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In case you have not heard the 2004 ABANA Conference will be at Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond, Kentucky, just south of Lexington on I-75. The dates are July 7-11, 2004. There will of course be demonstrators, vendors, classroom activities, the family program, tailgating (that’s a sales activity), galleries, the big auction (with Tim Ryan presiding), plus the thrilling general membership meeting! There will be time to catch up with old friends and meet new ones. Dave Koenig, Conference Chair and ABANA Board member from Houston, Texas, has, for many months, put a tremendous amount of time into organizing all the details. We can look forward to a great educational time. I hope to see you there.

The ABANA Board has recently passed two motions that will create and fund the Endowment Trust for Education. It will be initially funded with $150,000.00 from ABANA funds. This will help insure the future of blacksmithing by funding our scholarship program and limited grants. These will come from the interest, while the principal continues to increase in safety. This is really an important milestone for ABANA. We are growing up, and setting this money aside will help perpetuate our craft indefinitely for years to come. Bravo to Treasurer Bob Fredell who for many years has been working passionately on the teaching program in the Education Division, now chaired by Mae Koenig, Conference Chair and ABANA Board member from Houston, Texas, has, for many months, put a tremendous amount of time into organizing all the details. We can look forward to a great educational time. I hope to see you there.

Jerry Kagle, ABANA Secretary, has been overseeing the ABANA Central Office that LesAnn Mitchell runs so efficiently. I thought his explanation of our elections in the last issue of The Anvil’s Ring was excellent. His reason, legal knowledge, and professional business skills have brought a lot to the board meetings, not to mention his sense of humor!

ABANA has never been in such good shape financially, educationally, and with regard to our publications. Dorothy Stiegler has run a running publications, lobbying for the color pages in The Anvil’s Ring and the additional pages now provided in Hammer’s Blow, Rob Edwards and Brian Gilbert work extremely hard to meet the deadlines and produce high-quality material. Dan Nauman has been working passionately on the teaching program in the Education Division, now chaired by Margaret Crowley, and has a new series of basic articles which are now being published quarterly in Hammer’s Blow. These are designed to help aspiring smiths learn the basics. If you have something to share, please send it in. For many years I have heard people ask, “How DO you get published in The Anvil’s Ring?” The reply is still the same. Send it in! I really enjoy reading the articles, though I must admit that I always look at all the pictures first! So whether you have an article or photos for New Works feel free to submit them. Look on the ABANA web site or in the front of either publication to find contact information for submission—they’ll be glad to hear from you.

Remember, it is our 30th anniversary year: Amazing! Spread the word; better yet, sign up a new member! We are a very diverse group of individuals and it is really wonderful to share tips and information with others regarding, “How did you do that?”

Bob Fredell has worked hard to strengthen relations with all the ABANA Affiliates, which are now equal in their own right. Please remember that all our board members are volunteers and send us your ideas for improving your association.

I want to mention that The National Ornamental Metal Museum in Memphis, Tennessee, is in the process of building a new library. Many individuals and organizations have donated, including ABANA. Bill Gichner has donated HIS entire library. Wow! A lot has been collected over the years and a proper place to display it where smiths and others can go to conduct research will be great. If you have some money to donate to a very worthy smithing cause, this is it. Or send them work for their auction at “Repair Days” in October. I first saw that place in 1983, and it has really undergone an impressive transformation under Jim Wallace’s hand, with the aid of his excellent staff.

This just in—Leonard Masters has been awarded the prestigious Alex Stealer Award! Leonard has organized and led many wonderful blacksmith tours in Europe over the years. More on this can be found at the ABANA web site and in this issue of The Anvil’s Ring. Congratulations, Leonard!

Last, but far from least, we lost a giant recently. Carl Jennings of California passed away in May. Those who knew him will mourn his passing by celebrating the joy and beauty of life as he said he wanted us to. He was so kind and incredibly gifted and the world is a poorer place without him. Get out to that fire now and make him proud! Celebrate life and don’t postpone joy. —

Congratulations,
Scott K. Hanks

* * *

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DEAR EDITOR,

I thought this picture would be of general interest. On a recent trip to the Arabian Peninsula I saw these two smiths. The absence of stampa in the desert means you put the anvil on the ground. But no one wants a backache, so they dug some holes and shored up the sides with old oil drums. Very ergonomic.

Courtesy Dan MacLeod, Millford, Pennsylvania

DEAR EDITOR,

I got the idea to make this gas tank for a motorcycle basically to see if I could do it. The tank is 16” long, 8” tall, 10” wide. The helmet is life-size. Material for both: 32oz. copper, 19 gauge. I was working on some copper light fixtures and water fountains for a client who had a lot of repousse and some rather wild designs, when I saw a TV show on the Discovery Channel. Jesse James was fabricating a gas tank out of aluminum using a sand bag and a hammer and, as they say, “a light went on.” I thought to myself, “I can do that!” That was the beginning of the end as they say, “a light went on.” I decided to see if I could do it. The tank and transferred it to my shop, swinging away. I do a considerable amount of ornamental iron repair work and miscellaneous fabrication, so I had to pace myself. From 4 am to 8 am I would work on the tank, then from 8 am to 5 pm I would take a nap. From there I shaped the metal and welded the seams. I hammered, welded and grinded over and over until I had a decent “blank.” Now it was time to see if I could keep the technique I used my secret, at least for now, seeing how 90 percent of your readers could use the technique and make stuff that looks far better than mine.

After the gas tank was made I thought, “Well, now what?” I would love to keep the technique I used my secret, at least for now, seeing how 90 percent of your readers could use the technique and make stuff that looks far better than mine. I found it interesting to have a job that is new (at least to me it was new) for hammering the tank designs and achieving a decent depth in the anvil and flames (1/8”). The test of the designs were more moderate (2 1/8”). I would like to keep the technique I used my secret, at least for now, seeing how 90 percent of your readers could use the technique and make stuff that looks far better than mine.

DEAR EDITOR,

The separation of the arts and manufacturing is straining a lot of creative people. In the last year I have had the opportunity to visit many blacksmith shops. One striking thing I see on a regular basis is the lack of networking within the trade and with other trades, such as glass, wood, textile, ceramic and electric. Each of these trades, like ours, has artisans experts. If you are going to build quality items that use more than your own medium, go to the trade that can help you. To compromise a fine piece of your art by using an accessory from a hardware chain store tells your customer that you don’t know what is currently at the cutting edge in quality. If our industry is going to survive we should not compete with the products being fabricated in sweatshops in some third-world country. We should set the standard of acceptability in quality design workmanship. There have been a lot of shops that are like the plastic pink Flamingo. They were kinda fun for a while, but they really don’t do anything. We must stay progressive; this also makes being alive much more fun.

The older I become (56), the more I realize the value of life. And the reward of a job well done seems to mean more. I realize now that I had invested in tools that would have taken the abuse off my body when I was younger, I would have been able to look forward to working much more comfortably for many more years. Once a commitment to being a blacksmith has been made, the investment in equipment is more than an asset: it allows you to work in a safer manner with less strain on your body. Yes, you can pound it out by hand and sometimes that’s the only way to do it. But a power hammer should be considered. You can drill a half-inch hole in steel with a hand-held drill. But a magnetic drill or a drill press used correctly could have saved that bad bruise or that broken arm. Hydraulic presses, punches, mig welders, Tig welders and forming machines will save your body as it develops your skills.

I have recently discovered that there are many people in the trades who are willing to work with us to produce a better product. Stained glass or slump glass can often transform a nice piece of work into something that is drop-dead gorgeous. A little or a lot of color can set off an item into a more saleable unit. If you talk to glass people, you will find one you can work with. The surprising thing is that they are just as happy to find you. Now both trades will progress. A fine piece of wood makes the difference if it’s unique and finished well. A good cabinetmaker or wood carver can make your unique item a real treasure to be found by a customer.

The bottom line is: Quality makes the statement. “Unique” creates the interest. Keep smiling.

Bob Graham, Tracy, California

DEAR EDITOR,

The cool autumn air caressing cheeks crisp - fresh
Wood burning
winding bellows continue the slow burn where - where - where
spirits whispering to one another
whee - whee - whee
Wood burning
winding bellows continue the slow burn where - where - where
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- the coming of what is to be
a final statement
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cold - black - hard
IS
a monument of love.
Silence
shape taken - a gift.
Armene Margosian, Montague,
Massachusetts

e-mail: xzcjx9@verizon.net

DEAR EDITOR,

A colleague at work showed me
a copy of your publication, Vol.31,
Number 1, Fall 2002. I was thrilled
to see the fabulous full color photo
(New Works pg.47) of the collab-
orative piece that I created with
Harry Foster, for my parent’s 50th
wedding anniversary last year. The
memory box was originally cre-
ated in a raku pottery workshop,
and Harry’s amazing talent at the
forge helped me realize my initial
vision for the piece. The ironwork
and copper leaves enhance the
metallic raku glazes, and the open
iron framework adds the necessary
breathing space to the bulk and
weightiness of the ceramic box. I
have always loved the juxtaposi-
tion of iron and ceramics, and I
look forward to more successful
collaborations.

