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The 2009 CBA Conference

Content:

- 2010 ABANA Conference Demonstrators:
  - Dan Nauman
  - Dan Boone
  - Tom Lutat

- 2010 ABANA Ring Project: Call for Submissions:
  - Richard Rosinski
  - Western Nebraska Black Bark Elm Project
  - Witty Sailor

- Photography For Blacksmiths

- The Historic Blacksmith Shop: Calora, California - After the Gold Rush

- Tom Clark Memorial:
  - By Tim Convery

- ABANA Bealer Award 2009

- Regional Report 2009 California

- New Works:
  - Olih Bonikovsky
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Regional Report 2009 California

Blacksmith Association Conference

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Witty Sailor

Photography For Blacksmiths

The Historic Blacksmith Shop:

Calora, California - After the Gold Rush

By Mark Paul Kocher, Senior Guest Editor

Tom Clark Memorial:

By Tim Convery

Check your ABANA membership expiration date on the mailing label. If the date there is 9/30/2009, it is urgent that you renew now to continue your ABANA membership. If the date is 12/31/2009, please look for your renewal notice in the mail in July and support ABANA by renewing early. Remember, the first 400 memberships received each calendar quarter will receive a CD with a compilation of Conference Gallery photos. See your renewal notice or www.abana.org for details.

REMINDER:

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Fellow members, we have lost a kind, humble, and quiet soul with the passing of Philip Simmons. I never met Mr. Simmons, but I can say that I knew about him. In February of 2008 I did an article with (Barry Meyers’ able assistance) on Philip and The Philip Simmons Artist Blacksmith Guild for our Constant Contact e-mail spot that I have called the “Affiliate Spotlight.” This article is still posted in the Constant Contact Archives and you can view it by visiting the ABANA home page www.abana.org, where you will find a link at the bottom of the page that reads “ABANA Message Archives.”

We are also including an article on Philip Simmons in this edition of The Anvil’s Ring. I hope that you find this a suitable tribute. If you want to learn more about Mr. Simmons, there are dozens of links on the Internet, including a link to the Philip Simmons Foundation.

Also noteworthy, for those of you who receive the ABANA Constant Contact e-mails, I have placed a photo of Philip Simmons in the 2010 Conference announcement; it will remain there for the duration of the conference announcements.

Speaking of the 2010 Conference, our first announcements are on the street now and we are moving right along with plans to host a good old-fashioned blacksmithing event focused on education. There will be some new faces and some more familiar faces on the demonstrator list. We have commitments from nine demonstrators, plus Tom Latané with the well-known “Patient Order of Meticulous Metalsmiths,” and well-known “Patient Order of Meticulous Metalsmiths,” and are continuing to work on rounding out the field.

Once again there will be a Ring Project with three grilles designed by board member and architect John Yust; the announcement is in this edition of The Anvil’s Ring. There is something new with this Ring Project: that is, 50% of the net auction proceeds will be shared with the participants. If your group submits a ring that is included in one of the three 4-ring grilles, you will share 50% of the profits. If your ring is not selected, you will still share in 50% of the auction proceeds.

Other news on the conference is about the teaching stations; there will be more forging stations than ever before. This effort will be led by Mark Aspery and his able assistants Darryl Nelson and Gerald Boggs. Stay tuned for further program announcements.

One more item on the conference subject and then I’ll stop running on about the work of your ABANA Board to produce a quality event that is educational and cost effective to attend. In 2008 we ran the first-ever member survey, and we listened. In producing an affordable education-based conference with on-site camping, RV spots, low-cost motels/hotels and pay-as-you-go food, the other extras that were included with registration are gone.
ABANA is no longer involved in what has been termed the “Eats and Sheets” business for this conference. What this means is that attendees will choose their own accommodations, make their own travel arrangements, and decide what and where they want to eat. ABANA will do its best to provide information on local motels and hotels, suggest the rental car companies (some will offer a discount for conference attendees), and we will have a variety of food concessioners on site. We have been listening; most all of these changes are a direct result of the information gathered from the 2008 survey.

In closing, please feel free to contact any board member with concerns, questions, and suggestions. We have our ears on and are listening.

For Love of the Craft,

Rome Hutchings, ABANA President

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ABANA BUSINESS

2010 Conference Demonstrators

The 2010 ABANA Conference Committee is pleased to announce these demonstrators. We are working behind the scenes to secure additional demonstrators to round out the conference.

JUNE 2-5, 2010

ABANA’S GREATEST HITS

JOE ANDERSON will do one demo on forged kitchen wares and 2 sessions on sculpture.

MARK ASPERY will do a demo on making tools.

GERALD BOGGS will be busy at the teaching station.

DAN BOONE will do 2 demo sessions on dragon’s heads and his other products.

DAN AND JUDY BOONE will do a roundtable talk and question session on how they market their wares (other panels TBD).

PHIL COX will do a session on Power Hammers: Getting the most out of them, including both mechanical and air hammers. He will also cover tips on checking used hammers and rebuilding them.

AMIT HAR-LEV and TSUR SADAN (of Israel) will demo as a team. Stay tuned for details.

DAN NAUMAN will demonstrate repoussé. See article this issue.

DARRYL NELSON will do a demonstration on forging animal heads.

STEVE PARKER will demonstrate power hammer tools and forging; he and Phil Cox will do separate demos but they will complement each other.

TOM LATANE will lead the “Meticulous Metalmiths” forging a lock during the conference (see article this issue).

MARK ASPERY will run the “Green Coal” teaching station, with DARRYL NELSON and GERALD BOGGS helping him.

Plus additional international and domestic demonstrators. See you in Memphis!

For Love of the Craft,

Rome Hutchings, ABANA President

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE CONT’D

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For Love of the Craft,

Rome Hutchings, ABANA President

Notice of Election for ABANA Board of Directors 2009 Timetable


June 20, 2009 - Notice of election published in the Spring issue of The Anvil’s Ring.

July 1, 2009 - Nominations deadline date for candidates’ statements to be submitted to the ABANA Central Office, 15754 Widewater Drive, Dumfries, VA 22025-1212.

September 20, 2009 - Ballot mailing (only if there are more than 5 candidates) with candidates’ statements in the Summer issue of The Anvil’s Ring. This year there were 5 candidates, so they will automatically fill the empty seats.

October 18, 2009 - Postmark deadline for completed ballots.

November 4, 2009 - Notification to elected Board members.
ABANA BUSINESS

December 3, 2009 - Board meeting to be

T - Board meeting to be

athan Blank

828-765-2359.

Anvil’s

Individual members – $00 and up

David Hutchison -- Cordova, MD

Paul Boulay -- Campbell, CA

Individual members – $00 and up

Rome Hutchings -- Clearwater, MN

Mack Beal -- Jackson, NH

Individual members – $2,000 and up

The Guild of Metalsmiths, St. Paul, MN

Blacksmith Guild of Virginia, Amelia, VA

Balcones Forge, Austin, TX

Jonesborough, TN

Mid-Atlantic Smith’s Association,

Affiliates -- $000 and up

Jill Cooper -- Willcox, AZ

Joe Cappel -- Ft.Worth, TX

Bruce Delaney -- Peyton, CO

Robert Evans -- Liberty, MO

Steve Fontanini -- Jackson, WY

Toby Hickman -- Westport, CA

Doug Glessler -- Phoenix, AZ

Jeffry Luy -- Atlanta, GA

Kirk McNeil -- Santa Cruz, CA

Linda Tanner -- Amelia, VA

Joseph Urbano -- Ashburn, VA

Scott Vore -- Camell, IN

Contracts

Central Office contract will be reviewed

yearly. The Anvil’s Ring, the Hammer’s Blow, and the Accounting and Tax Preparation

Contracts all extend through 2009.

