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The Anvil’s Ring (ISSN 0889-177X) is the official publication of the Artist-Blacksmith’s Association of North America, Inc. It is mailed to the members on a quarterly basis in Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter by ABANA, P.O. Box 816, Farmington, GA 30638-0816. Membership is available to any individual or organization interested in the art of blacksmithing. The annual fee for a regular membership is $45; $24 of this amount is for a subscription to The Anvil’s Ring for one year. Permit to mail at periodical postage rates is registered at Farmington, GA, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: send address changes to The Anvil’s Ring, P.O. Box 816, Farmington, GA 30638-0816. Matters related only to membership and subscription, including dues, change of address and subscription complaints, should be addressed to LeeAnn Mitchell, ABANA Executive Secretary, P.O. Box 816, Farmington, GA 30638-0816. (706) 310-1030 or e-mail to abana@abana.org. All editorially related materials, such as articles, book reviews, queries, tips, announcements of activities, ads, etc., should be mailed to The Anvil’s Ring, Sebastian Publishing, P.O. Box 1849, 2770 Sourdough Flat, Georgetown, CA 95634. Include SASE for material return. (530) 333-2687 phone or (530) 333-2689 fax or e-mail to thering@sebastianpublishing.com. The contents of this publication may not be reproduced either in whole or in part without the permission of the editor or the individual contributors. Contributors retain all copyright privileges; the material is copyrighted solely for their protection. The Anvil’s Ring, ©2001 The Artist-Blacksmith’s Association of North America, Inc.
Dear ABANA Members,

Fall is in the air and the time has come again for me to converse, in this limited way, with the membership. First, look elsewhere in this issue, on the web site, and in the chapter communications for information on the upcoming ABANA conference in LaCrosse, Wisconsin, June 5 - 9, 2002. The board and the conference team, headed by Bill Fiorini, are working to finalize the venues, demonstrators and activities. We have worked hard to hold down expenses while still maintaining a truly world-class conference, so please make every effort to attend; you will not be disappointed. With the publications coming out on schedule, we will be using them extensively to deliver conference information while holding down costs. As noted in this issue, registration is coming up soon. We only have space for a total of 1500 attendees, so register early.

The ABANA election is over and I thank all of the members who voted. There were some comments and questions regarding the open position created by the lack of nominees (four for five open positions). As defined by the bylaws or described in the procedures, there is no provision for write-in candidates in our elections. To address this issue in this or any way with the election ongoing would have been unfair to those members and candidates who followed the election procedures and were nominated by the proscribed procedures. The responsibility for filling this or any other open seat is the responsibility of the board, again as defined by the bylaws and procedures. A strong nominee has been placed before the board for approval. As this is written, I do not know the outcome of that vote, but I hope the vote will be successful.

To the blacksmith community,
The events of September 11th have deeply affected all of us; indeed, the entire world. On behalf of ABANA, I extend my sympathies and support to all who have suffered loss. Please give pause in all that you do in support of the victims of these attacks, as well as for our country and the civilized world. Many ways are available to assist and support the victims and those working in the recovery efforts. Please contribute as you can. While we and our world have been changed in many and immeasurable and yet unknown ways, we must go on — as a world, as a nation, as an organization, as individuals. To do so is one way to fight back against this evil in a positive way. And, for all of ABANA, I thank those members from outside the USA who contacted us with messages of concern, support, and sympathy. They have shown that blacksmithing is a universal family that knows no borders.

Hold close all those whom you hold dear.

[Signature]

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[Signature]
ABANA continues to get positive feedback regarding the Boy Scout Metalwork Merit Badge. The requirements are on the web site, www.abana.org, along with the information on how to sign up as a merit badge counselor. No other program could fall more firmly into the ABANA mission of education. Any further questions, give me a call or drop me a line. And, if the Girl Scouts or any other youth organization have programs that will fit with ABANA’s mission of education about blacksmithing, please get them involved too. And we need to include more of our youth in our organizations and activities. I see too much gray hair and too few young faces when I attend local and regional meetings.

Safe and productive forging.

Doug Learn
ABANA President

Geronimo Bayard 1936 - 2001
Dear Editor,
It is with a heavy heart that I want to let the members of ABANA know that The American Blacksmith School in Oakland, Oregon, is now closed. My husband, owner and instructor of the school, died July 16th in his shop. Perhaps one of the saddest things is that this spring the classes at the school, which was started by Geronimo in 1995, really took off, and even more so in the summer of 2001. We were married in 1990, and I am his only surviving family.
He loved the legend, the lore, the mystery, and best of all, the magic of blacksmithing.

Mary Bayard, Oakland, Oregon

Dear Editor,
Who’s who in blacksmithing ... is a farrier a blacksmith or a blacksmith a farrier? If you use a welder and bend steel, are you a blacksmith? These are some of the questions of a beginner — I should know, because I am a beginner.

I do not want to offend anyone, but the definition of a farrier in Webster’s Dictionary is: “A shoer of horses,” and the definition of blacksmith is “One who works in iron, making and fitting horseshoes, etc.” A welder is “One who unites pieces of metal by heating until fused or soft enough to hammer or press together.”

I know farriers, who do nothing but shoe horses, who call themselves blacksmiths and welders who make gates and other metal objects, who call themselves blacksmiths and blacksmiths who do not shoe horses. This can be very confusing to a beginner. As a novice, I wanted to

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find out as much as I could about blacksmithing while learning this hobby or, maybe, trade.

Where do we draw the line, or do we have to? To answer this question, we have to look back in our past and relate it to where we are now and where we are going in the future.

The first recovery of iron from ore is generally conceded to have taken place about 2000 B.C., at the time when man was preoccupied with hunting and survival. There are a few items found that have dated back to 1200 B.C. Unlike the early metallurgists and artisans who worked in bronze, copper, silver, and gold, the molders of iron have left virtually no recorded history of any sort. Bronze, copper, silver, and gold resist corrosion or form protective oxide layers that slow their deterioration if buried in the soil. Iron, on the other hand, does not withstand the passage of time. Buried in the soil, few items fabricated from iron can survive more than a century.

Some of the earliest specimens of 12th-century England and France are those preserved in the many churches and cathedrals. Few items forged from iron survived before the 12th century, and these were protected from the elements. Even in the United States, other than a handful of old prints, a scattering of references in books and journals, and a few accounts ledgers, almost nothing has been recorded of blacksmiths and their trade.

In his book *Early American Wrought Iron*, Albert Sonn comments: “What manner of man was the blacksmith of those early days, and what actually did he make? Except in a few instances, history answers the question very meagerly, if at all.”

The blacksmith was no mere shoer of horses. In those long-gone good old days he made a wide variety of things. After a horse was shod, the smith moved on to the next task: tools, hinges for a barn door, andirons for a kitchen fireplace, runners for a logging sled, wedges, wagon springs, door latches, pots, and pans...the list goes on.

Iron played a vital part in the forward thrust of civilization. It opened the way for the invention and manufacture of complex machines that could not have been built from traditional materials. A dramatic and radical change in man’s life followed the rapid development of machinery that turned at high speed, doing the job of many men. The way of life changed quickly over time. All areas of life changed — transportation went from horse to trains and automobiles, wooden ships to metal ships, wood was being replaced by iron, and the blacksmith were right in the middle of it and virtually worked themselves out of a job. Meanwhile, the tiresome chore of shoeing thousands of horses went on as before, a specialized branch of the blacksmith’s trade that was ultimately to be the sole surviving part of his work. Their specialized tools and products now could be made faster and cheaper than he could make them, himself.

The industrial era was the downfall of the blacksmith. Many went on to the automotive trade, opening garages to fix horseless carriages, some went on to become farriers, other went into the industrial trade as welders or metalworkers. We all have to change with the times or we would be left holding an empty bag.

So you can see that blacksmiths, farriers, and welders have all come from the same strain. Is it important to give a division to our interest? I do not think so. As a novice, this variety gives me the flexibility to explore all aspects of iron working. There are so many different things that can be done today with iron that it would take a lifetime to explore all the possibilities. Do I want to shoe horses for a living or for a hobby? Or how about being a re-enactor, living the ways of our ancestors? Are you interested in art? Do you want to sell your
wares at arts and crafts shows? Are you interested in teaching your skill or giving demonstrations? How about helping the Boy Scouts with their metalworking merit badges? How about welding — do you want to produce items using modern equipment? Do you want to preserve our heritage and work as the past blacksmiths did, with charcoal, coal and forge?

The time is now and the future is yours in the making. As you can see, we have many scenarios to choose from, and these choices sometimes can be overwhelming. My suggestion to fellow beginners is to pick one and have fun with it. If you don’t like that area, go on to another. No one is stopping you except you.

It is not difficult to get started; find a local blacksmith, farrier, or bladesmith and talk to him or her about helping. There are schools available that teach many levels of blacksmithing. I have attended a class at the John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, North Carolina, and was very impressed, not only with the smithy and the level of instruction, but also with the atmosphere. I plan to take as many classes as I can. Want to join me?

Robert W. Schlag, Kingsland, Georgia

Dear Editor,

This is a photo of my “Worminator.” It is copper, high-relief repoussé with a bit of chasing, patinated with liver of sulphur and polished for highlighting. The size is 5½” x 5¼.”

I had taken Kirsten Skiles’ high-relief repoussé class at the John C. Campbell Folk School, and afterward tried copper instead of steel, which she taught. The motif stems from a toad photo I had taken in our flower garden. So it is photorealistic – just the worm is an addition. Hope you like it.

Dietrich Hoecht, Dancing Hammer Forge, Loganville, Georgia

Dear Editor,

Great issue of The Ring — am referring to Summer 2001 issue with the photo of my turtle on the front cover as well as the back. Your choice of colors for the turtle is splendid. Creative layouts throughout and exciting New Works. I am proud to be a member of ABANA and honored to be on the cover.

As forgemaster of the Adirondack regional sub-chapter of the New York State Designer Blacksmiths, I am helping to incorporate... continued on page 8

By now, you’ve probably heard of Fred Holder’s Blacksmith’s Gazette. It is designed to provide guidance in blacksmithing techniques and to keep you informed as much as possible with what is happening in the blacksmithing craft. We are not an art publication. Our purpose is to provide good information on technique and news.

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Dear Editor,

I'm forwarding this letter from one of the last journeymen who was visiting Postville Blacksmith Shop. I thought it might be interesting to your readers. I'd like to mention that there are more shops looking for help than journeymen looking for work experience in the U.S.

