring one guest.

The ornament was to be a replica of any bird indigenous to the state you were chosen to represent. I chose to make an indigo bunting for a number of reasons. The bird is native to Illinois and a few days after receiving the letter, I saw one in our backyard and was able to watch it for quite awhile. His coloring was perfect, since I use tempering colors to color my work. Illinois, being a prairie state, and having a restablished prairie behind our house, helped for models for my design. The indigo bunting is sitting on a purple coneflower with a yellow coneflower and prairie grass in the background, all of which are native to Illinois.

The ornament is made of 18-gauge mild steel and is egg shaped. The holder for the cold copper is a steel feather that is folded over toward the front of the ornament. I used a combination of chasing and repoussé, the majority of which was done on the treadle hammer. The scale was removed with sandpaper and a wire brush. A propane torch was used to heat different areas of the ornament to the required temperatures to achieve the colors that I wanted. The grass and stems of the flowers were brushed with a small brass brush and also heated with the torch. The piece is coated with a linseed oil, spar varnish, and wax finish.

On December 4th, 2002, Mark and I attended the reception for the artists at the White House. What a spectacular Christmas wonderland! The White House was so beautiful. Mrs. Bush was a very gracious hostess, and took the time to speak with every artist as well as having her picture taken with each one of us.

Going to one blacksmithing conference and taking good notes really made a difference in my life. Thanks to all those responsible for that
Bellow: John Loeffler and Dan Rogers, Leavenworth Washington. This railing is an example of how tough it is to adhere to 4” spaced pickets as required by building codes and still have a flowing, graceful railing, says John.

Richard E. Clark III, Russell, Pennsylvania. Drago Guardian of the Mist. 17 1/2” h x 18” w x 21” d. Hand forged and fabricated.

Chris Waters, Calgary, AB, Canada. Hacksaw forged completely from a single section of 3/4” round bar, mild steel. The wing nut and all fittings were also derived from the same bar, less the blade.

Below: John Loeffler and Dan Rogers, Leavenworth Washington. This railing is an example of how tough it is to adhere to 4” spaced pickets as required by building codes and still have a flowing, graceful railing, says John.


Dave Mariette, Rosemount, Minnesota. Front stair rail for a victorian restoration. Work was riveted, collared, forged-welded and held together with some drilled and tapped mechanical joinery.

Chris Waters, Calgary, AB, Canada. Hacksaw forged completely from a single section of 3/4” round bar, mild steel. The wing nut and all fittings were also derived from the same bar, less the blade.

Takayoshi Komine, Saitama, Japan. Fireplace of guest saloon. 3 meters high, 2 meters in diameter. Iron and copper.


Dave Mariette, Rosemount, Minnesota. Front stair rail for a victorian restoration. Work was riveted, collared, forged-welded and held together with some drilled and tapped mechanical joinery.

Chris Waters, Calgary, AB, Canada. Hacksaw forged completely from a single section of 3/4” round bar, mild steel. The wing nut and all fittings were also derived from the same bar, less the blade.


Dave Mariette, Rosemount, Minnesota. Front stair rail for a victorian restoration. Work was riveted, collared, forged-welded and held together with some drilled and tapped mechanical joinery.


George Dixon, Swannanoa, North Carolina. Lock is chiseled, forged textured steel with a forged bronze handle clad in a repoussé steel leaf. Key is forged and chiseled from naval bronze with a copper rosette set into the slit-and-drifted handle.


George Dixon, Swannanoa, North Carolina. Lock is chiseled, forged textured steel with a forged bronze handle clad in a repoussé steel leaf. Key is forged and chiseled from naval bronze with a copper rosette set into the slit-and-drifted handle.

Rik Mettes, Powell, Wyoming. Oak leaf and acorn fire screen with accessories. 28" x 36", forged iron. Photo by Kathleen Haydon

Mike Wellington, Midland, Texas. Bouquet of six long-stemmed roses, 144 petals, 16-gauge mild steel, 1/4" and 1/8" mild steel rod, forged, 18" long x 10" across, with two brass bands representing wedding rings.

David Wehrenberg, Raleigh, North Carolina. Celebratory Vessel. 9" x 9" x 15". Mild steel, copper, bronze and stainless steel. Photo by Lynn Ruck.

Ira Wiesenfeld, Tucson, Arizona. Ironwood coffee table. 19" h, 36"l, 19"w. Mild steel, textured under power hammer dies. Table top is glass. Photo by David Flynn.

Larry Crawford, Marble Falls, Texas. Eddy queen-size headboard. Forged and fabricated steel with copper rivets.

Bruce Smith, Ketchum Idaho. Gun rack. 24" h x 16" w. Forged steel.

Karl Olsen, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Fireplace fend- er. 75"w x 16"h x 14"d. Forged steel and sheet with brass-brushed leaves and highlights. Wax finish.

Larry Crawford, Marble Falls, Texas. Eddy queen-size headboard. Forged and fabricated steel with copper rivets.
Last summer, after finishing the International 2002 ABANA Conference, I had the opportunity to stay in the United States and get acquainted with the country for several months. It felt quite natural for me, as an artist-blacksmith and a professor at Lviv Academy of Arts in the Ukraine, to work at a forge of American blacksmiths and to be able to practice and share experiences.

It is a long tradition in Europe since the Middle Ages for craftsmen to travel from one country and workshop to another. My friend and artist-blacksmith Yevhen Bohonok, a graduate of Lviv Academy of Arts, works in Pittsburgh at John Walter’s forge. It was very kind of John to invite me to Pittsburgh and to give me the opportunity to practice at his forge that he has named “Metal Eden.” At first glance the title “Metal Eden” seems quite intriguing, and when I found myself in this forge I imme-

Ironwork by John Walter & Yevhen Bohonok.
diately felt that this title suited it correctly. Here one can see metal flowers grow, fabulous metal branches interlace, candles on different candlesticks burn, intricate metal tables and chairs announce their presence, and various constructions of a cosmic theme turn on metal columns. But what is really striking is the fact that all of these metal works of art are created from metal waste material that John finds in different metalworking enterprises. In his forge on the shelves there are many boxes with iron pieces of different forms: rings, balls, plates and other items. All this dead material comes to life and turns into various art forms.

