The Anvil’s Ring (ISSN 0889-177X) is the official publication of the Artist-Blacksmith’s Association of North America, Inc. It is mailed to the members on a quarterly basis in Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter by ABANA, P.O. Box 816, Farmington, GA 30638-0816. Membership is available to any individual or organization interested in the art of blacksmithing. The annual fee for a regular membership is $45; $24 of this amount is for a subscription to The Anvil’s Ring for one year. Permit to mail at periodical postage rates is registered at Farmington, GA, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: send address changes to The Anvil’s Ring, P.O. Box 816, Farmington, GA 30638-0816. Matters related only to membership and subscription, including dues, change of address and subscription complaints, should be addressed to LeeAnn Mitchell, ABANA Executive Secretary, P.O. Box 816, Farmington, GA 30638-0816 (706) 310-1030 or e-mail to abana@abana.org. All editorially related materials, such as articles, book reviews, queries, tips, announcements of activities, ads, etc., should be mailed to The Anvil’s Ring, Sebastian Publishing, P.O. Box 1969, 6990 Worthenworth Springs Rd., Georgetown, CA 95634. Include SASE for material return. (730) 333-2887 phone or (730) 333-2889 fax or e-mail to rob@sebastianpublishing.com. The contents of this publication may not be reproduced either in whole or in part without the permission of the editor or the individual contributors. Contributors retain all copyright privileges; the material is copyrighted solely for their protection. The Anvil’s Ring, ©2005 The Artist-Blacksmith’s Association of North America, Inc.
W ell, the weather is warming, and as reviewed interest springs forth for many of us to explore a new skill or idea in our pursuit of excellence in the art of blacksmithing.

The craft school brochures and workshop opportunities seem a little brighter as you read them. You get to thinking of a visit to other shops to gain new ideas or of working with a ‘master’ in a technique you wish to learn more of. Reading published articles and opportunities to attend demonstrations occupy more of your attention.

GREAT! One of ABANA’s goals is to foster that enthusiasm!

After a patient and a diligent effort of a dedicated group of members, the ABANA Educational Endowment Trust is becoming a formal reality, even as this goes to press.

Combining the old National Endowment Trust, the ABANA Scholarship Account and a contribution of general funds into the new Educational Endowment Trust will provide initial funding. Income from the Trust will provide annual scholarship and grant funds for the committee to award to members. In your committee’s words:

“First, I’d like to explain the purpose of the scholarship program as I see it. As is the case with all of ABANA’s activities, our mission through the awarding of scholarships is to promote the craft of blacksmithing. This happens in at least three possible ways: first, a member who receives a scholarship gets financial assistance as she or he pursues some aspect of blacksmithing. This most often comes in the form of taking a class or workshop, but it might extend to travel in order to study or document a rare technique, or a style of work unique to a specific geographic area, or document a rare technique, or a style of work unique to a specific geographic area, or a particular time period. That is the easy part and generally, it primarily benefits an individual member. Secondly, and more to the benefit of the general membership, [it is your money and] it is our job to insure the best value to the membership through the awarding of scholarships. A thorough, well-prepared application including documentation of costs and financial needs, and outlining benefits to the individual as well as to the general membership, is expected. The level of detail should match the level of support requested. That is, if you want $1,500, we expect more than if you are asking for $200. Finally, due to limited funding, your chances are better of getting a smaller amount of money than a larger one. It is just a fact.

Whether you seek scholarship funding, have an idea in our pursuit of excellence in the art of blacksmithing.

The committee chair is Chris Winterstein, ABANA President. He also operates a shop accepting private commissions for many of his students. Chris’ contacts are so strong and well-regarded that he and his committee have the background to give your application the full consideration it deserves!

TIPS ON APPLYING FOR AN ABANA SCHOLARSHIP:

A. First, read the instructions! In order to apply for a scholarship, you must have been a member in good standing for at least six months (one full year for applications requesting over $1000.)

B. Only completed applications will be considered.

C. ABANA does not award funds for college tuition assistance.

D. It is the committee that undertaking a course of study, an applicant have an instructor or program in mind. We do not grant funding to provide “time for developing work.”

E. An applicant, rather than an individual, must apply for funding to support a workshop or demonstration.

F. The more you want, the more we want! It is our job to insure the best value to the membership through the awarding of scholarships. A thorough, well-prepared application including documentation of costs and financial needs, and outlining benefits to the individual as well as to the general membership, is expected. The level of detail should match the level of support requested. That is, if you want $1,500, we expect more than if you are asking for $200. Finally, due to limited funding, your chances are better of getting a smaller amount of money than a larger one. It is just a fact.

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DEAR EDITOR,

Here are a few letters you will also see 2004 ABANA Conference chairperson Dave Koenig’s letter, thanking people for conference help. It has always seemed to me that leaders are never thankful enough for their leadership—especially in print. As Dave’s assistant in that project, I want to correct that shortfall.

Producing an ABANA conference in compressed time, a thousand miles from home, in an area with very little organized support, and with far too little complete information is a very daunting task which only a very competent, experienced, and skilled person should attempt. Dave took the job and did it in a way that tried at every turn to leave friends for ABANA. He was the right person in the right place at the right time, and all of us owe him a great debt for the thousands of hours and uncompensated dollars he invested in our organization. It was a joy to work with him.

Dave could not have accomplished this feat without the helpful support of his wife Marilyn. For more than a year and a half this office was concentrated on producing the best possible conference.

A big thanks to all of the ABANA members who came to the 2004 ABANA Conference. About twenty percent of the membership took part last July and about ten percent of the members attending worked on behalf of the entire ABANA membership. This small group of about a 100 volunteers planned, organized, produced and successfully completed a project which cost ABANA about $120,000. About $40,000 was taken-in to pay the bills and about $80,000 will be used to run and grow ABANA, a nonprofit educational organization with so much potential to be used to run and grow ABANA, a nonprofit educational organization with so much potential to be used to run and grow ABANA, a nonprofit educational organization with so much potential to be used to run and grow ABANA, a nonprofit educational organization with so much potential to grow the blacksmithing craft.

Here it is the middle of February 2005. There are still odds and ends that need tending—regarding the 2004 ABANA Conference in Richmond, KY. The conference books should be closed by the time this letter appears in the Anvil’s Ring and the 2004 Conference will finally be complete for the hard work and concentrations, vendors, tailgaters, attendees and management resources to bring it all together.

As with any large undertaking, there are a handful of people who deserve extra recognition for their work. The following people did extraordinary amounts of work to produce the 2004 Conference and did it in an extraordinarily productive way. At the top of this list is Paul Moffett of Indiana. A number of you know Paul and know that he has been involved in managing blacksmithing events and organizations for a long time. He understands smiths and how we operate. I am very proud to say that we chaired the 2004 ABANA Conference. Simply put, the conference would not have been as successful as without Paul.

ABANA’s Central Office Staff, LeeAnn Mitchell, Central Office Administrator, and Michele Devine, Conference Coordinator/Registrar, both of Georgia, conducted [like an orchestra conducts] the conference. Michele focused on Registration—a huge task. LeeAnn kept the office running, consulted with me daily, organized the setup/tear-down and supervision of conference and ABANA sales and registration, did leg work for internal and external communications, coordinated the arrival and departure of ABANA Conference guests, identified the vendors and their needs, and so much more.

Don Kemper of Washington State, ABANA President, kept a steady hand on ABANA’s helm. He has informed about all aspects of the conference and offered sound and invaluable advice on several occasions. It was the kind of advice which is based on information, management experience and a little distance.

Pat McCarty from Missouri was the demonstration site manager. His primary job was to make sure that everything in the 150,000 square foot demonstration site... containers, tents, bleachers, gas, equipment and steel was set up, operated and torn down safely and smoothly. He worked hard in glove with Ralph Spraul and his setup/tear-down crew, the vendors, the demo site managers, conference committee members and EKU personnel. Pat showed up early and departed late. He did the leg work for the Patient Order of Meticulous Metalsmiths, ordered supplies, gathered information and arrived with a trailer full of equipment.

And all of this was done with a management style which only can be admired.

Ralph Spraul was the setup/tear-down crew

Brent Bailey hammer presented by Richard Bonsell, HABA President (left) to Dave Koenig.

A HERITAGE IN IRON

Routson, 11 3/4” x 9 1/2”, 215 pgs, over 200 color photos. This beautifully done hardcover book features several gourmand mountain homes and the ironwork in them. Also featured are the blacksmiths who did the work, including: Howard McCall, Glenn Gilmore, Bob Bregman, Mike “Smyth” Boone, Rod Pickert, Marty Moews, Warren Gibbs, and Linda Rosi. Great book with inspiring examples of ironwork.

