



Balcones Forge Dispatch

President's Corner

February 2015



Greetings!

The Farmer's Almanac says we're in for a "colder, wetter winter". So far they've nailed it. The keepers of the records say the drought has ended in Texas. Good news, but we are not out of the woods yet, but things are looking better.

Gary Hilton put on a good show at his smithy in Hunt, TX last month with a very fine axe making demo. I don't know how he is able to hammer for long periods of time. My arm gave out before lunch and I was just watching. Great demo Gary, thanks!

Please note! There was some damage to one of Gary's culverts along his road. We understand that sometimes it is difficult finding a parking space at some locations, but please watch for septic tanks and fields, and try to stay on the driving surfaces. Gary, we apologize for this incident and we hope to avoid things like this in the future.

This month is another world class event: The Lee Brothers Combo Demo at Steephollow Forge in Bryan. Alan and Jeff (the Bruise Brothers) have been putting on this demo for a few years and it is now an annual event that is drawing folks from all over Texas and Louisiana. They have lined up some additional talent and a few vendors that you will not want to miss. Bring your show-n-tell items as well as an auction item to help offset the cost and if anyone would like to help out with this event, just show up a little early and ask for a job. We could use the help.

The Bluebonnet Demo in March also promises to be another great one. Dorothy Steigler is back by popular demand with an all new show that you can't afford to miss. Dorothy will be working in silicone bronze this year and she will also be teaching four workshops out at the ranch. Be sure to contact Jim Elliott if you are interested in a slot.

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JANUARY SECRETARY'S REPORT

This will be the first workshop with all Balcones Forge owned equipment. It's been a lot of work and a lot of money, but this is the big payoff. Well, except for one thing, it's not fully paid for yet. That's why this fundraising auction will be the most important we have ever had. We need to top everything we have done in the past to help pay for this equipment and with the auctions getting better and better every year, I have no doubt we can do it again with your support.

So here's the plan: Do your spring cleaning early. Save the good stuff for the auction. Have a garage sale and sell all the not-so-good stuff and bring the money to Marble Falls. Simple, right? And then show everybody how talented you are and make one of your masterpieces for the auction. I've put some thought into this plan and I know it will work!

Anyone that would like to help with the Bluebonnet is certainly welcome. We have folks that never get to watch much of the demo because there is too much to do in the background. Give them a hand every chance you get.

Thank ya'll. (That's "you all" if ya'll ain't from here.)

Hope to see everybody at Steephollow Forge

Jerry Achterberg
Balcones Forge President

Meeting is Feb 21

January 24, 2015

The inclement snowy weather from the evening before cleared up for the Balcones Forge meeting at Gary Hilton's forge in Hunt, Texas. The day was beautiful. Gary began the meeting by exhibiting the various steps in progress for a hand forged wood axe that Gerald Boggs illustrated in a recent edition of the Hammer's Blow. The seemingly complex steps were displayed and explained in such a way to assist the numerous students in attendance to an easily understood process.

Before the actual forging process began, Jerry Achterberg called a meeting to order. First on the agenda was regarding the ever growing and popular demo meeting at Lee Brother's forge in Bryan, Texas. Jerry pointed out that the need for volunteers are needed to help with parking, sign-in, and welcoming guests. It would be greatly appreciated if anyone wants to help out to get there early and offer the much needed assistance. A hand forged Doorknocker is the item for competition at this year's meeting. Don't be the individual that admires or criticizes the work or other blacksmiths that have taken the time to participate in this exciting event - get busy and let's make it difficult for the judges to make a final decision on so many Doorknockers! I personally have learned a lot about improving the blacksmithing skills and techniques necessary to compete in this event. What I haven't figured out yet is why the item selected with the detailed (step-by-step) forging process necessary for the interested blacksmith does not appear in The Hammer's Blow until after the Balcones Forge competition takes place.

Meal tickets will be made available this year to quicken the process for the noon meal at Lee Brothers. Jerry also reminded everyone to re-

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member to bring something for the Iron-In-The-Hat event scheduled for 11:30 am which is the main financial contributor to Balcones Forge. Remember also, to bring a means for purchasing some of the unique and necessary items that will be up for auction. There will be some familiar vendors present as well as demonstrations from 9:30-11:30 am and 1-4pm by the following:

John Perilous - Richard, Louisiana
Larry House - Picayune, Mississippi
Dana Flanders - Simonton, Tx.
John McGee - Bryan, Tx.
Jeff Schockley - San Marcos, Tx.
Jeff & Alan Lee - Bryan, Tx.