While working with John Walter, I was greatly surprised by his industriousness and his selflessness to his craft. He feels proportions and mass ratio so very well; he has subtle aesthetic taste. John is good at improvisation. A lot of his works he has created without any paper sketches, keeping a design in his creative imagination. Most of his works are simple in execution and can be easily reproduced.

I had a very unique opportunity to improvise together with John Walter in his forge and to create butterflies, which now fly about the garden of “Metal Eden.”
Discussions ensued on cost parameters, budgets, lists they were getting into. So I decided to ride along of the blacksmith industry—had any clue as to what had not been brought up at that point. I was leery that He proposed the following idea: “What do you think for the equipment they had just purchased, whether for blacksmithing and the whole artistic aspect of it. So I thought I might really be able to stay involved. They said they were busy running Maine-Oxy and wanted to hand the job of setting up the school entirely over to them. So I spent my time at Winthrop High School when Maine-Oxy came to me: I had a small three-forge studio at the school. Maine-Oxy was my vendor who was bringing us the gases and supplies needed for the welding classes.

**RING:** So this was an opportunity? Something new?

**DERECK:** Well, it was a strange evolution. At first I saw another opportunity to broaden my metal as a blacksmith. Teaching in the public school was great but a bit of a noose around my neck, as far as being able to be creative and truly pursue my love for blacksmithing and the whole artistic aspect of it. So I thought I might really be able to stay involved in blacksmithing. They said they were busy running Maine-Oxy and wanted to hand the job of setting up the school entirely over to them. So I spent my time at Winthrop High School when Maine-Oxy came to me: I had a small three-forge studio at the school. Maine-Oxy was my vendor who was bringing us the gases and supplies needed for the welding classes.

**RING:** Where did you graduate from?

**DERECK:** I went to Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. My degree is in industrial arts education.

**RING:** So then after you graduated from college, what happened?

**DERECK:** Well, unfortunately, the year I graduated the state of Ohio no longer mandated middle schools or high schools to offer industrial arts as a part of their core curriculum. So here is May, I’m about to graduate, sending out letters for jobs. I found out that the market is flooded with industrial arts teachers who were just let go from their jobs because the schools no longer had money to spend on Industrial Arts programs anymore. There were no job prospects.

I had been working all through college break time at Cincinnati Artists. I was working with my hands, being dirty and sweaty and that’s where I spent most of my high school years.

**RING:** How long did you spend there?

**DERECK:** I was around 12; I remember I was in a blacksmith shop that had turned to making church goods in the mid-1900s. At the point where I stopped in, they were doing a lot of interior furnishings: tables and chairs, things like that. I was able to work with some very knowledgeable Dutch blacksmiths who had been in Cincinnati since they had come over from Holland in their mid-40s. They were in their mid-70s by the time I was working with them. They were quite protective of their own knowledge—it was really the old European school thinking. As they began to see what I was doing and how I could help them out, the relationship between us improved.

**RING:** Where did you go to college?

**DERECK:** I went to Ohio University in Athens, Ohio.

**RING:** And where did you go to college?

**DERECK:** I was there for four years total, on and off during college. That business was bought by a stockbroker. He and I have always been very hands on, and had a very well-equipped basement workshop. I had been around since I was a little girl. So he wasn’t seeing that it was metal, and dirty, to him it was just a craft and he felt each person should have a craft—something outside of work. Little did he know I’d always be doing it! That’s why I went to college, because he said I probably wouldn’t want to be working with my hands, being dirty and covering my whole life.

**RING:** And did you go to college?

**DERECK:** Yes, I was really able to hone my skills in that balance—finding the quickest way to do things in conjunction with traditional joinery, whether it’s producing a couple of hundred pickets with tenons on each end or sitting and drifting dozens and dozens of holes, using technology to help with that. We used punch presses and air tools to punch holes and things like that. Still, the focus was giving the customer a traditionally executed piece, but maybe not using the traditional processes per se.

**RING:** How long did you spend there?

**DERECK:** I was there for four years total, on and off during college. That business was bought by a stockbroker. He and I have always been very hands on, and had a very well-equipped basement workshop. I had been around since I was a little girl. So he wasn’t seeing that it was metal, and dirty, to him it was just a craft and he felt each person should have a craft—something outside of work. Little did he know I’d always be doing it! That’s why I went to college, because he said I probably wouldn’t want to be working with my hands, being dirty and covering my whole life.

**RING:** And where did you learn this balance between welding and forging?

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3’ x 4’ x 10’. Done while head Balcony railing. Forged and

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DERECK: Yes, we have. This is our first work-shop season; the summer of 2002 was the first year we brought in instructors. And the school has been opened almost two years. So prior to the summer of 2002 you were primarily the instructor, then.

DERECK: Yes, that’s correct. I started full time in June, 2000, when I finished my contract with the public high school. I am the resident blacksmith instructor so I hold the evening classes and winter classes. Bringing in the talent and having the cooperation of the blacksmiths who come here to a new school, way up here in this corner of the country, has been a nice departure from being in the forge and it’s still a metalworking class. It has more of a jewelry-type aspect to it. Bob Bregman held a five-day power hammer class on producing tooling, which wound up the year 2002.

RING: That was quite a lineup.

DERECK: Yes, and we had good response. Actually, I had sent out letters of invitation to about 60 blacksmiths whom I felt represented a very good cross-section of different techniques, ideas and design concepts. The response was very supportive and I wasn’t able to get through my call-backs to all 60 people, because I had filled the schedule for the summer. The work after that is maintaining the contract, getting the contracts out to the instructors—things like that. That takes a lot of time. And added to that is getting the write-ups done for a catalog to go out.

RING: So in the meantime there are welding classes going on. How does that work? Does Maine-Oxy run that part of you or do you?

DERECK: The first year I ran it and helped with some outside instructors. Obviously the workload in teaching both was impossible. This past May I hired Warren Swan, who is now the resident welding instructor here, full time. And it has opened up a whole other world to us as far as the welding side of the school can grow. With me being the sole instructor, things elevated to a level at which they couldn’t go any further, just based on one person’s time. So when Warren here somebody may come in who wants to learn how to gas-weld chrome-moly steel for aircraft. Up to now it had been a situation

DERECK: In May Charley Orlando did his infamous beginners’ class.

RING: Why do you say infamous?