Danielle Dupont,
Graphic Designer
Canadian Museum of Civiliza-

ion

American Craft Council
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 30838.
August 1, 2003: Ballot mailing in the Sum-
er issue of The Anvil’s Ring.
September 15, 2003: Postmark deadline for completed ballots.

October 1, 2003: Notification to elected
Board members.

CONFERENCES

The next ABANA conference will be held
July 7 – 11, 2004, at East Kentucky University
in Richmond, Kentucky.

CONTRACTS

Central Office contract will be reviewed
yearly and extends until 2002.
The Anvil’s Ring contract extends until the
year 2004.
The Hammer’s Blow contract extends until
2003.

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 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1.
Information can be obtained from the ABANA
Central Office, call 706/310-1010.

THE ABANA SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Since its founding in 1973, ABANA has
been committed to the education of its mem-
ABANA Business cont. on page 7
Leonard Masters of Concord, New Hampshire, is this year’s recipient of The Bealer Award. Leonard was presented the award by Peter Happy at the Berkshire Blacksmith Annual meet, “The Age of Iron.” The event was held at the Hancock Shaker Village in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, on May 11, 2003. This year the Berkshire group hosted several ABANA Affiliates at the event. They were the Connecticut Blacksmiths Guild, the New England Blacksmiths and the Northeast Blacksmiths Association. It was a fitting occasion to bestow The Bealer Award on Leonard Masters.

Leonard and his wife Lilo have been responsible for organizing and running eight different trips to Europe over the last twenty years. The opportunities and educational experiences afforded by these travels have expanded the horizons of many people as to what is going on in the field of metal in other parts of the world. Leonard has been active with the Northeast Blacksmith Association and served as president in the 1980’s. Since 1975 Leonard has been an active ABANA member, serving on the ABANA Board (1988-90). On behalf of all of the students of iron, we thank Leonard and Lilo for the experiences they have shown us and the opportunity to learn more about blacksmithing.
ABANA Business

ABANA Business cont. from page 19

The purpose of the ABANA Scholarship Fund is to provide financial assistance to ABANA members at all skill levels to assist them in the development of their blacksmithing skills and abilities.

1. Criteria for Selection
Applicants must show financial need, proven talent and demonstrated ability in blacksmithing. In reviewing applications, the ABANA Scholarship Committee will consider but not be limited to the following factors:

• Documented evidence that the applicant possesses a strong desire for continued and serious involvement in blacksmithing.

A novice blacksmith, the candidate must demonstrate a commitment to learning and a legitimate interest in blacksmithing.

• Quality of or potential for work as demonstrated by visual materials submitted in support of the application.

• Record of professional activity and achievement as indicated by Federal and State law.

2. Responsibilities of Recipients

As a condition of receiving an ABANA scholarship, all scholarship recipients are required to share results of their learning with ABANA members and/or ABANA Affiliates. The recipient will fulfill this responsibility through at least one of the following forms of presentation:

- A public demonstration or workshop,
- A submission of an article to either an ABANA newsletter or as an ABANA publication,
- A public exhibit of work completed during or after the course,
- A lecture demonstrating the results of the course,
- An article published in a non-ABANA publication.

This requirement must be fulfilled within one year of the award application deadlines.

Along with the Scholarship Application Form, applicants must include the following:

- Current résumé (updated within one month of application), including summary of relevant prior work or study.

- Three (3) letters of reference, two of which must be from ABANA Affiliates; letters must be dated no more than three months in advance of the application date.

- Three (3) slides, photos or concept drawings of current work (within 6 months of application) in protective plastic sleeves or other suitable holders. A novice blacksmith may fulfill this requirement with an essay detailing their interest in blacksmithing and future plans for accomplishment in the craft.

- Support materials describing the project for which the grant will be used: School brochure or catalog, curriculum outline, instructor résumé, etc.

- List of all current blacksmith group affiliations.

In addition to the above criteria, Category C applicants must submit detailed documentation, including a plan of study, anticipated results, application of these skills in furthering their career, and letters or reference from all master smiths with whom the applicant wishes to study.

Application materials will not be returned to the applicant unless return postage is included with the application.

The ABANA Scholarship Committee

The ABANA Scholarship Committee and the President of ABANA will approve all grant applications. The ABANA Scholarship Committee and the President of ABANA will consider but not be limited to the following factors in determining the size and duration of a scholarship award.

3. Scholarships

The ABANA Scholarship Fund is to provide financial assistance to ABANA members at all skill levels.

Scholarship categories are:

- Scholarship A: Affiliates - Scholarships matching funds, $300.00. Members using an ABANA Affiliates’ scholarship funds can match those funds up to $200.00.

- Scholarship B: Funds for individual study, maximum of $400.00.

- Scholarship C: Funds for extended study of three weeks or longer. Level of support to be determined by the circumstances of the proposed course of study, to a maximum of $1,500.00.

Note: Any monies received by an individual may be subject to taxes as added income as determined by applicable Federal and State law.

4. Deadlines

To be considered for a scholarship, applications must be postmarked by the following dates and sent to the ABANA Central Office:

- January 2
- April 1
- July 1
- October 1

Exceptions to this rule will only be made for applicants who need immediate consideration and in extraordinary circumstances, as outlined by the applicant and approved by the Scholarship Committee and the President of ABANA. Alternatively, applications may be submitted after the completion of the course. Electronic applications are not accepted at this time.

Category A and B scholarship winners will be notified of awards within one month of the above application deadlines.

Review of Category C applicants will be extensive and take up to two months.

Notification of awards will be made either through electronic mail or by telephone. Funds will be sent to the recipient within two weeks after the notification.

5. Guidelines & Instructions


- Be sure to read and understand the rules for application. Partial or improperly completed applications will be rejected without review.

Revised applications will be considered no sooner than the next application deadline.

Notification of awards will be made either through electronic mail or by telephone. Funds will be sent to the recipient within two weeks after the notification.

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As a condition of receiving an ABANA scholarship, all scholarship recipients are required to share results of their learning with ABANA members and/or ABANA Affiliates. The recipient will fulfill this responsibility through at least one of the following forms of presentation:

- A public demonstration or workshop,
- A submission of an article to either an ABANA newsletter or as an ABANA publication,
- A public exhibit of work completed during or after the course,
- A lecture demonstrating the results of the course,
- An article published in a non-ABANA publication.

This requirement must be fulfilled within one year of the award application deadlines.

Additionally, the recipient must submit a short statement to the Scholarship Chair describing their study experience to the Scholarship Chair to be included in a form in The Anvil’s Ring. This requirement is waived if an article is submitted to The Anvil’s Ring.

Scholarship funds may be used for those purposes only that are consistent with the fund’s stated benefit to the blacksmithing community.

9. Application Information

Application materials will be accepted at this time.

Electronic applications are not accepted at this time.

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As a part-time pipeline welder, it’s common for members of the trade to build barbecues for themselves out of scrap pipe—usually flat plate on the ends, a short piece of 2-inch pipe for the chimney, and a crude rear handle. Lacking one myself, I thought I would have a go at something a bit different, and pictured here is what evolved.

The pit itself is 12-inch pipe which I split lengthwise and added a piece of flat plate top and bottom (3/16” x 4”) to gain a bit more cooking area. The bonnet ends are not difficult to lay out, with help from The Frankland Book of Fabrication, along with some welding supplies. I also carry ready-made templates for most sizes of pipe. The dragon’s head started out as 2 1/2” pipe, welding on 1-inch square stock for the nostrils and 3/4” stock for the eyes. Only after much forging and hacking did it begin looking like a head. The eyeballs are simply round-headed screws in drilled and tapped holes. After screwing them in, I brazed over the slots and peened for texture. I didn’t have room to drill holes for the teeth, so I made a separate set of dentures to fit, welded them up and then sanded the weld away.

The body is of 10-gauge sheet metal blown up with compressed air, a process developed by Penland School of Crafts’ resident blacksmith, Elizabeth Brim. Fins are two matching pieces welded on, ground smooth and sanded, then heated with a torch at the base and spread apart with a chisel. The ash drawer underneath is where the adjustable air intake is. Putting an old 7” or 9” grinding wheel in the vise and knocking off all the old abrasive leaves you with a perfect round metal disc to use, with a 5/8” bolt welded to the inside of the box.

When completed, I had the whole thing powder coated. The end result of the barbecue is that it cooks very well and is put to use almost every weekend.
Brent Bailey, Orland, California

Back of chair is 1/2” solid square bar, twisted. The small rings are 1/4” square twisted. The hearts are 3/16” round stock. Arms are railing top cap. Arm supports and legs are 1/2” solid square, legs were split in quarters and splayed to fit the feet. Seat is white oak hand-worked by this blacksmith.

