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The annual meeting of ABANA’s board was held in Seattle, Washington, the last week of October, 2004. Seattle will also be the home of the 2006 ABANA Conference. This will be an exciting venue for “Fusion and Transformation in the Ring of Fire,” an examination of smithing from around the world—literally on the waterfront of “The Ring of Fire.”

Board members and contract staff filled the three days and nights in Seattle with directions to keep ABANA a world leader in artistic blacksmithing. A high point was devoting a half-day work session to “Non-Profit Board Actions and Responsibilities.” It speaks to the dedication each board member makes to our ABANA members and the artistic metals community in seeking ways to maximize their knowledge, effectiveness and involvement. A big ABANA thanks to Doug Kluender for the session.

Among the myriad of actions taken at the board meeting was an increased emphasis on two main goals of ABANA:

First was a doubling of the Educational Committee’s leadership. With co-chairs’ efforts, we look to elicit MORE articles from you, the members, for our publications! Our two publications are looking for original articles to share the vast expertise lying in your hands, and the editors DO guarantee, when it reaches the printed page, every submission will seem to have come from “The Ernest Hemingway of Smithing.” Well, almost! Contact board members Dan Nauman, Tim Ryan, or one of our publication editors, Rob Edwards or Brian Gilbert with your ideas, and help us fulfill our educational goals. THANKS!

Second, a new committee was added to the Educational Division: The “Professional / Academic Outreach Committee.” Chaired by Elizabeth Brim, members include board members Maegan Crowley and Chris Winterstein and off-board member Jim Buonaccorsi. Efforts to find new ways to stimulate the involvement of our professional members will be a primary goal of the committee, as will additional ways to reach and involve the academic community of art. The committee will be the “central coordinators,” but the true success will depend on the professionals and academics among us. Be involved or be square—the opportunity to help shape this committee awaits your presence, ideas and help.

As the author Nickos Kazantzakis states in the novel Zorba the Greek, “I like you too much not to tell you. You have everything—everything except madness. A man needs a little madness—or else he never dares cut the rope to be free!”

With new and exciting ways to be involved, a little madness on your part is all it takes to reach a new horizon in artistic smithing.

Welcome aboard!

Don Kemper
DEAR EDITOR,

Here are a couple of shots of the July, 2004 ABANA Conference in Richmond, Kentucky. The top one is a shot of the demonstrator site from the 16th floor of the dormitory building. The bottom photo shows the containers packed up and leaving for the next conference site in 2006, Seattle.

Pat McGarry, Washington, Missouri

DEAR EDITOR,

John McWeddell was rather offended by Tim Ryan’s Kentucky folk song introduction at the ABANA auction, according to his letter to The Anvil’s Ring. I don’t know Mr. Ryan personally, but I did not perceive his performance as insensitive or patently offensive. If one interprets it with disdain for euphemisms and political correctness, then I share such feelings. Questions: is ‘darkie’ in the historical context such a horrible word that it cannot be repeated? Is the “n” word so much more acceptable when circumscribed, as opposed to spelled out? Can I not be compassionate to my gay friends, and still poke fun at a ‘flaming queen’? Can I not grin at George Carlin’s definition of the 9/11 attack as ‘faith-based initiative’? To me euphemisms and political correctness are like calamine lotion for poison ivy: it feels a bit better, but it’s an ugly pink coating. And the blisters are still underneath. I think we are nowadays sophisticated enough to recognize real underlying offensiveness against races, minorities, males, etc. Most likely, Mr. Ryan does not fall in that league.

May I suggest that if we have to walk a lingo and sensitivity tightrope over societal divides, then let us balance across it and not fall over the side. Here is a mellowing dose from my bavarian upbringing: let’s all have a beer, together, or two or three.

Cheers,

Dietrich Hoecht, Big Bang Forge, Inc.
Clayton, Georgia

DEAR EDITOR,

This poem entitled “The Smith” was written by Oxford University student and Rhodes scholar, Tyler Fisher. Tyler is my son and I am a long-time ABANA member. Please consider including it in an issue of The Anvil’s Ring.

Thank you,
Harland Fisher, Fort Myers, Florida

The Smith

When raindrops leap like lemmings from the eaves,
when late noon cloudbursts chase me from my play,
I slip along the footpath to your shed
and watch you batter blazing iron rays.
The iron rays rise shining from the forge.
You nod to me, a welcome best unsaid,
the bellows sigh in coal clouds overhead.
You peen the glowing tip against the edge.
From white to dusky red the gleaming fades beneath your blows. ‘The anvil sponges up the heat like thirsty ground,’ you once explained.

The storm clouds trundle onward to the east.
A candlestick now glows within your tongs.
You wire brush the scale and turn to stab the slagpool till it shrieks, the magic done.

DEAR EDITOR,

This is in regard to the possible return of pure iron to the USA. Anyone who has ever gotten their hands on this material knows how wonderful it was to work with. But, just like many a good thing... the East Coast importer stopped bringing it to the USA. While it is true that it was expensive, the ease of working with it more than made up for the cost in reduced forging time.

If there are enough people out there interested, the possibility of importing it is very good. Right now I have standing pre-orders for 5,000 pounds. What needs to happen is this number has to be more like 20,000 lbs. in order to get a break on the shipping.

So if you are interested, please reply and pass this message on to others who might be interested. In the meantime, check out the link:

Regards,
Rome Hutchings, The Prairie Forge
Clearwater, Minnesota

Phone: 763/878-1694. E-mail: rome.hutchings@theprairieismygarden.com

DEAR EDITOR,

A fellow blacksmith, while walking his dog along the railroad tracks, found old railroad...
spikes galore. He decided to take some home and try making various items from them. At a hammer-in that our group held in June, he brought a fork, a spoon and a barbecue-style knife for our iron-in-the-hat auction. Well, what he can do, I said to myself, I can do as well, so I threw out a challenge to our Kootenay Blacksmiths Association group: What can YOU do with a rail spike, leaving the head intact for identification?

We had our Fall Conference last September and wow! We got quite an assortment of items, ranging from knives and steak flippers to a dragonfly and a Christoph Friedrich-style cross. We called it, "Making something out of nothing."

The KBA only meets twice a year, as we cover quite a large area here in British Columbia. Some of us are a four-hour drive from the others.

Hope you enjoy the pictures of our rail spike challenge.

Gunner Jorgensen,
Invermere, BC, Canada

Dear Editor,

As a British member of ABANA, I have taken part in five Conferences since 1986, and was a demonstrator at Richmond, Kentucky, this year. I was surprised and saddened to read John Medwedeff's letter about Tim Ryan's approach to "warming up" the auction audience. Happily as it turned out, we arrived late in the hall with our demonstration piece, and maybe an hour after it all started. I am just glad I didn't know at the time, or we might have left again, along with John. As it was we went away on a high, feeling it had been a really worthwhile conference, well organised, positive and enthusiastic with an atmosphere of friendship and goodwill, which re-affirmed the qualities I thought ABANA stood for. Was I wrong?