DERECK: Because Charley loves teaching begin-

ners. There are a lot of talented smiths, but they don’t like teaching beginners because it is challenging. Charley’s background is in education, so it fits in perfectly. In June we had Jeff Mohr from Florida teaching about making fire tools. Doug Wilson, who is local on Deer Isle, Maine, did tong making for a three week course. And July was light, predominately because many people are taking their vacations that month. But Bob Compton was here and taught tra-

ditional joinery. August was a killer month—we held four workshops: Bill Fiorini, Jonathan Nedbor, Dan Radvern and Daniel Miller were the instructors. They run the gamut of age groups and disciplines, right there. Ed Mack came to do copper fold forming, which is a nice departure from being in the forge and it’s still a metalworking class. It has more of a jewelry-type aspect to it. Bob Bregman held a five-day power hammer class on producing tooling, which wound up the year 2002.

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RING: You hit it to a couple hundred degrees—enough so the finish will flow and soak in, but not to the point where you’ve discovered the metal.

DERECK: I would like to see ABANA continue to honor people at the conferences. At that particular one, if you recall, they had several different awards, some legitimate, others were just for fun. They gave awards in the Gallery for a sculptural area, a functional area and a multidisciplinary area. And it was a good thing to see people whom you never read about get up in front of everyone and be recognized for their work.

RING: That was something the local host blacksmith group did at that conference. ABANA’s philos-

"Metal Design."
like that. So it’s not just welding, it’s a process.

RING: It seems to be such an ideal string, where you’ve got the blacksmith and the welder, paired with that gas which supplies the gases: it’s a mutually beneficial and symbiotic relationship.

DERECK: Yes, it must definitely be symbiotic to be sure. A welder goes beyond gases and equipment. If we need three more oxygen-acetylene torches for heating or cutting, they’re there. If we don’t have a plasma capable of six-inch plate for a company that may come in and needs to train some employees, we can get one. If we need grinding disks they’re there for us. Maine-Oxy is the school’s store. In the same respect, Maine-Oxy has been using the company that may come in and needs to train some individuals and the companies that have been satisfying enough to him that he wants to keep the school open to all.

RING: It sure would be nice to see this kind of relationship develop across the country with different companies.

DERECK: Well, to open a school is not a short-term proposition, profitable. There is a reason that most of the schools for blacksmithing and crafts are nonprofit organizations, because the line is very fine. The owner of Maine-Oxy is unique in the respect that it is solely owned by one person. And he feels very strongly about giving back to the community, the individuals and the companies that have kept his company going. We were close to breaking even in our first year but in his mind, the return in other ways that cannot be calculated is off the chart--just the support of other companies and the industries in general that they deal with has been satisfying enough to him that he feels okay with it. We don’t have the welding side up to full steam as yet. The plans are to bring the welding side of the school up to being AWS certified. That is having a facility that is certified by the American Welding Society to do weld certification and testing. There is only one other place that certifies welders in New England and that is in Bangor, Maine. So we’re looking to tap that market. The owners of Maine-Oxy and I feel very strongly that the welding side will end up being probably within the next two years, being quite profitable.

RING: If you were a blacksmith who had his own shop and was doing commercial forge work, how would you start out as far as what equipment you would need? (Note: Their school as their showroom and they have gotten many individual and the companies that have been satisfied enough to him that he wants to keep the school open to all.)

DERECK: Well, it’s a mixed bag based on what you’re planning to do. But I’d say one of the most versatile tools, besides your anvil, hammer and forge, is your welding torch. It has the capability of cutting, heating, and welding right there. And it’s probably one of the most under-utilized pieces of equipment. Many blacksmiths either cut with a torch or just heat with it. But you can braze with it and you can get different attachments for motorized cutting to where you have machine-quality cuts by hand. For example, New York College of Trades. They have a machine that I would have to be the next investment I would make. It’s up to each individual to find out how much in each world he or she wants to be. It’s a different world when Samuel Yellin was doing work. You could get away then with just hot-collaring work to hold things together, but in today’s society if that collar fails and those rolls slip a gap and a balcony or balcony fails, you’re in deep trouble. The assurance of having a nice, penetrating MIG or TIG weld underneath the collar is merely a matter of security, as far as I can see. The collar is still there; it’s still put on hot.

RING: So it gives the piece structural integrity, then.

DERECK: Yes. I think artist-blacksmiths can build a lot more integrity into their work now with today’s technology. The use of torches and plasma cutters to produce shapes and designs and plate wasn’t available back then.

RING: You mentioned pattern cutting with acetylene. Could you explain that further?

DERECK: There are several different cutting wheels. There are mechanized torches which are essentially a hand torch with a small, variable speed motorized wheel on it. You can set the speed of the travel for the thickness of the material you’re cutting. You start your cut with just a single wheel and you can do any sort of fire-form cutting. You pull the trigger and the cutting starts and the wheel starts. But it will only move as fast as it should move for that material’s thickness. So you have essentially a hand-guided machine. Cut by machine cut I mean the quality of the cut if your tips are in good shape and the machine is maintained then you will have cuts that rival plasma. In fact, the school offers an accurate oxygen-fuel cutting class instructed by David McLaughlin who is from Liberty, Maine. A class on waterjet cutting. Even the best waterjet machines from Hypo-Therm, the plasma company, come in and look at what he does and how he does it. They just share their heads in disbelief because plasma is revolutionar--but the cutting you can get with the torch set up properly and the plasma--there is no slag, no deflection, it’s really amazing.

RING: The classes offered in welding and blacksmithing are quite diversified here and students have the opportunity to expand their skills as well as individual instruction in both.

DERECK: The mainstay of the welding is that we break it up into one-day classes and extended classes. There are one-day classes in MIG, TIG, and arc welding. They offer classes for certification in pipe, plate, and classes in different materials: aluminum, stainless steel, and steel. We’ve done some workshops in titanium--things like that. Maine seems to be quite open to adopting some of the new, exotic methods of welding now coming in, which is interesting to see. A lot of shops in Maine provide specialty welding of fixtures for the oil industry. And they use a lot of different, exotic methods which are completely foreign to me but not so for our welding instructor.

RING: What instructors do you have lined up for this 2003 season?

