



# Blacksmiths of Central Texas

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## January 2007

Happy New Year! 2007 promises to be a great year for Balcones Forge! More than thirty members sent 2006 out with an outstanding meeting at Gary Evensen's well-equipped shop, which allowed Gary Hilton to do a great demonstration of tong making. One of the best aspects of the day was the hands-on participation by several members trying their hand at making tongs. I bet next year's Christmas lists will have a few power hammers on them. Thanks to both Gary's. See our Secretary's report for more details.

As you will see, your "marketing department" created a new name for the Winter Workshop. But when you have Dorothy Stiegler as the featured demonstrator, it doesn't matter what you call it, it will be fantastic! Plan now to be in Marble Falls for two days of outstanding information, good food, and fun! Get your reservation in soon. "Bluebonnet Workshop" does have a nice ring to it, doesn't it?

Our giant annual auction during that weekend is the major fund-raising activity that allows us to operate throughout the year. So, please start creating and gathering up those auction items you know others will be interested in bidding on. Thanks!

Our next meeting at the Zilker Blacksmith Shop may allow you to leave your mark on this world. We will start creating the decorative panels for the smithy gates. Harvey came up with a good idea for us to pair up with someone that may complement a skill we're not comfortable with. If you're good at design, find a partner who is good at forging, etc. The Trade Item is a heavy duty leaf that can be incorporated into a panel. "Heavy duty" because I'm sure the panels will be subjected to little (and big) hands that could bend or break off delicate features, so keep that in mind when creating your panels. If you have not been to the Zilker forge, you're missing a special place. We are very lucky to have access to this, and the other community forges around central Texas. See you there!

Forging ahead,  
Rudy

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

# Balcones Forge ~~Winter~~ Bluebonnet



## Workshop featuring **DOROTHY STIEGLER**



March 31-April 1, 2007      Marble Falls, Texas

**Balcones Forge** is delighted to present a dynamic and entertaining two-day team demonstration by world famous blacksmith **Dorothy Stiegler** and her very accomplished apprentice, **Jake Hill**. This very special exhibition will include a wide array of Dorothy's own practical and productive forging secrets and tricks of the trade, as well as exciting displays of team forging. Learn to add value and artistic interest to your forged work with Dorothy's special demonstrations of bronze forging. As Dorothy says, "It looks old, it feels old."

Dorothy Stiegler is renowned for her artistic work in both iron and bronze. She has received the Alex Bealer Award, the highest honor that ABANA can bestow. She has served for many years on the ABANA Board of Directors and has worked with many of the finest blacksmiths of the past, present and future! Her demonstrations are packed with learning and laughter and she makes new friends wherever she goes! Come join us for a wonderful weekend in the Texas Hill Country and meet our friend, Dorothy Stiegler!

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 Dorothy's latest creation, or just enjoy our rousing, old-time auction! We will finish Saturday night with Dorothy's entertaining **slide show**, featuring the intricate and fascinating bronze work she and Jake have forged over the last three years.

The Balcones Workshop will be held March 31 and April 1. Here in the **Texas Hill Country**, folks, that is **Bluebonnet Time!** 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! Whether you ride the back roads on your trusty motorcycle or by automobile, it is a sight you will not want to miss!

**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  
7:25 – If you do not attend the dinner, please join us at this time for the Old Time Auction and Dorothy's slide show

**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 Hwy 71**, 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 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? Just call John Crouchet for directions at 830-798-3710. Web map: [maps.citysearch.com/map/view/10195073](http://maps.citysearch.com/map/view/10195073)

#### For more info contact:

**Rudy Billings**, 512-461-7375 or [Rudy@RedHotIronWorks.com](mailto:Rudy@RedHotIronWorks.com)

**John Crouchet**, 830-798-3710 or [John@TexasWroughtIron.com](mailto:John@TexasWroughtIron.com)

**Jerry Achterberg**, 210-661-3293 or [treefarm@swbell.net](mailto: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

See the latest newsletter or website ([www.BalconesForge.org](http://www.BalconesForge.org)) for Registration form.

**REGISTER EARLY!**

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

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

The December 2006 Balcones Forge meeting was a good one. It was at Gary Evensen's shop in Lakeway and we had at least 37 people attend, which is great for a holiday weekend. The meeting was full this time, as we had everything from show & tell to iron-in-the-hat, trade items and a work shop...all topped off with a great Dutch oven lunch.