A special attraction will be Wilson Capron from Christoval, Tx a well respected bit and spur maker and master engraver, as well as Cotton Elliott, Sheriff of King County (Guthrie, Tx) who are members of Texas Cowboy Artist Association.

Knife makers Tim Tellander (Bulverde, Tx), Richard Epting (Welborn, Tx) and Curtis Kingle (Welborn, Tx) will be displaying and selling their custom knives. James Johnson with Anyang Power Hammers will also be on site for hands-on demonstrations.

It was pointed out that making hotel reservations early would eliminate lodging problems and that an RV park is nearby the Lee Brother's shop for those that want to bring a camper or trailer.

The March demo at Bluebonnet in Marble Falls is approaching fast and there is still some preparation work that needs to be completed. John Crouchet and Jim Elliott have been putting in long hours to get the forging stations ready for the hands on workshop with Dorothy Stiegler. Classes are Tuesday thru Friday (March 24-27) and Jim Elliott can be contacted at 512-630-1293 to sign up for classes in forging silicon bronze. Pre-paid spots are the only slots that will be available. Members \$135 / Non-members \$155 for the class. Ms. Stiegler's two day demonstration is scheduled for March 28 - 29. John & Carolyn Crouchet will again host this most popular blacksmithing event which are de-

tailed in the January issue of the BFD newsletter. Jerry pointed out that we still need to borrow several more gas forges.

April 25 is the Balcones Forge meeting at the forge of James Helms where we will be entertained by a great knife maker and allowed to view a great selection of tools. Details of his knife making skills are detailed on I FORGE.

After the meeting, Gary began forging the wood axe with envious and precise hammer blows. Gary began the (apparently untiring) process by forging the poll of the axe from a rectangular piece of mild steel in the gas forge. He then forged the sidecheeks incorporating a unique spur (ie: shoulder / lug) demonstrating the process of equalizing both sides for balance and appearance. The blade was formed to equal dimensions and then Gary switched to the anthracite coal forge for forge welding the cutting edge into the axe. This demonstration described within a few sentences does not reflect the tiring hours and expertise Gary so freely demonstrated to the group. Any advice, tip, or precautions were cheerfully verbalized to everyone by this generous blacksmith. Gary Hilton is a remarkable and skillful blacksmith and his generosity for opening his shop to Balcones Forge was appreciated by everyone.

Many of us also congratulated Gary on suggesting The Store in nearby Hunt which served up the biggest hamburger we had ever seen. You know it's a Big hamburger when Jerry Achterberg leaves a third of it on his plate!

Tim Tellander, Secretary
Balcones Forge



A GREAT DEAL

Balcones Forge has Mark Aspery Books!

All 3 volumes:

I - Basic Blacksmithing

II - Leafwork

III - Joinery

\$50 each -- no tax, no shipping, normal price \$59

Send your requests to Rudy@BalconesForge.org

FUTURE BALCONES FORGE MEETINGS

February 21- Lee Brothers @ Steep Hollow
Forge - Bryan, TX
(spurs and more)

March 2015- Pioneer Museum - Fredericksburg,
TX
28 & 29 Bluebonnet - Marble Falls, TX
(Dorothy demos bronze)

April 25, 2015: James Helm

May 2015- Swing Music Fest - San Marcos, TX



FEBRUARY COMPETITION ITEM

The competition trade item for February is a.....

Door Knocker

REMEMBER: you gotta make one to **to be in the contest**



Gary Hilton makes great critters

THE BALCONES FORGE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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FEBRUARY MEETING INFO

The 5th annual Combo-Demo at Steephollow Forgeworks in Bryan, TX. is February 21, 2015. This is a one day mini blacksmithing conference, free of charge, and open to the public. It is a once a year rendezvous of all the blacksmithing groups in Texas and Louisiana with demonstrations, vendors, art displays, auction, iron smelt, tailgating, food, and music. The Combo-Demo is only possible because of the generous support of the blacksmithing community at large. Volunteers are always needed and auctions donations help pay for the whole thing.