DERECK: It looks like we’ve got Jeff Mohr, Doug Wilson, Walt Scalden, Peter Haypany, Warren Holz- man, Charlie Orlando and Brian Gilbert, to name some. I’d like to have Morgan Crowley up here, who is now the resident blacksmith at Peters Valley Craft Center in Layton, New Jersey. She and I have known each other for awhile. I think she is doing work with vessels and her forms are quite fresh and innovative. Lee Kosow of Coming, New York, is leading a forge building workshop in September. I don’t want to limit the school to blacksmithing. It is a school of metalwork. Bill Mack, for instance, is doing fold forming, which initially was not so much of an innovation but was brought to the forefront by Charles Lewton-Brain at the Alfred ABANA Conference, where I first saw him do work and he had the hammer. There are blacksmiths out there who are annealing it, but it’s not a blacksmithing thing. So I really want to keep the school open to all sorts of sculptural forms of metalworking.

RING: So you’re trying to get it ready. I started last February breaking ground back in the middle of the orchard at home. The building is there and is being insulated and having the windows put in. However, things are so busy in the studio where I’m presently working that I cannot stop things for the few months. I need to move all the equipment and set things up again. It’s a situation that I’m sure a lot of blacksmiths have had to deal with in making a move to another shop. It’s just going to be a very busy time.

RING: When the time comes you’ll certainly know who are the first to contact you as far as different problems regarding your own creative processes.

DERECK: Absolutely. We are metalworkers--some of us consider ourselves artists. We have to produce what we are thinking and feeling and I believe we shouldn’t be bound by the laws and rules of an ancient craft, when we have other means available to us to work with metal. It comes down to a person doing work that is sincere to one’s audience and doing work in a fashion that keeps you true to yourself--that you can live with and be proud of. People have to adopt new technology; it is not going away. And I don’t think we can ever forget the roots of our craft, from the hammer, forge and anvil traditional aspects. Think it is becoming time to embrace both if we wish to. The fact remains that there needs to be a marriage of both.

RING: For you personally, you are about ready to move into your own workshop.

DERECK: That will be a mixed bag based on what you’re doing. I’m trying to get it ready. I started last February breaking ground back in the middle of the orchard at home. The building is there and is being insulated and having the windows put in. However, things are so busy in the studio where I’m presently working that I cannot stop things for the few months. I need to move all the equipment and set things up again. It’s a situation that I’m sure a lot of blacksmiths have had to deal with in making a move to another shop. It’s just going to be a very busy time.

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Daniel Miller, there is never a weld showing. He spent one-fourth of his time with his students TIG welding and explaining it, setting it up, cleaning the joint, figuring it out ahead of time. And cleaning it—doing it neatly—cleaning it again. Make it disappear. He’s not using welding as a design aspect in his work, it’s a supportive process in regard to the joinery and the collars and, in Daniel’s case, the wedges and mortise and tenons. You can’t tell by looking at his work the welding he uses and that, to me, is the sign of a true craftsman. The work doesn’t speak to the process; it speaks for itself.

RING: Thank you so much for all the information you’ve shared with us today, Dereck.

Editor’s Note: Since the interview, Dereck has finished his studio at home. As a result of feeling the security and strength of finally having a place to make his own, Dereck has been pursuing specific work. A proposal he submitted won a Percent for Art commission from a new high school in his area. The year-long commission is the break he has been looking for to break into the art market of New England and to further equip the studio. Dereck spent the winter introducing a one-ton bridge crane into his studio, two strategically located jib booms, and an interestingly engineered side draft coal forge. He is seeing now, even after 18 years of full-time smithing, that having his own space will allow his adventure into the craft to begin.

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- 2” x 3” Bar stock ports
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- Bill Pich
- John Rais
- Frank Yurley
- Francis Whitaker

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Anvil’s Ring
I was very pleased to be invited to join Dan Nauman and Eric Moebius on the Neptune Gate project for the Villa Terrace Decorative Arts Museum in Milwaukee. It seemed a perfect arrangement, whereby I could be part of a project of a scale I could not have considered alone, making elements about which I was most enthusiastic.

During the design process, when we exchanged sketches, I was most inspired by the idea of an arch-crowned entablature inspired by the Italian lunettes pictured in Geerlings’ Wrought Iron in Architecture. I envisioned a repoussé Neptune with a negative backside, shielded from view by a scallop shell behind him, as the central element within the arch. I thought I could produce a pair of full-body sturgeon to flank him using, on a larger scale, a technique I learned in a jewelry class, where a two-sided die is used to make matching body halves.

I prepared a full-size drawing and sent copies to Eric and Villa Terrace for their consent. I ordered pure iron, just shy of 1/8 inch thick, for Neptune and the shell, and purchased 14-gauge draw-quality steel from blacksmith Kirsten Skiles for the halves of the sturgeon bodies. I spent a day with Kirsten, coaching me to prepare further for the project.

To warm up I decided to start with the shell. It seemed the least detailed and I thought getting it done quickly would get me off to a nice start. The beginning was actually discouraging. Making the shell (and all the tools necessary to form the valleys and ridges) took six weeks. I began by producing a half-size trial piece in lighter steel. Suspecting that the flutes in the shell surface would draw in the steel, I measured the roughly finished piece against the pattern to come up with a ratio for shrinkage. The pattern for the large shell was increased by this ratio so it would end up the correct size when fluted. Unfortunately, it did not. The thicker iron apparently stretched as the flutes were formed, rather than drawing in as the thinner steel had. Or maybe the shell drew in, but planishing stretched it back out. Whatever the case, I had to cut off about as much when it was done as I had added in the beginning. Continuing the process, I cut out the shell profile using the Beverly shear and chisels. After filing the edges I was ready to dish the plate by sinking into the hollowed end of a stump. The shell, being too large to heat at the forge, was placed over a campfire in the yard. It was November when this was started and after burning much wood and consuming much hot cocoa, my apprentice Katherine Hinderlie and I decided a plain fire was not hot enough. We dug a tuyere into the ground (which had thawed) and took the blower into the yard. This gave us the heat to sink the shell shape with one person using two pairs of tongs and the other hammering. A smooth curve was formed which was deeper at the base of the shell. It was planished evenly, but not perfectly, prior to fluting. The fluting was done cold.

A tool was made of coil spring steel into a “V” shape, thinned to a tighter radius than the shell dish, and fit into the vise with the angle of the “V” touching the backside at the jaw. (Fig. #1) By holding the shell over the tool in the vise a flute of decreasing width could be formed by hammering the iron into the shell. (The shell) seemed the least detailed and I thought getting it done quickly would get me off to a nice start. Making the shell (and all the tools necessary to form the valleys and ridges) took six weeks.