Bob Bergman, Postville Blacksmith Shop, Blanchardville, WI

It all began when I saw Bob Bergman's note looking for a journeyman back at the ABANA 2000 conference in Flagstaff, Arizona. A year later and at the end of my tour, I am still grateful to Bob for setting me on this amazing adventure. I had just finished school then and, after reading that note, becoming a journeyman to continue my training in working with metals became the next logical step. So I packed some clothes and took off to Wisconsin and from there went to a series of shops and studios that took me around the entire nation. I would ultimately work at nine different shops in six states and visit a dozen blacksmiths. We may all have heard about the helpful tips and tricks one picks up from such an experience, but what is not as apparent are the little tricks you learn about human relations. Every few weeks I was thrown into a completely new group of people, each with particular routines and idiosyncrasies, and adjusting to and enjoying this environment was quite enriching. You learn how to deal with mistakes—like forgetting the drill bits as you pack the brand-new, super-duper, monster drill that the boss got specifically to finish the job, and then realizing it only after reaching the installation site 200 miles away. There are also moments of fulfillment like the completion of your first railing, even if all you did was grind the welds.

For me, learning to work metal is not the key benefit of this journey; rather, it is the contacts and friendships that were established and the opportunity to see this country. I am amazed at the generosity of smiths in general. Some have opened their homes to me and took me in like family. All laid open their shops, shared their experiences with me, and encouraged me to go further. I cannot think of an easier way to meet and really get to know so many smiths and their methods than by going on this journey. Now I have a list of excellent blacksmiths and their area of specialty and I can refer questions directly to the smith most able to answer them.

In my driving and living at the various blacksmith shops from Wisconsin to Minnesota to California, I have indeed seen the sun rise from the Atlantic and have followed it to watch it set into the Pacific. I have taken in the congestion and excitement of New York City as well as the clear, crisp peace of the Rockies, slept beneath the rustling towers of the mighty redwoods and wondered at the endless stars in the skies above the rolling, vast prairies. It was wonderful.

Lee Wing Wei, Malaysia, lee_wing_wei@hotmail.com
1. Criteria for Selection & Funding
In reviewing applications, the ABANA Scholarship Committee will consider but not be limited to reviewing the following items:

- Documentation of the talent and skills of the visiting artist in blacksmithing and the smith’s ability to demonstrate that talent and skills in an educational environment.
- The demonstration by the sponsoring Chapter as to how the grant will allow the Chapter to achieve it’s educational goals, such as allowing the event to occur at all, underwriting the visiting smith’s travel budget, decreasing the attendance fee and thus allowing more members to attend, underwriting student attendance fees at a decreased cost, etc.
- Evidence of a plan to disseminate the information from the event to the Chapter membership and the blacksmithing community by publication of articles covering the event in the Chapter’s Newsletter and submission of such articles to ABANA publications and the Scholarship Committee.

The ABANA Chapters’ Visiting Artist Grant will provide funds for support of an ABANA Chapter educational event. The maximum amount of funding for this grant is $600.00

2. Responsibilities of Recipient Chapter
As a condition of receiving an ABANA Grant, the chapter is required to share the learning from this event as outlined in the third point listed in Section 1. The use or disposition of any demonstration pieces resulting from the event is the responsibility of the Chapter and the visiting artist. The event is to be open to any person with an
interest in blacksmithing regardless of chapter affiliation or ABANA membership status.

3. Deadlines
To be considered for a grant, the grant application must be mailed to the ABANA Office, postmarked by the following dates:
- January 2
- April 1
- July 1
- October 1

Exceptions to this rule will only be made for applicants who need immediate consideration and in extraordinary circumstances, as outlined by the Chapter President and approved by the Scholarship Committee and the President of ABANA. Electronic applications cannot be accepted at this time.

Winners will be notified of grants within one month of the above application deadlines either by voice, e-mail or surface mail. Funds will be sent to the recipient within two weeks after the notification.

4. Guidelines and Instructions
Along with the Chapters’ Visiting Artist Grant Application Form, applicants must include:

- Résumé of the visiting artist, including training, images of recent works and educational experience at workshops and conferences.
- A description of the event, including date, time, location and program.
- Plan for sharing the results of the event with the Chapter membership and the blacksmith community at large.

Recipients of previous Chapter Grants are not eligible to submit another application for two years after the completion of the event and submission of articles to either The Anvil’s Ring or Hammer’s Blow and submission to the Scholarship Committee.

Partial or improperly completed applications will be rejected without review. Rejected applications will be considered no sooner than the next application deadline. Be sure your application is in order, as there will be no exceptions to this requirement.

Application materials will not be returned unless return postage is included with the application.

Call the Central Office at 706/310-1030 to request a grant application form or download from: www.abana.org. Go to Chapters. At bottom of page is application form for Chapters Grant Program. Click on adobe.pdf document to download application.

Mail all applications to:

The ABANA Scholarship & Grants Committee
Artist-Blacksmith’s Association of N.A., Inc.
FROM OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD

• A team of up to 12 blacksmiths from Europe will continuously demonstrate throughout the conference. You will hear more about this event in future Chapter Liaison Letters.

• You will be pleased to know that Angelo Bartolucci from Italy will again be with us for the 2002 Conference. Those of you who attended the 2000 ABANA Conference will remember this delightful and skilled gentleman.

• You won’t want to miss this one! From Japan you will see a carpenter plane maker, chisel maker, saw maker, swords smith, high-relief chaser and a knife maker, all demonstrating in the traditional manner. (See pages 20 and 21.)

FROM CLOSER TO HOME

• Tom Latané will head up a team comprised of Pete Renzetti, Carl Close, Tina Chisena, Paul Spaulding and Kevin Clancy. You may remember their wonderful Gothic sculpture from the 2000 ABANA Conference. Just wait and see their classical master clock at this one!

• The Colonial Williamsburg blacksmiths led by Peter Ross are again back with us, demonstrating colonial-era gunsmithing and blacksmithing.

• Ric Dunkerly is lined up to demonstrate mosaic Damascus knife making.

• Steve Schwarter will show us how to make powder mosaic Damascus.
Tentatively planned for the La Crosse ABANA Conference are three free demos or lectures relating to arts and crafts. These will be open to all family members of registered conference participants. In addition to the free demonstrations and lectures, we will offer a number of fee-based classes for spouses and older children.

We have the Child Care Center on campus reserved. It’s a wonderful and comprehensive play area for young ones, designed for children six years and under. There will be no day care. Children under the age of 18 must be in the company of a parent at all times. There will be a television and VCR available. There will also be sleeping cots, books, a huge selection of toys, and a fenced outdoor playground for the little ones. This is a day care center during the school year, so it is extremely well equipped.

There will also be a creativity station set up with paints, construction paper, and other drawing supplies. Again, parents must supervise their children at all times in this day care center. There are a few rocking chairs and also folding chairs designed for use by the adults. Many of the adults sit on the floor with the children, or bring their own folding chairs.

We are looking into the possibility of getting a storyteller and a musician to do some free children’s performances during the conference. This is not yet confirmed, however; we will have more information on this later. If any members wish to volunteer to do storytelling or be a musician for the children’s benefit, please feel free to call Al Butlak, 1351 Walden Ave. Buffalo, NY 14211, or butlak1@mindspring.com.
me at 507/643-6946. My e-mail address is: kokairon@clear.lakes.com. You may also call me with other suggestions you might have for the children’s benefit.

Also yet unconfirmed are some fee-based bus tips to tourist attractions in the region.

I do want to clarify that any fees involved in the Family Program will only be enough to cover the cost of the workshop or bus trip; ABANA will not make any profit from the Family Program activities. We are using the Family Program budget to provide the three free demo/lectures, the creativity station, and the child care center.

In addition to the conference-sponsored family activities, the La Crosse area offers a number of wonderful recreation activities for families and individuals. Located at the confluence of three rivers – the Mississippi, the Black River and the Root River — the area is popular for camping, water sports and hiking in the city, county and nearby state parks. There is also a Children’s Museum in downtown La Crosse. A well-run bus system operates in the city of La Crosse and connects to the shopping mall area in Onalaska. Even if you don’t bring a car, you can travel the area utilizing the efficient and affordable bus system.

We will be updating the web site, www.abana.org, and The Anvil’s Ring and Hammer’s Blow as we confirm all of our free and fee-based activities. If in the past you have been reluctant to come to the ABANA conference with small children, this would be the year to change your mind. I look forward to seeing you there!

SITE OF THE 2002 ABANA CONFERENCE:
LA CROSSE, WISCONSIN

Established during the mid-1800s, La Crosse is steeped in history and rests directly on the banks of the Mississippi River. La Crosse is a refreshing change for those who want to get away from it all and also for those who want to discover new and interesting things to see and do.

Visitors can walk along brick-lined sidewalks beneath old-fashioned street lamps and venture into museums, galleries, candy shops and an old-fashioned ice cream parlor. La Crosse offers a large selection of restaurants and lively nightclubs, many within walking distance of the Convention Center.

Discover City Brewery and learn about the old world brewing traditions carried on by the brew master. Relax and taste the various beverages at the end of the brewery tour and visit the gift shop for that one-of-a-kind souvenir.

Take a tour and a tasting at the Mississippi Brittle Candy Kitchen. Take a guided tour of the La Crosse Doll Museum, one of the largest collections in the United States. Or enjoy a timeless visit to the La Crosse Clock Company. Browse through antique, craft and gift shops in one of Wisconsin’s largest historical shopping districts. Enjoy a tour and tasting at Pleasing Gourmet Seasoning. Tour the breathtaking St. Rose Convent. Take the family to the new Children’s Museum.

Experience the wonderful German heritage and natural beauty of La Crosse, Wisconsin, located on the majestic Mississippi River.

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In 1960 Oleh entered Lviv College of Applied and Decorative Arts, Department of Sculpture, and later studied decorative glasswork there. From 1968 to 1990 he worked as an artist-monumentalist at Lviv Art Production Works, specializing in the fields of mosaics and painting. He began his work in blacksmithing in 1974, and in 1984 Oleh held an exhibition of his art metalwork; shortly thereafter, he became a member of the Union of Artists of Ukraine.

In 1990 he was invited to work as an instructor at Lviv Academy of Arts in the Department of Metalwork Art; he is now head of the Department of Metalwork at the Academy.

“Tree of the Blacksmithing Craft”

“Churchyard Entrance Gate”
V S K Y – U K R A I N E

“Walking Monks Handrail”
Oleh V. Bonkovsky

Iron Tapestry: “Ornamental Music of the Carpathians”
2002 Abana Conference: Look Who’s Coming to Demonstrate!

2002 Abana Conference: Look Who’s Coming to Demonstrate!

“Swallows”

“The Wing”
Shoji Asai—Japan

Shoji’s work is in Japanese traditional metal art; he has worked in this venue since 1975. His work has been shown in the exhibition of Japanese Traditional Art Crafts, and he has been the recipient of several awards for his work. Shoji is a full member of the Japan Art Crafts Association.

“Summer Orange”, Kanagu (Kimono pin). 45mm x 60mm.