Demonstrations will be from 9:30-11:30am and 1-4pm. a number of demonstrators have been booked including:

- *John Perilloux---Richard Louisiana, johnperilloux.com
- *Larry House---Picayune, Mississippi, Dragons Watch Forge & Foundry
- *Dana Flanders---Simonton, TX, Ziwa Forge/ Facebook
- *John McGee---Bryan, TX, Shamrock Forge
- *Jeff Schockley---San Marcos, TX.
- *Jeff and Alan Lee---Bryan, TX, steepforge.com

Action will be constant following the side by side Demo format. A catered lunch will be available. Lunch tickets can be purchased at the door.

A special attraction will be Bit and Spur makers Wilson Capron, Christoval, TX, wilsoncapron.com and Cotton Elliott, Sheriff of King County, Guthrie, TX. They are members of the " Traditional Cowboy Artist Association". They both do world class work. Wilson Capron is a master engraver.

Knifemakers Tim Tellender, Bullverde, TX.

Richard Epting, Welborn, TX. eptingknives.com

Curtis Klinge, Welborn, TX. cmforgeknives.com

Each will be displaying & selling their latest creations.

James Johnson with Anyang Power Hammers will bring one of his hammers for anyone to test drive.

The auction of donated iron artwork at 11:30am is what covers the expenses and is only possible because of the generous donation from the group members of:

HABA

Balcones Forge

NTBA

Goliad Blacksmiths

LAMA

Please consider donating your latest creation and don't forget your checkbook.

The smelt will be led by Richard DelaHousaye from Carencro, La. The bloom will be tapped near 4pm.

This years' competition item is a Doorknocker. Show off your skills and compete with some of the best.

BLUEBONNET DEMO: REQUEST FOR AUCTION ITEMS

by Laura Armstrong

The Bluebonnet Demo, featuring Dorothy Stiegler, is next month (March 28-29).

The auctions on Saturday are a traditional part of this special weekend.

- SILENT auction items will be available for bidding throughout the day.
- After Saturday's dinner, the LIVE auction begins.

YOU CAN HELP ensure the success of the auction portion of the weekend by donating an item.

We're actively seeking donations for the LIVE and SILENT portions of the auction, including:

- one of your creations
- tools
- an in-kind service

Examples of in-kind services you could donate might include the following:

- "building one anvil stand at my shop"
- "a 6-hour lesson in basic blacksmithing"
- "hands-on demonstration of heat treating and tempering"
- "making a punch-and-drift starter set"
- "resurfacing of an anvil"
- "patina lesson"

In-kind donation forms will be available on Saturday, or e-mail laura@TurtleOnARockStudio.com for a form.

We look forward to your donated auction item -- it will be greatly appreciated.

* * *

Please note, we're also seeking enthusiastic bidders for the auctions.

Great attitudes and eager participation will be welcome and encouraged!



Axe "story board" by Gary Hilton

Photos (all from the meeting) by Jerry Whitley



**LEARN HOW TO MAKE YOUR LITTLE GIANT
POWER HAMMER WORK HARDER THAN
EVER!**

Please join us for the 23rd annual Little Giant Rebuilding Seminar! Although we did pass ownership of Little Giant to our machinist Roger Rice in 2013, Sid Suedmeier will continue teaching the rebuilding class at his shop at 420 4th Corso in Nebraska City.

We carry on the tradition of our good friend Fred Caylor of teaching how to make Little Giants run well and hit hard.

The 2 ½ day class is a hands-on format. You will help transform a 25 LB Little Giant hammer from functional but sloppy condition into a well tuned, quiet, hard working hammer. Sid Suedmeier, former owner of Little Giant, will share all his knowledge and experience gained from working with Fred and from 23 years of repairing and rebuilding Little Giants.

An old style 25 LB Little Giant will be rebuilt during the class, and a new style machine will be on hand to demonstrate proper assembly and adjustment of both styles.

The class is held in Sid’s shop in historical Nebraska City, Nebraska. The city has a wide variety of cafes, outlets (including Pendleton Woolen Mills), antique and gift shops, orchards, wineries and museums.

IF YOU HAVE A LITTLE GIANT, THIS CLASS IS FOR YOU!

