



Blacksmiths of Central Texas

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February 2008



THE PREZ SAYS:

This time each year, things change for Balcones Forge. Instead of the usual (read "outstanding") monthly meetings, we start preparing for the annual Bluebonnet Workshop, then the Summer Workshop. A lot of preparation has already taken place for the March event, but there is much more to do. That is where you come in. To make the workshop run smoothly, we will need volunteers to help in many areas. We won't kidnap you for the whole event, just for short, easy tasks, such as checking folks in and giving them their name tags. We always need help at auction time. So, the more of us that volunteer, the less taxing it is for everyone. Therefore, if you have not had the pleasure of helping your organization, step up and let me or any board member know that you are available. Thanks.

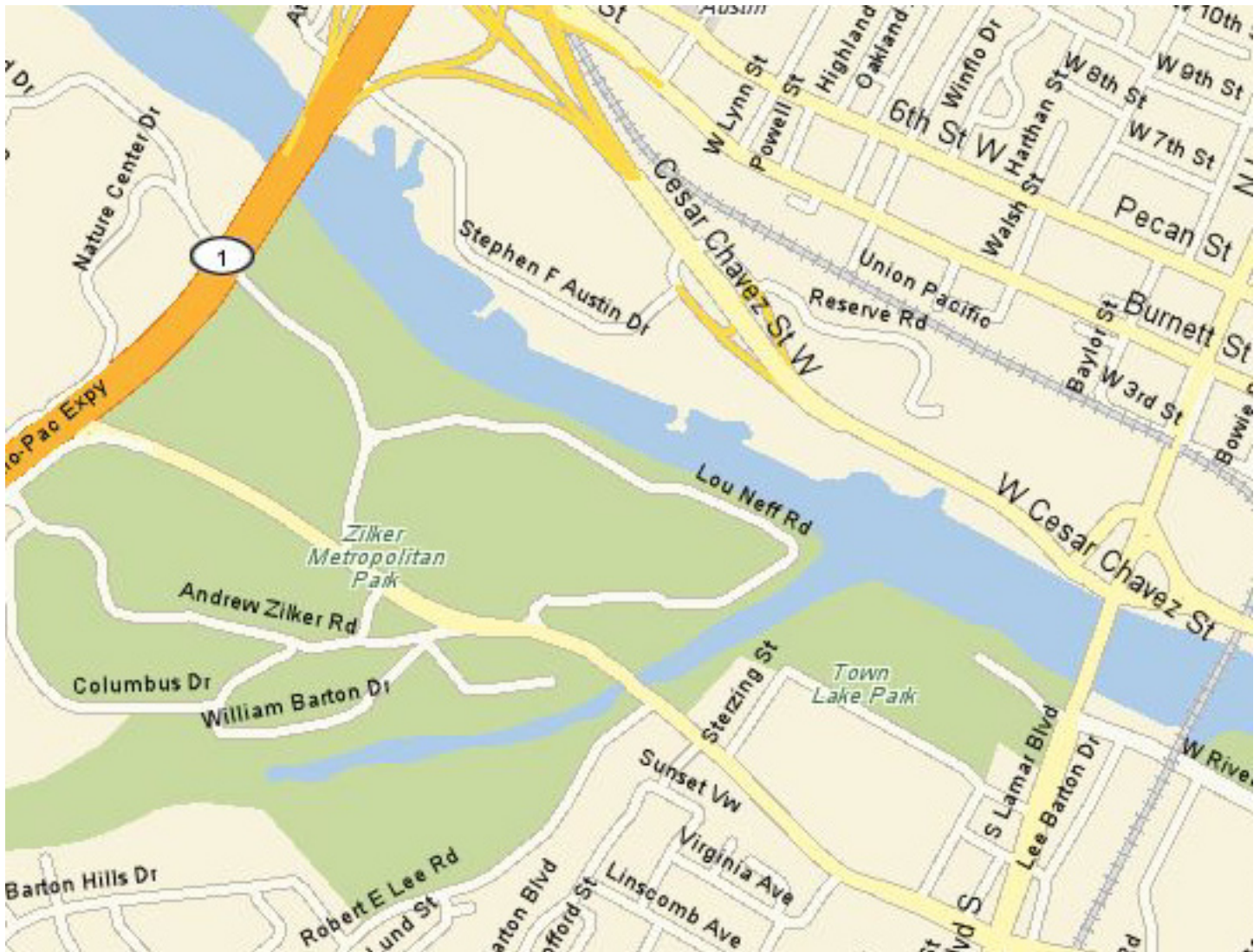
Have you started creating and uncovering your auction items yet? A little over a month to go! Remember, the Bluebonnet Auction is the event that allows us to operate for the rest of the year. By donating, bidding, or both, you really help. What a fun way to contribute to your club.