This could all be dismissed as a trivial event, but it leaves a nasty taste in my mouth. Not least, I am offended that anyone might think I would find it amusing. I thought the world had moved on. How would I have felt as a black or a gay man, sitting in that audience? Using this kind of public occasion to air distinctly dubious attitudes, reveals at the very least a profound lack of judgment. As an inadvertent member of the vocal minority, I might have been able to accept it as just that, had it not been for Tim Ryan's reply. Divided as we are by a common language, this reads to me as a "rich tradition" with a distinctly sinister undertone. If this is an explanation - it is far from reassuring. If this is an apology - why end it with a homily about diversity and tolerance?

I don't know enough about the ABANA Constitution to suggest how the Board should respond to this. But if the Association really does stand for tolerance and diversity, doing nothing is no answer.

Sincerely,

Peter Parkinson,
Hampshire, United Kingdom
IN MEMORY

William W. Gichner died on the 8th of December 2004, at his home in Bethany Beach, Delaware. A long-time member of ABANA, Bill, as most of us knew him, was born 91 years ago in Washington, DC. He owned and operated Iron Age Antiques in Ocean View, DE, for the past 30 years, specializing in blacksmithing tools, equipment, and knowledge. He graduated from McKinley High School in DC, and later attended American University and several trade schools, specializing in the metal arts and fabrication.

From the time he was a young boy, he worked in his father’s business in Washington, the Fred S. Gichner Iron works, which later moved to Beltsville, MD. As a marine, Bill served in WWII. Bill, like his father, was a philanthropist as well as a skilled blacksmith, and will be remembered as a generous supporter and friend of blacksmiths throughout the world.

Norraine M. Keutel, Editor
Cool fans of various sizes for use in each forging station, the teaching station and the cool tent.

**CONTRACTS**


**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 706/310-1030 or email: abana@abana.org.

**ABANA BOARD MEETING**

The annual Board of Directors meeting is held in late October or early November each year. ABANA members are welcome to attend. Call the ABANA Central Office for time and place.

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**Invitation to Bid**

Artist Blacksmiths Association of North America ABANA is soliciting bids from interested concerns and individuals for a 2006 CENTRAL OFFICE which also provides RELATED SERVICES.

This is a one-year service contract, subject to performance review and possible extension. Bids will be accepted until 3:00 p.m. EDT, September 1, 2005.

Knowledge of blacksmithing skills and terms is required. ABANA is a nonprofit, educational, equal-opportunity corporation.

To receive a detailed description of the services required, please contact: William L. Hightower, ABANA Secretary P.O. Box 475 • Sterling, AK 99672 907-262-4801 • iceanvil@alaska.net

**Thanks to Vendors**

Kayne and Son Custom Hardware loaned ABANA a flypress, two blowers and twelve tongs for use at the 2004 ABANA Conference. Our apologies for omitting this important Thank You in the fall edition of The Anvil’s Ring.

SpeedCool loaned ABANA eight Porta-A-

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Friendships Forged Along With A New Advent Wreath

By Bob Fredell

THE BEGINNING
When Immanuel Lutheran Church of Princeton, Minnesota, completed its new sanctuary in 2003, the congregation thrilled over the new altar and wide chancel. But when the old Advent wreath was moved into the new sanctuary, it was clear that it was too small for the broad and soaring worship space. Yet, it needed to stay. It had been a memorial gift and had historical significance to some in the congregation. The Advent wreath needed to be enlarged to proper proportions.

The easiest way to accomplish the task would be for me to simply build it. But the most meaningful way would be to gather together a group of parishioners to design and build it. (Design and Build -- that has a familiar ring to it for persons who attended the 2004 ABANA conference.) Ten people responded to the call.

The ages of the volunteers ranged from 62 to 85. The sum total of their blacksmithing experience was that they could spell the word. Short on experience and long on enthusiasm, the men and women were eager to learn and work diligently.

We met for three-hour sessions over 20 separate afternoons during 2004. The evening ended with a potluck dinner and a lot of good fellowship.

The Designing
The group spent the first two sessions learning about hand-forged ironwork. They examined Bob and Mary Fredell’s collection of ironwork and looked through a dozen or so German blacksmithing books.

Then began the design process. We drew and redrew, each time choosing a new design by majority vote. Finally, cardboard models of the two leading designs clearly indicated the winner. Now, on to the making.

THE MAKING
The women chisel-cut all the symbols from 16-gauge steel. With some instruction and a little practice, they jumped right into the project. They had such a good time that it was a bit difficult to take turns at the workstations! All work was by hammer and by hand. (By Hammer, By Hand -- another bell of recognition will be sounded to those persons who attended the 1998 ABANA Conference.)

The symbols were finished with gold leaf, visually tying the new wreath with the existing brass wreath.

The men worked at the forge and anvil. They caught on quickly after viewing my short demonstrations. The men hand-forged all the elements using traditional blacksmithing processes. Of course, the design called for relatively simple elements that could be completed with not too much frustration.

THE SYMBOLISM
The wreath is divided into four panels, each representing one week in Advent. Riveted on to each panel are the chisel-cut symbols taken from biblical scripture. The center symbol is the branch of Jesse (The Messiah), which grows throughout Advent from the first panel to the last.

THE BIG BENEFIT
The wonderful relationships that grew out of our working and breaking bread together will be felt long after the enjoyment of seeing the completed object has dimmed. New friendships are more important than works of iron.

The ages of the volunteers ranged from 62 to 85. The sum total of their blacksmithing experience was that they could spell the word.

Build – that has a familiar ring to it for persons who attended the 2004 ABANA conference.) Ten people responded to the call.

The ages of the volunteers ranged from 62 to 85. The sum total of their blacksmithing experience was that they could spell the word. Short on experience and long on enthusiasm, the men and women were eager to learn and work diligently.
A lot of blacksmiths I know do not have a clear approach to design, unless it is looking through books for ideas, and I feel it is so important that everyone should be able to approach design with the same ease,” Doug says.

B lacksmithing in Australia received another international boost in September when British-born and trained smith Doug Newell travelled from his new home of Canada to lead Hot Iron Muster 2004. Established in 2000 as a skills development and networking opportunity, the annual six-day Muster draws blacksmithing enthusiasts from near and far to Alan Ball’s smithy in Logan Village, just outside Brisbane (the capital city of Queensland). “Although there are very talented smiths in Australia, few opportunities exist to see them at work,” Alan explains. “Hot Iron Muster is the only event of its kind here, providing access to a top-level international smith who enjoys sharing his expertise and different experiences gained in other countries. We have people attend from all over Australia, as it really is an occasion not to be missed by anyone interested in forged ironwork.”

SUNDAY DEMONSTRATION DAY

An eager audience filled up the 50 seats available at the Sunday Demonstration Day, the traditional introduction to the week of Muster activities. This year’s guest instructor, Doug Newell, travels widely throughout the UK, Canada and the USA to complete ironwork commissions and teaching assignments. With his visit following straight after the ABANA (Artist-Blacksmiths Association of North America) Conference in Kentucky USA and the Calgary Stampede in Canada where he judges at the World Championship Blacksmiths Competition, Doug was able to present an up-to-the-minute picture of the state of blacksmithing overseas.