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 newsletters.

Scholarships

ABANA scholarships are available to all ABANA members. The closing dates are: January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1.

ABANA has initiated a new grants program

for individual members who are creating demonstrations that introduce blacksmithing

to the general public. Information can be obtained from the ABANA Central Office, call 703-680-1632.

Dues Decrease for 2-year Sign-ups

Due to these difficult economic times we have discounted our RATES for two-year memberships. Effective October 1:

** $105 = 2 Year Regular

** $ 95 = 2 Year Senior

** $ 85 = 2 Year Student

** $125 = 2 Year Foreign

** $ 85 = 2 Year Library

Guest Editors

We are still seeking guest editors as announced in previous issues. Several proposals have been received and we are working with these fine volunteers to schedule the issues where their exciting content will be showcased. We would like the Guest Editor slot to be an ongoing process. Perhaps there is great unrecognized talent in your region. Sign up to be a guest editor and tell the world about it!

This issue introduces the first Guest Editor

in this issue of the

Anvil’s Ring. The theme is now open…

see the insert in

this issue of the magazines.

2010 Conference Registration is now open…

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My name is Doug Kluender and I have served on the ABANA board since February 2008. I was appointed to fill the remainder of the term previously held by Dorothy Steigler. Prior to being selected I had served as an off-board member of both the bylaws and finance committees. Locally, I have served as a board member of the Arizona Artist Blacksmith Association and was twice elected president.

I believe that ABANA should focus its efforts on supporting local blacksmithing organizations. During the past four years I have been have been directly involved in a cooperative program with the Colorado and California associations to bring renowned British smiths to our states. We have brought Peter Parkinson, Mark Constable, Adrian Legge and Henry Pomfret over at nominal cost by working together. We need to find more opportunities to perpetuate our art and craft through efforts such as this.

With your support I look forward to working to define the role of ABANA and seek better ways to carry out our charter of educating the public and promoting our craft.
I traveled to Europe on one of the Leonard Masters trips with 40 blacksmiths. Metal is in my blood, even on vacation. My work has been featured in a number of galleries throughout the years with both my steel sculptures and furnishings, and silver and steel jewelry. Most currently the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft and artfulhome.com are carrying my work.

I also do trunk shows with my jewelry, both silver and steel. My work has been published in The Contemporary Blacksmith, Best Of America: Jewelry Artists and Artisans, and Art Jewelry Today, along with various newspaper articles.

I have experience as Publications and Advertising Design Manager, Art Director, Project Manager, and Production Manager. One leads people, and manages resources. As a synergistic leader and hands-on manager, I evaluate performance, offer guidance, resolve conflicts, and identify resource needs in my team. And, whether in a team of one or twenty, I am personally committed to continual self-improvement. It will be an honor to serve as one of your Directors.

Steve Williamson
Columbia, Tennessee

I am a full-time blacksmith with eighteen years’ experience and manage a shop in Columbia, TN. I served a four-year millwright apprenticeship which sparked my interest in blacksmithing.

I am past President of the Appalachian Area Chapter of Blacksmiths and also a member of the Alabama Forge Council. I have received the Francis Whitaker Scholarship and the Joe Humble Scholarship. I was also presented the Joe Humble Hammer Award and a lifetime membership to the Appalachian Area Chapter of Blacksmiths.

My teaching experience ranges from local to international. I have taught and demonstrated locally at schools and colleges in my community, local forge meetings, John C. Campbell Folk School, The Appalachian Center for Crafts, and the Hot Iron Muster 2002, in Brisbane, Australia.

I shop at my house and I specialize in custom ironwork, railings, gates, furniture, fireplace accessories and more. I was recently commissioned by the city of Nashville, TN, to restore the ironworks in the historic city cemetery.

I am including my e-mail address or can be contacted by phone for any further details. My e-mail address is stevew@go.com or 931-381-7910 home phone, cell phone 1-931-374-1190.

Anvil's Ring
Steve Williamson
Columbia, Tennessee

MAIL
To Sebastian Publishing, Mimi Clark
Dear Mimi,

What a wonderful surprise! And it was a surprise, only because we’d lost track of when [the article] was to appear. So Melvin received some unexpected calls, notes and letters from ABANA friends who were quicker to read their copies than we’d been.

The tribute that you ran was just lovely (see The Anvil’s Ring, Spring, 2009). We found it particularly pleasing that the layout featured two senior members of ABANA who had recently been recognized for their work. The article was way more than I ever expected, Mimi. You did a great job from the little I gave you to crank it up several notches into a full-blown description of the Cleveland Arts Prize, the company’s history, and Dad and Bob’s roles in maintaining the ornamental end of the business.

Beyond recognizing Melvin Rose and Rose Iron Works and Nehem Hersom’s fabulous repousse, the tributes play another important role for younger blacksmiths. It shows them that there is a lifetime of work to pursue and that the “outside” world does appreciate and recognize their work from time to time. Tom Joyce’s recognition from the McArthur Foundation was another statement of this kind – that love of the craft, hard work, persistence – and yes, some talent, too – can offer a lifetime of personal satisfaction and make a contribution to one’s community, too. So thanks again. We really appreciate all you’ve done.

Cordially, Melvin Rose and Barbara Rose,
Rose Iron Works, Cleveland, Ohio
Dear ABANA,

I am humbled to receive the Alex Bealer Award from ABANA. Imagine my shock to answer the doorbell and find 35 good friends from the Arizona Artist Blacksmith Association standing at my front door recently! Len Dedot and Doug Kluender, both ABANA board members, handed me a box and Fred Borchert handed me a pocket knife to open it with. I had not a clue what was inside the box until I saw the engraved froe.

Four years ago the Arizona Artist Blacksmith Association initiated an award, of which I was the first recipient, called the Bill Callaway Award for Outstanding Service to AABA. I am truly blessed and honored to have received these awards. They are now on display in a special place in my home. The Alex Bealer Award, awarded to me in the comfort of my home and surrounded by good friends and fellow blacksmiths, was for me truly the best way to receive it.

Many of the finest people I have ever known, who have supported ABANA, are recipients of the Bealer Award and I am truly honored to have my name added to that list. Those who serve ABANA must always dedicate themselves to work for the good of the organization and never for their personal benefit. Thank you all. It is, and always has been, an honor to serve ABANA.

Very best regards,
Bill Callaway, Phoenix, Arizona

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**Open Letter to Bealer Award Recipient**, Bill Callaway, Phoenix, Arizona

Bill, I wish I could present this to you, though any of your many friends in the smithing community would be equally honored to present it or be there when you receive it. It was difficult for me ethically to be Chair of the Committee when you receive the award for a couple of reasons. First, I know and like you. Second, I started the Blacksmith Association of Missouri with your encouragement, advice and help. For that alone you deserve this award. But you were chairman of two ABANA Conferences, on the ABANA Board, started your group, and, helped so many smiths in all phases of blacksmithing, brought top-world copper smiths to ABANA Conferences as well as world attention, and changed the very lives of the people in their community.