The Neptune Gate project for the Villa Terrace Decorative Arts Museum in Milwaukee was a perfect arrangement, whereby I could be part of a project of a scale I could not have considered alone, making elements about which I was most enthusiastic. During the design process, when we exchanged sketches, I was most inspired by the idea of an arch-crowned entablature inspired by the Italian lunettes pictured in Geerlings’ Wrought Iron in Architecture. I envisioned a repoussé Neptune with a negative backside, shielded from view by a scallop shell behind him, as the central element within the arch. I thought I could produce a pair of full-body sturgeon to flank him using, on a larger scale, a technique I learned in a jewelry class, where a two-sided die is used to make matching body halves.

I prepared a full-size drawing and sent copies to Eric and Villa Terrace for their consent. I ordered pure iron, just shy of 1/8 inch thick, for Neptune and the shell, and purchased 14-gauge draw-quality steel from blacksmith Kirsten Skiles for the halves of the sturgeon bodies. I spent a day with Kirsten, coaching me to prepare further for the project.

To warm up I decided to start with the shell. It seemed the least detailed and I thought getting it done quickly would get me off to a nice start. The beginning was actually discouraging. Making the shell (and all the tools necessary to form the valleys and ridges) took six weeks. I began by producing a half-size trial piece in lighter steel. Suspecting that the flutes in the shell surface would draw in the steel, I measured the roughly finished piece against the pattern to come up with a ratio for shrinkage. The pattern for the large shell was increased by this ratio so it would end up the correct size when fluted. Unfortunately, it did not. The thicker iron apparently stretched as the flutes were formed, rather than drawing in as the thinner steel had. Or maybe the shell drew in, but planishing stretched it back out. Whatever the case, I had to cut off about as much when it was done as I had added in the beginning. Continuing the process, I cut out the shell profile using the Beverly shear and chisels. After filing the edges I was ready to dish the plate by sinking into the hollowed end of a stump. The shell, being too large to heat at the forge, was placed over a campfire in the yard. It was November when this was started and after burning much wood and consuming much hot cocoa, my apprentice Katherine Hinderlie and I decided a plain fire was not hot enough. We dug a tuyere into the ground (which had thawed) and took the blower into the yard. This gave us the heat to sink the shell shape with one person using two pairs of tongs and the other hammering. A smooth curve was formed which was deeper at the base of the shell. It was planished evenly, but not perfectly, prior to fluting. The fluting was done cold.

A tool was made of coil spring steel into a “V” shape, thinned to a tighter radius than the shell dish, and fit into the vise with the angle of the “V” touching the backside at the jaw. (Fig. #1) By holding the shell over the tool in the vise a flute of decreasing width could be formed by hammering the iron into the shell. (The shell) seemed the least detailed and I thought getting it done quickly would get me off to a nice start. Making the shell (and all the tools necessary to form the valleys and ridges) took six weeks.
Neptune was begun by sinking hot over the hollowed stump and raising cold over stakes. The cavity thus formed on the back was then filled with pitch and Neptune was stuck, face up, to a pitch stump.

Eyes, brows and lips given shape. Work has been centered first on the arm across the chest, as I was most concerned about this challenge. The cavity was then filled with pitch and metal forced into the nose from both sides and below. The cavity was then filled with pitch and metal forced into the nose from both sides and below.

To practice for the figure of Neptune I formed a full-size section of his arm across his chest. I did not complete it before I felt confident enough to start on Neptune. I formed a full-size section of his arm across his chest. I did not complete it before I felt confident enough to start on Neptune.

Rounded and teardrop stakes were made to planish the round ridges of the flutes, and this went well. Planishing the square edges of the valleys was frustrating because what looked good on one side (the concave side) showed unwanted tool marks on the reverse side. There was a lot of back and forth. To make things more difficult, the shell was heavy enough that, except when I worked the center, I could not balance the weight accurately over the stake with one hand. When Katherine (apprentice) or Catherine (wife) or Frances (daughter) were not available to help hold, I used a bucket of scrap steel on a rope over a pulley and clamped to the opposite side of the shell to reduce the weight.

Frustrated with the tool marks the stakes were leaving on the outside of the shell, I formed a full-size section of his arm across his chest. I did not complete it before I felt confident enough to start on Neptune.

Neptune was stuck, face up, to a pitch stump. I had neither enough pitch nor enough area on the end of the stump to mount all of Neptune at once, so I worked on areas of his figure. Head and shoulders or arm and chest were filled with pitch and mounted while braces secured with more pitch supported the rest of the body to lessen shock. The pitch was broken up and chunks melted over the fire in an old cast iron pan. The iron figure was heated to help the pitch stick. Semi-molten chunks were used to build dams to confine the pitch to the area to be worked. More semi-molten

Recipes call for brick dust or plaster, but I thought iron oxide might conduct the heat more readily to the inside when heated on the surface. This material was much cheaper than jeweler's pitch, of which I was glad, considering the amount I burned or lost on the floor. Bob helped me flatten the perimeter of the shell, when planishing was done, by clamping it to a steel table and heating areas with the torch while I coaxed the shell into place with a wooden mallet.

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The basic body form was completed first and then details such as the scales and shells on the crown and necklace were pushed out further and detailed. Though I had taken pains to prevent vibration, fractures did develop repeatedly at the base of the crown and on the outstretched arm.

Chunks were pushed into the melted pitch in the back of the figure to speed cooling and reduce shrinkage. The repoussé work was begun with rounded tools, then details sharpened with tools with square edges or angles no sharper than 45°. The planishing tool I used the most has a square foot with two adjacent edges well rounded, one less round, and the toe square. In my cold shop I had to keep the pitch warm enough that it wouldn’t crack as soon as it was struck. If I controlled the temperature well, the pitch would separate from the iron when the iron had moved enough that it was ready to be annealed. After working the front, I would mark it with crayon where material needed to be pushed from behind. Then the front would be put down in the pitch on the stump. More lard was added to the pitch as repeated melting burned off oils and reduced its elasticity.