A four-time winner himself at the World Championship before turning to judging, Doug explained the secret of his success. "Being focused and having good designs is important. One year the competition required a scroll panel as the test piece. I started out making it in 35 minutes and had to get it down to 30 minutes for the competition. By working out the sequences and practicing, I had it made easily in the time allowed.” He showed how he initially prepares his designs in modeling clay, shaping a leaf in various ways to work out the steps that would be required to forge the steel version. He duly repeated that at the forge, making instant converts among the spectators to this simple but efficient process.

This set the theme for the day, with Doug outlining many “tricks of the trade” that he uses in his work. A firm believer in asking “what if . . .”, he showed while making a simple wall hook and then a coat rack how small changes in shape and placement of elements can give a design a totally different look. Having developed particular tooling that can be used with either hand hammer or power hammer, he used these to forge a variety of decorative elements. Doug finished off the day by demonstrating his own style of forge welding, an essential timesaving skill that can be used in many projects. As well as keeping up a running commentary on his own work, Doug fielded questions on aspects of ironwork around the world, giving the enthralled audience a greater appreciation of the opportunities to be found through the practice of this illustrious craft.

HANDS-ON WORK

Continuing from the Demonstration Day, the hands-on training this year was focused on design as an integral element of creative forging. “A lot of blacksmiths I know do not have a clear approach to design, unless it is looking through books for ideas, and I feel it is so important that everyone should be able to approach design with the same ease,” Doug says. “My aim is to pass on some design skills and shortcuts to create a foundation for people to be able to generate their own ideas.” Accordingly, the drawing board was the first tool employed on Monday morning.

Doug had prepared numbered lists of possible project items, styles, forging techniques and materials. Without knowing what they related to, each participant chose numbers from the lists to determine what their project would be. One person might then work on a door knocker in an art deco style incorporating drifting, chiseling and twisting with mortise and tenon joinery, while another might use drifting, upsetting and scrolling techniques with rivet joinery to make a traditional-style candle holder. A group brainstorming session ensued, with Doug’s design sketchbook and sample pieces offering inspiration for the new designs.

THE NEXT STEP

With the individual projects settled, the next step was to experiment with the design in modeling clay. Doug makes regular use of this very forgiving medium, which allows easy modifications and additions to be made as ideas flow. A group discussion of the resulting clay prototypes aided a further crystallization of ideas. The end of the day saw a wide array of specimens laid out, ready to be translated into metal.

To demonstrate some of the forging procedures that would be employed in the projects, Doug made a decorative letter opener. The group then forged a similar piece to reinforce the techniques and settle in to their tasks. The clay samples then came out to the forges to guide the shaping of the individual projects. With a wide variety of items being hammered out, Doug was kept busy providing direction and encouragement. By the time the fires were extinguished, a wide array of belt buckles, candlesticks, doorknockers, and bracelets joined their clay precedents on the display table.

Encouraged by their early successes, the class members graduated to more complex items throughout the week, each time stepping their way through the now familiar design process before turning to the forges. To add to the initial collection, a very industrious group turned out a remarkable display of clocks, vases, bowls, pendants, folding knives, wine racks, and even a unique clinging vine lamp holder for a lightpost. All participants declared that this different approach to design freed them to indulge their creative thoughts. They felt inspired to investigate more diverse projects without the initial constraint of inexperience, and were looking forward to building their technical knowledge along the way.

VIDEOS FROM ABANA

Doug’s swage tool, photo by Graham Moyses.

The week’s activities were not only centered
Repair Days 2004
at the Metal Museum
Memphis, Tennessee

He... had an intriguing video of a Czech blacksmith shop from the 1940s, where the equipment was driven by a water wheel.

around the forge and anvil. The tools were willingly surrendered on Wednesday night in favor of viewing some videos on loan from the ABANA Library. The support of ABANA in allowing the videos to make the trip to Australia is very much appreciated, as Aussie members are a little too remote to be able to comply with the regular borrowing period.

Pizza and cold beer were the accompaniment for “The Work of Manfred Bredohl” video, an exhibition of the legacy of work left by this German master smith. This was followed by the “Tom Joyce Demonstration and Lecture” video, an interesting insight from the master himself into his own progression as an artist-blacksmith and his work that is now so well known across the USA. Having spent time with both these smiths in the past, Doug was able to add his own anecdotes to the commentary. He also had an intriguing video of a Czech blacksmith shop from the 1940s, where the equipment was driven by a water wheel. It was fascinating to see what could be achieved with old-fashioned inventiveness.

A Friday night sojourn to the local hotel for supper and slides marked the close of another successful Hot Iron Muster. Throughout his career Doug has built up a diverse collection of work, from public art to architectural installations and many and varied private commissions. The photographic slides and colorful commentary of his work and travels made for a relaxing evening, enabling us to review the week’s achievements and to say farewell to a new friend made through the far-reaching network of blacksmithing devotees.

Footnote: Alan Ball is always keen to talk to smiths interested in visiting Australia as guest instructor for Hot Iron Muster. Email smithy@villagesmith.com.au or phone 61-7-55468211.
Blacksmiths at Stone County Ironworks have risen to the challenge of creating a new vintage style for furnishings and accessories, drawing upon their years of experience at the forge. The new Vineyard Collection features abundant, well-tended vines that seem to promise the exquisite taste of fine wine in good company. Tendrils wrap around twisting, leafy vines as nature intended. Also introduced in 2004, the Pine Collection mimics the texture of pine branches, with added pinecones and needles in the production of barstools, tables, beds, bath hardware, mirrors, candleholders, and other pieces. Iron furnishings this realistic can only be produced by artisans close to nature and in full control of their medium. Both collections are heavily textured and have finishes unique to that collection, generally, areas of black relief with highlights of brown.

David McCain, Shawn Ellis, and Shane Bailey are three of several blacksmiths making customized pieces at SCI. Developing new motifs for furniture sold throughout the U.S. has fallen upon the shoulders of these experienced and creative smiths. David, also known as Tiny, recently forged an eagle for a new flagpole in front of the manufacturing facility (see page 21), drawing on his experience in creating sculptural wildlife pieces. “It’s like working in hot clay,” he says. “You mold it to the shape you want.” Shane Bailey works only on custom pieces, including providing the quotes and finishing the design process, while turning someone’s dream into reality.

Shawn Ellis is the production foreman, a member of ARANA and the American Bladesmith Society. He compares Stone County’s blacksmithing efforts to the American Bladesmith Society’s mission of returning traditional forging techniques to the forefront and epitome of excellence in bladesmithing. “We forge our products with a traditional flair, and hope we help preserve and bring back the art of forging. We build all our own gas-fired forges. There are three four-man forges and one that is 7 1/2 feet long.” Other tools include 25 anvils, five air hammers, two 50-lb. and 16 25-lb. Little Giant trip hammers.

Finishes are hand-applied with meticulous care. More than one color and layer of paint is needed to create the visual effects of the Pine and Vineyard Collections.
Available for their entire production, 12 premium finishes are offered besides their standard Natural Black. Dapping, burnishing, these effects cannot be created with only a spray gun, but by experienced hands with years of tenure, illustrated by the many colors of their metallic rainbow.