So...to begin with, Dave Koenig, all the way from Houston, showed us some cool napkin rings/wine bottle bling (whichever folks are buying!) that he made from 1/4" tin-coated copper wire he found in the scrap yard. They had a really nice color to them, being a copper color softened by a hint of tin to lighten them up. He also brought some chased vessels made of 14 gauge sheet metal and a forged aluminum spoon and leaf that will become his kinetic sculpture trade item.

Because we planned a tong-making workshop for the day's main event, we went ahead with iron-in-the-hat and the trade items early. I'd like to remind everyone that iron-in-the-hat is a great way to bring in a little extra change to the group for demos and is a good way to clean out your shop at the same time. So...if you have blacksmithing related items you'd like to get rid of and want to donate them to Balcones Forge...bring them on in!! This month, we had an black glass store front panel (1" thick) from 1876 that will make a good table top, some 1084 steel shot, a box jaw tong kit, a cold cut, a 2 1/4" x 53 1/2" steel bar ("large" cross kit), an unused cardboard milk jug cap, a 5lb can of coffee, and a 2006 ABANA T-shirt. We also had seven trade items. This month's theme was something kinetic and boy did we have some good moving pieces come out of the challenge. Keep in mind that if you make an item to trade, you get to take home someone else's interpretation of that item and we are such a clever bunch

of folks. You don't want to miss out. It also gives you the opportunity to practice making things you may not otherwise think about making.

For the meeting, Gary Hilton came all the way from Hunt to show us how to make box-jaw tongs. Cut stock was provided for everyone who wanted to make a pair and there were lots of takers. There was a nice procedure board on which tongs at each step in the forging process were displayed. Then, Gary H. forged one half of a set of tongs for folks to see how it was done in person. Afterwards, with the power hammer going, three anvils and two forges set up...folks got busy.

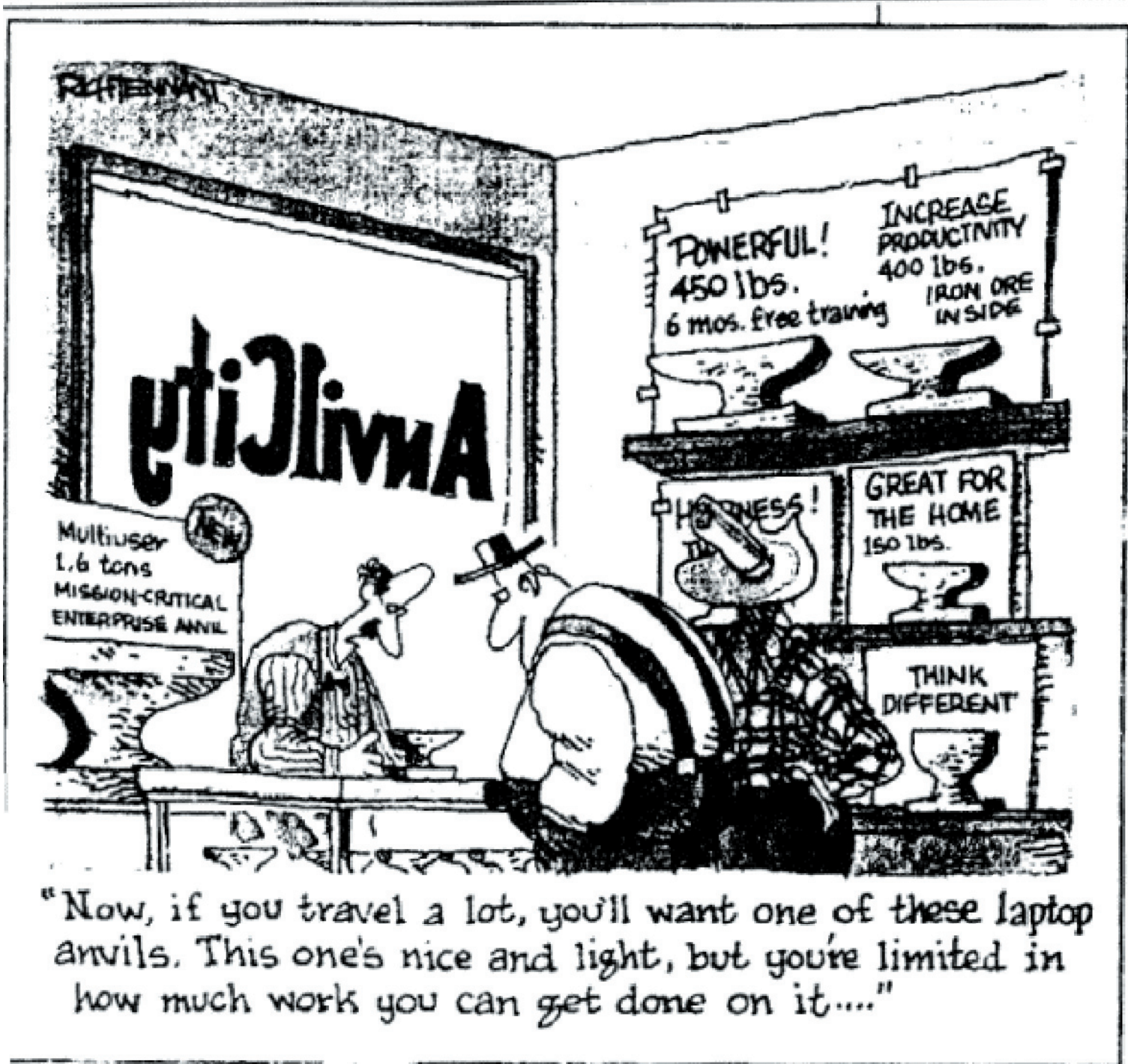
At lunch time...Gary Evensen's wife, B'Ann, and one of the girls in her scout troop had a fabulous scout fund-raiser lunch ready for us. It was a cold day, so the hot lunch really tasted extra good. Thanks! Sue Murray - BF Secretary



