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# Blacksmiths of Central Texas

## President's Corner

January 2010

Greetings, fellow iron-pounders! After watching our group go for two months without a volunteer for President, my conscience finally got the better of me and I realized that I still owe Balcones Forge a lot more than I have paid, so here I am, your volunteer President for 2010.

The first thing we need to get straight is that, unlike most organizations, around here the President does NOT run the organization. That is the duty of the Board of Directors, an illustrious group of wise and experienced blacksmiths elected by YOU. The President's real job is to be head cheerleader, facilitator, and planner of good stuff for the members! That's me, folks!

It is my job to make sure every Balcones Forge meeting is interesting and exciting. I need to include things in every meeting for beginning blacksmiths, intermediate blacksmiths, and even something for the old hands who thought they knew it all! If you have complaints about our meetings, TELL IT TO ME! I am serious. I will do all I can to make sure you are happy to be here.

This year is going to a busy one for blacksmithing in Central Texas. We have already lined up –by popular request—a return visit from everybody's favorite cowboy blacksmith, GORDON WILLIAMS! We are planning teaching and forging sessions in conjunction with the Zilker Park Festival in March. We will be forging iron for the Pioneer Museum in Fredericksburg soon, and your Board of Directors (remember those guys?) is planning a meeting SOON to build us all some new tools! Lots more is in the works. Stay tuned and please, keep those suggestions coming!

Our next meeting is Saturday, January 30 at beautiful Conservation Plaza in New Braunfels. This is an interesting group of preserved old buildings with a historical forge in need of a little bit of TLC. We plan to provide that while we hammer out a bit of hardware for the old place and do some LEAF FORGING.

(Continued on page 2)

## President's Corner continued

Our demonstration on leaf-forging techniques will be followed with a teaching/forging session with anvils and forge space available for everyone. Just bring your favorite hammer and expect to go home with some leaves and some new techniques in organic forging! Will it be cold the last day of January? What do you think? Fortunately, you can do your forging near one of our PROPANE HEATERS while you gulp down HOT CHOCOLATE! That's right! Heaters, hot chocolate, and hot iron. Is this starting to sound better? I hope so. See you there.

John Crouchett

## TRADE ITEM

Since this month's meeting is all about the leaf, the trade item is, you guessed it, a leaf!

Now get out to your shop and come up with something unique and fun that you can trade with a fellow member of Balcones Forge.

Remember, you gotta make one to take one.

## A TRIBUTE TO MR. CHARLIE

We have a celebrity in our midst! Our own Mary Jo Emrick was featured in the latest Anvil's Ring. The article, "In Memory of Charlie Stolte" told of Mary Jo's love affair with metal and the making of a unique frame for her Austin Community College diploma. The titanium hummingbird which adorns the top of the frame was forged in the style taught to so many by Mr. Charlie. Mary Jo did not hesitate to give credit to the many benefits we have here in central Texas, such as ACC and the numerous blacksmiths associated with Balcones Forge. Beautiful work, Mary Jo! A great article and beautiful frame with many other features too many to

detail. Anyway, you should be receiving your own copy of both the Anvil's Ring and the Hammer's Blow. It's easy -- become an ABANA member. Well worth the price of membership -- it does have its privileges.

## THANKS FOR THE DONATIONS!

The new Rockdale Blacksmith Shop recently was the beneficiary of some great tools donated by both Verl Underwood and Gary Hilton. This new shop is well equipped, but like any, it can benefit from the little things like tongs, hammers, chisels, etc. If you have some extra tools you are not using, any of the community forges that Balcones Forge has built and/or supports could use your unused items. Any board member will be glad to accept your donation on behalf of the Rockdale, Zilker, Espada, Pioneer Museum or Conservation Plaza forges. Thanks -- you'll be glad you did.

## NEW IN THE BF GALLERY

Hey folks. Gary Hilton has been at it again and has created a couple of new sculptures just added to the Balcones Forge Gallery. Check it out at <http://www.balconesforge.org/garyhilton>. For the rest of you, submit your pictures and you can be famous too. Send to Rudy@BalconesForge.org.