The basic body form was completed first and then details such as the scales, and shells on the crown and necklace were pushed out further and detailed. Though I had taken pains to prevent vibration, fractures did develop repeatedly at the base of the crown and on the outstretched arm. Bob Walsh used strips cut from pure iron as rod for welding the cracks. Cracks in the crown were welded, I continued to employ Bob’s welding skills to make improvements. I cut one side of Neptune’s neck where I was afraid the metal would get too thin, and made a gusset for Bob to weld into the space where I spread the cut. To bring Neptune’s right hand out further without too much thinning I cut around it, pulled it away from the body, and forged pieces for Bob to weld into the spaces. The welds were ground, filed and planished.

There was some struggling to get Neptune and the shell to fit into the arch with the trident protruding above the arch. Besides Neptune’s right hand having been pulled out, more parts of his hip and the base of the shell had to be trimmed to fit the channel. The trident slid through both hands and was screwed to the hip from behind with a stainless bolt. The sturgeon’s heads were formed with heads, (made like toes of boots,) fit over bodies made in two halves fastened to a central plate, which included tails and dorsal fins as well as anchoring tabs. The heads were formed over stakes, then filled with pitch so the eyes and cheeks could be detailed. The body halves were die formed from my drawing Bob welded up a die of 1/2” x 1 1/2” steel which was open on both sides so one half of each fish body could be formed from either side.
welded to the edge of the die for clamping the metal to be formed. Bob and I worked together, one handling the torch and the other the hammer. I made large cross prin-shaped maillets of maple for sinking the body halves.

For the first pass the 14-gauge draw-quality steel was clamped to only one side of the die so that metal could be pulled into the form rather than stretching from the start. After as much metal as needed had been pushed down into the die, angled blows formed a sharp corner on all edges. (Fig. #5) The sheet outside the die was trimmed to form a flange with which each side was fastened to the center plate and outer side. Except where fins protruded on the center plate, all three layers of flange were cut to simulate the rows of horny protrusions that sturgeons have above and below. The bony plates on the sturgeons’ sides were chased in over pitch on each half after planishing. During fitting, the sides were chased in over pitch on each side. The bony plates on the sturgeons’ sides were chased in over pitch on each half after planishing. During fitting, the halves were bolted together. Before final assembly with rivets, the insides of the fish were sandblasted to take the paint into which they would be anchored to the pitch stump. Fins were set in chiseled grooves, planished tight and silver soldered. The tails were set in splits at the ends of the bodies.

I had promised to demonstrate at the Norwegian festival in Decorah, Iowa, on the date Eric and Dan chose to install the gates at the Villa Terrace Decorative Arts Museum, so didn’t see the efforts of the group finished and assembled until the ribbons were cut to simulate the rows of horny protrusions that sturgeons have above and below. The bony plates on the sturgeons’ sides were chased in over pitch on each half after planishing. During fitting, the halves were bolted together. Before final assembly with rivets, the insides of the fish were sandblasted to take the paint into which they would be dipped. Pectoral fins were riveted on each side. Neptune, the shell and the sturgeon were painted separately and then screwed into the arch before it was placed above the gates.

One hopes that the struggles and frustration involved in a piece are left in the shop when a project goes out the door and all that the public sees appears to have gone together effortlessly because everything was designed and executed just as it should be.
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every year in Central Illinois the quiet landscape surrounding Pontiac is transformed by a sleepy spring, the Thresherman’s Reunion Park comes to life. Tucked among fields of corn and hay on a windswept flatlands, the park begins to fill. Hobbyists, professionals, the young and “mature,” these men and women flock to gather. They have come to participate in what is regarded as one of the best events held in the Midwest, The Upper Midwest Regional Blacksmithing Conference. This biennial event is sponsored by Indiana Blacksmithing Association (IBA), the Illinois Valley Blacksmith Association (IVBA), and the Upper Midwest Blacksmiths Association (UMBBA).

For at least five years, Roger Lorance of Illinois and Clifton Ralph of Indiana talked about having a large regional meeting in the upper Midwest. It was their thought that a regional meeting could provide experience for area blacksmiths that they might not get in their local groups. And, as Clifton put it, it was very important to have a conference “extend friendships and camaraderie between fellow blacksmiths.” And indeed, it does! The first UMRBC was held October of 1997. Paul Moffett of IBA chaired this very successful event and John Biewer, a member of UMBBA, continues that tradition.

This conference is truly a “gathering of the greats.” Previous demonstrators include George Dixon, Ward Greenough, Chuck Hackbarth, Dan Nauman, Bob Patrick, and Peter Renzetti. One attendee, so inspired by the tredle hammer art created by George Dixon in 1997, tentatively put his hand to the task in 1999. Mindy Gardner, of Farmer City, Illinois, began blacksmithing that year. Her work is now included in the permanent White House collection. (See story on page 13)

There is something for everyone at the Upper Midwest Regional Blacksmithing Conference. Workers will have been on site all week, attending to the details that will make this conference run smoothly. As sunshine fills the park on Friday morning, the pungent smoke from forges lifts into the air and anvils begin to ring. The program starts with the all-day class. The quantity of Pontiac is close and offers delightful shopping that will include crafts and antiques. Historic Pontiac is home to three swinging bridges and features a city tour by trolley car. The trolley will literally roll out the red carpet and ferry our attendees to and from Pontiac for a day of fun.

The featured blacksmiths at the 2003 UMRBC will draw from their resumes which are rich in talent, experience, and sheer love for the craft. Demonstrators that will be liberally sprinkled with the wisdom and humor that can only be acquired by spending many years at the anvil. One of this year’s featured smiths is Chuck Patrick of Brantstown, North Carolina. Chuck began making knives in Alaska in 1979. He is internationally known for his beautiful Damascus knives and his excelled edged tools. He has taught and demonstrated regularly for years at major conferences and seminars, and his work has been published in many major publications. Chuck’s demonstration topics will include “Toolmaking for Both Woodworking and Blacksmithing” and “Mokume Gane,” which is layered copper, silver, and nickel silver.


The Upper Midwest Blacksmiths Association and the Illinois Valley Blacksmiths Association are encouraging all blacksmiths to participate in this event and John Biewer at 847/746-2470 or e-mail: biewer@spraintmail.com.

The program starts with the all-day beginner’s blacksmithing class led by Augie Schmidt. Friday afternoon ushers in several affiliate member demonstrations from Treadle Hammer to Hydraulic Press. If you have the basics, you may decide to take advantage of the Open Forging Station manned by Steve Hackbarth and his son. Try that new technique before you return home!