Stone County Ironworks was started in an old gas station about 1979. Through an apprenticeship program at the Ozark Folk Center in Mountain View, an Arkansas State Park dedicated to preserving Ozark traditional culture, experienced local blacksmiths handed down the hand-forging skills needed. Demonstrating traditional blacksmithing at the Ozark Folk Center for tourists was part of the apprenticeship, combined with direct sales.

Early marketing for Stone County Ironworks was at craft shows. By 1984, wholesale accounts were more the focus of sales, with nine employees. A 5000 square-foot building was erected with the financial assistance of local governmental officials, who were seeking to create employment opportunities in the county. In 1989 the first Furniture Collection was showcased at an Interior Design trade show, and after rave reviews, was featured in the 1990 catalog. By then, 33,000 square feet of production and office space and over 100 employees handled 1000 wholesale accounts. A showroom and outlet store opened on the square in downtown Mountain View in a stone store which is on the National Historic Register. In the December 1990 issue of Inc magazine, Stone County Ironworks was rated #352 on the annual list of the 500 fastest-growing privately held companies in the nation.

In September, 2003 local business leader, Paul Balentine, became a partner and brought his production and business expertise to the new corporation, Metal Creations, Inc. The Pine Collection, Vineyard Collection, and Forest Hill Designer Series are new product lines created under the new management, as the spark of excitement and pride in workmanship is rekindled at Stone County Ironworks among the 60 employees. Nearly 2000 wholesale accounts are currently in all 50 states and include design firms and retailers. Manufacturers’ reps are also a part of the marketing structure of the company, as well as wholesale shows in High Point, North Carolina, New York, Denver, and Dallas. A catalog of all Stone County Ironworks products can be seen at www.stoneiron.com.

David McCain forged this eagle for a new flagpole in front of the manufacturing facility, drawing on his experience in creating sculptural wildlife pieces.
THE PENDANT PROJECT

ABANA Conference 2004, Richmond, Kentucky

By Al Butlak,
New York State Designer Blacksmiths Affiliate

When passing by Keen Johnson Hall at the ABANA Conference, one could see where a small group of affiliates had responded to the request of the New York State Designer Blacksmiths affiliate to design and build a pendant, or flag, and stand to represent their affiliate group. It was interesting to see the variations of designs that appeared from the guidelines that were set. Although the response was only ten percent, the attending members showed great interest in the project, viewing and photographing the pendants at every opportunity.

The following email was received by the New York State Designer Blacksmiths group from Conference Chairman Dave Koenig, who wrote: “Thank you and the whole New York group for leading the Pendant Project for the 2004 Conference. It was interesting to see how people responded to the project. Several times I saw pictures being taken when I passed by the Keen Johnson Hall. You also set a standard with the judging. This will hopefully motivate other affiliates to join any Seattle display of pendants. The Pendant Project is a unique way for affiliates to say something about their particular organization and how they view the art and craft of blacksmithing.”

The flags were gathered for judging in the main square of the campus, and they really made a spectacular show. The judges really had a difficult time making their choices, but we persevered and prizes were awarded. I was honored to be the one to award those ribbons to the winning entries. Saltfork Craftsmen of Oklahoma won first place for their unique flag stand design. Western Reserve Artist Blacksmiths of Ohio came in second with their unusual harp design, followed third by the Arizona Artist Blacksmiths with their neat-looking blacksmith on top of their pendant stand. All three groups took ribbons for both stands and pendants respectively. The ABANA pendant and stand were not judged, and were donated to ABANA by the N.Y. State Designer Blacksmiths so the national wouldn’t be left out.

Our sincere thanks to 2004 Conference Chairman Dave Koenig, ABANA President Don Kemper, Central Office Coordinator LeeAnn Mitchell, and our past president of NYSDB, Chuck Canterbury, for making the Pendant Project possible.

As a result of all this, I was selected to be the chairman of the next pendant project and the NYSDB will host the project at the Seattle Conference, Seattle, Washington, in 2006, which I am happy to accept. A word to ABANA affiliates, be thinking about what your pendant and stand for the 2006 Seattle Conference should look like, while you still have plenty of time to plan for it. Hope to see even more of you participate then, and thank you to all the affiliates who took the time to enter their pendants and stands this time. For more information, contact me at New York State Designer Blacksmiths, 1351 Walden Ave., Buffalo, NY 14211. E-mail me at: butlak1@ mindspring.com. See our web site: www.nysdb.org.

Editor’s Note: Other entries not clearly shown are: Blacksmith Association of Missouri, Pittsburgh Area Blacksmiths, Northern Ohio Blacksmiths, Alabama Forge Council and Western Reserve Artist Blacksmiths.
Steven Bondi. 20” x 12”, steel, slate base.

Toby Hickman. “Five Postcards”

Steven Bondi. 20” x 12”, steel, wood base.

Will Hightower. Flower, 14” long

Noah Kirby. Concept Model for “True To Direction”

Theodore Hinman. Menorah
Ben Cowden. Lamp, 7” x 10”

Bob Compton. “Nicotina fe”, 18” x 9”

Bob Montgomery. Wreath, 26” diameter

Erin Ryan. Plate #1 (green) and Plate #2

LeeAnn Mitchell, Elizabeth Brim, Jim Bunacconi, April Franklin, P.M. Goulding, Gary Noffke. “After Urn For Rocket,” 21” x 10”
This chest is #30 in a series that I make and donate to BAM and ABANA. The chests are auctioned or placed in the Iron-in-the-Hat drawing. This particular chest is a copy of a 17th-century traveler’s chest. Its round shape allows it to be carried under a person’s arm. The chest looks like a coopered barrel, but is actually a square box carved to look round. Chest #30 was auctioned off at the 2004 ABANA Conference in Richmond, Kentucky, to Lee Liles.

Some facts about the chest:
- Dimensions: 11” in diameter, 24” long. The woodwork was finished by me. Walnut was used: 3” x 6” timber, 6’ long, Danish oil finish. Material used for lock, braces and metal handles: mild steel.
- Dr. Iron’s finish was applied on the metal handles when they were hot. (Dr. Iron is Doug Hendrickson, the blacksmith who came up with the formula.)
The clients had just built a log home in the northwoods of Wisconsin when they contacted Rick Korinek to design and produce an indoor railing. Rick chose cattails with a heron perched at the top of the stairs. The organic shape of the plants provides a contrast to the strong horizontal lines of the home’s interior and reflects the natural surroundings of their lake home.

Designed to look random, it is a very deliberate layout. The railing conforms to the 5” pass-through restriction. Many of the leaves are twisted and turned to fit under the 4” wood handrail. This assures they do not catch on the user’s clothing and gives the plants a natural look.

Korinek took measurements and studied cattails in the wild around the home. He constructed wood forms, which defined the shape of each of the five panels created by the wood rails. He went back to his shop in the Boston area where he spent four months forging the cat tails and the heron before bringing them back to Wisconsin. Installation and finishing took two weeks.
Lucian designs and forges Early American hardware and one-of-a-kind functional pieces. Over the past 12 years, most of his pieces have been commissioned for private residences. He has also done work for museums and historic restoration projects. Lucian sees blacksmithing as a living art and his interest is in creating pieces that bring human warmth into contemporary life.