B446 .......................................................... $47.95

LIVES SHAPED BY STEEL

Zastrow, 9” x 12”, 235 Pgs. Over 400 photos. This softcover book has the subtitle, “Celebrating East Coast Outdoor Metal Artists.” Nancy Zastrow has done a great job of bringing together the works of over 40 well-known modern artists on the East Coast. Bound to be used as an idea and creative process for a long time.

B447 .......................................................... $42.50

Note: Postage is $3.00 for the first book and $.75 for each additional.
previews & notes

Anvil's Ring

Preparations for the 2006 Conference in Seattle, WA, are underway. This is your next conference. Now is the time for each of us to begin thinking about how we can make a contribution to its success. Volunteer to work now or you will miss the opportunity. Spread the word and talk it up at affiliate meetings. Decide to make something for one of the galleries.

It is the membership and only the membership that determines what an ABANA Conference turns out to be.

Dave Kriens, Chairman, 2004 ABANA Conference

DEAR EDITOR,

Many thanks for publishing The Pendant Project in the Winter 2005 issue of Anvil's Ring. It is a popular annual event for women interested in the metal arts. Women's Welding Workshop & Retreat is a popular annual event for women interested in the metal arts. The full complement of pictures of The Pendant Project is now on the ABANA web site, abana.org, for viewing.

Al Butlak, Buffalo, New York

At the 2003 ABANA Board meeting at Villa Terrace Decorative Arts Museum (VTDAM) in Milwaukee received a plethora of Cynti Colnik-related materials such as original drawings, photographs, blueprints, legendaries and more to add to their Colnik ironwork exhibit, which is on permanent exhibition at the National Ornamental Metals Museum in Memphis, Tennessee. The museum needs to raise $50,000 in order to preserve, conserve and properly display these records. The museum’s goal is to make these archives available for study, and to utilize them to their fullest extent.

At the 2003 ABANA Board meeting at the National Ornamental Metals Museum in Memphis, I had asked that the ABANA Board donate some money towards preserving the

Women's WELDING WORKSHOP & RETREAT

When: Spitfire Forge, Taos, New Mexico

When: September 4 - 10, 2005

Contact: Christina Speronig, Spitfire Forge, 505/770-3306. E-mail: spitfireferg@yahoo.com.

See web site: www.spitfireforge.com for more information.

The week-long workshop and retreat encompass welding and blacksmithing instruction, materials, field trips, breakfasts, lunches, and two dinners. Lodging is at the historic Mabel Dodge Lujan House. Side trips to a local hot springs and a foundry tour in Santa Fe round out the retreat. Register by June 15, 2005. This is a popular annual event for women interested in blacksmithing and welding.

KENTUCKY MUSEUM OF ART AND CRAFT PRESENTS AN EXHIBITION OF AMERICAN BLACKSMITHS

Forging Ahead: Contemporary American Blacksmiths

When: Friday, April 1 - Saturday, July 16, 2005


Louisville, KY—The Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft is proud to present a blockbuster exhibition of American Blacksmiths entitled Forging Ahead: Contemporary American Blacksmiths. “The mission of this exhibition is to put the art of contemporary metalworking on the main stage of American cultural life and to reach out to inform potential collectors of this unique art form,” explains curator Brian Clinkingbeard. Over 70 blacksmiths will participate in the show, including well-known Louisville artist Craig Kavaris, making this the largest ironwork exhibit ever assembled. After the premier opening in Louisville, the show will travel to the National Metal Museum in Memphis, Tennessee. The Museum is also working with its neighbor, the Frazier Museum, to collaborate for lectures, demos and other forged metal-related activities.

For more information see article page 38.

CALL FOR ENTRIES


Download prospectus at www.silvermine.org or send SASE to: CRAFT USA, Silvermine Guild Arts Center, 1017 Silvermine Road, New Canaan, CT 06840. Phone: 203/966-9700, X26 or 203/881-9032.

YOUR ABANA DOLLARS AT WORK

By Dan Nauman, ABANA Board Member/Controlled Hand Forging Chairman

In 2003 Villa Terrace Decorative Arts Museum (VTDAM) in Milwaukee received a plethora of Cynti Colnik-related materials such as original drawings, photographs, blueprints, legendaries and more to add to their Colnik ironwork exhibit, which is on permanent exhibition at the National Ornamental Metals Museum in Memphis, Tennessee. The museum needs to raise $50,000 in order to preserve, conserve and properly display these records. The museum’s goal is to make these archives available for study, and to utilize them to their fullest extent.

At the 2003 ABANA Board meeting at the National Ornamental Metals Museum in Memphis, I had asked that the ABANA Board donate some money towards preserving the
Cyril Colnik exhibit at VTDAM. After a lengthy discussion, $500.00 was approved from the ABANA Conference coffers to not only help in this cause, but to help bring some of Colnik’s work to the 2004 ABANA Conference.

The Plan
I then devised a plan to make that money grow in a way that all parties involved would benefit. I discussed with Jim Temmer, director of VTDAM, about the potential of using this money to buy 20 copies of “Forged Elegance,” a video about the life and work of Cyril Colnik; to make CDs containing a portfolio of images from a grant I received from the Francis Whitaker Blacksmith Educational Foundation back in 1993; and duplicate images from the Colnik archives. These units alone will cost about $3000. 00. The remaining tapes and CDs are available at the 2004 ABANA Conference for sale and the images in the gallery sold through a silent auction. All the proceeds would then become available at the 2004 ABANA Conference for VTDAM to use for preserving the Colnik exhibit.

I also asked Jim if I could borrow some of Colnik’s work for display at the conference. Jim was happy to oblige, at no cost to ABANA (just my sweat equity to crate and get them there.) Many tapes and CDs were at the conference, as well as the images in the gallery, and the total income was between $850.00 and $950.00. The remaining CDs and tapes were given to VTDAM for them to sell. I might add that Brian Gilbert, your Hammer’s Blower editor, provided the CDs and the time and effort to transfer the images onto the CDs at no charge. Thanks Brian! Jim Temmer went to Kinko’s to copy the images I selected from the archives (for the gallery display) on his own time. When the remaining CDs and tapes are sold, the original $500.00 will have generated close to $1,200.00 for VTDAM to use for preserving the Colnik exhibit.

In Appreciation
Jim Temmer reports that “We (Villa Terrace Decorative Arts Museum) are in the process of purchasing archival quality flat metal storage units with secure drawers for the Colnik archives. These units alone will cost about $3000.00. The archives should be in their new home by mid-March, 2005. Obviously, the donations and proceeds from the Colnik materials are being put to good use. Thanks again for your continued efforts on this important matter.”

I wish to thank the ABANA Board, Brian Gilbert, and all those who purchased tapes, CDs, and the given archive images, all of which helped to maintain and preserve the Colnik exhibit at VTDAM.

If you wish to send donations to Villa Terrace Decorative Arts Museum to help preserve the Colnik exhibit, send your donations to: Villa Terrace Decorative Arts Museum, C/O James Temmer, 2220 N. Terrace Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53207. Note that the donation is for the “Cyril Colnik Exhibit.”

2005 SNAG CONFERENCE, “INTERSECTION,” TO BE HELD IN CLEVELAND, OHIO
When: June 22 - 25, 2005
This year’s conference, “Intersection,” co-hosted by the Cleveland Institute of Art and Kent State University and will be held at the Sheraton Cleveland City Centre. Keynote speaker will be Gijs Bakker, renowned Dutch designer. Bakker will be joined by speakers David McFadden, Kathy Buszkiewicz, Gertchen Goss and Maria Phillips, Dr. Howard Risatti, Melvin Rose and Dr. Lynesie Williams. The SNAG Conference, sponsored by the Society of North American Goldsmiths and hosted each year in a different North American location, provides an important forum for discussion and presentation in all areas of jewelry and metal-smithing. SNAG is the association of jewelers, designers and metalsmiths, providing many programs and services to its 3600-plus members, including Metalsmith magazine and a 16-page newsletter, each five times per year. Visit www.sna metalsmith.org or contact the SNAG/Metalsmith Business Office at 630/778-6385 for more information.
CONFERENCE
The biennial ABANA Conference will be held July 5–9, 2005 at the University of Washington and Sand Park, Seattle, Washington. See Calendar and add back page of this issue.

CONTRACTS
Central Office contract will be reviewed yearly and extends until 2005. The Anvil’s Ring contract extends until 2005.