Photos by Helen Wise



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From the Appalachian Blacksmith  
Association Newsletter, Dec. 1999.



## A CALL TO AUCTION

Now that you all have your calendars marked for the big event at the end of March, it is time for you to get out in your shop and create an item to donate to the auction.

Out of all the various fund raising activities spread through out the year the auction at the big demo is the one to attend. The truth is, without the auction, the big annual demo would loose money. Balcones Forge trys hard as an organization to keep the cost of membership low and keep the demos affordable.....and I think we do a good job!

So take some time in the next month or so to make an item or perhaps do a bit of shop cleaning and pass an unused piece of equipment along to someone who needs it to get going in the craft. Anything related to the craft will help. And don't forget, the auction is a family affair so make something for them as well.

Remember this is YOUR organization and it is up to YOU to help out .

Vince Herod, Editor

## FEBRUARY MEETING

I am going to present a slide show of my photos from my 2004 tour of European Art Nouveau (Barcelona, Brussels and a little bit in Paris), plus Rome, Florence, Assisi and Venice, with a concentration of metalwork of course. Also, I am going to talk about some new technologies of lighting, including LEDs, electroluminescent wire and Flat Light, for people that would like to include that in their metalwork.

John van Strien

## A TIP FROM TURLEY

“Presto” (brand) white-out will last through a heat. So you can use it to mark your iron and still see the mark when you bring it out of the forge, according to Frank Turley.

## READY TO HOST A MEETING?

We have a few spots still open for 2007. Contact our VP, Harvey Wise at [hpw@tconline.net](mailto:hpw@tconline.net) if you're interested.

## THINGS TO BRING TO MEETINGS...

Coffee, water, favorite beverage  
Portable chair  
Ear protection  
Something for Show-n-Tell

and last, but not least -- eye protection!

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

Please join us for the 15<sup>th</sup> annual Little Giant Rebuilding Seminar! We will host 2 classes, Friday, March 16 through Sunday, March 18 or Friday, March 23 through Sunday the 25<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

This class was first taught by our good friend Fred Caylor of Zionsville, Indiana. We carry on his tradition of teaching how to make Little Giants run well and hit hard.

Each 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, owner of Little Giant, will share all his knowledge and experience gained from working with Fred and from 16 years of repairing and rebuilding Little Giants.

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

The classes are held in our 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).

2007 REGISTRATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Business name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