Register early for the March workshop -- it costs more at the door.
Get your lodging taken care of also.

See you at the Zilker Blacksmith Shop. Rudy

DUES ARE DUE! If you havent paid for 2008, see inside for details of where to send your dues.

WWW.BALCONESFORGE.ORG



MEETING INFO

This month's meeting will take place at the Blacksmith Shop inside the Zilker Botanical Gardens. Our host for this month's meeting will be our President, Rudy Billings. Meeting time is 9:30am on Saturday February 23.

The Zilker Forge is one of several "park" forges that our organization has helped to restore and maintain over the last few years. At press time the demo for this month was still undetermined but a meeting at Zilker always includes time for the new members to spend some time at the forge and anvil.

If you have any ideas or would like to demo at the meeting, please give Rudy a call. His number is on the front page

The trade item for February is a flower or something organic. Flowers are a great way to show how hard, cold metal can be turned into something soft and warm. Go ahead; give it a try. Remember, you gotta make one to take one!

Just turn into the main parking lot for the gardens and follow the smell of burning coal.

DUES ARE PAST DUE!

Balcones Forge runs on a fiscal year that coincides with the calendar year so everyone's 2007 dues expired on December 31st. Dues are still the bargain-basement price of only \$15.

If you want to ONLY pay your 2008 dues, please send the \$15 dollars to our Secretary, Tom Lupton at 110 Reveille Road, Austin, TX 78746.

If you want to pay your dues AND register for the fantastic Balcones Forge Bluebonnet Workshop then fill out the form on the last page of the newsletter and send in your check to Rudy. His info is on the form.

So you don't forget; send before midnight tomorrow!!!!!!!!!! Anybody else remember those commercials?

If you need to join or renew your ABANA membership there is a form in this edition. ABANA membership is not required but it is a great resource.

WE ARE ONLINE

Want to view this newsletter in living color? Go to

www.BalconesForge.org

and check out the Newsletter section.

ORDER YOURS NOW!

Balcones Forge Hooded Sweatshirts - Order Yours Now

We have decided to order hooded sweatshirts with the oh-so-popular Balcones Forge logo on them. They will be \$30 each and come will come in black,, navy, or dark green. Because these

are more expensive than the t-shirts, we will be taking orders prior to purchase. So, if you would like one of these swanky body-warmers...please e-mail Sue Murray, current t-shirt custodian, at suraiyam@earthlink.net or ask me to put you down for one at the next meeting. We would like to have orders by the February meeting so we can get the sweatshirts ordered while it's still a little cool out. Please let me know the number you want, the color(s) and the size(s). We don't need your money until they come in. We also have more t-shirts, caps and some women's tank tops on the way, so...look for them soon.

Sue - T-shirt Custodian

DEMO OPPORTUNITY

The Rockdale Chamber of Commerce is holding its 2nd annual Tejas Art and Book Festival in Rockdale, Saturday March 1, from 9:00 AM til 5:00 PM. The Rockdale Historical Society would like to invite the Balcones Forge and other Central Texas Blacksmith's to put on a blacksmith demonstration at the Society's Rockdale I&GN Depot Museum. Also at the museum, we plan to have a stained/leaded glass demonstration, to be hosted by Mr. Frankeney, who is an instructor at Temple College in Taylor. Additionally, there will be artists and their paintings, authors and their books, a vintage car show, a motorcycle show/rally, and other events during the day, all to be held in downtown Rockdale. All artists/demonstrators will be allowed to have a table and sell their wares at no charge. The museum is planning to serve sausage wraps, and will provide lunch for the blacksmiths. This should be an interesting event, with lots of people in town. To get there, take US 79 north from Round Rock to Rockdale (about 45 Miles), take a right at the 3rd light on Main St. Travel one short block, and the Museum is on the right before you reach the railroad track.

The Balcones Forge Newsletter is written by the editor except as noted. Balcones Forge, it's officers, members, contributors, editors and writers specifically disclaim any responsibility, or liability for any damage, or injury as a result of the use of any information published in the newsletter or demonstrated at a meeting or conference. Every effort is made to insure the accuracy and safety of information provided but the use by our members and readers of any information published herein or provided at meetings is solely at the user's own risk.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

The January meeting was hosted by Hollis Wooldridge, south of New Braunfels. We had a great turnout with at least 27 attendees. We had a full meeting with interesting demonstrations, show-n-tell, trade items and iron-in-the-hat.

The first demonstration was presented by Aaron Tilton. Aaron showed us how he forges his tomahawks. One important tip he provided was that you must start with a fresh, clean fire in order to get a good forge weld. Clinker in the fire will keep it from being hot enough to weld such a large piece completely.