“Bee”, Kanagu (Kimono pin). 17mm x 35mm.
Michael Kaczmar-Puschwitz
Germany

Michael has trained and worked as a blacksmith since 1987, when he apprenticed as blacksmith at the Communal Training School in Löbau, Germany. He is now teaching apprentices in the basic training of blacksmithing at the Federal Technical School RoBwein, Saxony, Germany. Michael has received official certifications as Journeyman, Master Craftsman, and Restorer. He completed a three-year course, graduating in 1997, at the European Center of Venice for Professions for preservation of historical monuments. His work has been published in several German newspapers and in the magazines HEPHAISTOS and SODA, as well as in The Contemporary Blacksmith (see The Anvil’s Ring, 2001, summer issue).

"Bowl". 40cm diameter. Bronze.

"Grave Cross". 210cm x 170cm. Iron.
Chiyozuru Sadahide, II (Iwao Kanki)

Chiyozuru is a blacksmith specializing in plane and knife making. He was awarded the title of “Traditional Craftsman” by the Japanese Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry. He participated in the 1998 ABANA conference as a special guest. In 1999 Chiyozuru formed the organization, Shikoro.

Members of

Japanese organization for preservation of the traditional blacksmithing arts (Note: first name is “Artist’s name” followed by “Real name”.)

Top 4 photos by Hideki Togawa

Keisuke Uchihashi

Keisuke began his training in 1999 in the art of professional planes and knives under Chiyozuru Sadahide, II, and became a member of Shikoro that same year.

“Sadahide (knife)”. 20x250mm. Carbon steel.

Tengan, II (Osamu Tomita)

Tengan's specialty is chisel making. He started training in the art of making professional chisels in 1962, succeeding Tengan; thus receiving the name Tengan, II. Tengan chisels feature unique wave patterns on the blades called “Midare-ba” (approximate English translation: “Chaos”). He became a member of Shikoro in 1999.

Bottom 2 photos by Iwao Kanki

“Tengan-Oire set (chisel)”. 230mm length. Carbon steel and oak.

“Tsuru no Mai (knife), Dance of the Crane”. 20x250mm. Carbon steel.
Tesshinsai Houraku
(Yoshihiro Yamamoto)

Blacksmithing specialty: Plane making. Tesshinsai apprenticed in 1965 under Katsuzo and studied plane making. He became a member of Shikoro in 1999.

“Fusoa (plane) Divine Tree”. 90x300mm. Carbon steel and oak.

Juntaro Mitsukawa, III
(Daizo Mitsukawa)

Juntaro’s blacksmithing specialty is saw making. He started his training in the making of professional saws under Juntaro Mitsukawa, II. He became a member of Shikoro in 1999. Juntaro was awarded the title of “Traditional Craftsman” by the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry.

“Double-edged saw”. 130x240mm. Carbon steel.
Editor’s Note: I met with Michael Saari at the 2001 California Blacksmiths Conference earlier this year. Michael is well known as a teacher and lecturer of blacksmithing at various craft schools around the United States. He and his wife Cynthia live in Connecticut, where he does commission work. His interests in blacksmithing are many and varied.

RING: Michael, I understand that the name Saari is Finnish?

MICHAEL: Yes, my family emigrated from Finland. I actually studied there for awhile and ended up doing some guest teaching, as well. I was a guest lecturer and teacher at the school of art and craft in Mynamaki, not far from Helsinki. They cover a lot of things like design, ceramics, and pottery. Blacksmithing is one of the larger programs of the school.

RING: Didn’t the school host a large conference not long ago?

MICHAEL: Yes. It was the same summer as the ABANA 1998 conference. I was there in the winter teaching, prior to that. That was the first time the Finnish blacksmiths were organized at a conference. Probably one of the most well-known blacksmiths in Finland, since retired, is Kauko Moisio. He had a shop in Helsinki and was a friend of German blacksmith, Manfred Bredohl’s. They actually went to school together in Aachen. I was able to work in his shop for a short time after I had studied at Manfred’s in Aachen, Germany. He worked primarily in stainless steel.

RING: Tell us something about your formal education.

MICHAEL: As far as blacksmithing goes, I started as a teenager and worked at Old Sturbridge Village Living History Museum in Sturbridge, Mas-
there. Jack Andrews has written some books, one of which is *The Edge of the Anvil*, which covers quite a bit of the Yellin work and some of the technique.

Donald Streeter, who had written the book, *Professional Smithing*, which describes a lot of techniques and tooling on Early American ironwork, was also there. I’d always been interested in locksmithing and that was the focus of the study. Streeter was doing the actual teaching at Yellin’s shop. Donald received some of his initial training at the Philadelphia College of Art by people who had actually worked for Yellin. So there was sort of a direct connection. Some of Streeter’s initial training was done by the head foreman at Yellin’s shop, I believe, rather than by Yellin himself. Don had a shop in Franklinville, New Jersey, which wasn’t that far from Philadelphia. Donald was doing a lot of blacksmithing in the ’50s and ’60s and was making beautiful forged ironwork for a lot of important historic landmarks, such as those in colonial Williamsburg and others. He had done a lot of locksmithing and a lot of research on it. I visited his forge, too, when he was still practicing. He had a very tight, organized space — not a particularly large shop, but every tool had its home and it was extremely well organized. It was always a treat to go there, and I modeled my first studio after it.

I believe the program lasted a couple of weeks. It seemed like round-the-clock intensive instruction.

**RING**: What a marvelous opportunity. I don’t know of anyone who has had two straight weeks of intense instruction with Donald Streeter.

**MICHAEL**: I felt fortunate, because this was someone who was really a master blacksmith and so well skilled in the field. I also went to Old Sturbridge Village for an informal apprenticeship. They had an excellent research department and there were men who had worked there who had been blacksmiths all their lives. Since it was a museum they had a collection of ironwork, so there were many things to study and to look at — mainly early American ironwork like hinges and latches, locks...
and lighting devices. They also have a wonderful research library which contains many books on metalwork. They had a staff of researchers who did a lot of work looking at old account books of blacksmiths in the 18th and early 19th centuries. If you were on a seacoast doing blacksmithing you’d be making fittings for boats and ships, for example. It might have been a chain plate, a row lock, a marlin spike or shipsmith’s tools. Sturbridge Village represented an inland agricultural shop, so we’d be repairing tools for farmers, making axes, kitchen utensils and hardware — a lot of the traditional items. I felt it was a good training area because if you can make the old stuff, you can pretty much make anything. So everything had to be done the old way — hammering and a lot of forge welding. They also had a bellows to run the blast for the fire. When I initially worked there, they used hardwood charcoal. Basically, you take the hard wood and you cook it to burn out all the sap and dry it out. It then turns to carbon. It’s a little bit different from coal; it burns up quicker. You get the same amount of heat, but there is no clinker with it. It’s actually excellent for forge welding.

When I went to the California Blacksmiths ABANA Conference in 1980 in Santa Cruz, California, they had the Japanese swordsmiths there. And they were using charcoal to do all the welding in their bladesmithing. That was the first time that I’d ever seen anybody else using charcoal.

RING: After you finished at the college, then what happened?

MICHAEL: I went to Nichols College in Massachusetts, a small liberal arts and business school. I’d opened my own shop, mainly filling orders for historical restoration-type jobs. Being in the northeast of the United States, there are a lot of buildings and in the ’70s, with bicentennial celebrations, there was a great deal of renewed interest in preserving part of our cultural heritage.

Also at the time, the National Park Service was restoring a number of buildings up in the Concord and Lexington area. I made many of the hardware pieces for those buildings. So I had a niche to fill right away, because there weren’t a whole lot of sources for historical ironwork. I’d earned a reputation for making good stuff that was historically accurate, so I was often called for these jobs. I had quite a lot of work initially, even in the midst of a slowing economy at the time.

But I’d always been interested in contemporary design. I had studied quite a bit of architecture as an undergraduate. One thing that really piqued my interest was the Bauhaus School and the Bauhaus Movement. A lot of that was concerned with minimalism: not a lot of heavy use of ornamentation, but still a new aspect of design. I had hoped to study at a place where it was nontraditional metal work. That led to Manfred Bredohl’s shop in Aachen, Germany, in 1986. Manfred Bredohl was very well known in the blacksmith field. One thing that is unique about the American blacksmith movement is how quickly it organized. There were blacksmith conferences and “hammer-ins,” as they were called initially. In Europe that wasn’t really the case. Europe was based more on an apprenticeship system and basically people worked in closed shops. Once you got into an established firm or company, you didn’t really go out and share ideas like we do.

When Manfred heard about the blacksmith movement organizing in this country he was quite taken with it. He had been invited to the United States a number of times as a visiting artist and he got the idea to form a school in Aachen, Germany.
He was also at the same time building a very large shop so he could accommodate extra people. He basically set up the program through ABANA. They would be the clearing house, by committee, for prospective students wanting to apply to his program.

I applied and in February, 1986, flew to Germany to attend his school. I was there most of the year. It was somewhat of a shock — to go from a traditional metal shop to a very large, contemporary art/blacksmith setup. Also, the scale of the operation was quite large. There were approximately 20 employees and five students: from Canada, the United States, Norway, and two students from Germany. So it was a quite an international gathering! There were a lot of people who floated in and out of the shop, including Alfred Habermann from Czechoslovakia. He was a colleague and friend of Manfred’s. He came by a number of times and demonstrated some techniques and explained about his work. He is known worldwide for his architectural metalwork and is very skilled in using the power hammer. Besides learning some new technique in larger-scale work, experiencing a different culture was another aspect that was quite fascinating.

RING: Did you travel around Europe a lot?

MICHAEL: The time at Manfred’s school was rather intense. It was later on, after I’d finished at Manfred’s, that I actually traveled more. Easter is a big holiday in Europe and the shop was closed for about ten days. We took the train to Paris and went to many museums and also had the opportunity to view Picasso’s work. Picasso does a lot of abstract art, of course, and he is mainly well known for many of his paintings, but he also did a lot of pottery and assemblage work. And he was one of the first artists to actually work in iron as an art medium.

One of the first, prior to Picasso, was Julio Gonzales. He had visited a number of blacksmith shops and was intrigued by iron. He actually taught Picasso how to weld. Gonzales and Picasso were the first ones to use industrial equipment like the arc welder and the oxyacetylene torch applied to art work. What’s interesting about the Guggenheim exhibition, “The Age of Iron,” is that it was an important exhibition to illustrate that iron was really one of the most fundamental changes in art because, prior to that, when people made sculpture they used the traditional materials like cast bronze, carved limestone, or marble. By nature, iron is a structure. You’re dealing with line rather than mass. A lot of the early Picasso work in iron was basically geometric forms. It was a significant turning point in the first part of the 20th century. And then other people discovered iron and took a serious look at it, like Calder. He is most famous for his mobiles. And that was all using iron. He had some tremendous sculptures that he put together. And of course, there was David Smith. He worked in iron and stainless steel.