Lucian was born in 1972 in Carmel, California, and moved to Vermont in 1979 with his parents. In 1991 Lucian was drawn to blacksmithing with the hope of making tools for gardening and woodworking, but was soon captivated by the blacksmithing itself. He has been a Master Artist in the Vermont Folklife Center apprenticeship program for the last three years. He has also taught blacksmithing at the Shelburne Museum and is a founding member of the Green Mountain Blacksmiths’ Association.

While he has gleaned bits and pieces of the craft from many sources — old-time local smiths, other contemporary smiths, books, and a few classes — most of his learning has been through hands-on work and experimentation in his own studio.

RING: What classes did you attend that were helpful to you?

LUCIAN: I did go to the John C. Campbell Folk School and took two classes. One was Jim Batson’s class on making knives. It was very good because it helped me learn to make tools—hardening and tempering and basic metallurgy. After a few years I went to another one with George Dixon on chasing, chiseling, and repousse, which gave me a good idea of detail work. But mostly, I’ve learned from making mistakes, and some from books and from visiting old-time blacksmiths around here.

RING: What classes did you attend that were helpful to you?

LUCIAN: Well, for me I think a lot of it was diversity and I started when I was quite young so I didn’t have to make much money to get by, and didn’t have a lot of responsibilities back then. I do pretty much whatever work comes to me, as long as it is blacksmithing. If there aren’t people knocking on the door then I make things that I am interested in on speculation or organize classes. I do quite a few blacksmith lessons and classes. I also do ornamental custom work like gates, fireplace tools, chandeliers, custom hardware, and a little sculptural-type work. And I also have a small production line of some household items. Lately I’ve started to do more of the Early American Colonial-style hardware. This includes butterfly hinges, strap hinges, and ‘H’ and ‘L’ hinges. I have some slide bolts and many types of latches like exterior thumb latches — Norfolk and Suffolk latches.

RING: How do you market those?

LUCIAN: It’s a little bit of all those. Here I am on the East Coast, and I do think it’s sort of an East Coast thing, where the colonies were located. But it’s also very functional and it’s something that people touch; I like when people can touch my work and use it on a daily basis. I also really like detail work—work that, as you get closer and closer to it, more details show up. The small tenons and different shows and markets in the area.

RING: Tell us about the Early American hardware. Why such a deep interest in that? Is it the locale, the possibility of marketing it, or is it something that you’re simply fascinated with?

LUCIAN: Basically I have a small shop. It’s a two-car garage that I converted into a blacksmith shop. I raised the ceiling up to ten feet, which is a vast improvement over a seven- or eight-foot one. I have a coal and a gas forge and a Dupont model—about 75-pounds. I also have a Kynion-style modified air hammer that I made a few years ago. The shop is 24’ x 24’, cement floor, a rather low tech, basic blacksmith workplace. I have a couple of small welders as well as a good 4’ x 8’ layout bench, which is great. My latest acquisition is a Kidder press, which is very versatile.

RING: So blacksmithing is basically how you make your living?

LUCIAN: Yes, I do it full time.

RING: What’s the secret to being a full-time blacksmith in rural Vermont and still feeding yourself?

LUCIAN: I do it full-time.

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RING: You also have some unique video clips on your site.

LUCIAN: Yes a blacksmithing friend, Chris Caswell, helped me with it. They’re basic techniques: drawing out, upsetting, hot-punching, hot-splitting, forge welding—it’s a close up of what’s happening to the metal as I’m shaping it. I haven’t had an opportunity to do any notation with the video clips, which I hope to do shortly. It shows the basics—short videos that we kept under 10 megabytes. I edited out the sound just to keep them small so people with dial-up can access them.

RING: Where do you think you’re going to go with blacksmithing?

LUCIAN: My plan is to expand the Early American hardware portion of my business and hopefully have more items on hand. It took me so long to get the web site up and running that I fell behind on my custom work. So I’m up to my ears trying to get that done. Fall is always a busy time for me. In the winter we kind of hibernate up here in the cold country and things slow down, so hopefully I’ll be able to have a good inventory of the items I have on my web site. Next year I can work off that inventory and do more promotion work. From a creative point of view, I always have more ideas than I can possibly find time for.

RING: If you were to give advice to someone who wanted to become a blacksmith, what suggestions would you have?

LUCIAN: What I would say to him or her is that if you’re going to take blacksmith lessons or go to classes and you are really serious about learning, you need to get a setup at home or somewhere close by where you can actually work on your blacksmithing projects on a regular basis. It’s just like any other skill – you have to do it on a regular basis to get better at it. So that would be my first piece of advice. Even if one’s equipment and place of work is somewhat crude, it’s okay. I think people often over-emphasize the equipment aspect of it. At its core, blacksmithing really doesn’t require much. You need a hammer, an anvil, a forge, some tools, some steel, safety goggles and some fuel for the fire, and you’re up and running. You don’t even need a shop; if that’s not possible, you can use your front yard if you have the holes you have to make, and the little decorative details—I like all that very much. That’s what drew me to it. And this is just a niche which is small enough that a one-person business could possibly make something of it. But we’ll see.

RING: You also mentioned you’ve done some teaching. And that’s all part of being diversified.

LUCIAN: Yes, and it’s also something I feel very strongly about. Part of why I really got into blacksmithing and am absorbed by it is because it’s uncommon. I think it’s one of these skills that could be in danger of being lost. I know it is in a renaissance period right now, but it is still relatively uncommon in the general population for someone to be a skilled blacksmith. So for me, preserving the art and having people interested in it, and knowing that it exists, is important. Another thing I like about teaching is that I’m a one-person business right now so I spend all my time in the shop by myself. It’s fun for me to get out and share the things that I’m really excited about with others, show them things, and get them jazzed about blacksmithing.

RING: Where do you teach?

LUCIAN: I do classes at my shop and teach lessons. I’ve taught at the Shelburne Museum here in Vermont and also at the New England School of Metalwork in Auburn, Maine, and various other shops around the area, doing different kinds of workshops.

RING: Give us some information about your web site.

LUCIAN: I’ve had a web site for a few years now. My first site just had custom work on it, so it was kind of like a cyberspace brochure. It worked out well; if people called me with an inquiry, I could direct them there instead of sending them pictures. That way they could see a broad range of my work—maybe even things they weren’t looking for initially. For custom work this was great because people could really see my style and I think it helped them decide on their own whether it would work for me to design their piece. Then, when I decided to expand the site, I had professional pictures taken of some of my work. I added the catalog to my web site. The web site address is www.lucianaveryblacksmith.com.

LUCIAN: Yes a blacksmithing friend, Chris Caswell, helped me with it. They’re basic techniques: drawing out, upsetting, hot-punching, hot-splitting, forge welding—it’s a close up of what’s happening to the metal as I’m shaping it. I haven’t had an opportunity to do any notation with the video clips, which I hope to do shortly. It shows the basics—short videos that we kept under 10 megabytes. I edited out the sound just to keep them small so people with dial-up can access them.