There are many people who deserve this award, but I know of none who so many people literally demanded that you receive it. So it is with great pleasure that I played my small part in getting this to you. Many others were involved, including the other members of the Bealer committee: Lorelei Sams (soon to be the Chair) and Phillip Baldwin. I want to thank the people who helped arrange for the party where the froe was presented to you. Some other froes were beautiful. This, to my knowledge is the very nicest we’ve ever presented, and you deserve it so much. I am pleased to call you friend.

Bob Patrick, Bealer Committee Chair, 2009

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**2009 Bealer Award**

**2009 Bealer Award**

**2009 Bealer Award**

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**ABANA Bealer Award 2009**

The Alex W. Bealer Award is the highest honor ABANA can give to a blacksmith or person associated with blacksmithing. The award was created in honor of Alex Bealer, one of the founders of ABANA. Alex wrote a book called *The Art of Blacksmithing* before ABANA was formed. The book was published in 1969, a period of great decline for blacksmithing. The book became a catalyst that enabled isolated smiths to start networking and finding each other.

Several years later, ABANA was formed through the efforts of Dimitri Gerakeris, Alex Bealer, and others. Much work was done by Dimitri to get ABANA established, but due to Alex’s popularity through his book, he was used as the primary vehicle to get ABANA started.

Alex died unexpectedly of heart failure while while putting a shingle roof on a log cabin he was building and using his favorite tool, a froe (see below). So, in his honor, ABANA, which was less than 10 years old, named their most prestigious award, the Alex Bealer Award, after him.

The ABANA Bealer Award Committee is chartered to nominate the yearly recipient. The name is submitted to the ABANA Board for final approval. The award is represented by a forged Bealer froe. This year the award was forged by the Colonial Williamsburg blacksmiths, Ken Schwarz and strikers. It has been engraved by master engraver Bruce LePage, an early ABANA member who is now a professional gun engraver, one of the best hand engravers of steel in the USA.

The award is not given lightly. It is given to someone who has helped preserve and promote the art of blacksmithing over an extended period of time. This year, the Bealer Award is presented to Bill Callaway of Phoenix, Arizona.

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**A Little Bit About Froes:**

Alex Bealer loved all kinds of old tools. He also wrote a book, *Old Ways of Working with Wood.*

The froe is an ancient tool, not well recorded in history. It is considered one of the more humble tools a blacksmith might make or a wood worker could use. It is sometimes called a rending ax. In form it is a long wedge with an eye on one end. It is struck with a fee club or maul. The handle generally goes from the bottom of the wedge to the top, though an expert basket maker may reverse this. It is used to split wood into different articles, including shingles, basket splits, pickets for fences, clapboards, barrel staves, billets of wood for turning and other items. Items split with a froe have the maximum strength of the wood as it is split along its grain. In shingles the straight grain not only makes the shingles stronger, but makes them shed water.
In 1979, Dan Nauman's original design goals were simple and largely naïve. As he worked to develop his abilities, he sought out the men and women whose ironwork intrigued him. He also bought as many books as money would afford, many of which included some of the world's more recognized 20th-century smiths, i.e., Mazzucatelli, Rizzardo, Beneton, Schramm, Kuhn, Schmirler, Colink, Yellin and Brandt. Through studying the works of these and other fine craftsmen, he realized more and more how ironwork needs to address the same aspects of design as the other building trades.

Four key factors set the stage for improvement in Nauman's workmanship. In 1990, he began learning from well-known master blacksmith Francis Whitaker at his shop in Carbondale, Colorado. Whitaker instilled discipline and an uncompromising attitude.

The method of repoussé had always intrigued Dan, which led him to Boise, Idaho, to study with Nahum Hersom in 1993. Hersom not only taught him the nuances of this form of metalwork, but also how to utilize the creative and subconscious mind.

In Milwaukee (60 minutes from Kewaskum), Cyril Colnik's work can be seen firsthand, giving paradoxically an intimidation factor while also providing a benchmark regarding Dan's own work.

Networking with smiths from around the country also enhanced his process of learning, and continues to do so. In 1995, while still learning and practicing the classic forms, works by the contemporaries of the day, (reflected in what he refers to as "Neo-Art Nouveau"), offered alternative approaches to process and style for Dan. He began to realize and appreciate other exciting, largely sculptural aspects of iron directly through its honest plasticity. While not forgetting the discipline of his classic repertoire, when given the chance he applies what he has experienced into bold new forms and expressive designs.

Returning to the classic roots, at the 2010 ABANA Conference in Memphis, Dan will explain and demonstrate his approach to repoussé forms. Through his experience as an instructor and demonstrator, he feels repoussé is under-utilized today, largely because it is misunderstood by many working in metal. He will discuss that the applications in classic work are many, and learning repoussé consequently sets the groundwork for other forms in contemporary work.

Dan will not only discuss and show the processes of raising and sinking, but will also explain the tools used and how to make them, giving valuable insight as to where to begin and how to progress.

"Most likely," Dan says, "I will always have some drive to experiment with the classic aspect and nature of this process, as well as other classic forms." He has learned much about classic and repoussé work through many restorations and reproductions in a plethora of styles. Throughout the latter, he has also recognized that our forefathers in iron often used many more processes than many might realize, i.e., the oxyacetylene torch, brazing, electric welding, and screws. (Dan may also discuss these experiences at the conference, if time permits)

Twenty years ago, Dan was content with forging entirely period styles. However, as the years passed, more and more he found himself mentally conceiving forms to examine and orchestrate, driving him further to forge something that would challenge his abilities. Given the chance today he often chooses to depart from classic design, taking the opportunity to develop more sculptural forms in iron. He perceives this as a natural progression for many classically trained artisans, but something he wished to happen naturally – never forcing himself to push on into just any direction.

In recent works, such as the "Port Washington Gates" (see The Candlesticks, of which five were made, (two at 36", two at 42" and one at 46") reflect stylized wheat sheaves, the body of Christ. The "Altar of Holy Family Catholic Community, showing cross surround and candlesticks." the entrance of the Eucharistic chapel; three wall mounts to contain ambry oil glass vessels; confessional screen; and a lectern for the "Book of the Dead." All were made in the same style as the candlesticks. For more on Dan's work, go to www.bighornforge.com. The Anvil's Ring Volume 36 #4), as well as the works for Holy Family Catholic Community, a church, the designs involve much of the traditionally recognized blacksmith processes. Nonetheless, the forms are more figurative, sculptural, and enlist more positive space than in his earlier, more classic designs. Though he prefers to forge most of these elements, the use of any available power is not denied in recent works. But this use of power is the exception, and does not dominate the process.

Dan feels that learning (and also teaching) what he can about as many aspects of forming metal allows him to adapt the design to whatever his client's taste demands. It also increases the potential for him to try out new and different forms, thus always keeping the work exciting for him.

Old World, Neo-Art Nouveau, or whatever may cross his path, Dan's curiosity and fascination with forming iron continues while in the shop and while teaching, as well as when gazing upon other fine works.
For the last 20-plus years, I have followed my dream of being a blacksmith. There is something special about getting a piece of metal red hot and hammering it into a different shape. In this modern, electronic world, it is very gratifying to be able to work with my hands to form something beautiful and useful. For years now people have seen so many items they use daily be mass-produced; many do not realize that years ago each of those items was made individually, by someone’s hand. I love what I can do with metal and enjoy sharing that experience with others who are interested in seeing items formed this way – especially the children.