No experience is required to attend this class. Past classes have been comprised of students, retirees, artists, welders, doctors, farriers ...anyone who wants to learn will benefit from this class. We approach the rebuilding process using tools that can be found in the average home workshop. If you are in the market to buy a power hammer, this class will make you an educated shopper. If you already own a Little Giant, or any other brand of power hammer, this class will teach you how to get the best performance possible.

The class costs \$95, refundable up to 7 days prior to the class; advance registration is required. We limit each class to 25 participants. The classes start at 9 AM sharp on Friday, and usually end by Saturday evening. The schedule runs Sunday until noon in case we encounter any exceptional problems in rebuilding, and to answer remaining questions.

When we receive your registration, we will send you a city map, along with travel and hotel information.

Airports are located in Omaha (45 miles north), Lincoln (50 miles west) and Kansas City (125 miles south).

March 20-22, 2015

REGISTRATION

Name: _____

Business name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email address: _____

PAYMENT

- Check enclosed
- Visa
- MasterCard
- Discover
- American Express
- Number: _____
- Expiration Date: _____

POWER HAMMER INFO

Brand: _____

Size: _____

Serial Number: _____

Please call or email if you have any questions, or prefer to register by phone. You can reach us at 402.873.6605 or SidsShop@windstream.net. Suedmeier Enterprises 420 4th Corso, Nebraska City, NE 68410.

This page is dedicated to Francis Whitaker with “Francisisims” and methods as told by those who worked with and learned from him: Gordo Stonington, Will Perry, James Honig, Tal Harris, Clay Spencer, Alison Finn and more. Clay has started a book and has a copyright on it of many of Francis’ techniques and has generously let RMS print them here as long as we do not sell any of his material for profit. A big thank you to Clay.

From James Honig:

Use a carpenters drilling brace to tap holes.

Scribe work on steel. Won’t burn or scrape off.

Tal Harris:

When forge welding branching scrolls, bend to final shape while hot from welding heat.

Judy Berger:

Either it’s straight or not.

Get it hot!



Andy Morris:

Francis always did a full scale drawing of the project. From this he would calculate how much stock was needed for each piece, how many rivets, collars, etc. and cut all the pieces before he ever started forging.

Judy Berger:

If the stock is both bent and twisted. remove the twist first.

Do not use the step on the anvil for cutting.

Clay Spencer:

Francis expected each student to make a scale drawing of their project and send it to him before class to make sure you had designed a project that could be forged and assembled. If you came to class without a design, several days would be wasted trying to make the design and the project would not be finished in the class. I think Francis considered designing a project and drawing it to scale, showing the joinery, figuring out stock sizes and approximate lengths was a very important part of the learning process. If you could not put your ideas on paper, you could not make a presentation to a client and sell the project. You need to work out the problems before you start the project or make an estimate of what to charge the client.

Make a test piece if you are not sure of the process, length of stock, spacing, etc. required to make a particular piece. Record the size and length of stock, places you slit or punch a hole or fuller and the technique and tools used. A blacksmith’s memory is about five seconds long.

To figure out stock sizes, if you didn’t know already, Francis said to get a larger and a smaller size piece of stock and lay it on your drawing on the table to get a better idea of what size is right.

To transfer a drawing to a lay out table start with a clean table, especially remove all the wax. Rub chalk over all the lines on the back side of drawing and position drawing on the table front up. Secure your drawing to the table with tape or weights. Center punch through the paper at corners of the drawing and other critical points. Go over all the lines of your drawing with a ballpoint pen or similar object to transfer the chalk to the table. Press hard to make a line you can see. Remove the drawing and trace over the chalk with a silver pencil to make it permanent. **To be continued in the next issue.**

Balcones Forge Bluebonnet Demo

featuring

DOROTHY STIEGLER



March 28-29, 2015

Marble Falls, Texas



Dorothy (stieglermetaldesign.com) returns to Texas for our two-day demo and to teach four one-day workshops on bronze forging. Do not miss this opportunity to learn from a master! Classes run Tuesday-Friday (24-27), \$135/members, \$155/non-members. See Jim Elliott or call (512) 630-1293 for openings, then send your check (Balcones Forge) to 1102 Walnut Street, Georgetown TX 78626. Space is limited -- first come, first served -- only paid spots will be held. Registration for the demo is separate.