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Hand-Forged Chess Set

By Lucian Avery

This chess set and table were built in the winter of 2004. It was the brainchild of one of my imaginative customers, Ken Mills. He does landscape design and in the summer of 2003 talked me into making a chess table stand for a park he was volunteering to fix up in Burlington, Vermont. It was great fun and we both liked the result. So last winter we decided to make another one, just for fun and possibly to sell. This time it would have to be mobile, and I would make the chess pieces. Ken again designed the glass chess board. It consists of three layers, the top one is 1/4-inch thick clear glass with a sandblasted checker pattern. The middle layer consists of squares of stained glass and the bottom is another piece of 1/4-inch clear glass. The clear glass plates have holes in the corners so I could bolt the whole thing to the table base with rubber washers in between.

After Ken delivered the glass, I designed and made the table. I made the top round so there was room to rivet the legs on and a place for taken pieces. It stands 29 inches high and the top is 22 inches in diameter. My favorite part was forging the chess pieces. I made a spring die for my power hammer to forge the pawns -- all the others were forged freehand. All iron was finished with an oil/wax finish, the white pieces were pickled first.

This was a great interlude between my other projects last winter -- lots of Early American door hardware.

My favorite part was forging the chess pieces. I made a spring die for my power hammer to forge the pawns -- all the others were forged freehand.
Wall-hung clothes rack mounted on rough mesquite board. 52" x 14".

Mako shark. 42" x 22" x 16". Made from stainless steel pipe. Steel-brushed to create a rust finish.

All sharks by Jack Duckworth, Waldorf, Maryland

Hammerhead shark. 42" x 22" x 16". Made from stainless steel pipe. Steel-brushed to create a rust finish.

Great White shark. Polished stainless steel. 25" at girth x 48".

John Barron, Georgetown, California
Cross entitled "Remember me." 24" x 34". Forged and fabricated mild steel. Solvent dye finish. Photo by Phil Manning.

David Kayne, Candler, North Carolina
Grape cluster door handle, 16" long, forged steel. Finish - Earthtone as base by Rustoleum, as well as Gilders paste.

David Cornett and Jenn Mays, Pine Mountain Forge, Pine Mountain, Georgia
Commissioned piece, 67" x 44". Forged and fabricated steel. Matching back gate. Photograph by Jenn Mays.
Anatomy of a Project

By Robert Walsh, Pepin, Wisconsin

Last year Keith Johnson, Roger Loyson and I received a very nice commission. It came from a wonderful couple who were building a very fine home. The commission had many components:

Receiving the commission

Establishing the artwork
- During this stage of the process, in the past I have tried to be observant visually of the environment while at the same time be a good listener. I would then try to put the gathered information into a tangible art form (gate or railing). With this commission, however, after both listening and observing, I left a copy of Dona Z. Meilach’s book, *Architectural Ironwork* with the homeowners. I found this book to be an invaluable tool. Upon my next visit, the homeowners had tagged several pages. We then discussed: Could we apply some of the feel of this photograph over here, with some of the feel of this photograph over there? I then responded to these design leads by mixing in the skills in which our business is strongest, and then fine-tuning the whole mix with what would be appropriate inside the home.

The design process went very smoothly and in retrospect, I would recommend that if you are in need of routinely identifying design directions, you and your prospective clients may find Dona Meilach’s book to be highly valuable. I’m not suggesting plagiarizing, but instead, identifying design directions efficiently.

Create your own artwork—you owe it to yourself and your client to be original.

Making the sale
- Sales were once a huge problem for me, but now have become interesting in an academic sort of way. The change took place after taking a class from my business guru and fellow blacksmith friend, Peter Stanaitis. In his class, Peter addressed developing an N.O.A. N.O.A. stands for Negative Objection Analysis. Does this sound corporate? Well, it is, but it’s also good logical sense. What an N.O.A. boils down to is this: When you are either making a sales presentation or receiving one, the person not talking is usually thinking about the downside of the situation. In the case of architectural ironwork, it is usually two things. One, they cannot get the product as quickly as they would like, and two, it is costing more money than they wanted to spend. Sound familiar? These are the negative objections our analysis comes up with (for this given situation).

The way to get around these issues is as follows:
- Overnight delivery? On the first visit, I present lots of visuals and samples. On that visit I also explain that what is simply going to have to be done is for temporary railings to be put in place so they can receive their certificate of occupancy and move into the new home. The builder usually installs these and then deducts from the price of the...
home the costs of the original railings planned. One by one, over the course of the next year, we then replace the temporary railings with hand-forged iron. This delay is always a big pill to swallow, but once it is behind us, the next steps in the process can be fun.

The second N.O.A. is the cost. This also has to be dealt with right off the bat. We do this by not kidding ourselves about what is appropriate for a given home. Market yourself to really fine homes and upscale homeowners and the sale becomes a matter of fact, because the product is appropriate. Don’t kid yourself by trying to sell fine iron to the average development homeowner. As nice as the people are, it’s just not an economic match.

Templates vs. measurements - Once the project has been sold, it is time to measure up the site. Over the years, I have made countless errors measuring. I switched to 1” x 6” storyboards which, with the aid of a battery-powered skill saw and battery-powered screw gun (drill), I make on site. This process is what Francis Whitaker describes in his Blacksmith’s Cookbook. In addition to using this process on stairs, I use it on straight-run openings as per the illustrated railing. With storyboards, our error rate has dropped to less than 1%.

Samples - With the concept on paper and storyboards in hand, if needed, I make samples of anything I am in question about. These samples are usually shown to the client and are given to production.

Production - At this point, Keith Johnson takes over. Keith disappears into his shop and with the aid of his pneumatic hammer, soon thereafter appears with the finished metalwork. Keith is one of those quiet, mild-mannered blacksmiths who somehow make fabulous objects magically appear on the face of his anvil.

Applied finish - At this point in the process, the metalwork goes to the shop of Roger Loyson. Roger is a metalsmith who has spent many years restoring vintage cars. As such, Roger is a master painter/finisher. Roger does his thing and he does it well.

Installation - See photo page 42, the installation. Notice on the left, the yellow rag above the railing. What Roger has done here is attach a battery-powered winch on the end of a cherry picker, used for removing motors from cars. This picker easily breaks down into elements which they carried up onto the second floor. Then, after simple assembly, the picker was wheeled up to the edge of the balcony, the arm (with a welded extension) hanging over the edge. They then simply lowered the hook, connected it to the railing and zip, the railing was up to the correct height. Then the picker was rolled backwards (it was on boards) and the railing was in place.

This was such a successful team effort. The homeowners were patient and were also excellent communicators. They make good decisions, and made them swiftly. Keith, Roger and Peter were great to work with. This was one commission where, for us, there was truly joy in the journey.

Keith is one of those quiet, mild-mannered blacksmiths who somehow makes fabulous objects magically appear on the face of his anvil.
By Myra Saturen

A blacksmith’s forge is not just a setting for artistic creations; it is also a place where history is made. The 1750/1761 Smithy, located in the historic residential district of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, is an excellent example of this. The Smithy, which opened in 2004, is a reconstruction of a blacksmith shop that operated from the late 18th century to the early 19th century.

