



Balcones Forge Dispatch

President's Corner

April 2016



Greetings!

I hope everybody made it through all the storms without incident. Judging from the Facebook posts, this last hail storm was rather wide spread and took its toll on roofs, windows, and plants. Oh well, this is Texas.

I wish to thank everybody that made the Blubonnet Demo possible this year. Too many folks to mention here, but there was lots of plotting, planning, prepping and just plain hard work going on. Daniel and Monica did a wonderful job with the demo and the workshops. A lot of folks were introduced to a new style of joining and forging that makes Daniel's work stand out from the norm. The resulting projects were very nice and something to be proud of.

After the demo, Sue and Randy were surprised by a wedding celebration where they were the guests of honor at the Saturday night dinner. The whole workshop area of John's shop was decorated by many of our blacksmith gals and there was cake, champagne and gifts, it was a blast. Thank all of you ladies for all of your hard work in pulling off this surprise.

Mary Jo will be hosting the April meeting at her shop in Georgetown and well as demonstrating welding techniques. She has invited anyone that would like to bring his or her welder to the demo for some hands-on instruction. This is a great opportunity for you to finally figure out what you have been doing wrong and why your welds don't look quite right. For a lot of you younger members, Mary Jo has been welding for longer than you have been alive. Think about that. Mary Jo has decided on a trade item: A box with welded or mechanically attached sides. That should start the wheel turning.

Meeting Date is April 30

President's message continued on page 2.



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President's message continued.

Special request: could everybody that took the Daniel Miller workshop, please bring your completed projects to this meeting for show-n-tell. I saw very nice starts and would like to see how they all came out.

On a sad note, longtime TABA and Balcones Forge member, Willie Calhoun passed away on April 8th from a very short bout with a very aggressive cancer. Willie was born January 9th, 1953 and began blacksmithing in 1982. He worked on several projects for the National Park Service at the San Antonio missions and worked at the Texas Folklife Festival in San Antonio for the last 25 years, demonstrating for the kids and telling stories to their parents. Willie passed along many skills that were passed down to him from the old time smiths, thus, helping to keep the art of blacksmithing alive. Willie's sons, Quinn and Joe also worked with him at Folklife for many years as well as his wife, Mira, who passed away three years ago. Willie will be well remembered. God bless.

Hope to see you all in Georgetown.

Jerry Achterberg, President Balcones Forge



SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Blue Bonnet Demo kicked off at the Sycamore Ranch in Marble Falls April 2, 2016. Balcones Forge president Jerry Achterberg started the meeting by thanking

our hosts John & Carolyn Crouchet for their gracious hospitality. Special thanks were expressed

to all the volunteers that help put the event together and with all the group and individual efforts made again and again, events such as this are always a wonderful success.

A Balcones Forge Life Membership was awarded to Gary Hilton at the meeting. This unselfish, skillful, and pleasing individual is known to just about everyone and he is always willing to volunteer for those jobs that require exceptional blacksmithing skill, but those that just require a little personal touch and attention. He is well deserving of such a distinctive honor. Congratulations, Gary!

Special mention was well deserved also by David & Elise Guerrero, Cheryl Craig, and Jim Elliot for the hours they put in to make the event a seamless and successful demonstration. Noticeable to all was an exhibition table full of blacksmithing hammers done by 17 year old Matt Marti and if you missed out on viewing his exceptional hammers, you can contact him at: hartiforge@hotmail.com.

Our demonstrators and class instructors this year were Daniel Miller from North Carolina, and Monica Coyne from California. Blacksmith classes specializing in the use of a fly press started March 31 and ended April 4 with Saturday of that week being the group demonstration of forging a double candelabra from wrought iron. Daniel informed the group that this particular piece of iron was from an old stair railing built before 1905 and said that if you keep your eye out for old buildings or bridges, built before 1905 that are being torn down, it is likely to have some wrought iron in it and successful discussions with the owner might yield an individual some quantities for their own blacksmithing projects. Wrought iron is marvelous to work with, explained Daniel but not everything pre 1905 is pure. An example is a wagon wheel which can be very granular and not as good as pure W.I.