REPRINT POLICY
ABANA Affiliate newsletter editors are authorized to reprint anything published in either The Anvil’s Ring or Hammer’s Blow in their affiliate newsletter.

SCHOLARSHIPS
ABANA scholarships are available to all ABANA members. The closing dates are: January 15 of the even year, an additional meeting is held at the ABANA international conference in typically June or July. Between meetings, business is conducted by phone, mail, fax, and email, followed by a quarterly board mailing, distributed by the Central Office.

ELECTION INFORMATION
The Artisan 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 photographs and candidate statement to the Central Office by June 15 of the election year.

NOTICE OF ELECTION FOR ABANA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
2005 ELECTION TIMETABLE
May 1, 2005: Notice of election published in the Spring issue of The Anvil’s Ring.
June 15, 2005: Nominations deadline date, submitted to the ABANA Central Office, P.O. Box 816, Farmington, GA 30618
August 1, 2005: Ballot mailing in the Summer issue of The Anvil’s Ring.
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October 1, 2005: Notification to elected Board members.

To view the complete bylaws, go to the ABANA web site at www.abana.org/ the_by_laws.html.

Business meetings of the ABANA Board are held annually near the 15th of November. On the even year, an additional meeting is held at the ABANA international conference in typically June or July.

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What exciting times for our Guild! On the weekend of November 4th to 7th, 2004, we, the Saskatchewan Chapter of the Western Canadian Blacksmiths’ Guild, were very pleased to welcome blacksmiths John and Nancy Little from East Dover, Nova Scotia, for a full slate of events. The impetus for these events was our upcoming Iron in the Wind exhibition. John, along with sculptor Les Potter of Saskatoon, was asked to be a juror for this show. Other activities included an open critique session discussing all submissions, a slide presentation and a hands-on workshop with John. For more on Iron in the Wind see article page 26. This review focuses on the workshop.

The SATURDAY WORKSHOP

On Saturday November 5th John and Nancy facilitated a workshop at Larry and Colleen Olm’s shop just west of Saskatoon. Fifteen smiths registered and spent the day, participating in verbal and hands-on instruction. The day also allowed each of us to do some work with John observing, making suggestions or confirming what we were doing. It was a great time for asking questions or trying an idea that we’d had in the back of our mind. There was much discussion on line and finish. Les Potter’s comment from the previous evening’s critique session, “A line must know where it is going,” was repeated several times over the day. Unless there is a specific purpose for deviating, straight lines must be straight and curves must sweep through their arc with gentle fluid motion to an evident destination. Further, both positive and negative spaces were to be treated with equal importance. As for finish, we were encouraged to experiment beyond the wire wheel and clear coat surfaces that many of us had been using. For example, scale and rust, the natural evidence of the creation process, are sometimes desirable and can be used with great effect.

John started the day demonstrating both traditional work and contemporary sculpture. After years of making anchors for local Nova Scotia fishermen, John is happiest forging contemporary motifs. With Nancy at his side he forged two small sculptures: a heron on a base and a purely sculptural piece using similar techniques. By this point in the morning many of us were itching to hit hot iron. All six forges were lit and we got busy putting new ideas, skills, and tools into practice. The fires were idle and the hammers silent only for lunch when we discussed the marketing of our products, the state of blacksmithing in North America, and the upcoming CanIRON V in Nova Scotia. It was evident that most of us knew too little about marketing and about the potential for better financial return from our efforts.

THE SECOND DAY

The next afternoon John and Nancy treated us to a three-hour slide and photo CD presentation of John’s work spanning almost 30 years. John provided a running commentary as we viewed a wide array of his work from small to large, from architectural to sculptural, and from commission to speculative. They also shared images of their Nova Scotian home and shop–such a beautiful setting and a well-equipped shop.

The weekend was a wonderful experience and a great learning opportunity for members of our guild. We are very grateful to ABANA for its support through the Affiliate Grants & Loans program and to the Saskatchewan Craft Council for financial and administrative support. These two organizations were directly responsible for the success of this workshop and the entire weekend of activities.
Chandelier
A Personal Odyssey

by Daniel Kerem

Featured prominently in European painting—from Jan Van Eyck’s “Arnolfini Wedding Portrait” of 1434 to Vermeer’s “The Artist in his Studio” of 1665, the chandelier’s functional and decorative use has been in vogue for over 500 hundred years and serves distinctively this day in such celebrated interiors as the Spanish-Portugese Synagogue in Amsterdam, where it has cumulative effect in numbers.

Originating in the Middle Ages where it began as a single ring holding several candle-cups suspended by three or four chains, it then evolved into a two-tiered crown and from there into a densely cusped six-branched fixture.

The ornate late Gothic chandelier, as shown in the Arnolfini portrait, was an object of immense prestige and, judging by surviving examples, would have been in use only in the wealthiest patrician homes. With the advent of the Renaissance, the “modern” chandelier came into its own and took on altogether different appearance.

Sleek graphic lines replaced the crockets, cusping and decorative accumulation of medieval design and because urban domestic interiors increased significantly not only in size but also in number, more efficient centralized lighting was high in demand.

The baluster—a small, squat column—used in quantity in architectural settings—when placed side by side in a row and employed in the construction of parapets, staircases or balconies became a salient feature of Renaissance art and was adapted and modified to suit many functions other than purely architectural ones. Somewhat elongated and modified, it was utilized as the chandelier’s central post from which were suspended the horizontal arms. A series of interconnected spheres, ovoids and moldings made up the post or spindle, these modeled after the shapes and forms of classical Hellenistic vases and amphoras. As with many other elements in the decorative repertoire of the Renaissance, although inspired by ancient objects or forms, once translated by Northern European sensibilities they became not only unique, but retained little or no resemblance to their ancient prototypes.

The scrolling arms of the “modern” chandelier were inspired by Moresque patterns—of Islamic origin—which were adopted and subsequently modified by Renaissance designers and craftsmen for their elegance and exoticism. German Renaissance metalwork combined the Moresque with grotesques, producing a national style unrivaled for its fanciful imagination and bursting fantasia.

The popularity of the chandelier for over five centuries can be ascribed to at least two very good reasons: a strong, centralized source of illumination, casting its light in many directions and an understated elegance, whose immediacy remains current and carries through the vagaries and whims of what is in fashion.

My Youth in Ein-Kerem
Some things we do not have to learn, they are already (literally) within us, slumbering, waiting to be discovered.

Scattered along the northern slope of Mount Ora, in the small village of Ein-Kerem, outside of Jerusalem is the Russian monastery of Gorni. It was founded in 1871 and named Moscova by the local Arabs. (Gorni - from the Russian “Gorninski” - the mountainous. The Crusaders called this place by the same name - Montana - mountainous.) To the west of Gorni is the Franciscan monastery of the “Visitation”, to which thousands of pilgrims stream every year for Christian tradition which associates this place with the visitation of Mary to her cousin, Eliz-

“The Northern Renaissance
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A Personal Odyssey

by Daniel Kerem

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Sleek graphic lines replaced the crockets, cusping and decorative accumulation of medieval design and because urban domestic interiors increased significantly not only in size but also in number, more efficient centralized lighting was high in demand.

The baluster—a small, squat column—used in quantity in architectural settings—when placed side by side in a row and employed in the construction of parapets, staircases or balconies became a salient feature of Renaissance art and was adapted and modified to suit many functions other than purely architectural ones. Somewhat elongated and modified, it was utilized as the chandelier’s central post from which were suspended the horizontal arms. A series of interconnected spheres, ovoids and moldings made up the post or spindle, these modeled after the shapes and forms of classical Hellenistic vases and amphoras. As with many other elements in the decorative repertoire of the Renaissance, although inspired by ancient objects or forms, once translated by Northern European sensibilities they became not only unique, but retained little or no resemblance to their ancient prototypes.

The scrolling arms of the “modern” chandelier were inspired by Moresque patterns—of Islamic origin—which were adopted and subsequently modified by Renaissance designers and craftsmen for their elegance and exoticism. German Renaissance metalwork combined the Moresque with grotesques, producing a national style unrivaled for its fanciful imagination and bursting fantasia.

The popularity of the chandelier for over five centuries can be ascribed to at least two very good reasons: a strong, centralized source of illumination, casting its light in many directions and an understated elegance, whose immediacy remains current and carries through the vagaries and whims of what is in fashion.

My Youth in Ein-Kerem
Some things we do not have to learn, they are already (literally) within us, slumbering, waiting to be discovered.