From the time my family settled in Pennsylvania in the early 1700s until the present day, there have been blacksmiths in my family – they say it’s in our blood! I learned a lot from watching my grandfather, father and uncles work at the anvil. My father did much restoration work at Biltmore House in Asheville, North Carolina; his shop was located right outside their gates. My uncle Daniel’s shop was contracted to do the original restoration work at Colonial Williamsburg. As a result, he, my grandfather Kelse, and my father Lawrence were all involved in this restoration work. Today my sons Tom and Mike have both successfully followed us in this wonderful profession.

Dan Boone with forged low-carbon steel scroll. Photo by Bill Snead.
Anvil's Ring | Summer 2009

TOM LATANÉ, Pepin, Wisconsin and the Patient Order of Meticulous Metalsmiths

Tom Latané has been forging iron and steel with simple hand tools since building a backyard forge in Baltimore in the early 1970s. Besides learning from many hours producing scrap iron, he took several semesters of jewelry and metalsmithing from goldsmith John Fix. Since the early 1980s Tom and his wife Catherine have maintained a shop in Pepin, Wisconsin, repairing antiques and producing work using design vocabularies from various historic traditions.

It was also in the early 1980s that the couple joined the Guild of Metalsmiths and then ABANA. Tom first demonstrated at an ABANA conference at Alfred, New York, in 1990. At the 1994 conference in Saint Louis Tom talked with other smiths doing finely detailed traditional work about collaborating. The group, which has come to refer to itself as The Patient Order of Meticulous Metalsmiths, has produced four pieces for ABANA conferences. These projects, designed by Tom (allowing the others room for creative expression), have been: a rounded top casket, at Alfred, NY; a gothic door knocker, at Asheville, NC; a masterpiece lock at Lacrosse, WI; and a chest with locking lid at Richmond, KY.

For the 2010 conference, Tom has designed an ornamental padlock inspired by examples from the 16th and 17th centuries, incorporating details which will employ the talents of members of the demonstration group, who are: Tina Chisena, Carl Close, Michael McCarthy, and Pete Renzetti. Paul Spaulding and Kevin Clancy will also contribute parts to the lock, but will not be demonstrating at the conference. The front face of the lock will be decorated with a pierced overlay and the keyhole is protected by an embossed door. The heavy shackle will be chased in the form of a pair of fish. The lock mechanism with two spring-loaded bolts will be designed to accommodate piercing in three places through the lock body.

All parts, except those contributed by Paul Spaulding and Kevin Clancy, will be produced at the conference. Tom will construct the body of the lock using rivets, tenons and forge-brazing to assemble the forged parts. The sides will be fastened to the front and back plates by three tenon pins, a method used in the construction of many shallow case pieces where the top, bottom, and sides are separate parts.

Tom at work in his shop.

(18) Surface-mounted door lock. Approx. 4” H x 2” W x 2” D. Forged, filed and chased mild steel, spring steel, and pure iron (face). Lower jaw and beard are fixed to the ward box. Reed of face is mounted on tumbler so that mouth opens when key lifts tumbler. Tubular key is fabricated of sheet, rolled and brazed, with collar brazed at top to bolster junction with bow.

(19) Surface-mounted door lock. Approx. 4” H x 2” W x 2” D. Forged, filed and chased mild steel, spring steel, and pure iron (face). Lower jaw and beard are fixed to the ward box. Reed of face is mounted on tumbler so that mouth opens when key lifts tumbler. Tubular key is fabricated of sheet, rolled and brazed, with collar brazed at top to bolster junction with bow.
Calling all blacksmiths and metalsmiths! As part of its 2010 conference, ABANA is sponsoring another ring project. We are soliciting handmade rings for inclusion in ornamental pieces that will be auctioned off at the June conference in Memphis, Tennessee.

This year, instead of one large ring framework, conference planners are preparing three separate frameworks, each with a different theme, and each consisting of four rings. The goal is to create three great auction pieces that are small enough to hang and display in a home, business, museum, gallery, restaurant, corporate board room, shop, music studio, etc.

THE THREE THEMES ARE:

**National Ornamental Metal Museum**

The rings and framework of this piece will acknowledge the important presence of the National Ornamental Metal Museum in Memphis, Tennessee, and classical ornamental metal work in general. Ring submissions might draw their inspiration from American or European master smiths.

**Mississippi River**

These rings will acknowledge the importance of the Mississippi River from the headwaters of Lake Itasca in northern Minnesota to the Mississippi River delta in New Orleans. Rings might include flora, fauna, fish, birds, boats, river towns, and history associated with the river.

**Memphis Music**

These rings will acknowledge the Memphis music scene. Rings might reference musicians (Elvis Presley), music (Beale Street blues), instruments (Gibson guitars), etc.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this undertaking is to promote friendly competition for blacksmiths and metalsmiths, to raise revenue for ABANA, and for fun and camaraderie.

CALL FOR RINGS

Anyone interested in submitting a ring (or rings) is encouraged to make and send his or her best work for possible inclusion into one of the frameworks.

Commitments are requested by November 30, 2009; however, all rings are welcome at the ABANA conference. Rings must be handed in by noon June 3rd, 2010. To commit, contact project coordinator Rome Hutchings, The Prairie Forge, 13633 Ferman Avenue NW, Clearwater, MN 55320, 763-878-1694. E-mail: forge@theprairieismygarden.com.
ABANA RING PROJECT

Rings received before the conference may be used for photo opportunities advertising the conference, a great incentive to contact the project coordinator and get those rings in early!

SPECIFICATIONS FOR MAKING THE RINGS

Ring size is 10” O.D. (outside diameter, and must be accurate) made from ¼” x 1” steel flat stock bent the hard way.

Each ring needs space left at the 12, 3, 6, and 9 o’clock positions with a minimum of five minutes (using the clock analogy) on either side of these positions for mounting. Materials inside the ring can be ferrous or nonferrous metals.

All rings are offset from the framework 1/2”. (Ring construction cannot protrude greater than 1/2” towards the back side.)

Selection will be based on: interpretation of theme, quality of execution using traditional forging techniques (chiseling, forge welds, rivet joinery, etc.), and meet specifications.

Twelve rings will be selected, four for each theme, from all the rings submitted.

The funds raised from the ABANA 2010 Ring Project will help offset conference costs and support the educational mission of ABANA: grants, scholarships to individuals, and special projects of an educational nature. Those ring makers whose rings are selected for one of the three frameworks will receive 50% of the net auction proceeds. All other rings not selected for the project will be auctioned individually and the maker will receive 50% of the proceeds.

To view past ring projects hosted by ABANA, visit: http://www.photoworks.com and click on “my photoworks.” Login as blacksmithblacksmith@hotmail.com and enter password: anvill.

After you log in, click on “My albums” or the “Choose album” box. Photos are in folders titled: Ring Project “Ring of Fire” and BAM Conference Ring Project.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to the ring project framework design and construction team: Bill Krawczeski, Charlie Bateman, Myron Hanson, Marty Hicks, Nick Hinen, Tom Latane, Rob Murray, Chris Rand, Ann Schroeder, Bob Walsh, Anna Yust, and John Yust.

WHAT LIGHT THROUGH YONDER SCULPTURE...

Richard Rozinski, Scottsdale, Arizona

My first attraction to neon light was when I was a child. As I walked home from school, I passed the local package goods store followed by the neighborhood pub, with its neon sign blazing the name of the local establishment and the favorite beverage. I would stare in fascination—the colors and the pulsing of the light were mesmerizing.