There were 4 ways of determining if a piece of iron is authentic wrought iron. First is the break method by slotting a small piece and then bend it back and

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forth until it breaks. Then by visually inspecting the grain inside which should reveal a fibrous grain similar to cornmeal. A second method is to forge it which will produce a soft, thump sound when striking it with a hammer. One can also utilize the third method by soaking the iron in muratic acid to reveal the interior grade. Lastly, the grinding of a piece of suspected wrought iron will exhibit orange, non-trailing sparks that do not explode at the end of the trail.

Regarding shape and form, Daniel explained that the flow of any particular forged piece should appear to have grown into that shape and the more naturally it flows, the more appealing it will appear to those that admire nature. By bringing new forms or introducing new forms that do not exist into the world is his personal goal and passion. By thinking and visualizing an art form in his mind is the way he works and that he does not sketch a piece out before he begins the forging process. The main source of heat for Daniel is a propane & oxygen torch that produces a mellow flame. He utilizes a 1/16 hole in the tip to allow for faster gas flow which will boost the heat of other fossil fuels (ie; propane). The burn temperature of wrought iron is higher than carbon steel and by getting it hotter it is easier to work with a hammer. The scale is much less than carbon steel, smaller flakes than are easily removed with a wire brush.

It is important to hammer with restraint when forging wrought iron because the hammering process goes quickly. Incidentally, Daniel points out that by dipping his hammer head into a bucket of water allows him to gain more control of his hammer. Contrary to what Whitaker preaches about hitting black iron, one will not necessarily go to hell for hitting wrought iron that is black because it can be friction forged to a certain degree. Importantly, wrought iron will not harden when quenched like carbon steel, because carbon is the element necessary for hardening.

Another important part of Daniels forging is the use of a slurry or graphite and water to allow neat and precise hole punching in metal. The SLIK SEED brand which appears in a Napa catalog is the brand he uses. In dry form it has the con-

sistency of talcum powder and when added to a small amount of water produces a slurry in which to dip ones punch.

Of special interest concerning hole punching, Daniel utilizes a square hole and square rod as the rivet for an unusual but professional joinery process. The rectangular base for holding the candle as well as all edges in this particular piece are planished with the hammer to produce a beautiful edge geometry that is absolutely unique and pleasing to the eye.

The beautiful black finish that Daniel & Monica use is fist-size portion of beeswax, 1/2 cup linseed oil, and 1/2 cup turpentine. Melt beeswax in double boiler, stir in linseed oil & turpentine and store in a mason jar. Daniel and Monica spent many hours finishing up this elaborate, and beautiful candelabra that was ultimately auctioned off to a very happy bidder.

As always, the evening dinner was scrumptious and a most surprising event was in store for the newly married Sue and Randy Howerter. A beautiful wedding cake was the center of attention as Sue & Randy were applauded by the Balcones Forge Blacksmith Association and it's always a special experience to witness newlyweds blush and then try to tone it down by rubbing cake on each others face.

The following auction hosted by Vince Herod brought in over \$6,700 according to Daniel Harrington, treasurer for Balcones Forge. Personally, when I attend a blacksmithing event and being exposed to the magic of flame and red hot iron being artistically shaped into a beautiful and functional form by a hammer is very invigorating. Because so many people believe that the blacksmith is epitomized by brute strength, they have surely missed their mark. More often than not, brains, intellect, and the power of visualization are far more important than brawn to a blacksmith. This realization for me becomes more and more evident each time I watch a good blacksmith. Glad I was able to attend and thanks to everyone for helping make it a success. Tim Tellander, Secretary.

APRIL MEETING INFO

Address: 1008 Jennings Branch Rd, Georgetown, TX 78633

Please bring a welding hood if you have them. The box is the project just show and tell. If you have machines you would like me to demo bring them. Also chairs would be great.

We can have lunch Hardtails.