Scattered along the northern slope of Mount Ora, in the small village of Ein-Kerem, outside of Jerusalem is the Russian monastery of Gorni. It was founded in 1871 and named Moscova by the local Arabs. (Gorni - from the Russian “Gorninski” - the mountainous. The Crusaders called this place by the same name - Montana - mountainous.) To the west of Gorni is the Franciscan monastery of the “Visitation”, to which thousands of pilgrims stream every year for Christian tradition which associates this place with the visitation of Mary to her cousin, Eliz-
“Still, the ornate and lavish interior exerted a fascination, especially the chandeliers, and in my child’s mind I pictured the nuns’ home to be a densely wooded land, held in perpetual winter, the dwellings richly carved and gilded. As it turned out, I was not far from the truth.”

A little iron and brass chandelier. By Daniel Kerem.

A love of lavish ornament, austerity, simplicity and domestic seclusion are the values I took with me when I left my home and village and which have largely shaped my adulthood in the greater world.

When my end comes and my body is relegated to the cremation fire, I hope my ashes are scattered where my journey and my chandeliers began. As it turned out, I was not far from the truth.”
Tributes to Bill Gichner

“Above all, Bill was a friend. He was a friend to hundreds of people; but Bill was my friend. We met 30 years ago at a craft fair. When he came by my Booth for the fourth time, I said something brilliant, such as ‘You must like iron.’”

As a team, Peter (Hapny), you and I traveled some 80,000 miles in your big gray van all over the U.S.A. – with all of our tools and sometimes even a 50-lb. Little Giant hammer, or a couple of 25-lb. ones. That is about three times around the world! Peter would be doing the driving, so safely and securely, and the magic, then and in the Director, and I was the navigator and commissary person – coping with endless requests for snacks, fruit, whatever – at the same time attending to navigation, maps, a flashlight (sometimes held in my mouth), and sometimes putting up with ‘snappy remarks’ from Le Director.

There was always welcome at the forges and workshops of our blacksmith friends wherever we went. Traveling, eating, laughing, horse-riding, more eating, and learning more and more about working metal. In addition to your uncanny skill in sniffing out potential trades, the three of us have shared a curiosity about how things are made and how they work. Accordingly, we have visited a great many metal fabrication shops and factories – more often by a back entrance than through the front office. Your little signature mini anvil that you made and gave away so many of have sometimes been the magic key to getting in, when it was realized that we had a sincere interest in learning.

We saw, learned and marvelled at what could be done with metal: cold chucks and small tools in Baltimore, Oklahoma shovelers, West Virginia’s Tri-temper garden rakes, boat anchors in Seattle, horsehoes in Kentucky, go-carts and small submarines in Dixie, and big-time forging at night in Illinois (lower electric costs for big air hammers); in Texas we could feel the ‘stomp’ of the big arch hammer’s blow a half-mile away. We used metal handwheels that cut 1 1/2-foot billets. The saws were almost as big as a house. In Dal-лас we watched with awe the dialogue between a manipulator handling a yellow-hot piece of iron against a refractory and the hammer man working at an 800-ton Erie arch hammer. There was the skill of the operator at a 5000-ton hydraulic press, working yellow-hot railroad wheels with just a squeeze or two. We did all of that, Bill, at the same time managing to help out at Royal Days at the Metal Museum in Memphis. What a wonderful journey it all was.

I’ll miss the regular fussing with your heating aids trying to make them work, your visits to Peter and me in New Hampshire, and our frequent overnight stays with you at your place in Delaware, fondly called ‘The Beach,’ where we enjoyed Mile High Chocolate Pie at Magnolia’s restaurant and breakfasts at the Chit-Chat.

Thank you, too, Bill, for the legacy of your gentle catholic in the words: “Is there anything I can do for you?” A mantra for each of us to follow: I miss you so, but hope that you are making some successful trades.

Bye for now, my friend, and lots of love.

NOTE FROM MACK BEAL:
In addition to the suggested memorial contributions for Bill to the Furnace Town Forge project, please also consider contributing, in his name, to the Metal Museum in Memphis, Tennessee. A national library will be constructed there, to be known as The William Gichner Library. Bill had already contributed many of his own special books for that purpose. Donations can be made to: The William Gichner Library Fund, c/o The Metal Museum, 374 Metal Museum Drive, Memphis, TN 38106. Contact Jim Wallace at the museum, 901/774-6380. See web site: www.metalmuseum.org or email: wally@metalmuseum.org.

For specs and prices:

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Andrew R. Chambers Jr., 31, is a native of Buffalo, NY. He started his career of metal work at the age of 15 working for the family business fabricating car carriers. In 2001 he decided that he wanted to take his knowledge of fabricating to the next level. Having such passion for art, Andrew started incorporating his fabricating abilities with his artistic abilities, finding a new-found love for the art of blacksmithing.

Andrew poured himself into learning the trade, taking instructions at the Touchstone Center for Crafts in Pennsylvania, where he was taught by Jymm Hoffman. He sought out projects that would teach him the difficult aspects, and, in uncovering those, he also discovered how gratifying the craft could be. His hard work has resulted in beautiful pieces of art. He has been able to define his style on larger scale projects, making art deco pieces, gates, handrails, staircases and railings. His latest creation, a railing for a newly built home, took Andrew over 1400 hours to design and create, making it his most satisfying and intricate work to-date.

Even though he has only been blacksmithing for four years, he feels that his best work is ahead of him. He tries particularly hard on every new project to re-invent himself, using traditional and modern techniques of blacksmithing to create something he is proud of and that will stand the test of time.

Andrew works at building his business ARC Iron Creations so generations to come not only enjoy the work he has created, but also admire a work of art that makes the home unique.

Andrew can be emailed at: arcironcreations@yahoo.com

**Showcase**

**Andrew Chambers**

Door Handles. Forged & fabricated steel. 18" H X 5" D. Stainless steel wire wheel & clear powder coat finish.

Hand Rail. Forged & fabricated steel. 30" H X 20". Stainless steel wire wheel & clear powder coat finish.

Staircase Railing. Forged & fabricated steel. 30' L. Stainless steel wire wheel & clear powder coat finish.

Andrew Chambers
TED: I’ve always had a history of metalworking and machine working. I have AA degrees in metals technology and welding, a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, a teacher’s credential in industrial arts and also in fine arts.

RING: And you had acquired all those degrees prior to your search for the perfect hammer?

TED: I was always searching for the perfect tool. It’s been my goal to find that perfect tool, whether it was a Bridgeport milling machine or a hydraulic planer or a power hammer. I went looking for a Nazel or a Chambersburg hammer – I never could buy one because they were just too expensive and I was always beaten out by other buyers. I remember going to an auction and seeing a Chambersburg 300, which was in pieces, go for $27,000! That was more than ten years ago.

RIND: So then what happened?

TED: I just began looking around, which took me on a world search. I had owned small mechanical hammers over time, but I really wanted to get an air hammer. I finally bought a Turkish hammer; it lasted less than 30 days. I replaced it with photos of hammers that were in the Philippines. He had photos of hammers that were in the Philippines, and these hammers were almost indestructible. The metalworkers used them even after the hammers were submerged in their annual floods. They would clean them up, add new oil, start them up, and resume their metalwork. I thought to myself that they must be a pretty good hammer.

TED: I kept going to auctions in various states in the U.S. trying to find what I wanted. Fortunately, I finally ran across a guy at the CBA Oktoberfest gathering who had been to Asia. He had photos of hammers that were in the Philippines, and these hammers were almost indestructible. The metalworkers used them even after the hammers were submerged in their annual floods. They would clean them up, add new oil, start them up, and resume their metalwork. I thought to myself that they must be a pretty good hammer.

TED: Shortly after I ran across one of these hammers being used by a smith, I decided I must get my hands on one of them for myself. Fortunately, I located a young man who had a brochure and video on the hammers. I thought he was going to start importing them, but nothing came of it. I convinced an acquaintance of mine that we should find the Chinese source of these hammers. We decided to contact the Chinese embassy. They put us in touch with the second largest shipping company in China which was based out of L.A. The company name was C.S.T.C., which stood for China Shipbuilding Trading Company, who put together a fact-finding group. There were four or five companies who were making these hammers. The top two companies were Anyang and Shanxi, which is pronounced “Shang-shi.” Anyang was number one and Shanxi was second.

RING: Tell us the history of Shanxi and Anyang companies in China.

TED: The story goes that Anyang was the original company, the one that started it all. I think it has been building power hammers in China for 60 years–Shanxi for 40 or 50 years. The interest was to produce agricultural farm tools, of paramount interest to the Shanti province because there is wheat farming and other agricultural production there. The hammers were smaller because they wanted to pound out rice and wheat sticks. The hammer, copied from a German design, was meant to move sheet metal and other thin metal items.