Says Eichholz, “The story behind this is that two hearts joined together with two rings (in the back) to form the knot of matrimony (the cross-brace of the legs). It is called the ‘Wedding Chair,’ made for my son and his wife’s first Christmas.”

Edward Eichholz, Wilmington, Delaware

Tony Higdon, Lexington, Kentucky

Fireplace screen. 44” h x 46” w. Forged steel, glass.

April Franklin, Farmington, Georgia

“TANTO.”

11” x 2 1/4” x 1 1/2”
15N20, 1084, nickel, ebony, steel

Phil Kaufman

“Time Segment - The Path.”
24” x 15” x 9”. Sculpted and fabricated mild steel, polychromed.

Bugs knife. 5 3/4” x 3/4” x 3/8”
15N20, 1084, ash, copper, silver

Arabesque knife. 9 1/2” x 2 1/2” x 7/8”. 15N20, 1084, bloodwood, copper, silver

Edward Eichholz, Wilmington, Delaware

Ram’s head fireplace tools (broom, poker, shovel), mild steel. Tools are 32”. The stand is 37” h x 20” w.

Edward Eichholz, Wilmington, Delaware
Elizabeth Brim, Penland, North Carolina
Left, Apron entitled “Catch.” Life-size.
Mild steel.
Above, Apron detail.

Walt Hull, Walt Hull Iron Work, Lawrence, Kansas
Balcony railing in mild steel. 8’6” l x 3’ h. Designed by Walt Hull and executed by Kate Dinneen. Photos by Walt Hull.

Dale Morse & Edward Pelton, Clay Hill Forge, Charlottesville, Virginia
Hanging light fixture. Forged mild steel with case and fuse glass shade pieces. Each side has one of the five feng shui characters. Candlesticks are removable. 13” tip to tip. Shade section is 13” square.

Ralph Neumeister, Burton, Ohio
Library table, crafted and presented to his daughter for a high school graduation gift.
29 1/2” l, 16” w, 31” h. The steel was textured with a vine tool, and acorns are on all the ends. Leaves are colored in fall colors using Renaissance gold, green, red, copper and silver.
Like so many small towns and villages in rural Rajasthan, India, Samode has a fort and a palace built by the Rana-als—the nobility of Jaipur—into the foothills backing the town: an ideal retreat from the dusty heat of Jaipur.

Added to by each successive maharaja, the palace is a maze of arched walkways, hidden stairways, and courtyard gardens, and its numerous painted and mirrored halls hold a treasury of Rajput art.

The town’s main street, which leads to the palace, is lined with painted and carved (and now crumbling) havelis—mansions—of a once-wealthy merchant class. The town was originally walled, its entrance secured by four gates. Abutting the Mahar Gate is the Loharon Ka Mohalla, or blacksmiths’ quarter, inhabited by a small community of approximately 30 smiths and their families, of Sunni Muslim descent.

This community, which resembles a very large extended family or clan, has its shops in the street leading up to the town gate. They work communally; their numerous products are made to meet the needs of the local peasantry as well as being exported further, all over rural Rajasthan.

According to local tradition, the forefathers of these craftsmen migrated to Samode from the nearby village of Maharkala sometime between 1850 and the turn of the century. Apparently there were more work opportunities in Samode, though it is unclear if this move had anything to do with a royal decree from the maharajas of Jaipur who, since building their palace in Samode 400 years ago, had brought in entire families of artisans to execute its successive additions.

In its idyllic pastoral setting, Samode appears from a distance still part of a Moghul miniature painting. Change, though, has reached even this languid, small town, where on any given morning a battery of locally made trip hammers create a din so loud that you can hardly hear yourself think, if making your way through the blacksmiths’ section of the bazaar.

By far the most impressive and skilled work of these lohars, or smiths, are very large vessels, used for religious and social functions and seen in temple courtyards and kitchens all over rural western India. The largest of these vessels is a \textit{tasla}, or wok, close to two meters in diameter (large enough to accommodate several people) used for deep frying and the production of sweet meats. These are often made from recycled plate, 1/4 inch in thickness, starting with a central bottom disk, to which two successive horizontal rows are attached.

A variety of drum heads are also produced, ranging from a small size used in village temples to a very large variety, utilized by several drummers simultaneously in large religious processions, or \textit{mehlas}.

Aesthetically, the most refined and complex of these vessels are the \textit{matka ghadra}, or large pots, used for transporting water. Made from six pieces of 16-gauge iron riveted together, and in several sizes, their advantage over ceramic vessels of the same shape is obvious, though the production of these is threatened by the rapid appearance of plastics on the Indian market.

For close to two centuries, the lohars of Samode have shown adaptability, in their adoption of new technologies, in their communal methods of labor, and in expanding their markets to other urban and rural areas across the state. With the Indian subcontinent undergoing such rapid change, there can be no doubt that these attributes—the hallmarks of their ancient profession—will hold them in good stead in the years to come.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{samode_palace}
\caption{Mughul Miniature: Craftsman chasing a floral design on a round hookah bowl, pen and ink with color washes and gold. Southwest India, circa 1770. Collection of author.}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{samode_blacksmiths}
\caption{Photos by Daniel Kerem}
\end{figure}
The railing has a total of about 40 feet and is made of mild steel solid square and round, square tube, pipe, hexagon, angle, channel, and rebar. The posts are 1 inch square, upset at the bottoms, and then, after much punching and chiseling, are twisted informally.

The finials are 1 1/4 inch square, freely power-hammered into random results. Twist and reverse twisting were used on almost all the elements. Most intersecting joints were slit, drifted and passed through, then welded for strength.

The handrail was made from pipe and 1/2-inch round. Everything was wire brushed and an oil finish was used with a clear coat on top.

This railing is called “The Strength of Calmness,” which related well with the owner and location, and it was a pleasure to create.

Cairn Cunnane
Ottawa, ON, Canada
Robin and Mike Boone were demonstrating at the CBA Spring Conference in Tulare, California, when we sat down for this interview. The Boone’s are from Paonia, Colorado. Mike is a direct descendent of famous American pioneer, Daniel Boone.

RING: How long have you been living in Colorado?

MIKE: It’s been about 14 years altogether, but 3 1/2 years now that we’ve lived in Paonia. It’s a real small and very nice town that is essentially self-supporting. A lot of the families there participate in home schooling their children.

RING: Have you ever home schooled your children?

ROBIN: No, we started out in Montessori pre-school, went into public school because there were some great teachers in the lower grades, but the bureaucracy of public education, I think, is very detrimental to actual education potential. So based on that difference of philosophy, we began to home school our girls and now we network with a great group of people in Paonia. There are hundreds of home-schooled children where we live. Our girls are 10 and almost 12. We bring our family everywhere; they’re enjoying the conference this year.

ROBIN: We basically start out drawing on napkins. We will create some designs together, but mostly I create the architecture and you revamp it so it makes sense. Robin does the actual art for the designs. Robin has a degree in art so we started out with her drawing out the concepts first and then working on the metal. There has been a great support of our skills which came from a whole different frame of reference and different style, and is not always easy to do. We have ended up doing 400 feet of double tenons and after all these all had it mastered!

MIKE: It’s a great expression of the magic of ironwork. We started with that idea and then knew we’d need some sort of frame, moving forward. We have since mastered those skills, which then increases our possibilities of design. So now you take all those skills, and add into a great design, and it’s exponentially better. Basically it was getting the various processes down really well and then moving forward with all of those processes as your helpers.

MIKE: But now when we sit down to design something—we for instance the piece that we made for the CBA Spring conference here in California—we knew we wanted to make something quite special for this event.

MIKE: The California Blacksmiths as a group are so very good at what they do, we had to make something really fantastic. So we were doing those processes to how to do it—not an easy task.

MIKE: Actually, this design came together really quickly. I was surprised at how well it did. But on another level I’m really not all that surprised, because by now our minds are working together as a unit when it comes to design and figuring out how to make any kind of commission. We just get into the almost immediately and can whip through a lot of different ideas quickly. We don’t let our egos get in the way.

RING: It must require a tremendous amount of give and take.

MIKE: Yes, but we’ve dropped the competition part; it’s no longer about ourselves. You have to allow the other person’s input and release some of your own input to make it work. On a design we’ll see first what the parameters are. Where does it go? What does it need to do? How much money is going to be spent on it? How much time is involved? We also have to consider any sort of function that may be involved. For instance, in this demonstration I needed to carry very few tools, he able to do it in a few hours, and make something that involves a lot of different forgings. People need to come to us for something specific and we are including designers and architects. Mike wanted to learn how to do double tenons for a railing. So he ended up doing 400 feet of double tenons and after all these all had it mastered!