In the mid-1980s I transferred from a community college to Arizona State University to continue my study of sculpture, which was mostly welded steel. I liked color, yet found that painting the steel was very high maintenance, especially in Arizona with the UV rays wreaking havoc on any and all painted surfaces.

As it turned out, the head of the sculpture department at ASU was a neon artist and my first class with him required three sculptures using neon. He told us he would demonstrate the use of fires and torches to bend the glass tube and seal the gases inside the tube, and we would be given full use of the facilities to make our own units (a tube with an electrode on either end containing gas), or we could go to a sign shop and contract with them to make our tubes.

The instructor, however, found that he did not have the time to do the demonstration. So I struck out on my own and found a sign maker who showed me the technique and I was excited to see the glass bend in my hands with great ease and then be filled with light.

Next, the discovery of all the colors of light—not only the primary colors of neon: orange in a clear glass, and argon, powder blue in a clear glass. But then there were phosphorus coatings in clear glass that would produce purples, greens, yellows, peaches and pinks, and varying shades of whites. In a variety of old-world glass made in Europe by hand, there were solid colors of ruby red, emerald green, bronze blue, and novial gold. The whole spectrum was there. The colors were so rich you could taste them. They were dazzling. I would hear of neon repeatedly referred to as “eye candy.”

In some of my pieces I’ve used a heavy wall clear glass tube that is two or three times the thickness of the standard tubes. I produce a crack or open a tear in the sheet metal sculpture and form a bulge around the crack. Because of the extra thickness in the glass, I can blow a bubble with the glass into the crack to give the impression of life emerging. With the use of the clear glass, any other color that I might use behind a sculpture will bleed through this bubble and produce an extra added effect.

That semester I took a basic jewelry class that introduced me to the fundamentals of forging.
That class led me to an event called the Yuma Symposium where I was treated to a demonstration by Phil Baldwin, hot-forging a silver billet into a ladle with a power hammer and a ball peen. Phenomenal! Two days later I was in Tucson at Fred Borcherdt’s studio for the All-Arizona Sculpture Symposium. Fred was showing us what his 2B Nazel could do. He turned to the group of 30 or so students and asked if anyone would like to try it. I couldn’t contain myself; I jumped out of the crowd and yelled “Yes!” before anyone else could raise a peep. He handed me a 1 1/2” square bar that was five feet long and glowing orange. I immediately turned the end of it into a 6-inch pancake, and I was hooked for life.

Forging has created a whole new world for me. Neon produces lights and shadows that make my sculpture monumental by comparison to their actual size, producing a dimension beyond my wildest dream. The added colors and brilliance produce a joy in those observing my works, enveloping them in a radiance. I notice a sparkle in their eye when they see my sculptures and I have a hard time distinguishing whether that sparkle is coming from within the viewer or from the neon. My sculptures are forged and fabricated wall-mounted works that are back-lighted with neon to create the effects you see here.

Editor’s Note: For more information on Richard’s neon technique used in conjunction with blacksmithing works, contact Richard at watsu@cox.net. See web site: www.neongod.com/artists.

The whole spectrum was there. The colors were so rich you could taste them. They were dazzling. I would hear of neon repeatedly referred to as “eye candy.”

“Bolivia.” Neon and stainless steel. 34” x 34” x 6”.

“Votive-IV.” Neon, steel, copper and mokume-gane, 50” x 21” x 3.5”.

“Whispers” and me. Neon, copper and steel, 52” x 17” x 7”.

To see “Whispers” neon glow, visit the artist’s website.

“Life Force V.” Neon, steel and silver leaf, 25” x 14” x 4”.

Photos of neon by photographer Michael Thompson, mthompsonphotography@hotmail.com.
One of these days I will have to learn how to say "NO" when given the opportunity to do a project. But as an artist, how could I ever say no to a wonderful challenge such as this project presented? I was asked by Frank and Barbara Giacalone of Houston, Texas, to create a tree sculpture for their new home. The requirements of the sculpture were that it had to be hand-forged, look like a “distressed” tree, be a light fixture and, oh yes -- sit on top of the island in their kitchen. The island in their kitchen contains the built-in cooktop, prep sink, seating for 6-8 people, and has a granite top. The kitchen’s 12-ft. primary and 24-ft. secondary ceilings would allow adequate room for the 8 1/2 ft. tall, 8-ft. diameter tree to grow into the open space above the island. All of these requirements presented a personal challenge that I could not turn down.

The first and foremost factor was how to install the tree so as no pressure would be exerted on the granite. This was accomplished by having a piece of 5 1/4” wall tubing extending through the granite and cabinets below, and bolted to the concrete floor. The tree would sit upon and over a hub on the top of the pipe with a 3/16” gap between the base of the tree and the granite. (Text cont’d pg. 28)
This space was taken up by a 3/16”-thick rubber gasket acting as a safety cushion. The hub had a bolt pattern that allowed for a 360-degree rotation for optimum positioning of the tree when installed.

The next challenge was how to create bark on the 8”-diameter tree trunk. I rolled a tube that would slip over the “inner tube” of the trunk, drew 238 pieces of bark on it, cut each numbered piece out one at a time, ground and sanded each one and then plug-welded them onto the inner tube. I used 2”, 3” and 4” exhaust tubing for the roots.

I needed hollow branches/limbs for the wiring of the lights and each of the four large limbs needed to be removable. The branches were forged from 1 1/4”, 1 1/2”, 2” and 3” schedule 40 pipe. The smaller solid branches and leaves were forged out of 1/4”, 5/16” and 3/8” solid bar. I need to thank blacksmith Robb Gunter for showing me how to make pipe-forging dies as well as teaching us all how to forge pipe. I also want to thank Sid Suedmeier of Little Giant for the interchangeable die blocks for my 50-lb. Little Giant and Nazel 2B power hammers. Without the help of these gifted men, this project would not have been possible.

The next hurdle was how to put lights on the tree without distracting from the looks of the tree. I started thinking of “Hockey Puck” lights, but as the completion of the tree grew nearer, these were still way too big. After several frustrating weeks searching from coast to coast, I came across a
company called Hafele America. Hafele imports an LED spotlight with a 1 3/16” diameter. This would allow the lights to be flush-mounted in the larger tree limbs and branches. These lights worked perfectly for this project. I would like to thank David Kennedy and those at Hafele America for their help in finding me a solution to the lighting problems. The tree has nine lights facing downward and three lights facing upward for a “shadow” effect.

The ultimate finish for the tree after sandblasting was oil-rubbed bronze powder coat and a satin clear. This finish matched the dark stain in the kitchen perfectly.

The installation of the tree was a sleepless concern, considering that the tree would be “grown” in western Nebraska and “planted” 1200 miles away in Houston, Texas. The mount I used in my studio had to be a perfect match to the one already installed in Houston. There was absolutely no room for error.

Thanks to plenty of careful measuring and planning, the tree fit into its new home perfectly.

When these projects come along they are a one-time only, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the creative juices to flow. There is no way to estimate how flat or long the learning curve will be, and we artists truly appreciate the patience of our clients and family as we scratch our heads and say to ourselves, “How do I do this?” And at times we even surprise ourselves with the results. I’ll forget about saying no for now, and work on saying “Maybe!”
NEW WORKS
Oleh Bonkovsky, L'viv, Ukraine

Fish with bubbles. 30 cm x 30 cm.
Fish 45 cm x 47 cm.
Grasshopper. Mild steel.