The Smithy was originally located at the corner of Main and Vine Streets, a location that was chosen for its strategic position. The area was known for its iron deposits, which made it a hub for iron production. The smithy was owned by a family named Seibert, who operated it from 1780 to 1810.

The Smithy is now a museum and is open to the public. Visitors can see the original equipment, including the anvil, forge, and other tools used by blacksmiths. The museum also features exhibits that detail the history of blacksmithing in Bethlehem.

In addition to the exhibits, the Smithy also offers demonstrations of blacksmithing. Visitors can watch blacksmiths at work, using the same techniques that were used in the 18th century. The demonstrations are a popular attraction, and visitors often come to see the blacksmiths in action.

The Smithy is a wonderful example of the importance of blacksmithing in the history of Bethlehem. The reconstructed smithy serves as a reminder of the importance of this skilled trade in the development of the city and the region.

stones was found in the limestone of an about-to-be-demolished barn in nearby Nazareth, Pennsylvania. The sight of these beautiful stones, laid one-by-one by skilled masons, soon became part of the Bethlehem landscape, as passersby watched the smithy erected over a period of 14 months. Interior work on the building followed, and it was furnished with workbenches, tools and tool racks based on inventories in the Moravian archives. HBP staff member Kyle Datesman hand-crafted the smithy’s 100-pound, 6 x 3-foot leather bellows. Red roof tiles, modeled on period tiles found in Bethlehem, topped the structure.

Two forges, fashioned after 19th-century Germanic forges found in period lithographs, completed the project.

In a city passionate about preserving its history, the 1750/1761 Smithy is one of the most exciting sights in the city. But what is there about a smithy that so excites visitors?

“Blacksmith demonstrations are very appealing to people,” says Karen Huetter, HBP Director of Educational Services. “I believe that there is something magical, if you will, about watching a craftsperson use fire and human power to ‘tame’ iron and create something useful and necessary for everyday life like a nail, a hinge, a horseshoe, or a knife blade.”

Tom Turtzo, the head blacksmith for the new smithy and a descendent of smiths on both sides of his family, agrees: “People are drawn to an open fire like moths to a flame. They are spellbound. It is almost primal, an ancient memory being reawakened,” he says. In addition to its intrinsic fascination, the new smithy enhances people’s lives in many other ways. “Having a working smith makes the Colonial Industrial Quarter come alive in ways that words cannot,” says Karen Huetter. “As interpreters of this unique concentration of pre-industrial revolution technology, our blacksmith can help visitors make the sparks and experience a work world that has been lost to recent generations. Hopefully, visitors will have the opportunity to understand that life was hard 260 years ago and to sustain it meant having to make things by hand. And, because Bethlehem ultimately became a steel town, blacksmith can help visitors make that industrial and economic transition from the individual craftsman to world-wide producer.”

“Having a working smith allows visitors to compare work 260 years ago to today—was work easier, harder, or just different? Who worked and in what capacity—were jobs performed along gender lines? Hopefully, watching our smith will enable visitors to appreciate handwork and creativity and to come away with an understanding of how Moravian values played in a role in this community.”

What’s more, Tom Turtzo points out, a working smithy preserves ancient techniques that would otherwise be lost. He cites the art of forge welding, in which metal is heated to high temperatures, allowing two pieces to be joined as one piece so that there is no seam.

“In the twentieth century, we are going back to the eighteenth,” Turtzo says. “It’s like a phoenix rising, and that is exciting for a lot of people.”

You can share that excitement by visiting Bethlehem Pennsylvania’s 1750/1761 Smithy.

For information on dates for blacksmithing demonstrations, call 610-691-0803 or log onto www.historic-bethlehem.org.

Editor's Note: Historic Bethlehem Partnership is seeking items that will make the 1750/1761 even more complete. If you have Germanic continental anvils, a swage block, or a cone mandrel you would like to donate to the 1750/1761 Smithy, contact Kyle Datesman, Historic Bethlehem staff member, with one of the three bellows he hand-molded for the 1750/1761 smithy in Bethlehem, Pa.

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The sign I made is for a businessman in Orlando, Florida. It is all mild steel, with an acrylic enamel finish and guilder's paste highlights. It took about 100 hours to complete and will hang above the main entrance to his property. The sign is 54" x 30". The flowers are hand-forged and welded together. The letters are plasma cut free-hand and welded into place. The scroll work is riveted and collared using techniques that I learned from a seminar by Tal Harris. A friend of mine, Karl Stienmetz, helped me compose the design and apply the highlights.

Patrick O’Toole
Monroeville, Pennsylvania
By Michael L. Richards

This article is dedicated to Valentin Yotkov in honor of his 25th anniversary as a Master Silversmith.

It's a 4-1/2 hour flight from Phoenix to New York City, and that is plenty of time to fret over one's worthiness in the presence of Master Silversmith, Valentin Yotkov. As I board the plane and settle into my seat, I have this feeling I'd have a better chance shooting a game of "H-O-R-S-E" against Michael Jordan than impressing Valentin with my chasing and repoussé technique on his "intermediate level" pattern. Lucky for me, Valentin is the nicest guy in the world, and will offer only words of encouragement as I chisel ding-marks into my work. I just hope, when all is said and done, he invites me back to test on his "advanced level" pattern. That would be a personal victory—confirmation by the Master I am worthy.

Valentin Yotkov has a wonderful story that needs telling. It is a story of an old-world artisan following time-honored traditions in our modern digital era. However, I'm not writing this article to tell Valentin's story; I couldn't do him justice. You can read his forthcoming book for that.

No, I'm writing to tell you I'm concerned the very fabric of our society is threatened—not by domestic acts of terrorism, shortages of flu vaccine, or trade deficits with Asia—but by "bad repoussé," and it must be stopped. Now don't get me wrong, I'm not criticizing my fellow repousseurs, I'm just, in the words of Robert Frost, "...telling this with a sigh somewhere ages and ages hence:

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference."

The ancient Sumerians, the Egyptian goldsmiths that adorned King Tut's sarcophagus with depictions of the afterlife, the Greeks, and other civilizations across the Mediterranean developed the art of chasing and repoussé. Clearly the art form had migrated to central Europe by the Middle Ages, as evidenced by the artifacts on display in museums across the world. Today, only a few living artisans know...
An italian scroll chasing
those ways of old, and one has only to visit Valentin’s website (www.valentinyotkov.com) to see tangible evidence this native Bulgarian has an understanding of the art form rivaled only by the Masters of ancient times. As a kid, and his apprenticeships with Masters, he offers insight into seeing one of the ancient Masters whispering their secrets upon his tongue. It’s a magical experience. Valentin is as much a Master Teacher as he is a Master repousseur.

Valentin not only teaches the fundamentals of chasing and repousse, he offers insight into the essentials of fine art, which he divulged from his many hours studying museum pieces as a kid, and his apprenticeships with Master Bulgarian and Italian Silversmiths of this past century. This priceless information makes the difference in producing truly outstanding work. What he teaches is applicable to all metals, not just gold, silver or copper. For steel sheet—thicker, tools, and lead vs. pitch may be required, but the essence of good repousse transcends the medium. So, to avert the collapse of western civilization, I urge my fellow repousseurs to consider becoming disciplined in these techniques. I must be honest, however—learning the art form from Valentin will destine you to eternal suffering in the presence of bad chasing and repousse. So be warned...