RING: So then you came back to the United States?

MICHAEL: Yes. After returning home, I began to take a new direction. When I was at Manfred’s I did quite a number of pieces of sculptural furniture. I like the idea of making furniture out of forged iron and having sculptural aspects of it — yes, it is a functional table, for example, but it also becomes fine art. But I was still using traditional metalsmith’s techniques to create more of a new design. I was quite successful selling this newer work and some larger scale architectural pieces not based on traditional design.

When I came back from Germany I built a new shop. I wanted something bigger and better — a studio in which I could create larger-scale projects. It has a steel frame so I could have an overhead bridge crane.

RING: When did Southern Illinois University enter into the picture for you?

MICHAEL: By 1986 I had established a reputation in the field of blacksmithing and I began teaching at Peters Valley Craft Center, Brookfield Craft Center and the John C. Campbell Folk School. The idea of teaching had always fascinated me, as well as the prospect of meeting other blacksmiths in the field. I had a lot of ideas from Manfred’s program that I wanted to fulfill. I had long heard about Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois. Brent Kington, who was a professor there and later became director of the whole art school, was the first one to look at blacksmithing and...
ironwork as a medium in the art school. So they had an important exhibition in 1976 called “Iron, Solid Wrought, ’76,” in conjunction with one of the first ABANA conferences. And they also had an exhibition of both traditional and contemporary ironwork.

After working from ’86 to the early ’90s, I felt that I really needed to take a new direction in my work. I started looking into art school programs. I applied to S.I.U. in Carbondale in the winter of ’93 and was accepted. In the fall of 1993 I drove to Carbondale in a ’65 Ford pickup and began my studies there.

It was a pretty big scramble, basically closing down a successful business and going from full-time blacksmithing to full-time student; that was quite a transition, but a great experience. Besides the work in the studio, quite a bit of academic work was involved. I had to take a lot of art history and I focused on non-Western art history. We looked at pre-Colombian work and pre-Colombian cultures which did a lot of silversmithing and goldsmithing, particularly the Peruvian goldsmiths and silversmiths.

We also studied the African artists, who were blacksmiths and mask makers, among other things.

RING: Was this a master’s program?

MICHAEL: Yes, it was for a master’s degree in fine art. The length of the studies was approximately three years full time. You had to take classes in the summer, or you could teach. What was really great about Carbondale was that the state of Illinois funds a lot of art programs. So as a graduate student, we were also working for the university. I was teaching classes both in sculpture and in blacksmithing.

RING: So at that point Brent Kington was the head of the art department.

MICHAEL: Yes, he was. There were seven of us in the metals department. Brent was very involved in the actual day-to-day activities of the graduate metals program.

RING: Is he a blacksmith in his own right?

MICHAEL: Oh, yes, Brent is quite a skilled smith. I really admire his work. He did a lot of whimsical ‘toy’ forms forged out of sterling silver. He was doing a lot of sculpture and of course it was Brent who brought the blacksmithing/ironsmithing to Carbondale.

Brent was one of the founding members of ABANA and how that came about was that there was a man named Alex Bealer who was a tool collector. He collected both blacksmithing tools and woodworking tools. He was involved in a number of projects at home and he needed to do some blacksmith work. He had to forge some hardware pieces, and he began to interview some of the older blacksmiths because he wanted to learn some technique. He was a rather inquisitive guy. The upshot of it was that he ended up writing a book, The Art of Blacksmithing. At the time it was the Bible of the blacksmith movement, so to speak, because it was one of the few books you could get on blacksmithing. I don’t know how Brent became aware of the book, but he invited Alex to S.I.U. as a visiting artist, and Alex came and gave a lecture and demonstration on blacksmithing. That’s pretty much how it started.

The real kickoff of the blacksmith movement was the first conference in the early ’70s in Carbondale, Illinois, for which Brent Kington was the catalyst. Also involved were Richard Mawdsley and Aldon Addington, both were professors at S.I.U., who also helped organize that conference. They had people like Francis Whitaker demonstrating and it was a well-attended conference. That exhibition, Iron, Solid Wrought, “76,” was the exhibit that started it all. The groups began to organize and Alex Bealer became the first editor of The Anvil’s Ring. The Ring basically started off as a plain-paper handout, then later grew into the beautiful glossy-page magazine we have now.

RING: So after you finished getting your M.F.A. at Carbondale, you went back home to the East Coast. Now you split your time between lecturing and teaching, and also doing your own work in your shop. Do you think that all of these new blacksmithing facilities that are being built at many of the craft schools indicates a major move-
ment in blacksmithing in the United States?

MICHAEL: Yes. When blacksmithing first organized, it really took off. Many of the schools that offer blacksmithing are either building a new shop or retrofitting an old space. I believe there is a really bright future in blacksmithing. A lot of blacksmiths make architecturally related items. The booming economy of the last ten years has also helped. People are interested in having something custom made. They want to have unique ornamentation in a home they’re building, or in an office — things like weathervanes, hardware, stair railings, and even sculpture. Look at some of the new books that have come out. There is one titled *The Contemporary Blacksmith*, by Dona Z. Meilach, which shows the range of work that has been produced in the last 25 years, and it is really quite significant. It chronicles the work of a craft that was nearly extinct, to the phenomenal fine craftsmanship that is being seen today.

RING: Speaking of Dona Meilach’s book, I know that you are featured in her book in several different categories. One is your work on the spring latch. It’s a very contemporary design, but I would imagine it is based on your traditional work.

MICHAEL: Yes. There are some hardware and spring latches based on historical work. I still make a lot of hardware. The one in her book that I did has some brass included — the actual knobs are cast brass, which are silver-soldered together. It’s mainly forged iron and steel.

RING: There was another interesting piece you made that is featured in the book: “Dog Tags.”

MICHAEL: Yes, a piece I titled “Identity.” That is actually a piece I made when I was at Carbondale. Traditionally, we think of the jeweler working in gold or silver. I wanted to use iron and steel. And these are based on the design of a G.I. dog tag. A lot of people in my family served in the military. I didn’t, however, but it’s making a connection with that part of my family heritage. Pattern-welded steel is used — it’s multi-layered.

RING: Also in Meilach’s book there is a table you made that is very interesting. It’s simple, yet ornate at the same time. Could you tell us more about it?

MICHAEL: This is what I would put in the category of sculptural furniture and the one in Dona’s book is forged and fabricated iron. “Bridge Table” has a glass top and also a glass shelf to put some nice art books or magazines on, or even other collections of art. When I was speaking earlier of iron and steel being more about structure than mass, the table illustrated in Architectural Ironwork is kind of an open truss design.

RING: Are you mostly working on commissions or do you do art for shows?

MICHAEL: Both. I do commission work — basically I have a site-specific operation. When I do hardware for someone, there might be multiples of the same design, but that’s all commission work; it’s on order. I do some weathervanes and I also make pieces to go into galleries, as well. And that can be just pure, abstract sculpture or some of the sculptural-based furniture. I’m also doing some collaborative pieces with my wife, Cynthia. She works in glass and we’re making some iron and glass sculpture together.

RING: That’s an interesting combination, iron and glass.

MICHAEL: Yes; they actually complement each other very well. Our iron and glass pieces will be shown at the Ironwood Gallery in Ridgefield, Connecticut shortly. They are minimalist forms, but very sophisticated and ‘clean,’ in a sense. When I say minimalist, I mean that there is not a lot of heavy ornamentation. But it’s dealing with things like space and the space that is created by the object. Glass can sometimes be about color.
The pieces are basically like a container form that is forged and fabricated out of steel and then the glass is inserted. The iron finish on these pieces is a gray polished finish. With the brilliant colors of the glass, they really work very well together.

These sculptures go together in a series of five or six. I’m quite satisfied with the way they are turning out.

RING: When you work together on a project like that, obviously the design has to be worked out in a cooperative manner.

MICHAEL: When you work with another artist a lot of discussion and debate ensues, as well as a prototype. We might start with a simple sketch and then make some cutouts of cardboard, gluing or taping them together. It’s much easier to work in paper or cardboard first and then go to the iron and glass later, putting it into production. In a project like that there is a lot of give and take.

RING: Does Cynthia share your studio?

MICHAEL: Yes, she works in one part of the studio and I work in the other part. She also handles a lot of the paperwork — the business aspects, an area in which she is well versed.

RING: One of the concerns I have as editor of The Anvil’s Ring is trying to impress upon people the significance of good photography, because it either does the piece justice or it detracts from it.

MICHAEL: When I was at Carbondale, one of the other metal students, Dennis Nohabetian, was a very skilled photographer. So we photographed much our work together and he taught me a lot about setup and taking the shot. Actually taking the picture is the easy part; it’s all the setup and lighting which can take hours, even for one shot. All those things are, in a sense, part of the business side of blacksmithing — getting good photos of your work and taking care of one’s correspondence.

RING: I don’t think all artists realize the importance of a portfolio and the importance of correspondence.

MICHAEL: I would agree — a good portfolio is essential to present your work, whether it’s for a prospective client, an architect, or even making a presentation in front of a group of blacksmiths. You really need to start at the beginning and document what you do with your career as an artist blacksmith. Obviously everybody has to be a beginner at some point, but you still should make some documentation at the very beginning and then you can actually see the progression and the growing in sophistication of your work. Basically it’s a history of what you’re producing. Things you might not think are important in one year you might revisit later on. You’ll revisit it and take a new look at it — put a different spin on it and come up with something that’s even better. It’s important to keep both a written record and the pictorial images of what you’ve done, then having a current portfolio which you can present to people.

RING: Do you anticipate doing any large architectural or sculptural pieces in the future?

MICHAEL: Yes. One thing that I do is generate a lot of maquettes, which are small models. You can generate these rather quickly and get a lot of ideas in a three-dimensional form and then later actually build it into a larger-scale piece. They are both in wood and paper and they’re later enlarged and transferred to iron as a smaller scale. Cast iron is one thing I’ve been looking at quite a lot. I think some of my best sculpture has been done in cast iron and I have plans to build some large sculptures.

RING: You’re limited by size in casting, though, aren’t you?

MICHAEL: Not necessarily. If you want a really huge piece you have to go a foundry that can pour it for you. When I was at S.I.U. I learned some of the vocabulary from the foundry, the idea of making patterns and making sand molds, as well as the idea of building the cupola and getting the right mixture, then pouring the liquid metal into the mold. The only drawback to casting is you only get to work in the metal at the very end, whereas when you’re forging, it’s immediate, and a very direct process. Casting is a very indirect process. There are a lot of steps you have to follow. There is a lot of technical expertise that comes in, in actually making the molds so that the piece comes out right. Then there is strapping the mold together so
it doesn't separate when you are pouring nearly 3,000-degree iron into it.