RING: It is obvious you are an expert on the C-41 Series hammer. Can you tell us more about this one?

TED: The C-41 is a government designation for the whole series of Chinese hammers. They are all basically off the same design. Only recently have they started to change. For example, they now have an X/Y die axis on these hammers, which are for die positioning. American blacksmiths need to be able to have flexibility built into their hammers in order to move those dies around. If they want to make different finials and specialty things such as acorn shapes and olives, for example, they need that flexibility.

RING: You said the hammers were copied from the Germans. Is that the original design?

TED: No; there is no real original. These hammers are really an evolution. Different countries kept adding and modifying. The Chinese hammers have their origins based upon German, American, English and Russian designs. The Chinese didn’t produce anything original until the introduction of the new 33-pounder by Shanxi.

RING: What caused the development of the 33-pound hammer?

TED: It happened in a conversation that I had, along with others, with Anyang’s representative. I stated that there was a need for a smaller, more mobile hammer which would fill the need for the entry-level blacksmith.

RING: You mentioned to me earlier that you are planning to move to Casa Bay, Oregon, shortly. How come?

TED: I’d like to set up a power hammer school. The classes will probably be one or two weeks in length. It will also include some die design classes as well. So I’ve purchased the land there and I’m in the process of putting up

*Roots bowl.* Forged silicon bronze. 12” diameter x 12” tall. All bowls were formed using pole mas. Other components forged using Anyang and Shanxi 88-pound power hammers.

*Roots bowl.* Forged silicon bronze. 12” diameter x 12” tall. All bowls were formed using pole mas. Other components forged using Anyang and Shanxi 88-pound power hammers.
“We’ve got a real problem at the high school level in this country because we’ve lost all our metal shops. We need more hands-on places for students to learn these types of skills. I spend a lot of time working with kids.”

RING: You told me earlier that you have been busy teaching kids metalwork for quite a number of years.
TED: We’ve got a real problem at the high school level in this country because we’ve lost all our metal shops. We need more hands-on places for students to learn these types of skills. I spend a lot of time working with kids. We compete at the state fair level and have won a lot of competitions in casting, forging and machining. We vary our work. We have been supplying the high schools with silicon bronze scrap and material for casting. When I find something that I think will work, I just pick it up and haul it into the high schools. We work on a very limited budget, to say the least, as there is not a lot of funding out there for this type of class. We do what we have to do to keep it alive. It takes about $2000 a year to keep a lab like that going. That funds all the wax and all the materials necessary. What they give us instead is about $500 for the whole year.

RING: So you feel there is definitely a lack of education in the metals area in schools?
TED: Yes, it’s gone. Ours is the only remaining lab in my metropolitan area.
RING: Is this typical of what is going on around the country, do you think?
TED: Yes it is, even in Oregon. They’re cutting it out right and left. If it is because vocational education is so expensive?
TED: No, my take on it is that the school educators think of vocational classes as a “frill” rather than a mainstay, sad to say.
RING: You personally do mainly architectural and ornamental work, is that correct?
TED: Yes. I often work in various types of metals besides steel, such as bronze—silicon bronze, aluminum-based bronze and naval bronzes, as well as brass. I like working with those metals, because the end result is so pleasing.
RING: Where do you buy your bronze and copper?
TED: From Gary Traverso of Alaskan Copper and Brass in Seattle, Washington. He has good prices and good sources.
RING: We’ll look forward to the inception of your power hammer school in a year or two. Good luck with your upcoming plans.”
Iron in the Wind

Exhibition by the Saskatchewan Chapter of the Western Canadian Blacksmiths’ Guild

**JURORS’ STATEMENT**

by John Little, Leslie Potter (Jurore) and Nancy Little (Juror’s Assistant)

Bown away! We walked into the jurying room and were blown away. These objects clearly demonstrated the spectacular progress made in Saskatchewan during the past few years. This was particularly evident for juror John Little, who has been here four times in the past seven years. He has a unique perspective, because growth is more apparent when sampled at roughly two-year intervals. After we were able to catch our breath, we felt that these works showed a quantum leap in growth, particularly with design ideas and technical prowess, which are now merging dramatically. Our congratulations to everyone who participated, because every piece submitted for this jurying process showed a real attempt to stretch minds and skills.

The entries dealt with the theme in many diverse and creative ways. There were pieces that seized our attention and simply would not let us go; pieces that left us with a desire to keep on looking at them, to walk around them, to turn them over and over or around and around. These were the pieces that succinctly said all they needed to say. To us, the stronger works were the ones that understood the space they occupied, integrated the elements used in their assembly, and interpreted the theme without compromise. They were simple and honest—with no fuss over their purpose, with no concern about being pretty. They just were.

The successful pieces tended to be unpretentious—not self-conscious. The techniques used in their making were as a means to an end, not the end in itself. We had issues about some pieces that employed complicated techniques for the sake of showing complicated techniques.

In general, we noticed that simple ideas won out over complex ones. The successful pieces tended to be unpretentious—not self-conscious. The techniques used in their making were as a means to an end, not the end in itself. We had issues about some pieces that employed complicated techniques for the sake of showing complicated techniques.

Some of the more mature and intriguing pieces that we selected captured the design idea; at the same time, they need not be disguised. The “marks” that result from honest manipulation of material have total legitimacy. For example, we felt that when a surface results from the process of its making, rather than an attempt at decoration, it was usually more successful. Decorative elements can only add, subtract or remain neutral—if they do not add anything to what the piece is saying, they should be discarded. Also, it is extremely important to know when to stop. There’s an old saying, “It takes a good man to do a job, a better man to know when it’s done.”

Some of the more mature and intriguing pieces that we selected capitalized on the design element of negative space. There can be magic in empty space—the space between or around the elements used to make the form. In this collection of works, being able to “see the wind” is a powerful concept; the wind often occupies the negative space.

The Saskatchewan Chapter of the Western Canadian Blacksmiths has achieved critical mass. Now it is crucial to maintain momentum and forge ahead. We congratulate you once again for your spectacular tour de force. Note: View the Saskatchewan Craft Council’s website at: www.saskcraftcouncil.org
“Pulled incandescent from the blacksmith’s fire, wrought between hammer and anvil, this black metal is transformed into stunning creations of beauty, grace and strength. There is magic here, in the elemental use of earth, air, water and fire, all under the control of the blacksmith.”

Brad Allen, President
Maritime Blacksmith Association

A n ancient story proclaims the blacksmith the king of trades because every other trade relies on the blacksmith to produce its tools: the carpenter’s saws and nails, the tailor’s needles and shears, the chef’s pots, pans and utensils. Only the blacksmith is capable of making all of these tools and his own as well. From tools to architectural ironwork to artistic creations, the blacksmith’s trade has evolved over the centuries, but remains ever vital.

During the twentieth century blacksmithing began to wane, especially in North America, as the machine shop, foundry, electric welder and disposable parts put the blacksmith out of business. Fortunately, a few hot coals remained deep in the forge, waiting to be brought back to life by those who saw the magic in past works. The birth of the Saskatchewan Chapter of the Western Canadian Blacksmiths’ Guild came about fittingly at the Western Development Museum where it was evident that the old-time smiths were disappearing. To help preserve the king of trades in Saskatchewan, the museum hosted the first Basic Blacksmithing class in 1988. With increasing public interest in iron work, the WDM continues to offer this course.

From the actions of the Western Development Museum grew a wider interest. Membership and activities increased at several regional “Forges” around Saskatchewan. Weekend “Hammer-ins” became common in several centres and at members’ shops throughout the province. Individual members began to demonstrate at museums and historic sites, show their work professionally, offer lessons, deal in equipment, and assist the growth of blacksmithing in many directions. For Saskatoon-area blacksmiths monthly meetings were not enough and the Tuesday Night Blacksmiths began to meet weekly to share ideas and carry out significant projects for special events and charities. Similar revivals were happening throughout North America and by the turn of the century the vitality of the king of trades was assured.

In 2001 members of the Saskatchewan Chapter of the Western Canadian Blacksmiths’ Guild took a major step forward when they hosted CanIRON III, Canada’s biennial blacksmithing conference. Smiths from Alaska to Nova Scotia, California to Florida, and a few from the UK and Europe attended the successful Prairie Conference in North Battleford. Iron in the Wind is another such step forward for the Guild. The growth of skills and artistic vision among Saskatchewan blacksmiths over the past decade is, according to juror John Little, unmatched in any North American region that he has visited. With only our imagination to hold us back, several more “major steps forward” are inevitable.