After Aaron's demonstration, new member, bladesmith James Helm, showed us a variety of interesting blades he had made. Examples James brought were a knife from a car spring, a sword blade from a rail car spring, a trailing tip knife blade from a Camaro coil spring and an ax from a car axle.

Next, visitor, Joe Wolf, showed us a smooth-bore flint-lock shotgun a blacksmith friend had made some years earlier. The barrel was manufactured, but all of the other metal pieces were made by the smith. It was a great example of smithing that we don't often see.

For the second forging demonstration, our host, who can trace family blacksmiths back to 1697, forged a colonial style fork. Jerry Achterberg wrapped things up by showing some interesting examples of forms that can be forged from all-thread.

Several items were donated for iron-in-the hat this meeting. There was an electric switch pot (for hanging on the wall and storing things), horse-shoes, jackhammer bits, and an original old photo of blacksmiths from the Army Headquarters of the Potomac, at the Battle of Antietam in 1862. The trade item for the meeting was a cross and we had ten people bring one. Remember, if you make one, you get to take one. You might end up with something really cool.

We still have some months open for hosting a meeting. If you host and need a porta-pot or doughnuts, those can be paid for by Balcones Forge. Also, it is not a requirement that the host demonstrate, so if you would like to host and don't want to demo, or if you don't have equipment to demo, let us know and we'll come up with something. We're a flexible and creative group. If interested in hosting, contact Jerry Achterberg.

Safety Note: Remember that you won't be forging without your eyes. They are the most important piece of equipment in our shops. If you do get metal into your eye, go to an eye specialist, rather than the emergency room. The latter will probably not know how to deal with rust, which can cause blindness.

Finally, we would like to send our thoughts and prayers to Tom Leining, who recently lost his son. We also want to send out get-well messages to Budd Paris and Tony Ahuero, who we understand have been under the weather lately.

Sue Murray
Stand-in Secretary





Aaron Tilton



Scenes from the January 08 Meeting

Photos by Gerald Pollard



Hollis Wooldridge





Affiliate Letter January 2008

2/6/2008

Greetings Friends of Blacksmithing,

As I write this January is now history. First off, we have a new Affiliate organization! The Association of Alaska Blacksmiths has joined with Jerry Frost as Coordinator.

Since my letter in November we have the privilege to welcome 2 new members to the board. The ABANA Board was short two members due to the resignations of Bobby Floyd and Will Hightower. John H. Yust, an architect from St. Paul Minnesota was elected to the board position expiring in 2010 and Peyton Anderson of Farmville, Virginia to the board position expiring in 2009. Peyton is President of the Blacksmith Guild of Virginia. Subsequently, Linda Tanner was elected to the office of Treasurer. I am happy to report that Peyton has joined me on the Internet Committee and is doing great work for the membership.

Speaking of membership, January membership results are in. With your help January's new and renewal memberships were better than any month of 2007. We are excited by these results and heartened by the trust you have placed in us. But there is still more to do. So we have decided to **extend the Hammer's Blow Archive CD offer until March 31st**. But that is the absolute deadline. (See the notice on the lower right corner of the www.ABANA.org home page.) Don't miss out!

Your ABANA Board Sales and Member Services committees are almost ready to unveil a new member benefit. This will be announced on the web site as soon as the final details are worked out. **Current ABANA members will get a 5% discount from a number of leading Blacksmithing supply firms.** I would especially like to recognize Linda Tanner for leading this effort. Other member benefits such as discounts for classes are available and more are in the works.

ABANA board members will make an extra effort to be available to you at affiliate conferences this spring and summer. ABANA will sponsor a demonstrator from Europe at the Blacksmith Association of Missouri conference (May 1-3 in Sedalia, MO – see www.BAMsite.org). ABANA Board member Rome Hutchings is leading the Ring Project at this conference.

The ABANA web site is being updated with new features:

- Six new installments in the Controlled Hand Forging series from the Hammer's Blow were posted in December. (see <http://www.abana.org/resources/education/chf.shtml>)
- A page on the site for professionals will provide resources not available elsewhere. See the article on securing work doing public art projects by Jill Turman. (http://www.abana.org/business/Professionals_corner.shtml)

A number of groups are getting close to the goal of getting a free day of demonstration for their events. Several of the board members including Chris Winterstein and Dorothy Stiegler are donating their services as demonstrators; some off-board blacksmiths including Dan Nauman are participating as well. Affiliates (or groups of affiliates meeting together) who have 15-20 new or returning paid-up ABANA members can take part. Chris is the lead demonstrator on this program. Full details and availability dates on application.

We are seeking nominations for the Joe Humble Newsletter Editor Award. Contact Rome Hutchings (rome.hutchings@theprairieismygarden.com) for details and a nomination form.