For anyone interested in trying chasing and repousse, workshop and class information can be obtained by contacting Valentin directly at: Valentin Yotkov Studio 68 Jay Street, Suite 501A Brooklyn, New York, 11201 USA Phone: 718-852-8640 email: studio@valentinyotkov.com

Anyway, the westbound flight from New York City to Phoenix is nearly five hours. Five hours of celebration. I don’t. I passed. I hung out the “intermediate level” pattern, and Valentin invited me back to test at the “advanced level”. Few things excite me anymore, but this sure does. I don’t really know why, but I think it has to do with not just being confirmed by Valentin, but by the thousands of years of cultural heritage he embodies. I guess I find some people’s opinions more weighty than others. And that makes all the difference.

Pitch bowl with embedded work-piece

Winter 2005 – Anvil's Ring

The Ozark Folk Center 2005 Events

• March 20-25
  4th Annual Ozark Folk School
  *Basic Blacksmithing* with Scott Riedy

• May 14 - “Hammer-In” with special guest sword smith, Mark Morey

• May 15-17 - “Forged Flowers” Workshop with Scott Riedy

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Winter 2005

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IRON:
ONE HUNDRED BLACKSMITHS,
ONE THOUSAND IDEAS

Edited and compiled by Giuseppe Ciscato
Alinea Edizione, Italy, 2003, English/Italian,
hardcover, 352 pages with over 900 photographs
Reviewed by Rob Edwards

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This truly is a book of magic...the magic of forged iron...Italian style. It is every bit as good as Giuseppe Ciscato’s last book, The Magic of Italian Wrought Iron. Recommended reading for everyone interested in blacksmithing and ironwork.

The Magic of Italian Wrought Iron, referred to as the Rolls Royce of wrought iron books. Arranged alphabetically by subject (Andirons and Fireplace Irons to Wrought Iron and Glass), there are 32 categories of wrought iron work listed in the index. This makes for quick, easy reference to some of the finest pieces of contemporary Italian art around today.

As Giuseppe Ciscato so accurately states in the introduction: I wanted these pages to be a visual review of the best Italian blacksmithing art, the result of several experiences accumulated by many generations, the use of traditional methods and also the products of technological innovations.

When you browse this book, you will make a leap into the past and find yourself in a fairy tale. It is a multitude of sparkling works, of iron in the most diverse styles. The sheer number of elaborate designs, of ideas turned into objects, means that artist blacksmiths still exist in spite of whomever predicted the end of art. The back of the book contains photographs, addresses and phone numbers of the 100 artists whose work is so beautifully displayed in the main body of the book. The pages on which their work appears are also listed, once again making for quick, easy reference.

Book Review

Winter 2005

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MARCH 6 - 11

MARCH 11 - 13

MARCH 13 - 19

MARCH 18 - 21

MARCH 19 - 20
Damasus Bladesmithing with Robert Coogan. Appalachian Center for Craft, Smithville, TN. 615/597-6801. Contact Gail Gentry, e-mail: ggentry@tntech.edu. Web site: tntech.edu/craftcenter.

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MARCH 21 - 26
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APRIL 6
FindingaSuccessulArtist Market with LouisColombarini. The instructor will share over 30 years of experience in the business of art. Gain valuable information on selling art or fine craft. Appalachian Center for Craft, Smithville, TN. 615/597-6801. Contact Gail Gentry, 615/597-6801. E-mail: ggentry@tntech.edu. Web site: tntech.edu/craftcenter.

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Blacksmithing in Germany

...nearly 40 historic engines (steam, diesel and electric) are not only being preserved, but also kept in operation and used for historic train rides.

by Phil Rosche,
Summerville, South Carolina

I took a recent business trip to Darmstadt, Germany. A friend of mine named Jochen volunteers at the Darmstadt Railway Museum, which I’d been to before. When I was arranging this business trip, I asked Jochen if the blacksmith shop at the train museum would mind if I came by and worked with them. They told Jochen they’d love to have me come by and work. The Darmstadt Railway Museum is one of the oldest and biggest railway museums in Germany. The association was founded in 1971, and the museum opened to the public five years later, with the objective of providing a “living museum” to its visitors. The nearly 40 historic engines (steam, diesel and electric) are currently being preserved and restored by the association. Two views of the two anvils in use at the railway museum. These were typical German anvils with upsetting blocks and side shelves.

A really big cone mandrel outside the blacksmith shop at the railway museum.

A motorized flypress at the railway museum. They primarily used it for pressing things into holes such as bushings.

The forge at the railway museum. The firepot was really long in this forge, probably 24 inches. You could shut the blast off of one end or the other in the firepot.

One of the old steam engines that has been restored by the Darmstadt Railway Museum. Notice the small oval window that is open on the left side, in front of the engineer. This is similar to the window frames we were working on.

One of the old steam engines that has been restored by the Darmstadt Railway Museum. Notice the small oval window that is open on the left side, in front of the engineer. This is similar to the window frames we were working on.
operation and used for historic train rides. The trains are presented in the matching surroundings of a historic depot, including turntable and roundhouse. Besides housing some of the trains, it also has a lot of other attractions such as the blacksmith shop, model railways, signal box, ticket office, uniform collection and more. Probably the best thing about the railway museum is that they even serve beer in the snack bar!

I was somewhat limited in what I could take with me, so I just took work clothes and boots, safety glasses, and some comfortable leather gloves. I left Charleston on the afternoon of Saturday, September 18, 2004 and arrived in Frankfurt, Germany, the next morning. After going through immigration and customs I caught a bus to Darmstadt, checked into my hotel, called my friend Jochen, and put on my blacksmithing clothes. Jochen picked me up a short while later and we went to the train museum. Jochen introduced me to the blacksmith working there that day. His name was Bernd Lauer. Luckily, Bernd’s English was a lot better than my German (I basically know how to order a beer, and differentiate between the men’s room and the ladies’ room).

Bernd explained to me what he was working on that day. We started off making some “keys” that hold the brake shoes on the trains to a point. The last 10” or so had to be thinned down to 3/16” thick, the end was pointed, and then bent into a gentle arc. Bernd thinned them down under the Beche Lufthammer (a 165-lb. air hammer, or 75 kilogram). It was self-contained, meaning that it had its own compressor built in. The dies on these “keys” were 1/4” X 3/4” flatbar, about 18” long. The last 10” of the dies were 7/16” thick, and the end was pointed. Bernd thinned them down under the Beche Lufthammer (a 165-lb. air hammer, or 75 kilogram). It was self-contained, meaning that it had its own compressor built in. The dies on these “keys” were 1/4” X 3/4” flatbar, about 18” long. The last 10” of the dies were 7/16” thick, and the end was pointed. Bernd thinned them down under the Beche Lufthammer (a 165-lb. air hammer, or 75 kilogram). 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