There are safety measures, as well. Liquid metal is pretty daunting, very hot stuff. Obviously there are elements of danger in blacksmithing, since you are working with a fire and putting steel or iron bar into the forge. If you happen to drop it you can hopefully step out of the way, but if a ladle full of molten iron splashes, it's going to spray the area. A great deal of precaution is needed, and some different equipment is necessary also. You have to be suited up in leather chaps, an apron, a hard hat, and of course safety glasses and boots.

But it's fun pouring iron. One of the things we use, which is a really great material, is old radiators. They are good-quality iron and relatively thin. It breaks up easily. But when you pour the iron out of the ladle into the mold it's like honey — it's beautiful to see the liquid metal.

RING: It sounds like the art is in the process.

MICHAEL: That's it sometimes, yes. It is fascinating.

RING: On an international level, how would you compare what is happening in the United States with blacksmithing to what is happening in other countries?

MICHAEL: I've spent a lot of time in Europe; probably one of the most significant events that occurred was the fall of the Berlin Wall. There were a lot of blacksmiths locked up in the former Eastern bloc countries. That is all open now, places like Czechoslovakia, East Germany and parts of Russia have had a long history of blacksmithing for centuries. So there have been blacksmiths who have studied in Prague, and of course at Manfred Bredohl's in Germany. There has also been some tooling that has come out, as well as some new resources for the blacksmith in getting European smithing tools.

As far as Scandinavia — Sweden, Norway and Finland — they're all part of the new Euro, so they are interested in expanding into more of an international setting, looking outside of their countries. That was one reason I was invited to teach in Finland at the school there. They wanted to see what blacksmiths from different parts of the world are doing, and to partake of their expertise.

RING: I think ABANA feels the same way. Bill Fiorini is in charge of the next conference in La Crosse and he's got a contingency of Europeans coming over to demonstrate. Also the Japanese are going to return to make swords and other pieces.

MICHAEL: We're all in this together. Blacksmiths can come from every part of the world and we really speak a common language.

RING: It's interesting that there is so much fascination with the African smiths. I know Tom Joyce is quite taken with their designs, their process, and their methods.

MICHAEL: Yes, he put together a catalog of the exhibition of the 25-year ABANA Conference in Asheville, North Carolina. Africa is the roots of our craft; African smithing has been done for thousands of years and they have exquisite forms and very sophisticated technical expertise. They also have interesting implements, whether they are functional, like tools, or ceremonial-type items. Some of the items made by the blacksmiths of long ago were also used as a form of currency.

RING: And they're so beautifully ornate, using such simple methods.

MICHAEL: That's one thing that is so great about blacksmithing. Teaching as many classes and doing as much guest lecturing as I have, I've found over the years that you don't need to have a lot of sophisticated equipment. Very simple tooling and processing can assist you in coming up with some very unusual, creative and beautiful work. And that's evident in the exhibition that Tom Joyce curated on the African forged metalwork.

RING: What's coming up? Your head must be crammed full of projects and ideas.

MICHAEL: I hope I live long enough to make them all! One thing that I feel is important besides the portfolio of one's own work, is putting together a portfolio of ideas. I have notebooks chock full of clippings from newspapers and magazines — anything about color, form and style. It could be an ad for a car, even, that has some little element in it that you focus in on and think about incorporating the literal piece you see or an abstract version of it. And then just doing research by reading and looking at other artists' works. I enjoy looking at other artists besides blacksmiths.

RING: You certainly have a broad spectrum of interests, Michael, and it's been most enlightening talking with you today.
SUSAN BOND, Rowe, New Mexico

Music Stand. Steel and brass. 19" x 19" x 38"

Susan's interest in iron began about 20 years ago when she would shop flea markets, collecting small pieces of furniture made of bent metal. After moving to California many years later, Susan began her quest to find a Blacksmith's union where she could learn the trade, and hopefully work with, until she could develop skill and gain experience. Finally, Susan, "met many wonderful people through the California Blacksmith's Association who were so very helpful and encouraging, though at first I was only taking baby steps on the weekends. On a weekend afternoon I worked with Jerry Coe in Berkeley, while working a day job."

Currently Susan is apprenticing with Christopher Thomson in Rowe, New Mexico, with whom she has been working for the past year. "I have been given the incredible opportunity here to work in a production as well as a custom-work environment."

JEANNETTE BRANDT, Lake Luzerne, New York

"Velvet Quilt." Forged steel and velvet cloth. 12" x 16"

Jeannette is a partner and full-time smith at the Chicken Coop Forge in Lake Luzerne. Her work consists primarily of decorative functional objects, but occasionally time is made to create non-profitable art pieces. "My work involves an iterative process that seems to result in the development of organic forms and shapes. The influence of nature is a consistent theme."

MARIA CRISTALLI, Seattle, Washington

"True." Iron, bicycle chain and sprocket 7" x 3" x 2"

Best in Show

Maria started blacksmithing seven years ago and she currently runs her own studio in Seattle, Washington, designing and forging both traditional and contemporary architectural ironwork, home furnishings, and sculpture.

Maria explains, "I enjoy the challenge of expressing my client's personal aesthetic, along with my own. I'm intrigued with the vast spectrum of possibilities with the medium — from the most
HEIDI ERICKSON, Lincoln City, Oregon

*Untitled. Forged iron, fabricated steel, copper, tires, chalk, pencil, paint and lights. Four panels, 67” x 34” x 2½”*

Heidi Erickson is a metal sculptor currently living and working on the Oregon coast on a picturesque organic farm with her husband, three cats, two dogs, two sheep and a potbellied pig. She was born and raised in Portland, Oregon, and graduated from the University of Oregon, earning a Bachelor of Science degree.

Heidi’s studio on her farm houses a huge collection of recycled metal “treasures” that she has collected over many years from numerous places including the beach, the port docks and a host of junkyards. She enjoys combining recycled metal objects with forged and fabricated steel and exploring the relationship of color, texture, light, and material. She uses these combinations to create one-of-a-kind sculpture and commissioned, functional pieces. Currently she is developing a unique line of garden ornamentation.

ROBERTA ELLIOTT, Cobden, Illinois

*Gingko Doorknocker. Forged steel*

Roberta’s primary metal is mild steel. She uses solid stock and in recent years has added gas pipe to her palette. This hollow material gives an impression of mass without the actual weight and provides an additional surface (the interior) with its own potential to be worked. It is a form that requires a gentle and patient hammer blow so it doesn’t collapse.

“The first time I struck iron I was smitten,” explains Roberta. “There is something indescribable about the energy exchange that takes place while blacksmithing. The heat from the fire and the force of the hammer’s blow feed and energize me. My work often contains botanical references, and I can create images that evoke continuing growth. Each heat of the metal offers an opportunity to explore. The results can be unexpected, opening up an entirely new path leading to the spontaneity evident in many of my creations.

GRACE CATHEY, Waynesville, North Carolina

*Chokwe Mask. Metal, 16” x 9” x 6”*

Says Grace, “The mask was made and worn one year as part of my Halloween costume. It is my interpretation of a wooden carved Chokwe mask. This particular mask represents ideal young female beauty. Its serene expression commands respect.

After years of producing art in different mediums, Grace Cathey has chosen metal to express her visions of nature.

JENNIFER GILBERT, Las Vegas, Nevada

*“Box 5.” Forged and fabricated steel. 7” diameter, 7” b*

As an artisan in metal, Jennifer Gilbert draws on 20 years of design and furniture-making experience. Her career began at the University of Colorado where she studied design for the stage. That led her to New York where she helped realize the works of major artists and designers, while developing her own skills as a craftsperson. In 1992 she moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico, where she joined a very active and vital craft community and began to work on her own designs while still making custom furnishings.

“I moved to Las Vegas in 1999 and opened a business called ‘urbanIron,’ specializing in unique ironwork, furnishings and art metalwork. I’m working at my craft and really enjoying it.”
SUSAN HUTCHINSON, Weaverville, North Carolina

“Nouveau Tree Series”, Firescreen.” Mild steel. 4’ x 4’.

Susan earned a Bachelor of Arts in sculpture from Berea College. She participated in Penland’s core program for two years. She has run her own metalwork studio in Weaverville for the past ten years. Along the way, Susan has taught metalwork classes at John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, North Carolina, and demonstrated at events such as the ABANA conference in Asheville, North Carolina, CanIron in Calgary, AB Canada, the Tannehill conference in Alabama, and at a Blacksmiths of Missouri conference. She is an active member in the Southern Highlands Craft Guild.

KRISTIN KOERBER, Fountainville, Pennsylvania

“Break Your Chains.” Steel

Kristin Koerber has a broad background in the arts. Metal is the newest of her mediums. Since then it has proven to be a driving force in creating KayeLorraine Studios, where she has a full metal shop and forge.

“In addition to my metal art, I am a Middle Eastern dance instructor and performer. I teach the importance of respecting this ancient art form, stressing the history and culture as well as the healthful benefits of the movements.

“I was proud to be part of this important exhibit—one that acknowledges the balance required of women in allowing us to maintain our femininity while still proving worthy in such a traditionally masculine medium.”

J.E. JASEN, New York City

Soup bowl and cup, “Butterflies in the Autumn Leaves.”

Enamel on Iron. Cup: 3.5” x 3” Bowl: 9.75 diameter

Enameling is the process by which ground glass is fused onto a base metal surface, one of our oldest art forms. Vitreous enamel is ground glass particles fused onto a base metal. When treated with care, enamel pieces are durable and versatile. Their colors will not fade and the surface should not craze or crack. They can withstand the climate changes inherent to outdoor environments and are even fire resistant.

“I’ve worked with enamels for over 20 years, and I’ve begun to push the media and the materials to another level, while integrating more compatible pyro-materials (including incorporating compatible low-fired ceramic materials), within experimental and traditional enamel techniques.”
SUSAN MADACSI, Norwich, Connecticut

“Laura’s Collection.” Forged steel, 30” x 30”

“I grew up in Idaho. In 1994, after graduating with a fine arts degree, I moved to Austin, Texas, where I discovered the seductive and challenging world of blacksmithing and metal arts. While in Texas I worked for several smiths, artists and designers, creating works ranging from large architectural pieces, furniture, lighting, hardware and sculpture.”

Towards the end of her time in Austin, Susan began working independently on sculptural forms in which she applied her blacksmithing skills. Susan has recently moved to Connecticut where she is continuing her endeavors while working out of a rural historical blacksmith shop.