ROBIN: And that’s what we do with every project. If there’s a new technique that we want to incorporate or learn, we just throw it in and allow that to be part of the design. We did a railing with 900 forgings welded on it and I have felt very confident with forge welding since then. By repetition you basically force the issue, so you learn. For the first 7 or 8 years that we were working together we would keep incorporating new processes and techniques into the designs so that our skill level of the actual blacksmithing part could improve. We have since mastered those skills, which then increases our possibilities of design. So now you take all those skills, and add into a great design, and it’s exponentially better. Basically it was getting the various processes down really well and then moving forward with all of those processes as your helpers.

MIKE: It was a 7 1/2" wafer.

MIKE: Chiseled and chased figures on folded sheet.

MIKE: By Rob Edwards

MIKE: “Mother and Daughter”
putting everything together in five hours, or whatever the allotted time is. The sum of our demonstration time was a critical aspect of our design, but we wanted to try and show as many things within the time limit—aspects, choices and chisel work, the Yellin flowers, and then design—to come up with something that sums up the potential of designs for my lecture, as well.

MIKE: The overall concept when we’re demonstrating is very simple forging practices because that’s all blacksmithing is. It’s all very basic practices that are just compounded and added on top of each other to make a very complex finished product. But nothing that we forged individually was difficult. We put these all together with a fine design and then the piece looks so complex that you wonder how you can make it. That’s the part that I enjoy and hopefully that’s what passes on to others, so that they will gain more confidence in their work, get their skills honed and move forward, yet really get these simple forging techniques down pat. Then you can do anything with them. Look at Yellin’s work. Most of the work is very simple, but it was the putting together of all these simple elements that make it extremely complex-looking.

RING: I noticed the technique that you split it up into the piece and into the drawing.

MIKE: Yes, that drawing is truly a wonderful piece of art in and of itself.

ROBIN: Even though it ended up a shop drawing, we used it as a template. I colored chalk over the back of it and laid it down because we needed to get this one curve off the Yellin flower to attach it to the frame. I then traced with the chalk on the back onto a metal table here—that we used it as a base, we showed up for order for Mike to get that arch right. So we transferred the drawing onto the metal table here, and we bought the demo piece and a man named Chuck got the drawing.

RING: I noticed the little circle that you split it up into the piece and into the drawing.

MIKE: What is the piece you’re currently working on? And by the way, what is the name of your business?

MIKE: Wrought Iron, which goes back to my grandfather, who used to have that name for his business. Dad uses it now, also.

MIKE: We are making a series of lighting fixtures—interior and exterior—that are massive cages which surround large upright posts. Off one of the corners is a hand-hewn rope. It’s really a beautiful design and we feel fortunate to be working with Ted Moews and Howard McCull. Ted is a designer in Colorado who is a genius in his field. We’ve never met anyone who can draw ironwork who is not a blacksmith, but this guy can do it. He has a vision. He sends his drawings to Howard McCull who is one of the best draftsmen there is. Then Howard sends us the work to do. Whatever is on the drawings we make exactly as it is specified. These are really large-scale items. Only with Ted do we do someone else’s designs; in all other projects we use our own designs and our own original art work. But his are of such a caliber that they’re just right. It’s a very unique niche that we’re in, dealing with these homes and this builder in particular.

ROBIN: Yes; it’s an honor for us to be working with these gentlemen. And the people for whom we’re working, who commissioned the work, are very thoughtful people who understand fine craftsmanship. Their entire home is just gorgeous. It’s a community of about 900 people. There is a lot of alternative healing going on encompassing art and a lot of potential. It’s a great community radio station and Mike is a disc jockey for the station, and Mike is a disc jockey for the station, and Mike is a disc jockey for the station, and Mike is a disc jockey for the station, and Mike is a disc jockey for the station, and Mike is a disc jockey for the station.

RING: It’s a never-ending cycle that can go on forever, but this guy can do it. He has a vision. He sends his drawings to Howard McCull who is one of the best draftsmen there is. Then Howard sends us the work to do. Whatever is on the drawings we make exactly as it is specified. These are really large-scale items. Only with Ted do we do someone else’s designs; in all other projects we use our own designs and our own original art work. But his are of such a caliber that they’re just right. It’s a very unique niche that we’re in, dealing with these homes and this builder in particular.

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MIKE: Right. It’s a never-ending cycle that can only get larger, it seemed to us. But the experience is now under our belts. We’ve been there and done that—we’ve done the large-scale work and that is not necessarily the direction in which we want to head.

RING: When was that large project?

MIKE: It was in 1997 and it was nine months’ worth of work.

MIKE: Paonia has a very well-established community of home schooling, as we mentioned, which was a priority for us. There is also a theatre, a radio station, lots of kids, lots of organic food and a natural food store. There are working farms and-I-found a group of about 900 people. There is a lot of alternative healing going on encompassing artists, alternative energies, dance classes, three kinds of yoga, and more.

RING: How did you find out about Paonia?

MIKE: Through friends of ours who we used to do art shows with many years ago. They would come and visit and they encouraged us to come to Paonia, where they lived. At one point we were trying to get some land and start some homesteading elsewhere. That all fell through and we didn’t know what we were going to do next. We finally did drive to Paonia and fell in love from the very first moment we saw the town. Since then it has only increased and it’s more and more clear to us that we are in a very good place for how we are progressing with our lives. We find a lot of kindred souls there, and a lot of potential. We have a great radio station and Mike is a disc jockey for the station, as Am I. Cassidy, my daughter, is a d.j. also and once a month the three of us and Mar- par, the other daughter, host a children’s show on Saturday mornings. There is alternative news in our area and we, more and more, communicate with other people who have similar kinds of music—it’s great community radio.
and that is the core of the town for us.

RING: Did you buy a house in Paonia?

MIKE: No, we moved onto some land with our friends and then we built a small straw bale house and the shop. We built that with just the two of us working on it, so we have that under our belts as an experience. The shop is just a simple wood frame but the straw-bale structure is what we lived in and it’s all run on solar power. I run the shop off a generator just to operate the power tools when needed—whatever the solar can’t handle. I can run my radio and my blowers off the solar power, which is a wonderful thing.

RING: What kind of power hammer do you have?

MIKE: I run a 50-pound Little Giant. I also have a drill press, a band saw and hand tools and that’s pretty much it. I’ve found that living off the grid—other than having the shop. I run the shop off the solar power. We built that with just the two of us, working off the grid—or a drill press, a band saw and hand tools and that’s pretty much it. I’ve found that living off the grid, the whole idea of what we needed to do. Following that and trusting the synchronicities that were telling you to pay attention first. Synchronicities push you in a direction, if you’ll allow that.

ROBIN: The synchronicity for us was that we were trying to buy this land to homestead out in western Colorado. And it all fell through, we were so distraught by that. But then we realized that it’s got to be for some reason that we didn’t think about. And that is the core of the town for us.

MIKE: Right. For instance, if you got fired from your job that you had been hanging onto for the money for or the security and then all of a sudden it’s gone, you then have to choose what to do next, because maybe you hadn’t been picking up on the synchronicities that were telling you to pay attention first. Synchronicities push you in a direction, if you’ll allow that.

ROBIN: Synchronicity is basically a coincidence that is purposeful. I guess that’s the best way to say it. It is the opportunities that we have in making our choices in life. Certain people will come to you or situations are created to set your path in different directions. If we pay attention to the synchronicities around us and act upon them, then we find that we’re guided much better in our making of choices. So what looks like coincidence isn’t really coincidence at all.

MIKE: Yes. We’re set. We’ve got land, come, thereafter our friends showed up and said, ‘Come live in the now instead of living in the future trying to make things happen, which adds fuel and really is an unknown, but I do believe we’re getting to the point where we’re ready to make another decision and that is purposeful. I guess that’s the best way to say it.

RING: Synchronicity—can you elaborate on that?

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MIKE: Yes, I agree. We’ve been married for 12 years and we’ve expanded our potential together and individually; we’ve released control over each other and now we’re a much stronger unit by far.

And with design work, you reflect your level in life at all times. Your workmanship shows that—your abilities, your willingness to learn more—everything is reflected in your work whether it’s your happiness or your unhappiness; it’s all obvious at any given point in your life in what you’re working on. Art reflects life.

RING: What other clinics or events are you scheduled for, to do demonstrations?

ROBIN: I complete a demonstration in Georgia in May, and this fall I’ll be doing a one-day demonstration locally in Colorado.

MIKE: We also have the Rocky Mountain Smiths blacksmithing conference coming up this summer which I coordinate. Mike runs the forging competition and helps at the forge only. We’re an hour from Carbondale where it’s held.

RING: Where do you envision the work that you’re both doing together heading?