Long live the King!

Bob Wilson, Saskatoon, SK
Amethyst Wind, 2004 copper & stone. 18 x 19 x 17 cm. This piece simply represents a solitary tree warped and twisted by the wind. It is clinging to a rock as so many trees do, on the rocky north shore of Lake Superior. I chose Amethyst Wind as executive of beauty as sculpted by the wind.

M. Craig Campbell, Saskatoon, SK
Whitecaps, 2003 steel, paint, carbon steel, wax, forged and fabricated. 6.5 x 11 x 11 cm. The shape was inspired by the work of blacksmith Farrell Rupert from Maine. It is forged from reclaimed steel 1/8” thick and 6” square and incorporates experimental paint techniques. Whitecaps is an experiment in contrast: the surface is dark and highly reflective, rough and smooth, curved and sharp.

M. Craig Campbell & Miranda Jones, Saskatoon, SK
Trumpet Flower, 2004 steel, wood, copper leaf, acrylic paint, crayon, forging, fabrication, woodcarving, painting, gilding. 208 x 54 cm. Trumpet Flower grew from a simple plan to bend a pipe into a playful Dr. Seussian curve which then took its own direction towards a plant-like hat stand and lamp. The theme Iron in the Wind gave us an excuse to play with ideas and forms, resulting in a playful interpretation of a musical instrument (wind in the iron) or a flower undulating in the breeze. In short, it is a useful piece and wonderfully frivolous.
By Lane Therrell
Photos by Steve Sugar

The work of Northern California artistic blacksmith Dennis Dusek, 34, exemplifies what can happen when divinely-inspired creativity meets Old-World tradition: A unique, contemporary style.

The organic forms Dusek captures in metal possess a tangible quality of lyrical movement that likely stems, in part, from his musical heritage: Dusek’s grandfather made and played violins, his father made and played guitars and his uncle made and played mandolins. When asked about his own musical talents, Dusek answers honestly, with a smile, “I don’t play music. I bang on an anvil for a living.” He explains that his creativity “just comes out differently” from that of the other men in his family. “Metal sculpture is the way I feel most comfortable expressing myself,” he says.

Dusek was enjoying a career as a welder for an automation company in 2001 when a serious horseback riding accident influenced his life-changing decision to pursue his true calling as an artist—full time. “The accident changed a lot of things,” he says. “I thought it was the end of the road. I decided I’m not going to wait until I retire to do what I really like to do.” Dusek further defines his creative process as a spiritual experience that brings its own rewards. “There is power in forming something out of nothing,” he says. “The act of using a fire to form metal requires focused attention to create something totally new. It puts me into a transcendental state.”

Over the last three years, Dusek’s uniquely sensitive yet adventurous style has grown and matured, thanks to a renewed appreciation for traditional metalworking styles and techniques. During a family visit to Prague, in the Czech Republic in 2003, Dusek had a chance to see, photograph and study traditional European ironwork. This experience helped him realize how knowing the traditional styles and techniques could help him develop his own more contemporary style.

Dusek admits his new-found respect for tradition represents a major philosophical change in how he views his own creative output. “I wasn’t ever that interested in traditional style or technique; it was always the weird stuff that captured me,” he says. “I didn’t
want to do things the traditional way because I thought it was boring. But I see now that if you can do the traditional, you can make it contemporary. If you’re just stuck in one little area and you don’t experiment with all these other styles, you’re limiting the range of ways you can express yourself,” he cautions. “It opens up the window to how you want to communicate through your artwork, which helps so much when you try to get to the expression you’re looking for.”

He points to the example of how he expresses movement and softness through his signature organic shapes, like roses on a stem. “The roses come from tradition,” he says. “I start with penny scrolls. The components of the finished sculpture are forge-welded together and then overlayed with contemporary elements.”

The same openmindedness that allowed Dusek to re-examine his thoughts on traditional metalworking techniques and styles keeps him open to his own internal sources of artistic inspiration. For example, one of Dusek’s first commissioned pieces was a gate for a private residential driveway, the design for which featured grapevines with leaves and fruit. He recalls that the organic shapes were new and different from anything he had ever done. Making the vines look realistic and graceful required Dusek to push his own creative abilities. “The fine stems were woven and twisted. I had a dream about the process of how to do it and the end result was that the clients were very excited—they were pleased beyond the Wow! factor,” he says.

But the inspirational dreams are not always forthcoming. Dusek recalls a creative block he had about the design for another gate he made for a client’s residence. “It took me a long time to figure out what I wanted on that gate,” he says. “I did hundreds of sketches. I went to the used bookstore and found a Native American sketch-book which helped me think about it a different way.”

He points out that the final gate design, which featured peppers, arrows and a rising sun that echoed the warmth of the client’s Pueblo-style adobe home, he says, eventually “came to me in a dream. I was inspired by the sun on the patio. The end result was that the clients loved it.”

Dusek learned early from his family of musical instrument makers, who always aspired “to make the next one better,” to continuously push himself to improve his art. “There’s always an easier way to do it,” he has learned. Dusek recently ordered a power hammer to use for repetitive work after completing a stairway railing project where it “took longer to recover from the job than to do the job.” Dusek predicts the power hammer will make his day-to-day work easier on his arms and back. “I need to save myself for other parts of the projects,” he says.

Word-of-mouth advertising and displays at local art shows have brought Dusek a steady stream of commissioned work, including decorative objects and landscape and architectural elements for residential and commercial clients, including local wineries. As the future unfolds, Dusek says, “I’m going to keep reaching for the summit” in becoming the best artist he can be. “The journey,” he says, “is the fun part.”

Dennis Dusek lives and works in Sierra foothills near Placerville, California, with his wife, Vaughna, and two Labrador retrievers, Omicron and Archimedes. More of Dusek’s work is pictured on the Web at www.artisticblacksmith.com
Bobby Sharpe, Oakland, California. Ceiling-hung pot rack with floral lamp at bottom. Forged and chased mild steel, 32” h x 21” w x 23” d. Branches are 1/4” x 1 1/4” flat bar wood grain textured, both sides. Movable leaf hooks. Photo by Michael Pannullo.

Smyth Boone, Paonia, Colorado. “Goddess,” 5’h. Forged from a piece of 3/8” x 1/2”. Photo by Skip Naft.


Joel Sanderson, Quincy, Michigan. Snail table. Iron, granite. 48” tall, 67” long, 28” wide, and detail. Photo credit: Royal Images.
A client walked into my shop and said, “I want you to build the best gate you can build.” I asked her what the budget would be. She replied, “After meeting and talking with you, I feel you are a fair person, and won’t overcharge me for your work.” I asked her when she would like delivery of the gate and she answered, “In one year; that would be fine.”

My crew, which included Arnold Knouse, Marten Stone and Laura Schneider, put a lot of thought into the project. It was quite a challenge and, after much back-and-forth conversation and trading of ideas, we all decided that the theme for the single gate would be an angel partially stepping through the gate. I knew our client absolutely loved angels—she had made that very clear—and so we thought that as the focus would be very appropriate.

We made the frame of the gate from steel, which reminds me of the skeleton of a Viking ship. It also reminds me of a chapel. We used stained glass surrounding the angel’s body, thinking that whenever the sun would shine through it would look “heavenly.” We used the English Wheel to create the repoussé look of the angel’s clothing and body.

The face was a bit of a challenge. We used fiberglass to form the face and it worked perfectly. The hardest part was next...the hair. We talked it over and decided to try using welding lead wire. We made a “wig” of the wire, and we were very happy with the results. The wings are made from steel and are made so that each “feather” is a separate piece.

My wife and inlaws would come out to the shop almost every day to see the progress of the angel. My wife told me that to come around the doorway to the shop and see the angel changing every day was just stunning.

Our client does love her gate, and I’m very proud of the way my crew came together and did their very best for a once-in-a-lifetime job.
Forged Metal: Craft Transformed into Art

Curator and functional sculptor Craig Kaviar has a message for the world. Some of the finest art being produced today is in the realm of functional art (crafts). This message will be loud and clear when an extraordinary forged iron show – Forging Ahead: Contemporary American Blacksmiths – descends upon Louisville, Kentucky, April through July of 2005. With over 70 smiths from all over North America exhibiting their work, this will be the largest forged metalwork exhibits ever assembled. The exhibition will be showcased at the Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft and from there, Exhibits USA plans to travel the show to venues throughout the country for three years. The exhibition will be a celebration of forged metal, honoring the ancient art of blacksmithing that has been developed into a contemporary art form. "The mission of this exhibition is to put the art of contemporary blacksmithing on the main stage of American cultural life, and to reach and inform potential collectors of our art form," says Kaviar.