The survey, this letter and our Constant Contact e-mails are ways that we have used to keep communications open. We welcome your letters and e-mails and will take all your suggestions seriously. I can be reached via pboulay@abana.org.

Best Regards,

Paul Boulay
ABANA Affiliate Relations Board Member

Balcones Forge Bluebonnet Workshop

featuring

CHRISTOPHER THOMSON

March 29-30, 2008

Marble Falls, Texas



BALCONES FORGE is pleased to bring award-winning artist-blacksmith **Christopher Thomson** to Texas for its annual two-day demonstration. Christopher was one of Francis Whitaker's early students in the '60s.



Since then, he has established a successful business, creating all manner of furniture, home furnishings, architectural works, and sculpture. Discover how Christopher creates such beautiful ironwork.

The Balcones Workshop will be held March 29-30. That means **Bluebonnet Time** here in the **Texas Hill Country!** Plan to ride some of our scenic country back roads and enjoy the finest display of wildflowers in America! We are located right in the middle of Texas' best bluebonnet area!

The Balcones Forge Workshop will present a wonderful dinner on Saturday night, catered by our friends at **The Jamin' House**, the finest restaurant in Marble Falls.

Dinner will be followed by our famous annual **Balcones Auction!** Buy yourself a new (or old) blacksmithing hammer, maybe a forge or anvil, some smithing books, or maybe Christopher's latest creation! We will finish Saturday night with a slide presentation by Christopher, featuring his beautiful ironwork.

Times: Saturday: 9:00–Noon – Morning Demo
Noon–1:00 – Lunch: Drinks provided; bring a sack lunch or there are numerous places to eat nearby
1:00–5:00 – Afternoon Demo
6:00 – Tasty catered dinner, only \$15
7:15 – If you do not attend the dinner, please join us at this time for the Old Time Auction and Christopher's slide presentation

Sunday: 9:00–1:00 – Demo

Our host is Larry Crawford at his Hammerfest Forge, 2401 Commerce St. Directions: **From Burnet on Hwy 281**, State Street will be the second traffic light once you enter Marble Falls. You will turn left (East) onto State Street. **From San Antonio or South Austin**, when on Hwy 281 start counting traffic lights once you cross the Colorado River into town. State Street will be the eighth traffic light and you will turn right (East) onto State Street. **From North Austin - Ranch Road 1431**, you will turn right (North) onto Hwy 281. State Street will be the third traffic light once you are on Hwy 281. You will turn right (East) onto State Street. **Everybody:** Go one block to the end of State Street. Turn left and go twenty feet. Turn right into Larry's driveway. Lost? Call John Crouchet for directions at 830-798-3710. Web map: maps.citysearch.com/map/view/10195073

For more info contact:

Rudy Billings, 512-461-7375 or Rudy@RedHotIronWorks.com

John Crouchet, 830-798-3710 or John@TexasWroughtIron.com

Jerry Achterberg 210-661-3293 or treefarm@swbell.net

Hotel Accommodations:

Hampton Inn on the Lake, 704 First St., 830-798-1895

Ramada Limited, 1206 Hwy 281, 830-693-5731

Best Western, 1403 Hwy 281, 830-693-5122, 800-528-1234

Hill Country Inn, 1101 Hwy 281, 830-693-3637

W W W . B A L C O N E S F O R G E . O R G

Balcones Forge Bluebonnet Workshop

featuring **Christopher Thomson - March 29-30**

Please print clearly

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Yes, I prefer the electronic version of the newsletter. (You will be notified by email when the latest newsletter has been posted.)

Current Member \$45 _____
\$50 at the door

2008 Membership if unpaid . \$15 _____

Non-member..... \$60 _____

Yes, I wish to become a BF member

Saturday Evening Meal ... \$15 _____

Total _____

Please register by March 15.

Make check payable to Balcones Forge.

Send to Rudy Billings,

1906 Rampart Circle, Austin, TX 78727

PLEASE READ AND COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING RELEASE FORM: FORM MUST BE SIGNED AND DATED BY EACH MEMBER, GUEST AND PARENT OR GUARDIAN OF ANY MINOR IN ATTENDANCE.

In consideration of the Balcones Forge Blacksmith Association providing demonstrators and making these demonstrations available and granting permission to enter the area of said demonstration, I, individually and as parent or guardian of the minor child attending such demonstration, hereby waive all claims for damage and/or loss to my person or property, or the person or property of such minor child, which may be caused by an act, or failure to act of the Balcones Forge Blacksmith Association, its officers, directors, agents or employees and the hosts and demonstrators. I understand that there are inherent dangers in blacksmithing and I assume all risk of all dangerous conditions in and about such demonstration and waive any and all specific notice of the existence of such conditions. By signing this waiver, I acknowledge that I have read and understand this waiver.

X

Date

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