47 cm x 47 cm.
In this installment I intend to present a “how to” by moving from the quick-and-dirty use of a “point’n’shoot” (P&S) camera toward refining the image capture through tool choice in order to achieve a specific, almost studio quality, result.

The porch outside my home/office provides a broad, soft light from mid-morning through mid-afternoon. Some attractive results can be achieved by finding similar conditions near your home or shop.

Photo 1 demonstrates that a P&S in auto mode, with flash on, destroys the beautiful, natural light and has too much depth of field to separate the subject from the background.

Photo 2 demonstrates that even the maximum telephoto on a small sensor P&S cannot achieve control of the depth of focus. The actual focal length and small aperture simply keep everything relatively sharp.

Photo 3 demonstrates what a large sensor camera with a fast, large-aperture lens can accomplish in terms of separating a subject from the background.

Photo 4 demonstrates the further softening of the background by using a longer focal length, large aperture lens.

Photo 5 demonstrates the addition of a key light to the Photo 4 setup.

Photo 6 shows the addition of a “sweep” to totally isolate and put all of the visual emphasis on the subject. It also shows one of the most useful tools you could add to your photographic toolbox - a simple mono light strobe and soft box.

Finally, Photo 7 demonstrates that thoughtful use of a back porch can achieve near-studio quality photography.

Cont’d on page 36
3: By choosing a larger sensor camera, bolting it to solid tripod to avoid camera movement and using a fast f:1.4 35 mm lens, I was able to soften the background due to the very limited depth of field at f:1.4. However, the background still remains a bit distracting.

4: By switching to a 180 mm f:2.8 lens I was able to soften the background even further, thereby providing greater separation of subject and background.

The natural porch light, acting as both key light (stronger) from the left and fill light (weaker) from the front renders the sculpture quite nicely.

5: By adding a strobe in a soft box as a key light (from the right), and using the natural light as a fill light, we achieve a bit more sparkle and edge, whether this improves the presentation over Photo 4 may be a subjective choice. Some may prefer 4; others may prefer Photo 5.

6: By adding a piece of Formica as a small “sweep” we can isolate the subject even further — achieving, for all intents and purposes, a studio-like effect; with one key light from the right and the natural light as fill from the front.

7: Here we returned to the 35 mm lens, now stopped down to f:4.8 which will preserve sharpness from top to bottom and through the depth of the sculpture. We’ve achieved maximum emphasis on the subject with the use of a sweep; beautiful rendering of form with the use of a broad, soft key light; which is also small enough to provide sparkle to the spectral highlights and preserve texture.

You can see in these examples, the color of the sculpture shifting as it’s turned to various angles on the ‘set,’ or when the strobe is added to the mix. The 6,200 kelvin light in the shadow of the porch, together with the sienna-stained siding and ceiling, along with the green foliage outside, the set all reflects off the surface of the sculpture and affects its color. The 5,000 K strobe light brings accurate color to the sensor (balanced for 5,000 K), but the natural fill light is not at the same color temperature. So when absolute color fidelity is an issue to you, only the control achieved in the photographic studio will deliver that desired fidelity (or perhaps the sheeting off of your porch, or other locations, with white, neutral gray, or black). Which is why I said at the outset, “almost a studio-quality result.”
Welcome to the Coloma Blacksmith’s Shop. Typical of a small nineteenth-century blacksmith shop, we shape black iron into tools and implements the way it was done over one hundred years ago. The vintage equipment is now antique, and the same is true of the coal-fired forge. Docsents interpret the history of the Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park dating from 1848 until the turn of the century. Our building was reportedly built in 1903, but with a little imagination we could be a true 1848 Gold Rush blacksmith site.

How much imagination? Well for a start, imagine we did not have a building. Most of the smiths in Coloma at that time did not have a fixed location with a roof. They worked outside under a tent or a tree.

The discovery of gold was the single event that brought national attention to this location. This is the site of Sutter’s Mill and the gold discovery site. The information we have discovered we found by searching recorded personal accounts, 1848-1860 newspapers, property deeds and perusing files in our excellent Gold Discovery State Historic Park museum library. Our information has been partly found in letters sent home by the disillusioned adventurers who often painted a grim picture. We comb the old newspapers looking for news or advertisements offering smithing services. We are always hoping to gain a new bit of insight about their business plans.

One such business plan was that of blacksmith/businessman J.C. Brown. According to his advertisements in the local paper, Brown opened a blacksmith shop and was a typical Yankee of his day. He expanded his business from that of a village smithy to a large commercial enterprise that included both blacksmithing and hardware of all kinds. Finally by 1855 he was offering general merchandising of groceries and provisions. His advertisements were naturally directed towards the gold mining community. One such advertisement was as follows:

“Miners’ Tools, etc., at the old shop of J.C. Brown, situated on Main Street, opposite the Miners’ Hotel, will always be found on hand and of the best quality:—Shovels, Hoes, Drills, Rakes, Picks, Hammers, Sledges, Axes, Crowbars, Steel, Iron-Blasting Implements, Blasting Powder.”

We found the location of the Miners’ Hotel on Main Street. It was on a map drawn by Herman Au, C.E., in 1857. This advertisement helps us understand where they were located and what tools they made to satisfy the demanding market.

As the town grew and the competition to supply iron goods became more competitive, we see specialization. Some smiths like Brown made tools, i.e., shovels, picks and axes, while another specialized in gunsmithing or parts for wagons. We have also found that later, as the pace settled down and the supplies caught up to the demand, the surviving smiths struggled to maintain their market share and offered a broader range of products.

When we discover artifacts at an archaeological site we gain a different type of information. We know the brands of equipment that were manufactured and we know these products were available to the state-of-the-art 1848 blacksmithing shop. But did this equipment really make it all the way out West? When we actually find the item at the location, it reinforces our view and backs up our story. Prior to this we can only guess at the tools and equipment they might have had. How did it arrive at the location where it was found? Years later, without evidence we can’t know how it got there, but we now know it was there. A leg/post vise similar to one we use in the Coloma shop was found at the archeological site of Sutter’s Mill in 1947.

Sometimes we are fortunate enough to find a letter to a brother or a spouse back home. This can reveal interesting bits of information about their activities. When we are lucky enough to get a solid block of information, like a shop that has been relatively undisturbed for many years, this can provide a profile.

An odd bit of information can be exciting and at the same time confusing, like a forge blower powered by a small Pelton-style water wheel. Interesting! How useful would it have been? It is something to explore.

The equipment selected for use in the period blacksmith shop should be correctly dated to what was available at the time and location. When we rebuilt our chimney and hood we replaced it with the style that was there before. We assumed it had been researched.
This may have been a mistake. Good information is sometimes available, but no one bothers to look for it.

As we speculate about the actual products that were produced by blacksmiths in 1848, we find there are many sources of information. Reading about the items can give us a good description, a place to begin to try to imagine what they were like. Better yet we can examine actual antiques, keeping in mind we are only seeing the durable products that have survived over 100 years. It is fortunate that early photographs were often made. With them we are able to view the captured moment and to discover the items too fragile to have survived. That includes the everyday clothes that were worn in the photos. From the many photos available we can piece together a more accurate image of how they lived and how they dressed.

Great for period costumes.