See you on April 30 at 9am.

Mary Jo Emrick

mje.hotmetal@gmail.com

Directions from Austin:

NORTH on I-35

At Georgetown EXIT and take Williams Drive (west)

Go thru town and turn Right on to Hwy 245.

Cross over Ronald Reagan Blvd.

Right on to Jennings Branch Road.

Whisper Wood subdivision top of the hill on left side 1008.

Google Maps is your friend; use it!

BALCONES FORGE 2016

- April 30 - Mary Jo Emrick – Welding techniques – Georgetown, Texas
“Trade Item” – **A box with welded or mechanically attached sides.**
- May Annual Country Swing Music Festival – On the Square
“Trade Item” – To be announced
Date to be announced
- June Jim Schmidt is looking into the Tech Shop located in Round Rock, Texas

July & August-These two months are usually too hot to forge in Central and South Texas. We are again looking into a “Field Trip” type of meeting. This time we are hoping to get a guided tour of the Institute of Texas Cultures. Remember, it is air conditioned (YEAH!)

WEB PAGE UPDATE

Hello Balcones Forge members. The website now has many new aspects to it. As some of you know you can now fill out membership applications online under the membership page. Also the member gallery needs an update so please send some pictures of your work along with a short biography as to how you became a blacksmith. Please email this to Shane Tilton at:

flex201214@gmail.com

On another note many of our members offer teaching or other blacksmithing related services. If you are one of these individuals please email Shane the title of your service, prices or a price range and method of contact for the service. I look forward to your submissions and emails.

Strike while the irons hot.

Thank you,
Shane Tilton

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Bluebonnet Lost and Found

Missing Anything?

We had a number of personal items left at the Bluebonnet Demo this year. If you are missing anything, get in touch now with John Crouchet. A text to 830-798-3710 will insure that John brings your item to the April 30th meeting in Georgetown for you to pick up.

Several Balcones members have already indicated that they are not interested in retrieving their left items. They have requested that we simply donate these items to a local charitable organization. That is a fine idea and we are happy to oblige. If you do not wish to retrieve your left item, you do not need to contact me. Simply leave it with me and I will take all left over items to one of our local Marble Falls charities in the next couple of weeks. Thanks for your generosity!

Items we have found include:

- A rounding hammer marked HC
- A 12 inch magnetic ruler
- A scribe
- A red and gray folding chair
- A clear glass beer mug
- A bright red Sriracha Chili Sauce hoodie
- A gray "Old Navy" sweater, size Large
- A gray duffel containing Levi's and some Adidas flip flops

Thanks for a great demo and we hope to see you all back next year!

John Crouchet





Gary Hilton is the newest Lifetime Member of Balcones Forge!

photo by Vince Herod

Here is what Gary had to say about the 2016 Bleubonnet:

Nice job putting on the Bluebonnet demo as usual. The fly press is a nice piece of equipment and the weight alone sort of illustrates how much work goes in to putting on a demo this big. I don't have much power hammer so it was good to see how smooth John's hammer works and to be able to use it. It was also nice to see more vendors. The little candle holder workshop piece isn't as simple as it looks so if mine turns out anywhere close to Mr. Millers I'll be pleased.



The parts (above) make up the class project (below)

photos by Gerald Pollard





Daniel and Monica worked hard all day to create this wonder piece for the demo.







Hammers to buy, cake to eat and music by Riley Ann. What a great way to spend a day!
Below is Laura Armstrong's donation to the auction. *photos by Vince Herod*