The evolution of blacksmithing as an American art form

The ancient craft of the blacksmith has evolved into a contemporary American art form. Say "blacksmith" and conjure images of a brawny fellow shoeing horses – but say "artist-blacksmith" and you enter a whole new realm of men and women who have exhibited at the Smithsonian and in US embassies, have received the coveted MacArthur and other prestigious awards and whose work has found a special place in contemporary life.

Thanks to the upheaval of the late 1960s and early 70s, certain college-aged people began to question the most basic assumptions: "What is really important? Do I have to join the corporate world? Does everything have to be made of plastic? Are there not more enduring materials and honest ways of working them? Can I express solid values by doing this and feel some harmony in life?"

Mind you, this was an era of concrete and glass when ornament was anathema and college graduates had taken "job security" for granted. Often the case in troubled times, history was searched for Golden eras –real or imagined. Longfellow’s Village Blacksmith was admired, but the evolving contemporary artist-blacksmith could also identify with James Joyce’s "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man," where we aspire “to forge in the Smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race.”

A pivotal moment was March 16, 1973, when nearly 50 “artist-blacksmiths” convened in Lumpkin, Georgia, at the invitation of Alex W. Bealer, amateur blacksmith and author of The Art of Blacksmithing (pub. 1969). Attending were amateur and professional smiths as well as Prof. L. Brent Kington, professor of art at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale with a handful of his students. Kington had organized a workshop at SIU in 1970 at which he introduced students to the potential of working hot iron as an art form, an idea previously employed by abstract artists such as David Smith, Julio Gonzalez, Alberto Giacometti and Eduardo Chillida. Before departing the Lumpkin gathering, one of the participants (yours truly) was so impressed with the potential of sharing the combined knowledge of those in attendance – and sure there were others scattered far and wide with similar interests – that he suggested the formation of a group to be called “The Artist-Blacksmith Association of North America” (ABANA) and that there be a journal plus periodic conferences. This happened and the rest is a blurred history as the organization of two dozen exploded into an international body of over five thousand.

**JUST A FEW OF THE MILESTONES ALONG THE WAY:**

The second gathering at Lumpkin in 1974 was the first official ABANA Conference, at which Prof. Fritz Ulrich, Director of the German national artist-blacksmith school in Aachen, Germany, was featured. He did much to introduce American smiths to contemporary design in architectural forged metalwork with an emphasis on the role of the “negative space”, the area between the metal, plus the inherent plasticity of the metal when worked hot and with great force.
The great American smith, Samuel Yellin, employed this element of negative space and placticity in his designs of the 1920s and 30s, but the tastes of the day required a primarily neo-Gothic idiom.

The 1974 ABANA Conference in Greenville, South Carolina featured Richard Quinnell of England, who was very taken by the American artist-blacksmiths’ willingness to share information. He returned to found the British Artist-Blacksmiths’ Association (BABA), which has also become an engine in the international dissemination of ideas for the métier, as was the case with subsequent ABANA guest Manfred Bredohl of Aachen, Germany, who returned to stage two enormous international conferences in that country.

There was a major ABANA Conference at SU in 1976, and as it was our country’s bicentennial year, there was a great amount of discussion and debate over the role of tradition in design. This debate finally reached a form of resolution for some who, attending the international conference in Hereford, England, in 1980, decided that all which is now considered traditional was once innovative, and that while it is noble to preserve the designs of the past, it is also commendable for those who can, to go beyond that which has been handed down to us, using it as a foundation, to forge ahead in creative and innovative directions.

It is safe to say that before these various international events, it was possible to look at the work of most artist-blacksmiths and with relative ease surmise the country of origin. Those days are now happily gone as the metal is shaped not solely by traditional design, but by the attempt to apply creativity to a generous malleable material, capable not only of supporting itself through space, but of defining the very space around it was once innovative, and while it is noble to preserve the designs of the past, it is also commendable for those who can, to go beyond that which has been handed down to us, using it as a foundation, to forge ahead in creative and innovative directions.

Dmitri Gerakaris, a Dartmouth graduate, has been a professional artist-blacksmith since 1975 and in 1975 was a founding member of the Artist-Blacksmiths’ Association of North America (ABANA) and Editor of its publication, The Anvil’s Ring. He resides and works in Canaan, NH.

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Forged Figures

By Smyth Boone, Paonia, Colorado

The figures are forged from approximately 48" of 1/4" x 1". The material is truly transformed to create an exaggerated scaled figure true to human proportions and relationships.

The pieces are very exciting as they hang from the ceiling, jump or hang out off a wall, or are freestanding active sculptures. They are forged to break through the monotony of a static plane with interesting, intriguing motion that can be whimsical, fun, and thought-provoking.

Regarding techniques—the hips and shoulders are forge-welded. They are hand sanded and hot-waxed for the finish.
Exploring the Possibilities
Phil Abernethy, Richmond Hill, ON, Canada

I’ve had an ongoing interest in blacksmithing and mixed media sculptural work for many years. Work to date has included numerous items ranging from indoor and outdoor garden sculptures, lamps, mirrors, vases, bowls and gates in various media. I work primarily in forged steel which has the amazing ability to be worked to almost thread-like dimension, allowing great scope for experimentation and interpretation. Lately I’ve focused on figurative sculpture and geometric arrangements of cut and welded media.

Ideas often start with a sketch of the basic arrangement. At other times pieces come together from no particular plan, as often the process seems to take on a life of its own. Regardless, the best work emerges having a feeling of inherent rightness or personality.

I try to keep the arrangements, movement and finishes of the work simple. In doing so I hope that the focus is drawn to the arrangement, act or movement conveyed, and the ability of the medium to facilitate that.

Finishes are generally heat-colored with an open flame, which produces a subtle array of colors and a finish unique to each piece.

I’m self-taught, coming to forging via my first craft, which was traditional clockmaking. I would often make missing components for early English clocks during their restoration. That beginning, coupled with a strong urge to express my ideas, means I now spend much of my time devoted to studio forge work.

My aspiration is to develop my artistic identity through these forms and continue to explore the possibilities of the medium and finishes.

Note: See more of Phil’s work at www.absolutearts.com/portfolios/o/oremedia/
The railing was a commission for a private residence in Reading, PA. The house was built in the 1950s and the clients have an interest in artwork. They wanted something artistic yet "Williamsburg-looking." I guessed that this meant scrolls. As this was only for two steps, I sketched this concept and they loved it. The handrail and vertical is all one piece forged from 1-3/4" solid round steel. This required one piece ten feet long. Five feet of the bar was hammered to oval and then tapered for the scroll area. Maneuvering a bar that long around the shop (plus it weighed 80 pounds) was the hardest part of the job. Laying one end on tool rests while at the coal forge, anvil or power hammer made the task easier. Cross bars were welded to the base to prevent the unit from rotating in the hole.

Upon completion, the whole unit was cleaned by cup-brush wire wheeling to remove any scale or dirt. It was then primed using Vanex Break-Through acrylic paint in red oxide primer. Top coat was their satin black. This is a water-based paint made specifically for exterior metalwork. I have used it on the restoration of gates and even on the Hershey Children’s Garden entranceway (see article in The Anvil's Ring, Fall 2003). It has worked out very well regarding the variety of colors and the durability of its finish. It has the sheen of a wax finish instead of a paint finish and thus shows the hammered texture in the metal. The vertical bar extends into the ground 24" with concrete poured around it. This has proven to be a substantial design for this application.

Randy McDan-
Reading, Pennsylvania

“The handrail and vertical is all one piece forged from 1-3/4” solid round steel. This required one piece ten feet long. Maneuvering a bar that long around the shop (plus it weighed 80 pounds) was the hardest part of the job.”

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There are many parts to a kazan:
1. tabarka / kaca (pronounced: tabarca / katza) – the chilling unit or condensing unit
2. lula (pipe) – the chimney on top of the kazan
3. zmija (snake) – the pipe which transfers steam from one pot to another
4. kapak (lid)
5. resetka (reshetka) – the thing below the lid which puts pressure on the fruit, looks like a sirve
6. kazan – the pot in which you put fruit and where rakija is made
7. furuna – the pot used for heating

He started our kazan with the tabarka, which measures approximately 12.5” in diameter (approximately 31.5” in circumference) and 19” tall. It is made from stainless sheet, soldered at the joint. There is a cleanout valve about 1.5” from the bottom, and the end of the condenser is 1.25” from the base. It has forged handles and legs, welded and riveted.