The Upper Midwest Regional Blacksmiths Conference July 18 – 20, 2003

Anvil's Ring

Spring 2003

Spring 2003
April 28, 2003

Anvil’s Ring

A Tribute to Uri Hofi
Artist-Blacksmith - Teacher - Mentor
By Dean Cufman, Morgantown, North Carolina

It is February 18, 2002 and I am saying goodbye to my wife Shirley and our two sons Sam and Shane as I board a plane at Charlotte, North Carolina, on a flight to Israel. Many of my family, friends, and business associates were very concerned about such a trip because of the violent suicide bombings and political unrest in the Israel-Palestine area. Others, however, said, “Go for it.”

As I settled into my seat on the plane for the long flight of 23 hours, I had plenty of time to reflect upon the “who” and “how” of this journey.

Beginning in early childhood I had always wanted to be an artist and toyed with painting, wood and clay—more as a hobby simply to express—than any thought of a real vocation. However, work, marriage and family responsibilities never seemed to allow much time to reflect upon the “who” and “how” of this journey.

As I rode along on the flight, my mind went over all of this and began to realize all that was at stake. I thought to myself, our business is left over all of this and began to realize all that was at stake. I thought to myself, our business is left at stake. I finally had found someone with whom I could learn much about the art and craft of blacksmithing. I learned that Uri had studied briefly under Alfred Habermann and had redeveloped those age-old techniques to a new level.

As promised, Uri met me at the airport. We drove the short distance to the kibbutz where Uri lived and worked. I was given private quarters, a well-stocked refrigerator and personal two-wheeled transportation, which is the mode of travel for many. The kibbutz was comprised of approximately 1000 acres with about 800 people living there in a cooperative or collective farm style of living. In short, it is communal living—all working and contributing to the well-being of the whole.

I began to acquaint myself with the people (all are at least bilingual, with English as one of the main languages), I became more aware of the genius of Uri Hofi.

Uri Hofi is a self-taught individual who can seemingly apply himself to anything he sets his mind to. He was instrumental in engineering the agricultural setup of the kibbutz where they maintain a 400-cow dairy herd, growing all their own feed, along with major vegetable and fruit crops. Uri also designed and equipped a rubber factory that continues to produce, as well as a plastic injection molding plant that produces many parts and components for laboratories. Basically Uri has acted as the CEO of the kibbutz, but quietly had a board of directors looking over its progress.

Along with all this Uri decided he wanted to go into the field of art as he entered into his mid-40s. He took classes in history and design (all are at least bilingual, with English as one of the main languages), I became more aware of the genius of Uri Hofi.

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It is good to be home and so satisfying to be applying the many things I learned under Uri Hofi. He is definitely a unique individual who has contributed much to the world of artistic blacksmithing.

Portions of the day were also spent on theory and architecture. This involved discussion, show and tell, and production. I sensed that Uri was a born teacher. He covered the basics thoroughly. He patiently and skillfully took the time to explain in detail any techniques I questioned or that I sensed I didn’t quite grasp.

I continue to be impressed with Uri’s own designs of hammers, tools, punches, drifts, making them user friendly. If he does not have designs of hammers, tools, punches, drifts, I questioned or that he sensed I didn’t quite notice no religion, but have respect for those who do.

My wife and family kept things going while I was away. It is good to be home and so satisfying to be applying the many things I learned under Uri Hofi. He is definitely a unique individual who has contributed much to the world of artistic blacksmithing.
Vaughn Shafer was born in Edinburgh, Indiana, and began learning the basics of blacksmithing from his grandfather, father and uncle at the age of 7. He caught on quickly and found he enjoyed the art to its fullest extent.

In the mid-80s he began working as a blacksmith, as well as an entertainer, at the Rawhide Theme Park in Phoenix, Arizona, where he was living. In 1992 Vaughn moved to El Jebel, Colorado, to open his own working shop and gallery. At that time he began exploring the many artistic applications to metals.

He has been working on a North American wildlife series for five years and has completed 12 pieces. The series consists of accurate, detailed sculptures, hand forged and carefully crafted from scrap steel—no pouring, no molding.

Some of his other works of note are beautiful custom lighting, commissioned for homes from Alaska to Florida. Many are three-dimensional wall pieces made of steel and copper, all hand crafted. He is currently working on a large lighting fixture for the Embassy Suites Hotel.

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He has been working on a North American wildlife series for five years and has completed 12 pieces. The series consists of accurate, detailed sculptures, hand forged and carefully crafted from scrap steel—no pouring, no molding.

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I created the following fixtures for Omaha Botanical Gardens in Omaha, Nebraska. They commissioned three custom light fixtures for their new 32,000 square-foot Visitor and Education Center.

The first fixture is a copper fern basket, which was installed inside the Welcoming Gazebo, the main entrance to the building. The copper fern basket is comprised of individually cut and chased leaves that were heated, contoured, and fastened to a steel basket infrastructure. The exterior steel framework and hangers were forged from mild steel. This basket measures 5 feet in diameter and is 32 inches high. It weighs 450 pounds.

The other two fixtures are lanterns 10 1/2 feet long which were suspended from the cathedral ceilings in the main Floral Display Hall. The infrastructure fabrication for each lantern is an octagonal frame with two hinged access doors. The top caps of the lanterns were attached during installation. Each facet of the lantern holds hand-poured glass pates. The botanical elements were all created using plasma cutting, welding, and forging. The flora represented are compass plant, big blue stem, Indian grass, wild indigo purple cone flower, prairie broom, partridge pea and bird’s foot violet. Each of the lanterns weighs approximately 500 pounds.
Alfred Bullerman has a shop in Markhausen, Germany. He was born in Uppenburg, and trained with his father who was also a smith. In 1986 he received his Master’s Diploma in blacksmithing and in 1991 received his degree in metal design from Metallgestaltung. He organized and hosted the World Congress of Smiths, Ferro 2000 in Cloppehurg. Alfred is currently experimenting with making his own iron.

Alfred will be teaching a Master’s class at Peter’s Valley Craft Center this summer (www.pvcrafts.org).

Scott Lankton discusses one of Alfred’s interesting ideas on page 3 of this issue of The Anvil’s Ring.
"Good time, good company, learned a lot and enjoyed myself!" As a review of the week's hard and hot work at the forge and anvil, these comments echoed around the participants in Hot Iron Muster 2002 as they quenched hard-earned thirsts at the end of the final day.