LYNDA METCALFE, Brasstown, North Carolina

Scroll Foot Quad Table. Forged steel with glass top. 23.5”H x 27” W x 27” D

Lynda Metcalfe is an artist-blacksmith living and working in Brasstown, North Carolina. She was born in England and studied design and metalsmithing for her undergraduate degree. Lynda also spent a year working for architectural smith Charles Normandale after completing her studies. Her American metalsmithing experiences have included a student exchange with Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, classes at the John C. Campbell Folk School, North Carolina, and an artist-in-residence post at the Appalachian Center for Crafts, Tennessee.

Now a self-employed blacksmith, Lynda uses mainly traditional forging and joinery techniques in her work while experimenting with geometry and alternative structural arrangements. “My aim,” explains Lynda, is for my pieces to have a clean, harmonious look with visual weight and presence, as well as grace and rhythm.”

CHRISTINE MOULTON, Burien, Washington

“Women’s Work.” Forged steel

Honorable Mention

Christine spent her earlier days exploring textile art and craft which included weaving, spinning, dyeing, basketry, all manner of sewing and the many other manipulations of fiber. In 1999 she attended a blacksmithing class on a lark and was hooked. She continued her study of blacksmithing at South Seattle Community College.

“Having come relatively late to metal work, I feel a rush to create. The noise, grit, fire, power and movement that is the dance of blacksmithing makes me profoundly happy. I am entranced by the

MARSHA NELSON, Cold Spring, Kentucky

Key. Mild Steel, 1¾” x 6”

“The first bit of blacksmithing I ever did was at a class taught by Bob Walsh of Minneapolis, Minnesota. I then attended the 1982 ABANA conference in Ripley, West Virginia, which allowed me to focus my interests on colonial ironwork after spending days watching Peter Ross, Tony Milham and Dick Sargeant at work. In the fall of that same year, I enrolled in a Colonial Ironwork class taught by Mark Bokenkamp and Peter Ross at the John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, North Carolina.

“In 1984 I headed to the Farmer’s Museum in Cooperstown, New York, where I began a year-long apprenticeship with Paul Spaulding. Working with Paul at the museum provided an invaluable experience, enabling me to make many different pieces of ironwork using only period tools. It also whetted my appetite for museum work. Two years and many rejections later, I landed in Charleston, South Carolina, when Middleton Place Historic Foundation hired me to interpret blacksmithing at the 19th century Rice plantation. In 1990 I returned to my home in northern Kentucky to work as a contractor for the Workshops of David T. Smith in Morrow, Ohio. Most of my work now consists of forging hardware for the reproduction antique furniture built by the workshops and doing occasional demonstrations.”

Photo Credit: Sandy Andrews, Columbia, SC
KAREN ROBERTSON, Afton, Virginia
“Virginia Leaves.” Leaf napkin holders, set of 12. Steel with brass patina, leaves approximately 6”

Most of my professional blacksmithing career has been spent making hardware, even though sculpture was my initial introduction to metalworking. When I made this set of leaf napkin holders, it was a joy to start from the flat, cut-out pattern, and let the leaf take shape without needing it to conform to specifications. The sense that the piece is guiding me as I work on it is one of the pleasures of making sculpture for me. Each leaf was patterned after a tree either native to or commonly found in Virginia. It was difficult to take a walk that fall without coming home with three or four more leaves to pattern.

CAROL PARASKEVAS, Norwalk, Connecticut
“Rose Buckle Belt.” Hand-crocheted copper wire with white pearl beads. 24k gold plate, 38” in length.

Carol and her husband are partners in “Stelios, Inc.,” a jewelry design and production studio in Norwalk, Connecticut. Originally a painter and printer, her interest in jewelry and applied design flowered in the 1980s. Carol holds graduate degrees in fine art and design from Hunter College and Columbia University and a PhD from Somerset University in England. Her pieces have a Victorian flavor, with fine crocheted and knotted copper wires, plated gold or pewter.

“Inspired by the classical collections of museums throughout the world, we individually handcraft unique pieces of wearable art utilizing centuries-old techniques. Each belt or piece of jewelry is macramed, crocheted or woven from copper wire, then generously plated with 24k gold or pewter.”

LAUREN OSMOLSKI, Seattle, Washington
Wall-mounted sculpture. Untitled. Steel and copper, 41”x 39” x 4”

“After graduating from the Massachusetts College of Art in 1989 with a B.F.A. in ceramics, I moved west to Seattle. Shortly after arriving, I met some local blacksmiths. Having had some experience with welding and fabrication in college, I was urged to come down to the shop and play around; it wasn’t long before I was working there. I worked at the blacksmith shop in Pioneer Square for a couple of years and learned a great deal.

“Working with metal opened up so many possibilities. It’s given me a great appreciation for the malleability and immediacy of the steel. I also enjoy the physicality of the process of working at the forge. Working with both power and hand hammers, I am constantly amazed at the subtleties created by my ever-increasing force and accuracy. I am currently employed by Fire Mountain Forge in Eatonville, Washington, under the direction of Darryl Nelson, as well as maintaining my own studio in Seattle.”

HYEJUN PARK, Brooklyn, New York
“Tilting Pagoda.” Copper and stainless steel, 1” x 4”.

Honorable Mention
Wearable free-standing sculptures is how HyeJun Park describes her highly crafted one-of-a-kind jewelry. Her hand-fabricated rings are constructed out of sheet silver, making them hollow forms, allowing her pieces to be large in scale and light.

“My jewelry pieces are composed of simple geometric shapes that are manipulated to resemble architectural forms. I am inspired by the different architectural structures I’ve found in Southeast Asia. By utilizing these forms in my work, I establish a relationship between my changing physical surroundings and myself.”

HyeJun received her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in metalsmithing from Syracuse University in 1998 and has since been working in the fashion jewelry industry. She says that her full-time job as a commercial jewelry designer keeps her

KAREN ROBERTSON, Afton, Virginia
“Virginia Leaves.” Leaf napkin holders, set of 12. Steel with brass patina, leaves approximately 6”

“Most of my professional blacksmithing career has been spent making hardware, even though sculpture was my initial introduction to metalworking. When I made this set of leaf napkin holders, it was a joy to start from the flat, cut-out pattern, and let the leaf take shape without needing it to conform to specifications. The sense that the piece is guiding me as I work on it is one of the pleasures of making sculpture for me. Each leaf was patterned after a tree either native to or commonly found in Virginia. It was difficult to take a walk that fall without coming home with three or four more leaves to pattern.”

Editor’s Note: Our sincere thanks to Elizabeth Moss, Assistant Director of the Artisans Center of Virginia, for her assistance in submitting the works and descriptions presented here.
It is said that you should find a niche and fill it. With regards to regional blacksmiths conferences, there has always been a vacant gap in the south central part of America; larger-scale events have not been held in this area. Some smaller Hammerfests began as far back as the 1980 period and they continue today with usually one or two demonstrators displaying forging skills. The meetings all have their own personalities, with the location, organizers, demonstrators and audience playing an active role in adding color to the experience. These gatherings created a foundation for a bona fide South Central Regional Conference.

We are very appreciative of the Texas Artist Blacksmiths Association (TABA) for starting the building process of creating a regional conference in this area. Early TABA Hammerfests built a grassroots base for the process to follow. The meetings have been an excellent place for the officers to organize other events; meanwhile, the get-togethers help fuel the growing interest in the blacksmithing craft.

Not existing in a vacuum, ornamental blacksmithing has been buoyed by public acceptance of exterior and interior ironwork. Understandably, an excellent economy has contributed to the popularity, allowing professional blacksmiths creative skills to flourish. Perhaps the permanence of beautifully forged iron has found favor in an otherwise “planned-obsolescence” world. Whatever the case, in 1999, the time was right and discussion of the feasibility of a new South Central Regional Conference began.

An area of roughly five states was considered consisting of Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi. Surprisingly, Texas contains five blacksmith organizations, so we had a good basis from which to draw upon for organizing this project. Demographically the members are more densely populated in the eastern area. With this in mind, we enlisted the ideas and listened to the thoughts of the blacksmiths who gathered at numerous meetings. Primarily, we wanted to know what was their concept of an ideal conference. A few seeds of thought were also planted along the way.

In September, 1999, on my trip back from the North Texas Blacksmiths Association Hammerfest, the idea for an excellent location hit me—Grapevine! A great historical blacksmith shop is located there, fantastic visitors' facilities, and there is one other fine bonus: easy accessibility to an international airport. Fortunately, the city of Grapevine is experienced at organizing huge festivals and was very receptive to having hundreds of blacksmiths visit their fine city. The Grapevine Historical Foundation eagerly listened to our plans and they were totally supportive. This event parallels their mission of historic preservation and art education. A date after school is recessed allows families to attend and it dovetails with Grapevine's festivals. Of course this Dallas/Fort Worth area location entailed NTBA hosting the conference. So with our experience with smaller demos, we thoughtfully considered the responsibility and manpower needed to operate at a regional level.

Early contacts with ABANA, TABA, NTBA and SaltFork Craftsmen helped to secure seed funds. Since I personally know several leaders of other clubs, I invited them to organize various areas of the event. Enlisting these different skills was a tremendous help, and it was an honor to work with these IronFest volunteer groups: Texas Artist-Blacksmiths Association, National Demo, Saltfork Craftsmen, Tailgate area, Houston Artist-Blacksmiths Association, Public Demo.

For the inaugural conference I felt that a group of four demonstrators with firm name recognition in the south central region was mandatory. Thankfully, Frank Turley, Mike Boone, Jeff Mohr and Wendel Broussard accepted our invitation to be the demonstrators. At the conference, Frank Turley forged top and bottom tools and was an excellent teacher of the metallurgical process. Numerous well-known blacksmiths have learned the craft from Frank, so his skills as a teacher fit the IronFest educational plan very well. Mike Boone
The Northwest Ohio Blacksmiths Hammer-In

by James Auer

The Northwest Ohio Blacksmiths Hammer-In was held at historic Auglaize Village in Defiance, Ohio. It began on Friday evening with a gathering of family and friends with the goal of learning more about techniques of blacksmithing.

Clifton Ralph was the main demonstrator. The annual Hammer-In doesn’t usually begin until the Saturday of the weekend, but as usual, Clifton came early to make sure the 100-pound hammer was in tip-top shape.

Clifton’s demonstration was the highlight of the weekend. He emphasized process and safety, which included volume, area, resistance and power. He illustrated that anything which can be done by hand can be done by hand hammer — and by power hammer. Safety was stressed throughout.

Those not watching Clifton were busy at the eight teaching stations that were set up for hands-on classes. At these teaching stations at various times of the day you could learn “Lighting for Buck Skinner” from Mark Segaard; “Toolmaking,” as well as “Heat Treating and Tempering” from Bill Hahn; and “Beginning Blacksmithing,” from Mel Hoch. All who participated in the classes went home with an item they made themselves. Whether it was a center punch or a forge coal rake, they had something they made with their own hands.