Free camping spots are available all week around the pond on beautiful Sycamore Creek. Bring your tent or trailer and your fishing pole! Spring is a great time to be out in the Texas Hill Country under starry skies!

Don't miss the barbeque dinner Saturday night followed by our famous annual **Balcones Forge Auction**. Please create items and find unused tools to donate and prepare to bid on fantastic creations and blacksmithing tools -- maybe one of Dorothy's latest creations!

Demo Times: **Saturday:** 9:00–Noon – Morning Demo
Noon–1:00 Lunch: *Since Marble Falls is about 20 minutes away, it is recommended to order a sandwich, chips and drink for \$7 or bring a sack lunch.*
1:00–5:00 Afternoon Demo
6:00 Dinner -- only \$15
7:15 If not attending the dinner, please join us at this time for the fantastic auction
Sunday: 9:00–1:00+ – Demo

Our hosts are John and Carolyn Crouchet at their beautiful Sycamore Creek Ranch. **Directions: From Austin:** Hwy 71 northwest to Hwy 281. **From San Antonio:** Hwy 281 north to Marble Falls. Cross the Colorado River into Marble Falls, count 5 stoplights and turn right (east) at Ranch Road 1431. Go 5.6 miles and look for the "Anvil" signs. At our gate, you will see a small sign to the right that says, "Sycamore Creek Ranch, 5828 East Ranch Road 1431." If the gate is open, just drive in. If the gate is closed, there are cattle in this pasture, so please close the gate behind you. Continue crossing 4 cattle guards before you see the big metal shop on your left. Welcome! Lost? Call John at 830-798-3710.

For more info contact:

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

Jerry Achterberg 210-842-3049 or treefarm@swbell.net

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

Hotel Accommodations:

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

Quality Inn, 1206 Hwy 281 North, (866) 307-2224

Best Western, 1403 N Hwy 281, 830-693-5122

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

La Quinta Inn, 501 W. FM 2147, 830-798-2020

See the latest newsletter or website (www.BalconesForge.org) for Registration Form