How they actually performed their work can be an even bigger mystery. If you doubt this, try making a forge weld. Try making a weld in a coal forge, welding thin iron to thick, without overheating and burning the thin stuff. Not that easy for the amateur smith. We have to keep in mind they learned the tricks of their trade and honed their skill by doing it over and over again till they got it right. Yes, they were welding wrought iron, which welds easier than A36 mild steel. The smith who regularly produces wrought iron, which welds easier than A36 mild steel. The smith who regularly produces welding thin iron to thick, without overheating and burning the thin stuff. Not that easy for the amateur smith. We have to keep in mind they learned the tricks of their trade and honed their skill by doing it over and over again till they got it right. Yes, they were welding wrought iron, which welds easier than A36 mild steel. The smith who regularly produces work in a traditional turn-of-the-century shop knows the value of his experience. Accurate information about how they worked is important. I have heard more than one old smith say, “Make a few till you get it right, then make the ones you need.” We search for information... what we find is history.

We are fortunate to be researching a site that has been in the limelight for over 150 years. Our location was popular with historians and their findings are well documented. The museum at The Marshall Gold Discovery Park is amazing. So much has been preserved and is available that we have an unusual problem. With so much information... where do we begin? We searched the early census records to identify the trade of the head of the household. We found 15 smiths that worked in town during our period of interest. We have used the early maps to identify the locations of some of their shops.

The newspaper advertisements have been helpful at dating events. We know what kinds of equipment they could have had, and the kinds of services they offered. Their advertisements help to confirm it. We have collected copies of land deeds and land transfers that document the dates known smiths purchased land and buildings. Having an approximate date gives you a head start when you are searching for a small ad in hundred year-old newspaper. Some newspapers have been scanned and are in computer databases, but most have not. The actual newsprint is a great source and sometimes easier to search, but they can be very fragile. Cotton gloves should be worn to protect them from skin oil.

The intent of this article is to inspire the search for factual information about the past. We don’t want to create a sanitized “Hollywood” version of history, where everything is simplified, neat and tidy. We know there were flaws and the real story is usually more satisfying. It can lead to other discoveries we did not expect. We hope to get as close as possible to the facts without confusing them with uninformed speculation. We have found past research that conflicts with ours. Are we missing something that was once available or do we now have better information? That’s why it is so important to separate facts from tales told by folks who tell it “as they remember it,” or may have spiced it up to make a good story.

The clues we are looking for can be found in the locations we have mentioned and in places yet to be discovered. For our purposes we need to document where we find our facts and how they relate to our subject. We need to know their relevance. This information, when identified and properly documented, can be considered historically important. For these purposes, our discoveries can lead to a more accurate interpretation of our living history in the blacksmith shop.
It was a perfect day for it. We had great weather, clear roads, and no problem finding the conference site. It was clearly marked with a giant snail. We couldn’t miss it.

Unfortunately we had only the one day, so we did miss the tour of the Carl Jennings home. It is one of our favorite article subjects and the chance to look out through those windows over his work would have been awesome.

After a quick trip through registration for our “Press Passes” and a little fumbling with the new camera, we started out toward the sound of hammering. We have been working with these blacksmiths for years and know their faces from building The Anvil’s Ring almost as well as their email addresses.

It didn’t take long for Linda to find Dorothy Stiegler, Erin Simmons and others. It was clear then that it was going to take a while for me to get to the demonstrations. So I made a break for it, and got in to see Tony Standteiner forge a wine goblet base. Then back to the Gallery for some pics of the Bondi retrospective and the myriad of metalwork in the main gallery room.

As the next round of demonstrations was about to begin, we strolled the conference site.
All around were swap meets, and each tailgate was its own center of blacksmith commerce. Books, tools, tongs, dies—new, used, loved, cool. A guitar played bluegrass in discordant harmony with the hammering from the nail stations. There were lots of things to examine upside down and try to figure out what they were.

The nail stump (photo below, right) was fascinating, with the impossible paths the nail’s forces must have followed to split the grain and become part of the whole.

All the while, the snail was giving rides to kids and the demonstration stands were filling with onlookers. We made our way from there to the Claudio Boterro demonstration, making it just in time to see “Casanova” get his cane and finish. It was truly inspiring.

We lingered there for a few good pictures, but my attention had wandered. An earlier promise of a cold beer at the Boiler Bar had reasserted itself in my goals for the evening. One ale and several conversations later we said our goodbyes and hit the road home, the day having been filled with cool sights, new friends, and lasting memories.
TRIBUTE

Philip Simmons, Master Blacksmith, 1912 - 2009

By Al Jenkins, member of Philip Simmons Artist Blacksmith Guild and ABANA

He was bigger than life in so many ways: in mirth, activity level, spirit, caring, and in the embodiment of art. The popular perception of a blacksmith is one of a man, large in stature, strong as an ox, loud and boisterous, rough and burley, and above all focused on function over form. People found Philip different from that in many ways. Small in stature, quiet and engaging in conversation, Mr. Simmons was able to give function through his lasting art. He was a giant in many ways: in the work he produced, in the faith lived out in his church, in the role model he offered young men in his community and beyond.

Philip’s rural background gave him a set of values that would serve him well for 97 years. He was eight years old when he traveled by ferry from the former slave community called Wan- do on Daniel Island to attend Buist Elementary School in Charleston. It was a major move, from farming and fishing to a bustling port city. He began apprenticeship with the “old man” (Peter Simmons, no direct kin) when he was 13 years old. By the time he was 15, Philip had completed the 6th grade and was working full-time in Peters’ shop. Philip was 24 when he married and began running Peter's Charleston shop (Peters had opened a second shop in Mount Pleasant). Philip married Ertha Porchie and she bore him three children. But, she became ill and died after less than five years of marriage. Simmons placed the children with caring family and friends, and redoubled his efforts to earn a living. When economic times were tough, he took on side jobs like driving a taxi, dry-cleaning clothes, and running a restaurant to make ends meet. Simmons’ work ethic can best be expressed by this saying that hung on his wall: “If you want your prayers answered, get up off your knees and hustle.” His entry to ornamental iron work came from customers experiencing the expert repair work he made to some of the original 1700s iron work in Charleston. Once customers saw his craftsmanship, custom orders began coming in.

In 1982, at age 70, he was among the first to receive the National Heritage Fellowship, the highest honor the United States can bestow on a traditional artist. In 1988, the South Carolina State Legislature presented him with a Lifetime Achievement Award. Mr. Simmons was named to the South Carolina Hall of fame in 1994 and was named to the South Carolina Conservation Craftsman Award in 1995. South Carolina State University bestowed an honorary degree on Philip Simmons in 2006.

By his own admission and from the opinions of several writers, Mr. Simmons was a musician. John Michael Vlach quotes him in Charleston Blacksmith, the Work of Philip Simmons:

“...My instrument is an anvil. I guess some of you have heard me play ...a tune on the anvil, the old blacksmith tune...I’m proud of that anvil, really proud...That anvil fed me when I was hungry and that anvil clothed me when I was naked. That anvil put shoes on my feet.” Writer Jack McCray called Simmons “a jazzy person who didn’t play jazz.” He quotes Simmons talking to school children: “I would show them how I hit the iron. As I kept going, I would ask them, ‘Do you catch that rhythm? Do you catch that rhythm?’ They would get excited and say, ‘Yes, yes, catch that rhythm!’”

Simmons at his anvil.