CLASS

March 16-18

March 23-25

PAYMENT

Check enclosed

Visa

MasterCard

Discover

American Express

Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

POWER HAMMER INFO

Brand: \_\_\_\_\_

Size: \_\_\_\_\_

Serial Number: \_\_\_\_\_

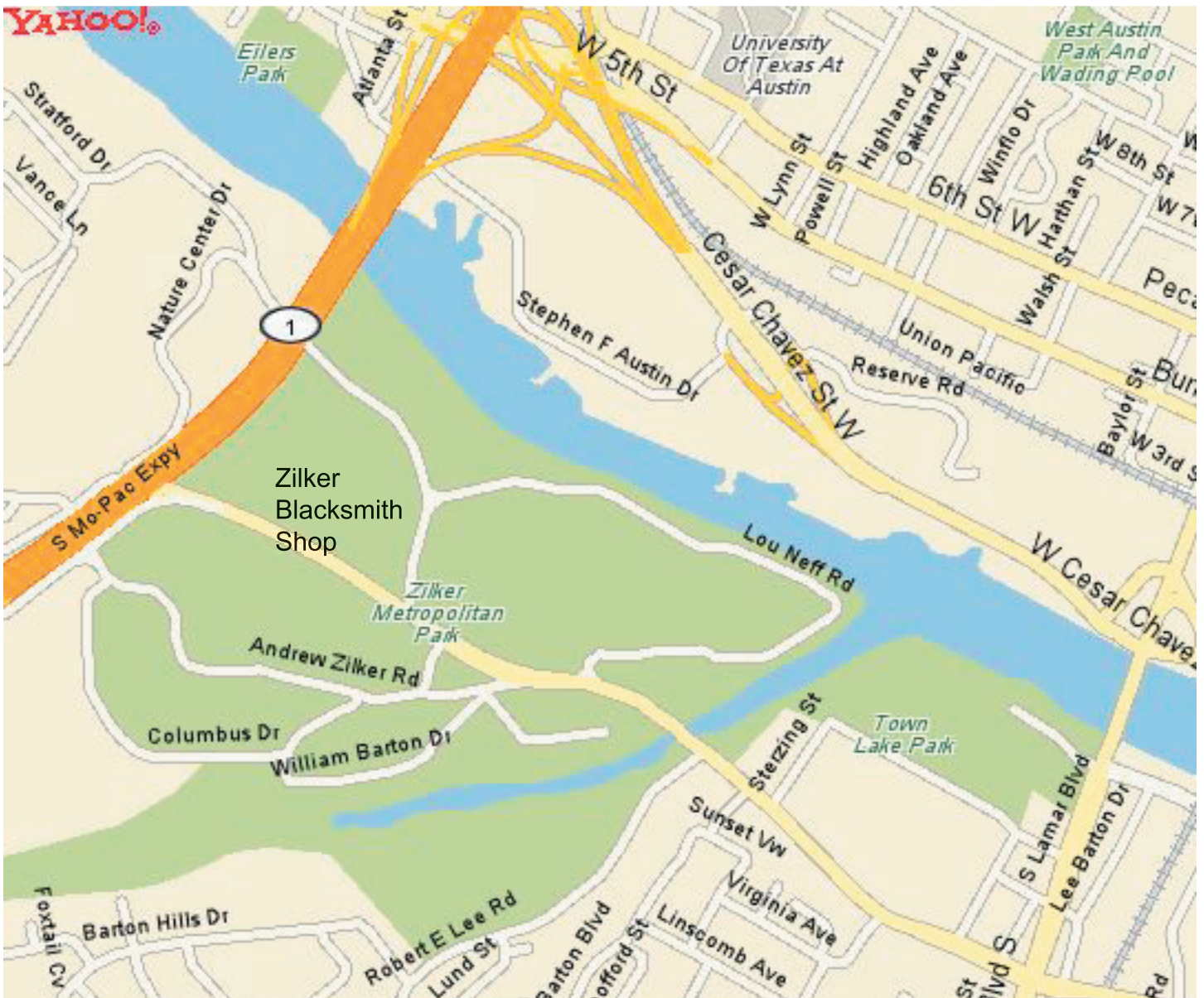
Please call or email if you have any questions, or prefer to register by phone. You can reach us at 402.873.6603 or Sid@LittleGiantHammer.com

Little Giant 420 4<sup>th</sup> Corso, Nebraska City, NE 68410

**January Meeting:** Zilker Blacksmith Shop, Austin; January 27, 2007 9:30am. Zilker Forge is located inside of the beautiful Botanical Gardens in the center of Zilker Park. Ask any of the friendly garden staff if you need help in finding the blacksmith shop.

If it gets a bit crowded around the forge, be sure to enjoy all the sights and smells of the Botanical Gardens.

**Trade Item:** a sturdy leaf or flower appropriate to place in a panel at the Zilker Blacksmith Shop.



# Balcones Forge Bluebonnet Workshop

featuring **Dorothy Stiegler - March 31-April 1**

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 \_\_\_\_\_

2007 Membership ..... \$15 \_\_\_\_\_

Non-member..... \$60 \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I wish to become a BF member

Saturday Evening Meal ... \$15 \_\_\_\_\_

**Total** \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to **Balcones Forge.**

Send to Sue Murray, Secretary,

5112 Cloverdale Lane, Austin, TX 78723

**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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