## NEED RIVETS?

Blacksmith Bolt & Rivet Supply offers a full range of authentic olde time fasteners to Blacksmiths, Wheelwrights, the Carriage Trades and other metalcrafters. These include Square Head Lag and Machine Bolts, black Carriage Bolts, Iron Tire Bolts, Slotted Oval and Round Head Wood Screws, Hanger Blanks, Solid Round and Truss Head Rivets in Iron and Brass, and more. Small orders are welcome.

<http://www.BlacksmithBolt.com>

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## DECEMBER MEETING MINUTES

The Balcones Forge Board of Directors met previous to the general meeting in December.

Discussion commenced regarding the lack of officers and make up of the Board of Directors. The Board appointed John Crouchett and Elize Garza to the Board. The Board then voted on a slate of officers.

The Balcones Forge Board now has 11 members:

John Crouchett, President  
Aaron Tilton, Vice President  
Rudy Billings, Treasurer  
Jim Elliot, Secretary

Jerry Achterberg  
Elise Garza  
David Guerro  
Vince Herod  
Tom Lupton  
Sue Murray  
Jerry Whitley

Discussion of spring demo featuring Gordon Williams to be held at John Crouchett's shop in Marble Falls. Event moved to April 24 & 25, 2010.

Discussion of calendar and meeting locations:

|           |                  |
|-----------|------------------|
| February  | open             |
| March     | Zilker Garden    |
| April     | John Crouchett's |
| May       | San Marcos       |
| September | Bob Phiel's      |

Discussion to compensate host of Spring Demo for use of their shop. Motion made by JA and seconded by SM to provide compensation; passed.

Discussion and planning of January meeting. Meeting to be held at Conservation Plaza at 9:30am on Saturday January 30, 2010. Production of hardware for the Plaza and leaf making will be the topics.

Discussion followed of future projects to be pro-

duced at monthly meetings. One project could be a Smithing Magician workshop. Another project could be a guillotine fuller (necking tool). Large projects could be another treadle hammer workshop or the Clay Spencer mechanical hammer. Members need to let the Board know what type of workshops are desired.

Possible future meetings could include related crafts and artists; one possibility is RC Hot Glass Studios in Austin.

Balcones Forge has raffle tickets for several great items available at the ABANA Conference in June. See Rudy to buy tickets for your chance at a BAM Box, Tire Hammer and 125 anvil.

Panels are still needed for the gate at the Zilker Forge. Talk with Rudy if you are interested in creating a panel.

Motion to adjourn the Board meeting made by Vince Herod and seconded by Rudy Billings. The regular meeting commenced immediately after the Board meeting.

Several people took advantage of the available forge and anvils to create hooks and other hardware.

Only two trade items were offered up at the December meeting; see pictures on page 5 of this edition.

At least one new member signed up at the December meeting. Please welcome Tim Deschner to the group! A total of four new members have signed up recently.

Pay your dues; they are due.

Submitted by Jim Elliot.

Edited by Vince Herod.

## **BALCONES FORGE LIBRARY INFO**

### Overdue Library Books

Just got through updating the library inventory after the August meeting at Mission Espada and it looks like we are getting quite a few books that are way overdue (several months). Remember that books are "officially" due back the next meeting after you check them out. If you are going to miss a meeting and have books checked out, just let me know. If no one requests a book you have and you need to keep it a while longer, that's OK, just let me know you'd like to keep it checked out a while longer. I'll be sending out individual email reminders soon. Thanks.

### New Library Materials

The library has received a very generous donation of Mr. Charlie's personal library, given to us by Mrs. Charles Stolte, via Rudy Billings. All materials contain a commemorative book plate so you'll recognize them when you read them. I'll be updating the lists in the next few days. Some are duplicates we already have, a few will replace some of the books that have gone missing over the years, but many are new. I'll bring the new material to the June meeting.