Groups have formed across America over the last 20 years, expressly to keep the art of blacksmithing alive. When the South Carolina blacksmiths gathered in Charleston for an event to honor Simmons, they placed a giant blacksmith anvil at the foot of the steps leading up to the Charleston blacksmithing guild. Blacksmiths from all over the country showed up to take part. The last 20 years, expressly to keep the art of blacksmithing alive. When the South Carolina blacksmiths gathered in Charleston for an event to honor Simmons, they placed a giant blacksmith anvil at the foot of the steps leading up to the Charleston blacksmithing guild. Blacksmiths from all over the country showed up to take part.

Photo by Claire Y. Greene.

Snake Gate, 329 East Bay St., Charleston, SC. Christopher Gadsden house. Gadsden was the designer of the Revolutionary War “Don’t tread on me” flag. Photo by Claire Y. Greene.

Photo by Claire Y. Greene.
Anvil’s Ring, Charleston. Photo by C. Curl, forged by Philip Simmons.

PHILIP SIMMONS, MASTER BLACKSMITH, 1912 - 2009

Hearts or herons.
The gates of the Holy City were left slightlyajar on June 22, 2009. Philip Simmons passed through on his way to meet his Maker, leaving us an everlasting legacy.

PASSING THE HAMMER
American College of the Building Arts (ACBA) Says Goodbye to a Friend, Mentor and Inspiration
By Brittany Darwin Wallace

America was faced with a pressing need for the systematic training of artisans through educational programs emphasizing craftsmanship. The country was losing master craftsmen and women who were skilled with their hands, creative and innovative with their minds, and passionate about quality workmanship in their hearts. The solution to the crisis was the American College of the Building Arts (ACBA): a college inspired by Master Blacksmith Philip Simmons.

Philip Simmons was more than just another outstanding American craftsman; he remains the inspirational founder of an entire American movement to ensure that art goes back into building. Just as Philip Simmons understood the critical need for master artisans in America, a small group of individuals in Charleston saw the shortage of professional building artisans across the United States and in 1997 the group joined forces with Simmons to try and preserve the lost arts and give hope to a national crisis.

The project goal was to make a universal understanding of the world’s architectural heritage a priority in education. See web site: www.buildingartscollege.us.

HISTORY OF THE PHILIP SIMMONS ARTIST BLACKSMITH GUILD

The Philip Simmons Artist Blacksmith Guild started out in 1994 as the South Carolina Artist Blacksmith Association with about 30 charter members. Robert Walter Hill III was the President, Gerald Ailsbrooke, Vice-President, and David Dwyer, Secretary/Treasurer. Two more smiths have joined the club since then: Bob Hill was friends with Philip Simmons. Mr. Simmons mentored and guided the organization and lent credibility to the organization through his fame. Mr. Simmons demonstrated at monthly meetings several times in the early days when he was still working. The last-known article forged by Mr. Simmons was a horseshoe door knocker presented for auction at the Guild’s monthly meeting at member David Dwyer’s in February 2000. Simmons wanted to forge something in the new century.

The name of SCABA was changed to the Philip Simmons Artist Blacksmith Guild of South Carolina in August, 1998 at the suggestion of Charter member John Rooney Floyd. Rooney said that we should do it to honor Mr. Simmons while he was still alive so that he could add this honor to his many other honors, perhaps most notably being recognized as a National Living Treasure by the Smithsonian Museum. In 2007, the name was officially changed to the Philip Simmons Artist Blacksmith Guild, omitting “of South Carolina.”

The Guild has grown to about 140 members, offering three week-long scholarships and one weekend scholarship to members with longevity of at least one year. These scholarships are funded by the bi-monthly meeting iron-in-the-hat monies donated by its members.

Memorial gifts may be made to:
Philip Simmons Artist Blacksmith Guild (NFP), 1847 Pisgah Road, North Augusta, SC 29841 or to Philip Simmons Foundation, Inc., P O Box 21585, Charleston, SC 29413-1585

Tsur had been contacted by Thelma, Tom’s widow, to make the urn for Tom’s ashes. He asked me home in Israel to teach a workshop at Marv if I could help with a design. I was honored that Tsur asked me and I set to work on some drawings. We decided that the urn and a memorial sculpture should be separate as he had already made the urn. We talked at length about what it was that made Tom so special and also what it was that he enjoyed more than anything else. What mainly stood out were his signature tools for forging. Tom made hundreds of these hammers and Tsur made many of them with Tom. We decided on one drawing which shows a hand holding a hammer - not just any hammer, though, it had to look just like Tom’s. The forging techniques we employed were inspired by Claudio Bottero and the Stenico brothers. My thanks to Frank for his expertise in executing the piece; none of us had made a hand before, an extremely difficult task. It was truly an international effort. Frank: Czech Republic/USA, Tsur: Israel, Myself: USA. Tom would have loved that!

The hammer had to look just like Tom’s.
EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES & CALENDAR


October 10 - 11 Blacksmithing Workshop with Wendel Brousard. The Forgery School of Blacksmithing, Tijeras, NM. 505/270-1007. E-mail: brad@blacksmithings.com. See web site: www.gblacksmith.com.

October 9 - 11 Workshop: Making open dies and swages by direct chasing and by forging a pattern to be driven into the die stock. Demonstrator: Tom Latane. At his Tunnel Mill workshop, Pepin, WI. Call for more information, John Adams 507/289-4189. E-mail: jc-adams@mn.com.

October 9 - 13 Soup to Nuts with Jonathan Nieder. New England School of Metalwork, Auburn, ME. 1-888/753-7502 E-mail: dglasner@newenglandschoolofmetalwork.com. See web site: www.newenglandschoolofmetalwork.com.


October 17 - 18 Cast Iron Sculpture with Josh Dow and Lauren Holmgren. New England School of Metalwork, Auburn, ME. 1-888/753-7502. E-mail: dglasner@newenglandschoolofmetalwork.com. See web site: www.newenglandschoolofmetalwork.com.

October 17 - 18 Blacksmithing I. At Tillers International, Scotts, MI. 800/498-2700. E-mail: tiller@tillersinternational.org. See web site: www.tillersinternational.org.


October 19 - 20 Cooping Tools. At Tillers International, Scotts, MI. 800/498-2700. E-mail: tiller@tillersinternational.org. See web site: www.tillersinternational.org.

October 21 Blacksmithing II. At Tillers International, Scotts, MI. 800/498-2700. E-mail: tiller@tillersinternational.org. See web site: www.tillersinternational.org.

October 21 - 23 Ferro-Weibird Bundle Chan- delier with Brian Brazeal. The Yesteryear School of Blacksmithing, Crewe, VA. Contact Peyton Anderson 434/390-6203. E-mail: info@yesteryearschool.com. See web site: www.yesteryearschool.com.


October 24 - 28 Forging an original for 26 years. Demonstrator: Doug Henrickson. Rocky Mountain Smiths Conference DVD's are on sale now! 2000-2006, $10.00 each or 3 for $25.00. A wealth of knowledge from premier Blacksmiths.

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Mark Aspery
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- Forging workshops or personalized tutorials taught by Dan Nauman in Wisconsin. Curriculum from basic forging to architectural and ornamental, to repousse'. Contact Dan at bighorn@alexssa.net for curriculum schedules. Website www.bighornforge.com.

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- KNIGHTS IN SHINING ARMOR, Myth and Reality 1450-1650, by Ida Strickv. Hardback, 10 1/2” x 11 1/2”, 84 pgs., 110 photos/drawings, ISBN 1-93737-055-1, Prepaid $15 plus $4 S&H.


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2010 Conference Registration is now open… see the insert in this issue of the magazines.
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