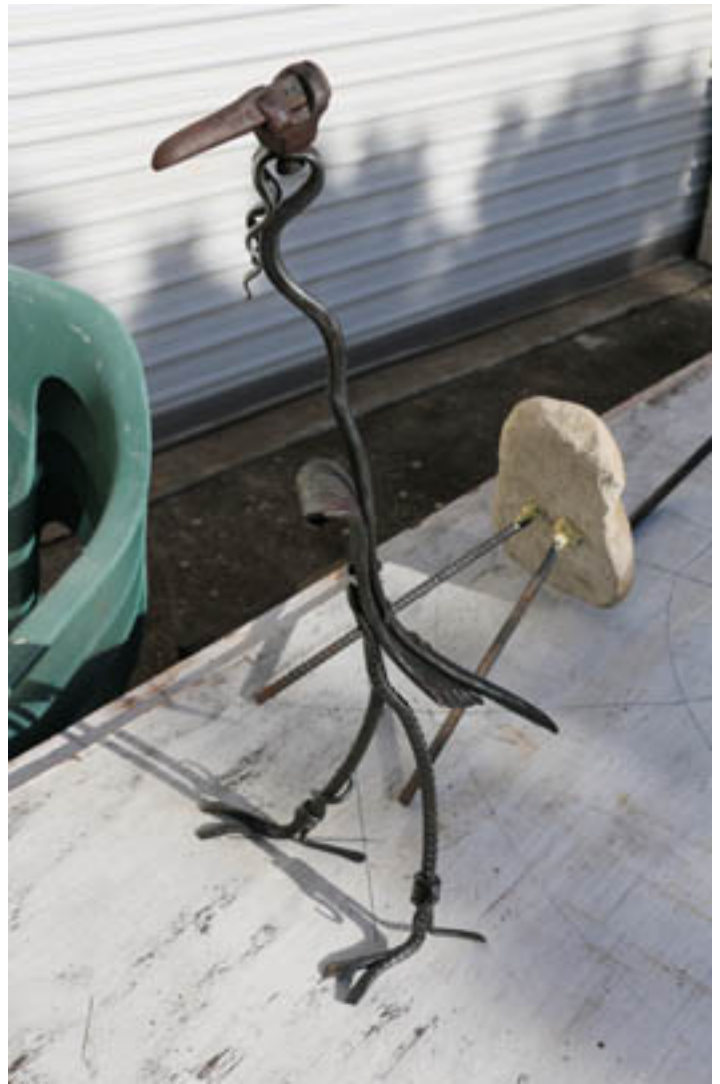
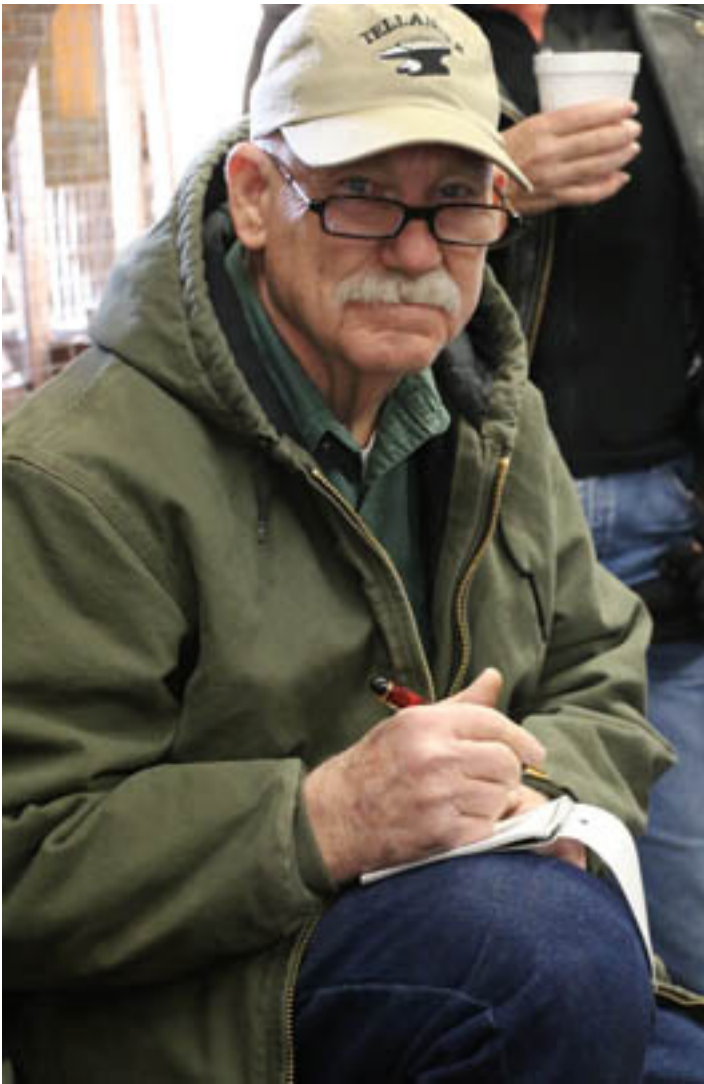
DON'T FORGET YOUR SAFETY GLASSES AND CUSHION. HELP US BY REGISTERING EARLY!!!



President Jerry Achterberg starts the meeting with host and demonstrator Gary Hilton



The fire ants are HUGE down around Hunt, Texas
WWW.BALCONESFORGE.ORG



Secretary Tim Tellander takes the notes



Balcones Forge Bluebonnet Demo

featuring **Dorothy Stiegler - March 28-29**

Please print clearly

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Yes, I prefer a hard-copy of the monthly newsletter mailed to me. I have added \$5 to the normal \$20 annual membership fee.

Current Member	\$45	_____
2015 Membership if unpaid.	\$20	_____
if you wish newsletter mailed	\$25	_____
Non-member	\$65	_____
Saturday Lunch	\$ 7	_____
Saturday Evening Meal...	\$15	_____
	Total \$	_____

****Please register by March 15****

Make check payable to **Balcones Forge**.
Send to Rudy Billings,
12302 Indian Mound, Austin, TX 78758

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 workshops and making these events available and granting permission to enter the area of said event, I, individually and as parent or guardian of the minor child attending such event, 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 workshop 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 _____

Vincent Herod
Spotted Dog Forge
166 Granite Road
Paige, TX 78659-4922