#### Summary of new material:

My Life as a Blacksmith, by Francis Whitaker as told to Gary Mansfield

Kunst aus dem Feuer, by Julius Hoffman. (German)

Julius Schramm (workshop report), Skipjack Press

Treadle Hammer Tooling, Clay Spencer

Expose of Repousse for the Begining Blacksmith, Robert M. heath

Metalworking & Enamelling, Herbert Maryon

Working with Copper, Silver and Enamel, Jan and Ove Sjoberg

Traditional Glasswork Techniques, Paul N. Hasluck

Antique Tools, our American Heritage, Kathryn McNerney

The Artist-Blacksmith's Craft, Julius Schramm

The Blacksmith's Cookbook, Recipes in Iron, by Francis Whitaker

The Complete Metalsmith, Tim McCreight

American Blacksmith, Holstrom and Holford

Samuel Yellin Metalworkers: Three Generations, Southern Highland Craft Guild

Joe Jelemensky, Librarian

*Sorry getting this information into the newsletter has been so long delayed. Editor.*

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



Photos from the December meeting by Harry Cablück.

Above, A young hook maker shows his just created work.

Left, The two Jerry's display their trade items.

For a great article on Harry's distinguished photo-journalism career, go online to [www.statesman.com](http://www.statesman.com) and look at page 1 of the Lifestyle section of the Austin American Statesman from January 10, 2010. The article is by Denise Gamino.

## **BROADEN YOUR HORIZONS THIS SUMMER**

Memphis, Tennessee is the place to be June 2, 3, 4, and 5 ! That will be the site of the Artist Blacksmiths Association of North America's national conference, and you are invited to attend.

Many of you have already attended one, two, three, or more National Conferences, so you know it can be a real eye-opener of an experience. For those who have yet to attend one of these blacksmithing extravaganzas, let me assure you, it can change your whole life-time perspective on forging iron!

ABANA will present demonstrations and seminars by many of America's foremost blacksmiths. These are the big guys, the folks with the real know-how, and they will pass it straight on to you continuously for three days! Watch Mark Aspery show his renowned tool-making techniques. Watch big-hammer man Phil Cox show you how to really work a power hammer. Joe Anderson, famous for forged kitchenware, will demo the tricks of his trade. Dragon heads? How about a demo from Dan Boone, one of America's best? Dan Naumann, author of "Controlled Hand Forging," will plumb the mysteries of repoussé. Folks, the list goes on and on. These are some of the finest, most successful blacksmiths in the world and they will be showing their craft and answering your questions. For those of you with a business interest in pounding iron, there will be discussions and seminars about the business end of blacksmithing. For your artistic side, there will be demos on sculpture techniques.

All of this happens at the Agricenter International in beautiful Memphis, home of famous music, famous barbecue, and the famous National Ornamental Metals Museum!

The ABANA Board of Directors is making every effort to keep the costs reasonable and the show extravagant! Check it out at [www.abana.org](http://www.abana.org) and plan to join me in Memphis this June!

John Crouchett

## **ABANA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The annual Board of Directors meeting was held in Memphis Dec 3-5, 2009.

We want to thank the Metal Museum and its Executive Director Carissa Hussong and staff for their welcome and hospitality. We also wish to recognize the River Bluff Forge Council for a good time at their Show and Reception at the Jack Robinson Gallery.