ROBIN: I think as far as Mike’s skill level, he is at a point where additional education and taking a leap with his skill are both coming. With our design and execution process this has come together so well, it’s bound to head to higher art forms. How that will look I’m not sure. It’s a mystery right now as to what we’re going with our design work. I know that after we took a very large job Mike got quite burned out on hammering. So we took a break and built the shop. Now we’ve started again and he’s excited about it and has a lot of new ideas. He is making wind sculptures, wonderful forgeries that sit on a pin and spin in the wind. Where we’re going with his skills is unknown, but I do believe we’re getting to the point where we’re ready to make another decision and that is purposeful. I guess that’s the best way to say it.

MIKE: I wouldn’t mind working with some master smiths and really get a grasp of entirely different perspectives. That is what is so wonderful about going to conferences and meeting other blacksmiths. You get other ideas which we can all draw from, which is so helpful. Then you can constantly expand in your growth of knowledge and production and what you can create. So I think it might be the time for education again. I love teaching and if there were a way to make money at that without being tied down every day, it would be something I would like to do. It’s a passion for me, and I would like to go. It’s a passion for me, and I would like to go. It’s a passion for me, and I would like to go.
decided that money was not in and of itself success. I was interested in your words on simple living and being happy. I left the corporate world six months ago, 15 years I was in corporate America and just looked around me, asking what was I doing.’ Now he is blacksmithing full time and that is how he is making his living. He said, ‘It’s so good to hear that there are others out there finding alternatives also.’ The fact that he came up and told me that made it all worthwhile that we were here.

MIKE: So we have made an impact in sharing our joy. And that’s what it’s about—our joy of the great craft of metalsmithing and the joy of these conferences, where people come from all walks of life, all backgrounds, all economic levels of society, and all different skill levels.

ROBIN: Yet everyone seems to be on an equal foot here. I am so impressed with the blacksmithing community. Having that in our lives is so important to us. This level of craft and bonding happens with blacksmithing to a degree that is unlike any other art form I’ve seen. There is usually a lot of competition between artists—for example, some people do pottery hiding their glazing secrets. Everybody shares in this craft, and that is why we’re so drawn to it and why we want to participate in it.

MIKE: We are sharing everything we know, and everyone here is doing the same thing—bringing their work to show and sharing their ideas. It’s very normal in the blacksmithing community to give tips to others on how to speed up a job, or how to enhance it. You can see the results: the blacksmithing skill level is just outrageous in this country. Since ABANA started and the other groups have formed, it has hastened the day when so many of us have learned the craft so well, by the sharing of knowledge. That is a grand lesson for the whole planet right now, that if we could all just work together, share and not be competitive, everyone benefits. The skill levels of blacksmiths are increasing dramatically. You don’t need to learn all the mistakes yourself; someone else has learned those mistakes and they are willing to show you how not to do that.

ROBIN: And if you’re open to receiving that information, then your situation is enhanced—your own life, your skill level, how you look at smithing is increased and the excitement is brought up more and more. And then that carries over into the rest of your life and your work.

In my case, I know design; I have an artistic eye. It comes out of me and is part of my existence. To then try and put it all in a package and present it to people who may not have that understanding or comprehension was terrifying. I was so intimidated just thinking about it. But I put it all together and then just opened myself up. I thought to myself that I am worthy of these people sitting in front of me and having them learn from me. I have something to share. Once I looked at it like that, it all fell into place for me. All I’m doing is sharing my heart and sharing my knowledge.

MIKE: It’s honest and genuine.

ROBIN: And presenting it is one woman’s perspective. This is the way I do it. But it’s not the only way to do things artistically. This is what I have found to be helpful and what I personally think is necessary. These are things that I’ve learned. These are the books I got it from. I like to bring to the mind of blacksmiths the importance of design. The importance of design exceeds that of your skill level. Someone was saying that you can have a well-designed piece that is marginally executed; it will sell before something that is poorly designed and well executed. At the bottom of the list, of course, is something that is poorly designed and poorly executed. So the design is not more important, but it is something that people know instinctively and what is most important to the eye. I think it’s fascinating, and the potential for others to understand that is gaining prominence as education is spreading and people are getting more skills under their belts. They are definitely, as a whole, understanding the importance of design.

MIKE: Another thing we find is that people are exceptionally receptive. Once you begin the demonstration, either in the shop or of the drawings, people get very enthusiastic and the demo gets quite interactive. That’s what the demonstration are about, piquing that interest as people think to themselves, ‘Oh, gee, I wonder what that is’. Then all of a sudden there’s the answer. ‘It’s a wonderful interaction.’

ROBIN: One of the reasons we’re so thrilled about being in the blacksmithing community is that sharing of knowledge and then acceptance. You don’t hear about people at conferences talking about politics or religion—people just put all that division aside and they come together for their love of smithing. That drew me in. I came from a very competitive artistic background and rejected it. I fell into this group of blacksmithing people and they embody the potential that all humanity has to share: knowledge, tolerance and acceptance. And we’re in it!

RING: Thanks so much to both of you; I’ve certainly enjoyed hearing your personal ideas as well as those
The ReConfiguration Arches, by sculptor Albert Paley, have recently been installed at The Hotel Pattee in Perry, Iowa, and they are huge—in all respects of the word! Howard and Roberta Ahmanson, owners of the Hotel Pattee, commissioned the site-specific sculpture. When initially invited to create a sculptural work for Soumas Court, adjacent to the hotel, Mr. Paley envisioned a work that was truly “of the area.” The newly named ReConfiguration Arches have been produced from thousands of found objects that represent Iowa’s cultural heritage and landscape. Paley culled objects from Iowa foundries, farms, and salvage yards, including a tractor combine and plow parts, the harp of a piano, old roller skates and sleds, even a kitchen sink. Old railroad switches, tie plates, rails and rail fragments comprise the basic structure of the arches, and reference the vital importance of the railroad to the founding of Perry. Notes Mr. Paley: “A public artwork brings a dimension to a city that is not otherwise there. The art helps develop a sense of place. It works in a symbolic context also, to bring a focus and identity to a community.”

The work is filled with details and nuances intended to engage people visually while producing a certain emotional response. “Public art in the best circumstances does that,” says Paley. “The arches will act as a shared memory base of people and place.”

In the spring of 2003, Mr. Paley spoke at a public forum on the importance of the sense of place on creative activity, the role of artists on culture in their communities, and the relationship between artists and the communities in which they live.
“A public artwork brings a dimension to a city that is not otherwise there. The art helps develop a sense of place. It works in a symbolic context also, to bring a focus and identity to a community.”
The Neptune Gate Project represents a unique experience in contemporary blacksmithing. Three artists with very different styles and experiences were brought together to collaborate on the design and execution of a major public ironwork project. The concept and setting of this project on the lakefront of my hometown, Milwaukee, was a high point in my blacksmithing career for several reasons. First and foremost was the style of ironwork the project demanded. The Villa Terrace Museum contains the works of Cyril Colnick, including his great 1893 masterpiece. Both Tom and Dan came up with sketches of elements and forms, which began another discussion with the Museum Board. The monetary considerations began to rise and a new understanding of the importance of this piece to the Museum Garden Project was established. I have always approached the design process with a complete mental conception. This was a new experience looking at sketches from two other smiths and trying to see the project as a whole. Having been involved with exterior architectural work, I knew what engineering would be needed. We had a meeting at which I proposed a full design for the gate; both Dan and Tom agreed we should use it and submit a presentation drawing to the board. The reaction to the framed rendering of the gate was unanimous.

It was decided to divide the work up to be done individually in each shop. We decided to have my shop be the general contractor and a contract was completed. I would be creating the entire framework, the curved section and their decorative elements, the gates, and managing the installation. Tom and Dan would be doing the figure, fishes, and decorative elements. I began my work right away. Full-scale drawings and mockups were made of the entire piece. The challenge of making the frame and having the overall look blend with the very intricate design elements was incredible. Each bar was heated, hammered, and textured. Although modern welding techniques were used, I wanted the joints to have a soft, flowing, and rounded feel with no sharp corners. The resulting effect was a look as if the entire framework was forge-welded, mottised, or split from one piece. After three months, the entire piece was completed and I was able to give exact spaces and dimensions for the decorative pieces. Tom and Dan began work on their respective pieces. I was able to begin work on the curved sections as well as the large leaf and branch forms. Neptunes and the sturgeons arrived and were installed, the entire piece came alive. I was now able to start the most rewarding assignment, the gates. With 25 years of experience in traditional gate construction, I was excited to begin. We decided to use mortise and tenon corners and hot-punched holes. We have always used the master smith and striker method for joinery. I am lucky to have the most accurate and skillful striker I have ever encountered, my brother Jeff. We use almost no verbal communication and he is able to anticipate exactly what I need done, making this a very rapid and accurate process.