The third annual event for skills development and networking in the Australian blacksmithing community was hosted by Alan & Helen Ball at their smithy in Logan Village, Queensland, from September 29 to October 4, 2002. Guest instructor Steve Williamson traveled with wife Vicky from Columbia, Tennessee, to lead the Muster and share their experiences and adventures in the dynamic world of US smithing. Combining the running of his own custom ironwork shop with teaching and networking in the Australian blacksmithing community was hosted by Alan & Helen Ball. Steve demonstrated forge-welding the set of four strands together and then on to the stem of the fire tool. Now it was up to the team to repeat this procedure for the other fire tools. Sparks were flying from more than the steel by the time the blades took shape!

Tuesday morning's tasks offered little respite from forge-welding practice. Once all the finished blades were welded to their stems, the poker and rake ends were forged. Steve's travailing spike into a stern-faced wizard. Coming from the mule capital of the USA, he couldn't resist hammering out a wall hook adorned with the head of a determined-looking mule. Keeping up a running commentary of his procedures and fielding questions throughout the day, Steve kept the audience enthralled and set the stage for each of their three fire tools. Sparks were flying from more than the steel by the time the blades took shape!

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May 2 - July 31

May 15 - 17
South Eastern Regional Blacksmithing Conference. Madison, GA. Barry Moore, e-mail only: BLINTER647@surfcape.net.

May 17 - 18
Upper Midwest Blacksmiths Association Spring Conference with demonstrator Roger Cashen. Haverhill, Iowa. John Biever, 847/746-2470. E-mail: leebiever@sprintmail.com.

May 17 - 18

May 23 - 25
Mississippi Forge Council Conference with demonstrator Jack Brubaker. Jackson, MI. Jim Pigott 601/540-6030. E-mail: jkpigott@jam.rr.com.

May 30 - June 1
IronFest Blacksmithing Regional Conference with demonstrators Toby Hickman, David A. Court, Susan Warrender and Mike Pearce. Grapevine, TX. Verl Underwood 817/626-5909. E-mail: vaunder@aol.com. See web site: www.ironfest.org.

May 31
Friends Day at Jackson’s Mill. Weston, WV. Open forge blacksmithing demonstrations, crafts. 304/269-5100 X107. E-mail: helen.hardman@mail.wvu.edu.

May 31 - June 1

June 7 - 9

July 3 - 7
World Champion Blacksmiths Competition. Stampede Park, Calgary, AB, Canada. For information call 800/661-1260 or 403/261-0313. E-mail: agriculture@calgarystampede.com.

July 10 - 13
CANIRON IV. Hamilton, ON, Canada. Demonstrations from across Canada, the U.S. and Great Britain. Murray Lowe 905/772-2474.

For Pictorial How to do it’s by:
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• Doug Hendrickson
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• Mike Bohn
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CALENDER cont. on page 53

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C L A S S I F I E D S

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JULY 10 - 20
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JULY 10 - AUGUST 5

JULY 10 - AUGUST 15

JULY 10 - AUGUST 20

JULY 10 - AUGUST 25

JULY 10 - AUGUST 26

JULY 10 - AUGUST 28

JULY 11 - 13

JULY 11 - 14

JULY 11 - 17

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JULY 12 - 27

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**Spring 2003 | Anvil’s Ring**
What is the best way for professional or amateur blacksmiths to interact? How can elitism be avoided? Serge: In one’s life, first you’re a sponge, absorbing information. Then you begin to choose your path. There is always the question, though, if you keep an open mind: Should I do this in a new way? We must allow our point of view to change when influenced by other people.

Also, you must make time for yourself. We lose the lead of ideas if we spend too much time communicating. The time to communicate, while essential, is necessarily brief. The rest of the time is spent digesting and creating. Henry: What is the best way for professional and amateur blacksmiths to interact? How can elitism be avoided?

Serge: It all cannot be on the same level. Someone else’s path cannot be yours. But it is okay to follow for awhile, and to realize that we are all on different paths. We are on our own paths, all gather from the past and from our peers. To each his own challenge; it is important to respect that.

It is important to have contact with those outside of blacksmithing, to appreciate other forms of skill and to gain more insight about how to approach blacksmithing. It is very important to accept that things come at their proper time. Some people may advance faster than others, but may also miss important details.

Henry: How can the terms “artist” and “artisan” be accepted?

Serge: It is my personal goal to do this. It is troubling to see such a rift between the two. Art and craft are valuable things—people pay a lot of money for both skill and artistic value. Albert Paley, for example, commands a high price for his work. He combines both ideas: vision and quality of work. Most blacksmiths don’t want to set themselves apart, though, to be recognized as artists. How can the terms “artist” and “artisan” be accepted?

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The restoration began in 1999 and made possible thanks to the donation of the Waldie family, the town of Milton Community Fund, the Ontario Trillium Foundation, local businesses and individuals.

The Ontario Blacksmith Association members acted, on numerous occasions, as consultants in the renovation of the building and the restoring of the accumulated tools and artifacts found in the old building. Many of the tools and artifacts used by the Waldies are on display and will be used by present-day blacksmiths.

The Ontario Artist Blacksmith Association has been asked to be the guardian of this historical blacksmith shop and blacksmithing demonstrations are being held and done by members of the Association.

The carriage shop and the shop itself provide meeting space and the loft shall be equipped as the Society’s archives and research area which will be accessible to all members of the association. Pre-arranged school and group tours will be possible and the shop will be open to welcome visitors and tourists, thus preserving blacksmithing.
The Ontario Artist Blacksmith Association is hosting

**Share our Fire**

Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

**July 10-13, 2003**

**Opening Ceremony: July 9th - 8:00 PM**

The highlight of the conference- the demonstrators:

- From Canada: Cairn Cunnane, Lloyd Johnston, Doug Newell, Dean Piesner and Jim Wallace
- From the United States: Elizabeth Brim, Scott Lankton, Charles Orlando and Doug Wilson
- From England: Eddie Payne

The Conference is being held at McMaster University and will include hands-on teaching stations, auction, vendors and tailgaters.

The Hamilton region is rich in history and alive with modern attractions. Experience a Conference you are sure to remember.

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