There was also a toilet paper holder contest. Each participant in the contest had made one prior to the Hammer-In, and the judge was last year’s winner, Mel Hoch. The 2001 winner was Paul Davidson. Now it’s Paul’s job to decide on the 2002 contest and, after long and hard thought, Paul announced that the 2002 contest would be to make top-fullering tools.

After a fine banquet and awards presentation there was a raffle as well as an auction of extremely high-quality items.

Then the evening progressed to the forges for the Forging Contest. This year the contest was to forge and proof-test a one-egg “hang-able” frying pan. Material was supplied in various sizes and shapes for each contestant to choose from. A one-hour time limit was enforced. I was asked to help judge the contest, and this was no easy task. Points were given for the frying pan as well as for the egg. The winner was Dave Shaffer, a new member who began smithing for the first time the weekend of the Hammer-In.

The activities were not just oriented to blacksmithing. There was also a spouse program, where Phyllis and Beth Hoch showed the women how to make ‘bee and hive’ plant pokers to dress up flowerbeds and flowerpots.

As if that were not enough to keep the attendees busy, a silent auction of the Don Dunbar Blacksmith Shop was also held. Don was one of the Northwest Ohio Blacksmiths’ founding fathers, and had passed away only too soon in life.

There was record attendance and perfect weather for the weekend’s events. As the saying goes, “It doesn’t get any better than this.” The next Northwest Ohio Blacksmiths Hammer-In will be held at Auglaize Village once again, the first weekend in May, 2002.
IRON ODYSSEY:
CanIRON III

By Jesse Ellingson, Kootenay Blacksmiths Association
Photography by Don Walhella, No. Battleford, SK

CanIRON III, the third Biennial Canadian Blacksmith Conference, was held this year in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, and was a wonderful time of learning and fellowship among blacksmiths. A great venue, superb demonstrators and exceptional hospitality combined to make this “Iron Odyssey” a truly wonderful event for those of us lucky enough to attend.

You can understand why they call Saskatchewan the “Land of Living Skies,” as the rolling farmland opens up in front of you and the sky becomes the dominant feature. One often thinks of this province as flat prairie land, but actually of its quarter-million square-mile area, one half is forest, one third is farmland and one eighth is covered in fresh water. Where the Battle River meets the mighty North Saskatchewan River lies the city of North Battleford. One of the earliest communities in the province, the first fur trading post was established here in 1785. The city sits on a plateau above the lush river valley and is home to one of the province’s four Western Development Museums, which provided an excellent backdrop for CanIRON III. The museum is set up as a heritage farm and village that provides a social and economic history for the province with one of the highlights being a fantastic collection of preserved farm equipment. The CanIRON demonstration areas were set up on the grounds of the museum village and participants were able to wander between these and the large exhibition building that housed the dinner hall, the “Instant Gallery,” and other exhibition areas.

The Chapel Gallery, North Battleford’s public gallery, presented the CanIRON exhibit “Iron Odyssey” and was the location of the weekend’s first event — a wine and cheese reception — to welcome the CanIRON participants. Old and new acquaintances mingled in the beautiful exhibit hall and on the outdoor patio with its incredible view over the river valley.

The next morning CanIRON kicked into full gear as the nine demonstration areas filled up with activity. Demonstrators from far and wide brought their expertise to CanIRON III and with just two and a half days, it was impossible to see everything. The following is just an overview of the demonstrations presented.

Mike Boone from Colorado produced a full-sized gate over the weekend to demonstrate how to take your ideas from design to finished product using several forging techniques, and traditional joinery and assembly. Mike Boone also presented an interesting seminar on design as it relates to forged metalwork, providing an insight into the development of an idea through its different stages to a completed design.

Shona Johnson and Pete Hill traveled from Edinburgh, Scotland, with their small son Josh to demonstrate the various techniques that they use to produce a large, elegant, freestanding Windvane sculpture. They also presented an exciting slide show of work by their company, Ratho Byres Forge, and by other British smiths. The majority of the slides were of very impressive architectural pieces that use traditional techniques to express some very non-traditional designs.

Bob Patrick of Arkansas brought many years of teaching experience with him to illustrate the fine points of forge welding and produced an ornate doorknocker during the weekend.

Dorothy Stiegler from California not only demonstrated some of her trademark floral pieces but also forged several interesting pieces out of bronze. She has also been experimenting with applications of glass enamel on her forged pieces and she shared this process with the eager participants that crowded her tent.

John and Nancy Little from East Dover, Nova Scotia, made — among other things — decorative elements that combined to make an elaborate railing as a way of illustrating their approach to modern sculptural design. An exquisite little dragon bottle opener that they produced during their demonstration was an extremely popular item.

Decorative scrolls and animal heads were the main focus of Mark Pearce from Calgary, Alberta, during the three-day event. It’s marvelous how a giant of a man like Mark can so deftly turn out a delicate little swan or graceful horse’s head.

Jim Jensen from Mont Nebo, Saskatchewan, had set up a portable foundry at his station and was demonstrating the process of casting bronze in sand molds. Along with many small pieces, Jim was casting parts for a life-size blacksmith, providing interested participants with several opportunities to watch him pour molten metal.

Bill Plant, also from Saskatchewan, was the only demonstrator whose tent, located next to the museum’s old blacksmith shop, was accessible to the general pub-
lic and registrants alike. Bill provided his audience with interesting demonstrations in tool making and various other things from materials at hand.

The Ontario Artist Blacksmith Association sent four representatives to demonstrate in their tent: Murray Lowe, Duff MacDonald, John Newman and Charlie Sutton. Charlie has designed a terrific “Beginner Blacksmith Workshop,” available as a small booklet, as well as a book titled, “Under The Spreading Chestnut Tree.” Several slide shows, a presentation from Parks Canada on historic restorations and blacksmithing artifacts, plus a basket-making workshop by Mary Patrick, were among the offerings provided to participants.

The final event of the weekend was the auction, where pieces donated by registrants and pieces produced during demonstrations were sold to the highest bidders. The general public was invited to this event and the large attendance made for some lively bidding.

Aside from the excellent events offered at CanIRON, it is the fellowship with other smiths that attracts people to the conference and provides the participants with the best memories. Over 250 people attended CanIRON III and meal times in the museum hall provided excellent opportunities to meet new people or reconnect with old friends. On the whole, it seems that blacksmiths are a magnanimous bunch, willing to share techniques and ideas especially, with novices. One of the registrants, a banker/hobby smith from Vancouver, lives in an apartment; since he doesn’t have a shop, he practices what he calls “guerrilla blacksmithing,” by hauling his forge and tools out to some abandoned lot or industrial area. It is this kind of love for the craft that unites us all.

A terrific conference of this quality doesn’t happen without a lot of hard work by many people, and the organizers of this event can be very proud of the weekend they hosted. Cheerful caterers dished out generous portions of delicious food. Volunteers and museum staff were always very friendly and helpful, and the participants were left with a great impression of Saskatchewan hospitality.

While the organization and planning of CanIRON IV is now underway, it is with a touch of sadness that we said farewell to our new friends in Saskatchewan, but look forward to meeting many more in Hamilton, Ontario, in 2003. All of the terrific people and organizations involved with CanIRON III, including the organizing committee, the Saskatchewan Craft Council, the Western Development Museum and the many weekend volunteers, are to be congratulated for producing an outstanding weekend event that will be remembered fondly by all those who attended.
On Tuesday, June 26, I was standing on the edge of the Arctic Ocean. The only thing between the North Pole and me was a whole lot of ice cakes and one man-made gravel island used for oil production. I immersed my hand in the cold salt water and headed south to one of my favorite activities: a blacksmith conference.

This time I was off to CanIron III at North Battleford, Saskatchewan. To get to the conference, I traveled 140 km northwest of Saskatoon and found the Western Development Museum at the south edge of town. There the friendly Canadian smiths and the Saskatchewan Crafts Council presented a wonderful conference in the tradition of the previous CanIron events.

The Western Development Museum recalls the pioneer days of Saskatchewan when the area was settled by diverse peoples. Once again a diverse group came together with a common interest, this time blacksmithing. There were the talented Canadian smiths with backgrounds from wheat farmers to Canadian mounties to business executives. There were some wonderful professional smiths from Scotland. And from the US some familiar demonstrators were in attendance.

The Canadians, through their CanIron conferences, are developing a national blacksmithing spirit which resulted in a meeting at this conference to explore the idea of an Artist-Blacksmiths Canada (ABC) organization. There is also the start of a certification program under the heading of “Fraternity of Wayland’s Forge.”

Canada has come a long way in spirit and organization with just three conferences under their belt, so to speak.

One of the noticeable trends at this conference was the husband/wife teams. There was John and Nancy Little from Canada, Mike and Robin Boone from the US, Bob and Mary Patrick from the US, and Shona Johnson and Peter Hill from Scotland.

Peter and Shona started and completed a beautiful weathervane during the conference. Both were totally focused on the project except when their young son cried and then Shona “lost it.” The conference people even had this problem in their game plan: a nanny to keep sonny entertained and out of mom’s hearing.

Mary Patrick (Bob Patrick’s new bride) is a skilled weaver of kidney baskets and already has Bob making beautiful metal handles. They are so artistic that Dorothy Steigler purchased just a handle for jewelry and used it as a choker necklace.

Some of the Canadians included Duff McDonald who demonstrated making items from horseshoes and Bill Plant showed how to make all of your blacksmith equipment needs from materials in the scrap pile. Jim Jensen demonstrated foundry work and had the arm section of a bronze blacksmith statue commission cast by the end of the conference.

There were many equipment innovations of note. One of the most practical was a swedge block that rotated on a stand cast by John Newman. The most unusual was the Meyers Brother’s Little Giant — a tractor, vintage early 1900s.

I am looking forward to attending CanIron IV and renewing many new and old friendships. It will be hosted by the Ontario Artist-Blacksmith Association in July, 2003 at McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario. Hope to see you there.
Harry Foster heads up the photography department of the Canadian Museum of Civilization near Ottawa, Canada. Says Harry, “I got into blacksmithing about five years ago after watching a program on local television which featured Abana member Richard Douglas from the Merrickville area of Ontario, south of Ottawa. At the end of the program it was noted that Mr. Douglas was to be starting a series of classes at a local agriculture college in a week’s time. I signed up and have been hooked ever since. It was not long before I had built my first gas forge and then a coal forge. I am still at the stage of developing techniques (do we ever stop?) and enjoy the thrill of designing and making something new, as well as doing reproductions or variations of items that were made and used so many years ago.

This is an image of a piece I just finished for a potter that you and your readers may find interesting. The challenge was to set off this piece of Raku pottery that was made as a trivet, but then when the artist saw how it turned out, she wanted to be able to see both sides. She talked to me about incorporating it into some ironwork and that perhaps candles could be included in the design.