The process of working with other blacksmiths and a committee from the Museum was the first hurdle to cross. After early discussions about design and the scope of the project we began to discover a working relationship. A basic outline was given to us by the landscape architect, Dennis Burtitter. Both Tom and Dan came up with sketches of elements and forms, which began another discussion with the Museum Board. The monetary considerations began to rise and a new understanding of the importance of this piece to the Museum Garden Project was established. I have always approached the design process with a complete mental conception. This was a new experience looking at sketches from two other smiths and trying to see the project as a whole. Having been involved with exterior architectural work, I knew what engineering would be needed. We had a meeting at which I proposed a full design for the gate; both Dan and Tom agreed we should use it and submit a presentation drawing to the board. The reaction to the framed rendering of the gate was unanimous.

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The internal pieces in the gates were hand forged and the 72 leaves were begun. All of the leaf forms were patterns
I developed and were hot-forged using 11-gauge and 14-gauge steel. All flat leaves were done in doubles so they are the same on either side of the gates. The patterns are first worked out in 14-gauge lead sheet, which is available as roof flashing. I can use the same hot-working tools on the lead and see how the metal will move. We do not cold work the surfaces or planish the leaves because we want to maintain a fire-textured surface.

I then completed the vase-forms in the main columns for Dan’s trident forms. Finally we were able to see how the different approaches each smith used would work together. These differences are what make the Neptune Gate unique.

When we attach leaves to stems, we form the leaf over the branch and mig weld them on. After grinding and filing, the joints are textured with chisels and pattern punches to blend smoothly. Because this piece is in such a public place, we had to vandal-proof all of the leaves with hidden pins or forge them out of heavy material.

Dan brought over some of his elements and I installed them. I then completed the vase-forms in the main columns for Dan’s trident forms. Finally we were able to see how the different approaches each smith used would work together. These differences are what make the Neptune Gate unique.

With a deadline approaching, we began the installation. After mounting the columns, we put the entire framework together and the fit was just right, everything was plumb and square. We had people from the Museum watching as we were ready to hang the gates on the hinges. In 30 years of blacksmithing, the next moment was the most satisfying, when I swung them closed and the latch was engaged, they hung perfectly! Needless to say, we acted like it was an everyday occurrence.

The Neptune Gate represents a collaboration of three artist-blacksmiths who were hoping to set a new standard for quality ironwork, much like Mr. Colnick did at the beginning of the last century. I feel that the essence of sharing knowledge and working together that I witnessed at the beginning of ABANA is shown in this project. I am grateful for having the group behind me; Jeff, Gary Stewart, and Jed Krieger, who worked incredibly hard to maintain the strict adherence to quality necessary to complete the Neptune Gate.
After the changed trade name for smiths, new regulations for apprentice training, which consider the present and future demands on the trade, have been worked out.

Names are prophetic. The smith, who is now a "forging technician," will also have a changed apprenticeship. New directives have been presented to the Ministry for Trades and are awaiting action by the Parliament in Vienna. They contain instructions for the use of new materials and new technology.

When the head of the Trade Union in the province of Braunau, Peter Lechner, completed his apprenticeship as artist-blacksmith during the 1950s, there were three forge classes because of the great number of apprentices. During the 1960s, there were two forge classes, and now a "forging technician," will also have a new title.

The scope of the trade, in its basic handwork, was clearly defined. As Lechner participated in the development of new apprentice training guidelines he recognized the changed demands, and the present-day requirements for the smith’s trade.

Under points four and five of the 32 sections of the proposed new requirements are, for example, "free-hand drawing," and "basics of style" from Roman to modern. The coming smiths of today are still in a handwork trade, but no longer in a formal tradition which they can take over and carry on, rather, in consideration of what has been done before and with some view of what is coming, each must work out his own form of expression.

"The customer no longer accepts the lumpy iron," said state trade director Otto Weisleitner to the Austrian smiths, who have persisted in their work. "This is a view of the future, which will continue to be a central point.

The trade schools will be equipped accordingly and, for apprentices whose schools do not offer the new technologies, courses will be offered at the expense of the trade union. At a meeting in April this year, representatives of the state commission, the trade union and the manufacturers, the new program was unanimously approved. For the president of the smith's trade union section, Ernst Peischl, this means "a view of the future, which will be a part of the smith's life."

While Peischl, in this country, hinted at a bureaucratic attack on "designer-smiths," he could accept "forging technician" in Austria. The deputy minister for trade was one of the principal actors in the dramatic battle over the preservation of trade names.)

In consideration of the declining interest in the blacksmith’s trade, which has been continuing in Austria for many years, the state minister for trades and his representative believe the modernization of the training program, and the new name, will improve the image of the trade. The blacksmith will no longer be the soot-covered, simple, old-fashioned workman who made copies of antique ironwork, but a member of Otto Weisleitner’s High Tech profession.

Translator’s note: This was a long struggle in Germany because the generally used name for the blacksmith was "schlosser," or locksmith, although blacksmiths had not made locks for more than a hundred years. There has been a similar problem in the United States, first to teach that no, the blacksmith does not shoe horses, and then to get acceptance of "artist-blacksmith."
The Work of Adolf Steines

Adolf Steines was born in Trier, Germany, and in 1950 began his metalwork apprenticeship in the family business, followed by two years as a journeyman in Germany and abroad. Adolf studied sculpture under Professor Benton in Venice in 1957 and in 1958 studied design and architecture at the Academy of Arts in Stuttgart.

Since 1963, Adolf has worked as artist-blacksmith in Bekond, Germany, creating contemporary and traditional works in iron and bronze. In 1984 he was awarded the Artisan Craftsman Prize of the year from the city of Trier as well as the Award for Contemporary Blacksmithing at the International Blacksmith Exhibition, Lindau/Bodensee.

The W ork of Adolf Steines

Entry gate - the design follows the historical style.

Staircase with candelabras – Electoral Palace in Trier, Germany. Banister, window grilles and candelabras follow the historical style.

Portal for the Royal Palace, Saudi Arabia, 4.80m x 2.80m.

Divider - height: 3m - forged iron, contemporary.

Wall relief - copper, repousse, painted.

Trebetastr, Germany
CARL JENNINGS
1910-2003
Carl Jennings, blacksmith, artist, gentleman and friend passed over on May 18, 2003.

From cabinet pulls to window Mullions, from front door to Carl’s ingenious version of a commode, the relationships of metal to wood to ceramic, glass and stone, reflected a rare understanding of materials and place.

In many ways, Carl was just like millions of others: he was born (Manton, Illinois), went to school, got a job, and later started his own business. It was in those similarities that Carl was different.

School was not mainstream college, but rather the California College of Arts and Crafts. His early jobs were in blacksmith shops; his business, El Diablo Forge, was started at a time when decorative anything was out of vogue; and ironwork was entering the Dark Ages.

While rooted in the Arts and Crafts tradition, Carl’s visions and interpretations of the world were his alone.

He operated El Diablo Forge in Lafayette, California, until 1969. During that time, he specialized in architectural ironwork for a wide range of clients, including signs for Christian Brothers Winery and railings and light fixtures for Chapel of the Chimes. It is in the latter where his family will hold its final farewell to Carl.

In 1969 Carl moved his shop to Sonoma, where he had started building his inspiring home. Centered around a steel and copper range, from cabinet pulls to window Mullions, from front door to Carl’s ingenious version of a commode, the relationships of metal to wood to ceramic, glass and stone, reflected a rare understanding of materials and place.

Carl was known as an exceptional problem solver (he pioneered the use of the hydraulic press to form seamless tubes), but was never afraid of tedious work. His famous terrazzo tub in his Sonoma residence was done with a quarter-inch drill motor and several handfuls of grinding stones.

In 1988, Carl was elected to the College of Fellows of the American Craft Council and the same year received the Alex Blairer Award for Lifetime Achievement from the Artist-Blacksmith’s Association of North America, Inc. (ABANA). Late in the same year, Carl began working on a new sculpture series in preparation for a one-person exhibit, which opened at the Metal Museum in 1990. Accompanied by wife Elizabeth, Carl traveled to Memphis where he was honored as Master Smith.

Carl Jennings holds the copper repoussé he made during the ABANA conference at Sloss Furnace complete with conference logo, date and location. It went to Bill Marley, conference chairman, for $2,000 at the auction.

Carl Jennings, blacksmith, artist, gentleman and friend passed over on May 18, 2003. C. Carl Jennings

TRIBUTE

By casting your vote for the candidates of your choice for the ABANA Board of Directors, you are not only ensuring that progressive, responsible and hard-working people are elected, your vote also enters you into a special raffle for a new anvil...now that’s vote incentive!

This year ABANA has decided to initiate a Voter Incentive Program to encourage members to participate in the election process by casting their ballot. Dan Morris of Old World Anvils has graciously donated a type 50, 118-lb. classic two-horned anvil as a raffle prize. Any questions about the anvil, please contact Dan Morris at 888/737-5714 or go to Old World Anvils’ web site: www.oldworldanvils.com.