Horseshoe Nail Hooks

Albin Drzewianowski

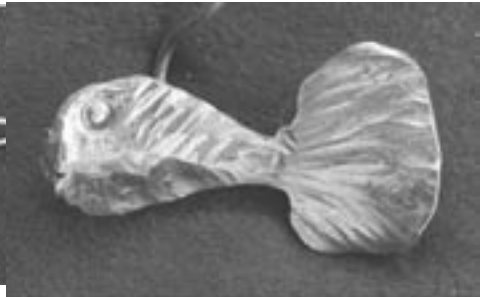
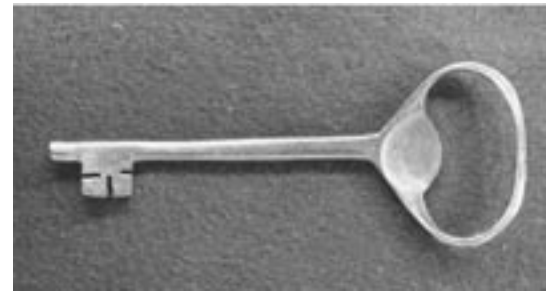
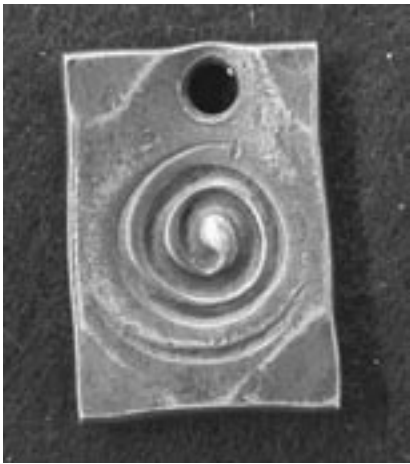
At the 2012 Bill Gichner Memorial Hammer-In, Pat McCarty demonstrated a quick and easy way to make small hooks. These are a perfect size for hanging up keys and other small items.

You take a horseshoe nail and flatten the head of the nail to make the tab for the screw hole. Then, using very small scrolling pliers, you can make a tiny pig tail then using a larger pair of scrolling pliers you can bend the "J" bend. Finally, you just need to drill a hole for the screw or nail. The hooks are soft enough that you can actually do them cold, but the head spreads nicer and it is easier to get a smooth bend if you do it with heat. (see picture)

I like to use #16 and #8 horseshoe nails. The #16 makes a slightly larger hook and the #8 a slightly smaller hook. (see other picture, the #16 nail and hook is on the left and the #8 nail and hook is on the right.) I have also done this with #12 nails. (Unfortunately, I could not find my supply of #12 nails for this article. A #12 hook would be half way between the two shown.) The #8 and #12 nails are easy to get, I was able to obtain them from a local farrier supply. To get the #16, I had to order them through Centaur Forge.



Key Chain Tree originally published by BAM in the May/June 2013 edition of their newsletter.



TOUCHSTONE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

About Touchstone

Touchstone Center for Crafts is a unique three-season, 501(c)(3) nonprofit craft school in the beautiful Laurel Highlands, only 60 miles southeast of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Founded in 1972 as Pioneer Crafts Council, Touchstone's original mission was to foster interest in the preservation of traditional mountain crafts. Today, this unique craft school has expanded to include contemporary and experimental techniques in addition to traditional and historic methods in disciplines such as blacksmithing, ceramics, metals, textiles, glass, oil and watercolor painting, photography, printmaking and sculpture. As Pennsylvania's only residential craft school, Touchstone offers both beginners and seasoned artists more than one hundred week-long and weekend courses taught by some of North America's finest artists and artisans.

Teaching Opportunities

Touchstone is currently looking for high-caliber instructors to teach blacksmithing and/or other art/craft forms. For those interested in teaching, information on how to submit a proposal to be considered for the 2017 season can be found at <http://www.touchstonecrafts.org/Teaching-Proposal>.

Studio Fellow, Technician and Assistantship Positions

Touchstone is currently seeking seasonal staff to help manage and assist workshops and operations in our Hart Moore Blacksmithing Studio. More information on the positions and how to apply may be found at www.touchstonecrafts.org/employment.