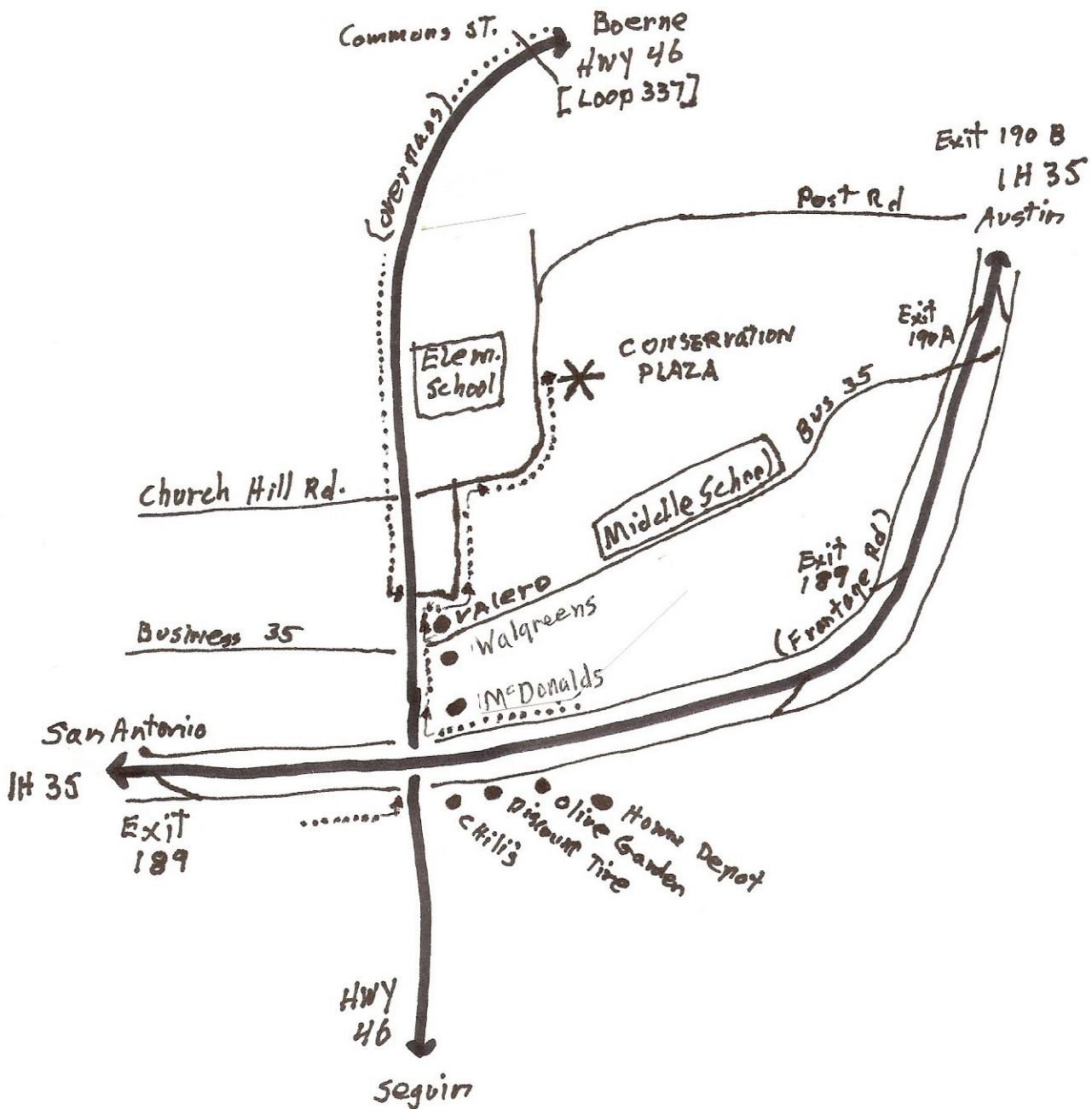
The same slate of officers from last year was re-elected:

Rome Hutchings - President  
Paul Boulay - 1st VP  
David Hutchison - 2nd VP  
Linda Tanner - Treasurer  
Peyton Anderson - Secretary

Strategic direction, association budget, publications and the upcoming conference were the main topics of many hours of fruitful discussion. The board also visited the site of the 2010 Conference, AgriCenter International.

## CONSERVATION PLAZA, NEW BRAUNFELS

Watch carefully for the abrupt right turn on the side of the Sac-N-Pac/ Valero station (Business 35 & Hwy 46 (Lp337)). You must be in the far right lane in front of Valero to make the turn. Proceed to the stop sign at Church Hill Rd. Turn right, go around the corner and then enter the Conservation Plaza on the right at the two stone pillars. For inclement weather our meeting will be indoors at the Plaza's Forke Store.



## **HEY DUDE, DUES ARE DUE**



The Balcones Forge membership runs from January through December, which means if you haven't paid lately, you'll be missing out. It's that privilege thing again. \$15 covers you and your entire family. What a deal! See Rudy at the next meeting, or send to:

Balcones Forge,  
1906 Rampart Circle  
Austin, TX 78727.

Remember to make your check out to  
“Balcones Forge”

Return Service Requested

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