DAN MORRIS OF OLD WORLD ANVILS HAS GRACIOUSLY DONATED A TYPE 50, 118-LB. CLASSIC TWO-HORNED ANVIL AS A RAFFLE PRIZE. ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ANVIL, PLEASE CONTACT DAN MORRIS AT 888/737-5714 OR GO TO OLD WORLD ANVIL’S WEB SITE: WWW.OLDWORLDANVILS.COM.
Entrance gate to St. Stephen's Episcopal School, Austin, TX.

Garden gate in Stonewall, TX.

Fredricksburg, Texas
Wildflower Cross

Wildflower Cross inside chapel. Chapel door shown on next page.
The Works of John Phillips
Montgomery, Alabama

Phillips Metal Works is run by John Phillips with the help of Mark Vaughn, who is an accomplished fabricator as well as a former professional photographer.

The rich history of ironwork has endeared with many attributes, from the warmth and safety of twisted bars and honed edges to the natural beauty of fluid and flowing forgings.

Properly designed work can beckon or repel, simulate strength or accentuate delicacy, and inspire awe and even amazement. Most important of all, blacksmithing has always symbolized toil turned to purpose.

It was my admiration of these qualities that prompted my start in blacksmithing 14 years ago. I am still intrigued by the limitless possibilities contained in a piece of steel and the endless number of ways to achieve a finished piece. The hardest part of a commission is to pick a starting point.

The “Union Headboard” is a good example of finding a starting point. The headboard was a blank slate project—just build whatever you want and call us when it is ready. What started out as a wedding present turned out to be an anniversary present! I knew that I wanted to do something with an Art Nouveau feel, so I pored through all of my books for ideas. One evening as I was looking on the Internet I saw a railing that Enrique Vega had forged out of some extremely large bars. And there was my inspiration. I adapted his double humps with some ideas of my own and got to work. A year and a half later and it was done. The nicest parts of this project were that I had the time to build it exactly like I wanted and that it went to a good home.

One of the most interesting projects I have worked on was for Blount Cultural Park. Mr. Blount started out in rural Alabama digging ponds with his brother in the 1940s. In the next fifty-odd years his company had built the Superdome, launch pad 39A at Cape Canaveral (Apollo 11), a two-billion dollar university in Saudi Arabia, and many other notable projects. Mr. Blount’s life story is the American dream come true.

On the home front, Mr. Blount had built his estate into a replica of the English countryside. He built the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts in his backyard (a BIG yard—300+ acres) and donated it to the city. Enamored with Shakespeare, Mr. Blount built the fifth largest Shakespeare Festival in the world directly behind his house so that he and his wife could walk to the plays. He also built a major Shakespeare Garden next to it. As a final farewell, Mr. Blount has turned his estate into a cultural park and opened it to the public. I had done work on his family chapel (fencing and interior), so I was especially excited to be contacted about building the signs for the park.

We built four signs for the park; one was quite large. It was particularly challenging as it had to be built in the shop, taken apart, then reassembled and erected with a crane on site. We built a special set of sawhorses that would hold up the posts and keep them at the proper dimensions for fitting the straps. The most exacting part of the job were the scrolls that had to meet the brackets at just the right places with virtually no room for error, since the position of the straps were predetermined. Fine tuning a 1/2” by 6” scroll that is six feet long is not your casual stroll to the anvil!

After the Blount Cultural Park sign was finished, I had a customer ask me to build a mailbox similar to the signpost. I had been talking to Ken Mankel about custom building a very large forge for big scrolls, so I went ahead and ordered it. It is a six-burner, 800-pound forge with doors on three sides so I can pull long pieces out of the side, rather than through the end. This makes it much easier for two people to handle both ends of a heated bar and allows me to put large scrolls back in the fire to heat them in the curved sections to tweak them.

Before I even had a chance to unpack the forge and fire it up, another customer approached me about replicating a sculpture I had made from twisting a piece of 1/2” by 6” flat stock into an abstract “dancer.” The only hitch was that it had to be much bigger and it had to be done in three weeks for his daughter’s wedding. So Mr. Mankel’s new forge had its first project—a 36”-long heat on a piece of 1/2” by 9” flat stock to be twisted 180 degrees to form our sculpture. After recruiting Bob McQueen to lend a hand, Mark and I heated the piece and all three of us twisted it. Moving it about 30 degrees per heat, it took a few hours to get it around. Finishing the extremities in the large...
The following books were (and are) significant teachers of mine:

- *Foxfire 5* - given to me by my brother, this book started me thinking about blacksmithing as a career.
- *Edge of the Anvil* - the first practical book that I found – was my first real instruction.
- *Samuel Yellin Metalworker* - definitely set the bar for quality – very intimidating.
- *Wrought Iron in Architecture* - a great resource for historical styles.
- *The Art of Albert Paley* - inspired freedom in design and forging.
- All of Dona Z. Meilach's books - great design inspiration and documentation of contemporary work – it’s very interesting to look at her first book, *Decorative and Sculptural Ironwork*, and see how contemporary work has progressed in the current books.
- *Metzger – Basics of Style for the Artist-Blacksmith* - just found this book – wonderful history of the development of style with great thoughts and designs.

I still reference a lot of these books and read every book that I can get my hands on.

**Forge was a snap.** This project was especially rewarding, as the client was very active in the design phase. We would stop by at each step of the project and we would plot and plan the next steps.

My latest project was a pair of lantern stands for an estate in Birmingham. The client was also very involved in the design of the stands. They had to set on stone platforms, next to steps that led up to the house. The biggest design challenge was to get the scale right. The client had already purchased a pair of large Bevelo lanterns, so we had a starting point.

We loosely worked from a picture that her architect had provided to come up with the design. I then scanned the drawings into my computer and used Adobe Photoshop to superimpose the drawings onto a photograph of their house. This allowed me to adjust the scale of the stands to a good height. I then created a full-scale mock-up of the stand and put it in place to make sure we were on track. The computer mock-ups made it much easier for all of us to see the final product.

The lantern stands took more than 300 hours to complete. Some interesting facts about the stands: The feet are 1” by 2 1/2” flat bar. As you progress toward the middle, the stock changes from large flat or square, to smaller flat to round. This helps give it some depth. The textures also change on each layer. All of the hammer work was done with a 25-pound Little Giant.

It is very important to remember that it is my clients who make this work possible. My work is very labor intensive and therefore relatively expensive. While it is fashionably artistic to loathe those with means, it has been my experience in working with affluent clients that most of them are a joy to work with. I believe that my clients have a special appreciation for the mental effort, inventiveness and discipline involved in creating ironwork, as these are probably the same values that brought them success.

Since the job of blacksmithing leaves a lot of time to ponder all of the world’s problems, I have come to a conclusion: Contemporary blacksmithing is, in large measure, a celebration of our country’s abundance. According to Andrew Taylor, democracy is a progress from bondage, to spiritual faith, to great courage, to liberty, and to abundance. Blacksmithing has played a significant role in all of these steps, from the great architectural works that adorn the European churches, to the flintlocks of our patriots, to the utensils that allowed the explorers and pioneers to venture West and create our great country. Two hundred years later, it is the blacksmith who celebrates our country’s abundance with ornamental and sculptural works.

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**“Sundancer”**
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SEPT 6
Third Annual Pig Roast. Peter’s Valley School of Crafts, Layton, New Jersey. Call 973/948-5200.

SEPT 7
Annual SLAG tool sale at Red Mill Forge, Red Mill Museum Village, Clinton, New Jersey. Adam Howard 908/735-4573 to reserve a tailgater’s spot, or if you wish to demonstrate.

SEPT 12-14
Northern Rockies Blacksmiths Association Fall Conference. At Steve Fontanini’s Shop, Jackson, WY. 307/733-7668.

SEPT 13-14
North Texas Blacksmiths Association 2003 Hammerfest with demonstrator Corrina Mensoff. Bridgeport, Texas. See the NTBA home page at: www.flash.net/~dwwilson/ntba/. To register contact Verl Underwood 817/626-5909. E-mail: vaunder@aol.com.

SEPT 27
Sims 2003 Conference with demonstrator Tom Joyce. Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL. Registration 8 am, demos at 9, evening auction and CustomFORGE (auction donations appreciated). Send $25 pre-registration to SIMS: Allyn Bldg., Rm. 113, Carbondale, IL 62901. Amy Wiskol 618/444-1746 or Angela Bulbok 618/549-5271 for more info.

SEPT 27-29

SEPTEMBER 3-5
Northeast Blacksmiths Fall Hammer-In. Glenshaw, NY. Jonathan Neuber 845/447-7110. E-mail: jneuber@brc.com.