Hart Moore Blacksmithing Studio and Metals and Jewelry Studio

Touchstone's Hart Moore Blacksmithing Studio is well-equipped with 12 coal student forge stations, 1 coal master/instructor forge station, and 2 gas forges are available for use. We have a number of power and treadle hammers, including a Bradley 100, Big Blu Max 100, and Bick Lick. The shop has additional equipment for welding, grinding, sandblasting, plus swages, mandrills, and more for use. The tool room has various hammers, tongs, clamps, files, etc., enough for a full class. We keep steel and other materials stocked based on instructor submissions for what is needed to carry out their workshop(s). I've attached a few photos of the shop. One photo is of the shop as a whole; please note some of the equipment has since been replaced with newer equipment and the fly press is no longer here.

In addition to the Hart Moore Blacksmithing Studio, we have a Metals and Jewelry Studio where we host a variety of workshops with renowned instructors. This studio also provides 1 instructor and 12 students with their own jewelry bench/workstation for the duration of each workshop. The space is well-designed by Wayne Werner and will suit most needs to carry out classes on a myriad of techniques in metalsmithing.

For the majority of our workshop sessions, a studio technician and/or assistant will be available to help instructors and students with workshop needs.

Workshops

Each year, Touchstone brings amazing, knowledgeable instructors to teach weekend, extended weekend, and week-long sessions in blacksmithing and other art/craft forms. We host classes to accommodate all skill levels, from beginner to advanced. Most of our students are adults (ages 18-90); however, we do have some classes for teens (high school students, ages 13-18) and children (ages 6-12). I've attached a listing of our 2016 blacksmithing and metals workshops, plus more information may be found on our website (www.touchstonecrafts.org).

Most of our students choose to lodge on our campus during their session. You'll find a variety of lodging options that include a meal plan to our dining hall. Our culinary manager and chef Meryl makes delicious and filling meals, and can accommodate most special dietary needs with advance notice.

Scholarships and Discounts

Touchstone has a limited number of scholarships available to deserving students each season. Information on the available scholarships and how to apply is found at <http://www.touchstonecrafts.org/scholarships>.

Touchstone offers a 10 percent early bird tuition discount to those who register for a workshop by April 30th. Additionally, we offer discounts to those who live within Fayette County, Pennsylvania, and in nearby counties, plus discounts to K-12 teachers currently employed in any school district. Anyone who is current on their Touchstone membership may also qualify for certain tuition and/or other discounts. More information may be found on our website.

If your group is willing to place information regarding Touchstone in a newsletter or on your website, we would be happy to add your guild to a listing of groups of which would qualify for a maker's discount of 5 percent off tuition. I would only request a copy of the newsletter and/or a link to your site showing Touchstone's info. To verify that someone is a member of your guild, I would also request a listing of your members – I am not requesting contact or other personal information, only names (for verification) of current members of whom the discount could be received.

Annual Symposiums: Jim Campbell Hammer-In and Alchemist Picnic

The Jim Campbell Hammer-In is a yearly celebration of all things blacksmithing, honoring the enduring legacy of longtime volunteer and friend to Touchstone, Jim Campbell. This year's symposium is being held in conjunction with the Alchemist Picnic, an annual gathering of metalsmiths and jewelers from the mid-Atlantic region and beyond offering attendees a wide variety of metals-related demonstrations.

The May 6-8, 2016 weekend will include artist lectures, forging demonstrations, gourmet camp food, a tool swap, roundtable discussion, and good old blacksmithing and metalsmithing camaraderie. The crossover presenter for both these events is Paige Davis. The Jim Campbell Hammer-In demonstrators are Ellen Durkan and Nick Ireys. The Alchemist Picnic presenters are April Wood, Heidi Lowe, and Andrew Haviland. More information on our presenters and event pricing may be found on our website.

I have a limited number of VIP passes (covers entry, room and board are available for an additional fee) for the weekend. I'd be happy to offer one or two of these passes to representative(s) of your group if you will kindly help us to pass along information about the events to your group. Please contact me if you are interested in a VIP pass.

If you wish to be added to Touchstone's email newsletter, you may sign up on the home page of our website. You may also request to be added to our mailing list to receive our annual catalog.

Kind regards, Stefanie

Stefanie Glover, Operations Manager
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