The condensing coil itself is 94.75” inches long and 1.5” in diameter. It is 1.25” from the base. It has forged handles and legs, welded and riveted.

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“...as with many traditions facing modern challenges, this one is partly under threat – because the stillmaker himself is becoming as large as 250 liters, where, using recipes passed down from generations, families make rakija that will last through the year.

Mihailo Tsintsar Kostich is 86 years old. His father started a shop in 1918, and Mihailo opened his shop in 1946, just after World War II. To be a professional kazandjija, he had to master six crafts: blacksmithing, coppersmithing, tinsmithing, a special craft for producing door and cabinet hardware, cup-making and metal joinery. In addition to kazans, he produces coffee pots and grinders, copper trays, and pots for boiling fish. He also repairs old copper pieces. He is joined in his shop by his son-in-law Karlo Kolar and grandson Victor Kolar, who will inherit the trade and the shop.

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We approached him and asked him to make a still – because the stillmaker himself is becoming.

The proper name for a still in Serbian is kazan, and the craftsman is called a kazandjija. However, as with many traditions facing modern challenges, this one is partly under threat – because the stillmaker himself is becoming attached between the two units. You can see the condensing coil inside the tabarka.

Grandpa may have had to dodge the “revenoors,” but in many parts of the world, making one’s own brandy is an honored and special tradition. Throughout the Balkans this tradition has transcended politics, conflict and economic challenges and has survived as a touchstone for rural communities as well as a link to tradition for many who have moved to the cities.

In the Balkans, branded, called rakija, is made primarily in the fall. Plums are harvested in village orchards and brought to stills that can be as large as 250 liters, where, using recipes passed down from generations, families make rakija that will last through the year.

His shop is simple and straightforward. Most of the work is done with tinsnips, stake anvils, swages and a couple of small anvils. He also uses a crimping tool, and a wide assortment of chasing hammers and tongs. He uses a small welder or copper rivets for joinery.

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above the top of the unit, ending in a 5/8” flange, to receive the zmija. At the other end, it protrudes 2.25” from the base (at a height of 1.25”) where the finished rakiya is deposited in an oak cask or clean glass jar.

The zmija is made of 1/2” copper tube 23.5” long, bent at each end, so its overall length is only 17.5”. The end which fits into the 5/8” flange on the tabarka is also flanged slightly to create a tight joint.

The actual cooking unit consists of two main parts — the faruna and the kazan.

The faruna resembles a smoker and is designed to burn wood, charcoal, coal, field waste or anything else handy as fuel. It is possible to put a gas burner inside and use propane as well. The faruna is also sheet steel, approximately 10” in diameter and 15” high. There is a smoke outlet or chimney 4.5” inches in diameter halfway up the side. Directly opposite is the fuel door 9.5” x 7.5”.

The kazan is made of copper sheet. Crafts- men here refer to “female” and “male” copper, but our informant was unable to articulate the difference, except that “female” copper is “thinner”.

However, tradition has it that the kazan should be made of “female” copper so that the brandy will be clear and not taste of impurities. The only other identifying characteristic is that “female” copper is also used on bells to give a lighter, cleaner tone, while “male” copper produces a deeper sound.

The top of the kazan has an outside diameter of 11”, with a lip that reduces the interior diameter to 10.25”. It rises to a height of 6.25 inches. The top of the top is riveted and then brazed on, and the top outlet for the distillate, or lula, which receives the zmija on this side, rises 2” above the top of the pot.

The bottom of the kazan is 11.25” in diameter, with a lip that reduces the interior diameter to 10.25”. It is 8.5” deep, and in a mirror image of the top, the bottom of the bottom is riveted and brazed on. This allows the bottom to be a different thickness than the sides — the larger the kazan, the thicker the bottom should be, to protect it from the heat and burning methanol. Tradition has it that the largest kanzas should have a base that is over 5 mm thick of “female” copper.

Finally, on the inside of the kazan is the resetka, which rests on top of the fermented liquid while it is being boiled. It is partly sieve and partly keeps the mixture from boiling over, which would clog the tubing and allow precious steam to escape. It is 9.25” in diameter, slightly bowed and punctured with a wealth of holes to allow the steam to rise freely while containing the fruit mixture.

The joints on a kazan are sealed with dough. The mash, made from plums or other seasonal fruits, herbs, flowers and other local products is prepared very similarly to beer or wine. Once fermentation is complete, it is poured into the kazan, covered by the resetka and closed. The fire is lit, the zmija joins the units, the condenser is filled with water (which should be kept between 16 and 18 degrees Celsius) and...
in a unit big enough, three hours later will produce 10 liters of rakiya. The end result can be re-distilled to produce a stronger drink and at this point recipes vary widely, according to family tradition and preferences.

OTHER USES FOR RAKIYA

There is a rakiya festival in a town called Valandovo on the Macedonia-Greece border every fall, where families compete for the best rakiya recipes.

Several people from abroad have bought kazans, including several ambassadors: some of them were sent by plane, and the declarations for the customs read: “a pot for colouring textile” (bigger) and “a pot for inhalation” (smaller). The people who buy kazans are not only Serbs living abroad, but other people as well.

Mihailo has a colleague, a craftman also, who is 90 years old. By the end of the 1990s in Serbia, when life was very difficult, he came to the shop and said: “God, I’ve spent all day in lines, waiting to buy medications.” Mihajlo asked: “Why do you need medication?” The other one answered: “They are not for me, they are for my wife. I take a couple cups of rakiya every day, and even the doctor is amazed how well my health serves me.”

Tom Vincent was a practising blacksmith with his own shop in Austin, Texas, several years ago. Since writing this article, he has moved to Uganda/South Sudan and is researching blacksmithing in the Darfur region of Sudan.

Those with questions regarding kazan-making can log onto Masha_Radonic@yahoo.com for more information.

Mihailo’s work

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American and French Cutlers: A Beneficial Exchange of Know-How

By Dominique Chambriard, Thiers, France

In April, 2003 Joe Kesslar, the president of the American Bladesmiths Society, was in the Auvergne region in central France for the annual and much-prized festival of “Coutellia,” an art of cutlery exhibition. It is open to craftsmen from all over the world. Joe, as a regular exhibitor, once again met with his French partners of the Thiers Cutlers’ guild and invited them to his own country.

The French cutlers from the Auvergne accepted the challenge and searched for ways to finance the trip. They received assistance from the Auvergne General Council, the French Cutlers’ Guild, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Town Council, and Ampli-tude, a local printing studio. The six members who would be setting off for the adventure donated their skills and created unique knives which were sold in the wink of an eye, thus succeeding in reaching their goal of gathering the necessary funds.

They left France for Bill Moran’s Forge School in Texarkana, Arkansas, in October, 2004 and stayed at the school from October 10 to November 3. On the first evening at the school the group was introduced to the audience as the Thiers Cutlers’ Guild and the visiting group introduced their emblematic knife, the “Thiers.”

The first demonstration

The French participation had two phases: the first was demonstrating the making of their basic pen knife, the Thiers, from material especially brought with them from their native town of Thiers. They also suggested that the audience members each make their own pen knife based on the Thiers model, and the French group helped them in doing so. The lucky American group went home with their own hand-made French pen knife, each one showing their own name on the blade. The demonstration was performed by Pierre Cognet, David Morel, and Jean-Paul Rimbert.

The second demonstration

The second demonstration was led by three Thiers blacksmiths who created a mobile sculpture showing the emblematic knife, the Thiers. Its blade is made of Damascus steel, repeating the “T” design (the brand symbol) on a mosaic pattern within the general pattern of the blade -- a creation of Henri Viollon’s, one of the group. While Henri was performing, Jean-Pierre Veyseyere was...
demonstrating forge welding to achieve the handle bolster, which also
repeated the “T” Damascus mosaic pattern. Dominique Chambriard
forged the handle of the knife from a square metal bar measuring
40mm x 40mm, 600 mm long; he was then able to put all the pieces
together by forging the structure, inserting the work of art.

It took two days’ work to achieve the special mobile sculpture. The
French Thiers team presented the ABS with this unique work of art,
addressing it personally to Joe Kesslar, together with a very special
designation: they appointed him a member of the Thiers Cutlers’ Guild
and they marked the occasion by offering him a symbolic medal show-
ing the Thiers logo.

Through international demonstrations, the Thiers Cutlers’ Guild gains
new means of promoting its fine cutlery and engenders an enthusiastic
driving force for the whole trade.
From the Conference Site!
Salmon Viewpoints Are a Mile Downstream

Hi Gene

Disk

Foligno for placement

Kids need a conference break?