SEPTEMBER 4-5
Fall Festival, featuring over 150 juried and nonjuried craftsmen. John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, NC. 800/FOLK-SCH. See web site: www.folkschool.org.

SEPTEMBER 10-12

SEPTEMBER 17-19
Repair Days Weekend and Auction. National Ornamental Metal Museum, Memphis, TN. Linda Raiteri 901/774-6380 or e-mail: library@metalumuseum.org. See web site: www.metalumuseum.org.

OCTOBER 18
3rd Annual Hammer-In at Frontier Culture Museum, Staunton, VA. Demos, contests, fun in the Hat and more. Rust Stabilizer 540/732-9503 X167 or e-mail: rcrittogen@frontiermuseum.state.va.us. See web site: www.frontiermuseum.state.va.us.

OCTOBER 19-20

OCTOBER 25-30
NovemBer 1
Blacksmithing in Cowboy Blacksmith’s work. MBS Metal/Antique Gallery, 177 Grand St., Brooklyn, NY. Krista Kosak 718/993-1184. E-mail: kkosak@mindspring.com. See web site: www.mbsmetalart.com.

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**August 18 - September 5**

Snow Farm: The New England Craft Program, Williamsburg, MA. 413/268-3101. E-mail: info@snowfarm.org. See web site: www.snowfarm.org.

**August 21 - 25**

Rochdale Iron with Scott Larkin. Petite Valley Craft Center, Layton, UT 97140-3500. E-mail: rochdale@rochdale.org. See web site: www.rochdale.org.

**August 21 - 31**


**September 12 - 16**

The right Tools & Miscellaneous Metals Association. 1-800/498-2700. E-mail: tillers@tillers.org. Web site: www.wmich.edu/tillers.

**October 5 - 11**

Damasco with Bill Fromm. Bill Fromm School of Blacksmithing. Auburn, ME. 888/753-7502 or 207/777-6211. For complete course schedule, call or see online at: www.newenglandschoolofmetalwork.com. **October 6 - 10**

Handles & Scorths with Scott Taylor. Bill Fromm School of Blacksmithing, Auburn, ME. Call Tetsukasa College, Scotty Hayes 905/823-5593, X. 5136. **October 10 - 13**

3-D Blacksmithing with Peter Happ. New England School of Metalwork. Aubum, ME. 888/753-7502 or 207/777-6211. For complete course schedule, call or see online at: www.newenglandschoolofmetalwork.com. **October 11 - 13**

Arnie Smithing Class with Bruce Woodward, Herb Neltner and John Sarge. Tillers International. 1-800/488-2300. E-mail: tillers@tillers.org. Web site: www.tillers.org.

**October 12 - 18**


**October 19 - 24**

For a full listing of classes and workshops go to ARABAS’s web site www.arabas.org.

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**Marketing Blacksmithing Blazes with Pat Bennett. Snow Farm: The New England Craft Program, Williamsburg, MA. 413/268-3101. E-mail: info@snowfarm.org. Web site: www.snowfarm.org.**

**AUGUST 29 - SEPTEMBER 2**

Sciptal Steel with Christopher Schmoller. Petite Valley Craft Center, Layton, UT 97140-3500. E-mail: pv@warwick.net. E-mail: www.pvcrafts.org. See web site: www.pvcrafts.org.

**SEPTEMBER 6 - 10**

Snow Farm: The New England Craft Program, Williamsburg, MA. 413/268-3101. E-mail: info@snowfarm.org. See web site: www.snowfarm.org.

**SEPTEMBER 20 - 24**

Blacksmithing Workshop: Steel Sheet Forming with Ross Haiti. Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, Deer Isle, ME. 207/348-2306. E-mail: haytek@haystack.org. See web site: www.haystack-mtn.org.

**SEPTEMBER 7 - 15**

School of Bladesmithing. Washington, DC. Call Turents Heavy. Scotty Hayes 905/823-5593, X. 5136. **September 17 - 19**


Bill Fromm School of Blacksmithing, Auburn, ME. 888/753-7502 or 207/777-6211. For complete course schedule, call or see online at: www.newenglandschoolofmetalwork.com.

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European Travels by Henry Brock
Last of a 4-Part series

For this fourth and final essay on my Thomas J. Watson Foundation-funded travels to visit blacksmiths in Europe, South Africa, and Japan, I have decided to narrate a selection of photographs to better make use of the colorful, glossy pages of The Anvil’s Ring. In January and February I was moving around in Ireland and England, north to Scotland, and then in mid-March I flew down to Cape Town, South Africa. Japan is the last stop before returning to the USA this August.

Ted Channon and the Coachman bid me farewell Clonmel, Ireland

I am not much of a drinker (sorry to alienate those among you for whom “drinking beer” and “blacksmithing” are symbiotic actions), but I must say I was put through my paces upon arrival and departure in Clonmel. Ted Channon, aging but spirited blacksmith and farrier, and his family of award-winning horse-shoers gave me such a nice welcome that I didn’t really feel like waking up the following day. I managed, though, and later accompanied Ted’s son Joseph for a day of shoeing out in the countryside. He says his record for doing all four feet from the time of opening the car door to driving off is 16 minutes; I was duly impressed by his “unhurried” pace that day. There is good reason why part of the Channon children’s inheritance will be in horseshoes.

Ted Channon, aging but spirited blacksmith and farrier, and his family of award-winning horse-shoers gave me such a nice welcome that I didn’t really feel like waking up the following day. I managed, though, and later accompanied Ted’s son Joseph for a day of shoeing out in the countryside.
I still miss inexpensive crunchy peanut butter, but the inexpensive raw fish quite makes up for it.

Wildfire The Blacksmith Forge, Cape Town, South Africa

Robin Hanney, right-hand man of Conrad Hicks at The Blacksmith Forge, seems to live for the sake of shaping hot iron, and his many stories of past exploits were stoked with his boundless energy. When I stopped by with some fellow Watson Fellows who were also in Cape Town, Rob gave us a quick demo of what he calls “the wildfire,” drawing out in one heat a piece of iron to the limit of one’s reach on the power hammer. If only the Guinness Book of World Records would add this to its roster, I wager Rob Hanney would hold the title.

Albert Faasen and John Allesandri at the Flying Cow Studios, Cape Town, South Africa

Albert Faasen, machinist and toolmaker for The Blacksmith Forge, took it upon himself to show me around Cape Town and the surrounding countryside, and one of the places we stopped was just down the road from The Blacksmith Forge. John Allesandri of Flying Cow Studios makes brass gongs, among other things, for use at big Cape Town trance parties; he said he had to make them out of thicker brass plate (3 mm instead of 2 mm) because “the guys would take off their shirts and just beat on the gong as hard as they could, to impress the girls you know, and would end up punching holes through the thinner metal.”

Luke of RootForm, at the hammer, Cape Town, South Africa

The guys at RootForm were a nice, industrious motley crew and their shop was peppered with experimental forms in iron and multimedia; it reminded me of the exciting, sensory-overload feeling of walking as a young boy with my mother into the university art department where she was enrolled. Sight and smell and sound all mixed, indicating that here was a place where things could materialize. This is one of the reasons I like visiting blacksmiths and their laboratories, to capture that feeling.

The evening of this photograph was the christening of their new hammer, an electric-motor driven spring hammer designed by Mario of RootForm and built by the group with parts from all over; a real team effort. They broke a bottle of champagne on the new machine, pounded some iron, and blew an anvil in the front yard to top things off.

Mt. Fuji and Lumber Yard

Yamanashi, Japan

I arrived in Japan on 17 May 2003 after about 23 hours of flying time from Cape Town and was met by Mr. Junji Kawai and his employee, Mr. Kazunari Sakaki. They have been of great assistance to me in arranging future visits with other blacksmiths and in treating me to some of the specialties of Japanese cuisine (I still miss inexpensive crunchy peanut butter, but the inexpensive raw fish quite makes up for it). Kawai-san has also helped in planning my route by bicycle north to Hokkaido, finding maps and contacting blacksmiths along the route. The transportation system in Japan is quite adequate for my needs, but after 9 months of taking trains and planes and automobiles I felt the need to get some exercise.

From Monday 26 May to Friday 30 May I cycled about 320 kilometers from Matsumoto (where I went with Mr. Kawai and Mr. Sakaki to a craft fair) back to Tokyo, visiting several blacksmiths along the way. This photograph of the famous Mt. Fuji was taken along Route 137.

Much has happened to me throughout these travels, and I have happened along to many blacksmiths since I left the US at the end of July 2002. I predict that this year of blacksmith hop-scout will be one that I will look back upon and continue to digest for the rest of my life. I am wholeheartedly grateful to all the kind folk who have welcomed me; because of them these past ten months have been thoroughly enriching. The blacksmithing community is a fine one, and I am glad that this old craft has persisted and forged itself a path for the future.
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