The image shows what I came up with. The base has been textured to resemble the texture of Raku pottery and the top part of the piece just under the pottery rotates (where the upright meets the horizontal bar), so that both sides can be seen.
Reading Lamp

Rob Evans, DDS
Bluffton, Indiana

Everyone needs a reading light. And I am no exception. It seems I spend an inordinate amount of time with various books and magazines and a good, strong light was indicated. With this thought in mind, I proceeded to design a lamp that would be uniquely mine. I wanted something that reflected 15 years of blacksmithing experience as well as a bit of my own personality.

Amateur smithing has been a prime advocacy of mine, giving me a creative release from the somewhat stressful practice of general dentistry. I started doing the usual craft-type projects for friends and relatives, gradually taking on commission work as my time allowed for them.

Starting with many blank sheets of paper, I began making sketches of my lamp. Some of the drawings were too fanciful, some too plain. Other ideas were impossible to make — at least by me — with the tools I had available.

Eventually, a design was settled upon that was creative, used most of the metal-working skills I possessed, and was buildable. I tried to blend the handwork look of forged metal with the crisp look of machined material. This represented to me a synthesis of man and machine. I wanted to integrate hand-forged elements with machined parts to make a whole that was greater than both together.

Construction was started by forging the pieces that would support the light fixture itself. The pieces were heated in a small gas forge of my own design. Some of the larger elements were forged on a 50-pound Little Giant Power Hammer while smaller elements were forged by hand. Once all the forged pieces were complete, the machined parts were made.

Trial assembly was accomplished! Once everything fit together properly, the work was disassembled for finishing. Since this was a mixed media project, consisting of mild steel and copper, different methods were used to finish the materials. All forged steel elements were wire brushed and finished with burnt oil. All machined parts were washed with strong detergent, wiped down with denatured alcohol and cold blued, using gun bluing. Copper parts were sanded lightly and soaked in Sani-flush, and waxed with clear furniture polish.

The lamp is wired with a standard porcelain receptacle and fitted with a 40-watt miniature spot light.

This piece measures 30” x 54” tall and weights about 50 pounds.

The project fulfilled the design criteria and my expectations. I have spent many pleasurable hours using it as a light source for my reading.
RAY CIEMNY, Groton, MA.
“Oleana Gates”, set of gates for a restaurant in Cambridge, MA.
4’ x 6’. Steel and copper

DICK NIETFELD, Grand Island, NE.
Black pot rack. 18” x 32”.

BRIAN F. RUSSELL, Arlington, TN
left: “Cylinder Series: Internalize”. 9” x 9” x 93”
right: “Cylinder Series: Realize”. Detail, 14” high
Both cast glass and forged steel.
JOEL SANDERSON, Quincy, MI.
left: Fire Screen. 65” x 70”. Forged iron
right: Table for Phone. 18” x 26” x 30”. Forged iron and red oak

JEFF FETTY, Spencer, WV.
“Trace Fork Sculpture Garden”, Charleston, WV. 10’ H x 28’ W x 13” D.
Hand-forged steel with epoxy based coatings.
owl handrail
cover story by John Barron
The fall of 2000 found me beginning to question my decision to return to being self-employed. I had been doing blacksmithing as side work out of my garage the past several years while building a shop on my property. The side work was keeping the building moving, slowly, while I worked as a welder-fabricator. In early spring a sudden, unexpected change found me unemployed, but inundated with prospective side jobs. These had played out okay, but now winter was approaching with nothing on the horizon.

About this time I got a phone call from a former co-worker asking if I was still doing ornamental work and would I like the phone number of a couple he had met who needed some ironwork for their log house. “Sure,” I said, “but have them call me.” That way I wouldn’t appear too desperate. A few weeks went by and I was desperate, so I called them. They were very interested and I had an appointment to meet them on site that week. The house, a beautiful custom-built log home on 50 acres near Nevada City, California, had recently been completed with a temporary wooden rail, and the owners were ready to have an iron one built and installed.

They did not have a particular design or style in mind, but after looking through my portfolio and several books of ironwork, I realized they had very definite likes and dislikes. They wanted an open, airy, free-form design — not symmetrical, but balanced. To keep it as open as possible, a 6” center design was preferred over the 4” center, required by current codes. The home had already passed its final inspection and this deviation was understood and accepted.

Though built from logs, this home had a very elegant feel, both inside and out. The details and furnishings only enforced that ambiance. The portion of rail now occupied by the owl is located directly opposite the entrance. It was to be designed to accept an elliptical-shaped wood carving soon to be started by an artist in Oregon who had done several other pieces throughout the home. The upper portion of the fascia on the loft was the only surface it could be mounted to which was flat. A 9-foot long section (not shown) sits on top of a log and fits between logs at both ends.

This design was developed to allow the bases of the post sections to wrap into place on the irregular surfaces of the logs. They served as “roots” for the branching scroll-shaped “vines,” which terminated in very stylized leaves. This gave an organic feel to complement the logs. The straight horizontal bars filled the spaces between to keep from getting too busy and to keep within budget. They are also reminiscent of the chinked edges of the logs.

Attaching to the logs was extremely tedious. Templates were made by wrapping sheet metal around pieces of particleboard, cut to various diameters. Extensive field measurements had to be taken, since the centerline of the rail was usually not the centerline of the log. Each vine section had to be individually fit on site, connected to the top rail in the shop, and re-fitted on site before the horizontal bars could be added to the rail. The hardwood floor below and the white carpet in the loft area were constant hazards.

As the fabrication neared completion, the wood carver was dismissed. He was supposed to be done by then, but had not even started. The wood hadn’t “spoken” to him yet. This was to be the central element of the entire project. Various solutions were presented and discussed, and the owl, the most ambitious, was chosen. Fortunately, I was able to borrow a legally stuffed owl for a model. Each feather was cut from various gauges of sheet metal, forged, veined and textured (primary wing and tail feathers on both sides), before being welded onto a fabricated shell body. The coloring is from metal dyes.

The fabrication time for the owl and pine branches was about 80 hours. The 40 feet of railing took just over 200 hours. The installation and field fitting was another 40 to 50 hours with one—and sometimes two—helpers. This project, as well as another rail system in another part of the house, kept me busy through a long, cold winter. The clients turned out to be wonderful people to work for. Their faith in me from the outset of this project gave me the confidence to expand the envelope of my abilities.
2001 - 2002 EVENTS

November 10, 2001
Upper Midwest Blacksmiths Association
Winter Meeting at Centaur Forge, Ltd. Burlington, WI
Call James Ribordy 815/389-4432 or Centaur Forge 262/763-9175
E-mail: centforge1@aol.com.

June 5 – 9, 2002
Artist Blacksmiths Association of North American (ABANA) Conference
LaCrosse, WI
Call 706/310-1030 or email: abana@abana.org

For more calendar events, see the ABANA web site: www.abana.org.
EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

2001

November 5 – 9

November 9 – 11
Botanical Forms, New England School of Metalwork, Auburn, ME. 207/777-6211. www.newenglandschoolofmetalwork.com

November 11 – 16

November 12 – February 2
Blacksmithing - Forged Lighting with John Stevens. Old Sturbridge Village, MA. Worcester Center for Crafts, Worcester, MA. 508/753-8183. E-mail: ccc@worcestercenter.org. See web site: www.worcestercenter.org.

November 12 – February 2

November 16 – 18

November 25 – December 1

December 2 – 8

December 17 – 21

December 26 – 31
Traditional Lighting with Bill Bastas. Ozark School of Blacksmithing, Potosi, MO. 573/438-4725.

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January 13 – 19

January 20 – 26

January 20 – 26

January 27 – February 1

February 3 – 9

February 4 – 22
Blacksmiting class with Frank Turley. Turley Forge School of Blacksmithing, Santa Fe, NM. 505/471-8608. E-mail: nudahonga@qwest.net.

February 10 – 16

February 17 – 22
Knife Making Made Simpler with Tony Palermo. John C. Campbell Folk School,

February 22 – 24

February 24 – March 2

March 3 – 8

March 8 – 10

March 8 – 10

March 10 – 16

March 10 – May 3
Miss Betty’s Hot Iron Revue with Elizabeth Brim. Penland School of Crafts, Penland, NC. 828/765-2359. E-mail: office@penland.org. Web site: www.penland.org.

March 11 – 29
Blacksmithing class with Frank Turley. Turley Forge School of Blacksmithing, Santa Fe, NM. 505/471-8608. E-mail: nuda-honga@qwest.net.

March 17 – 23

March 24 – 30

March 31 – April 5

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CALL FOR ENTRIES

The ABANA Conference 2002, in conjunction with The Pumphouse Regional Arts Center in La Crosse, Wisconsin, is hosting a professional juried exhibition for ABANA members entitled “Forging Traditions: ABANA 2002 Juried Exhibition.” The exhibition will be held May 22-June 29, 2002, with a reception for the artists to take place on June 6th during the 2002 ABANA Conference.

In the American Heritage Dictionary, ‘Tradition’ is defined as “the passing down of elements of a culture from generation to generation…a time-honored practice or a set of such practices.” In ABANA we realize that we are passing down an ancient craft and reinventing it at the same time, constantly creating new traditions, using both ancient and modern technology. In this exhibit we want to celebrate our continually evolving group of traditions that are being passed along within our diverse membership. We are looking for quality functional and non-functional work in metal that embodies high standards for creativity and craftsmanship.

The Juror: Gary Noffke has been professionally involved in metalworking since 1969. After receiving his MFA from Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, he served as head of the Metals program at the University of Georgia-Athens from 1971-2001. While Noffke’s personal work focuses primarily on forging silver and gold, which he alloys, he is no stranger to the art and craft of blacksmithing. Noffke was among one of the first metalsmiths to introduce the knife to the contemporary craft scene in the late ‘60s and has a keen eye for ‘quality’ in metalwork. Noffke has received numerous awards for his work and has exhibited his work throughout the world. Noffke was named an American Craft Fellow in 2001.

How to submit your work: Only two works will be considered from each artist. Send up to two slides of each piece labeled with your name, title of work, materials, and techniques. The slides should also be numbered to correspond with the entry form. A complete packet will include the entry form, slides and a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) for the return of your photographic materials. Artists whose work is juried into the exhibition will be asked to sign a statement giving ABANA permission to photograph and/or publish work included in the exhibition.

Send your materials to:

ABANA
“Forging Traditions: ABANA 2002 Juried Exhibition”
PO Box 816
Farmington, GA 30638-0816

Shipping: Any entry and its reusable shipping container must fit through a doorway that measures 38”w x 82”h. All shipping expenses, both to and from the exhibit, will be the responsibility of the artist.

Arrangements for prepaid return shipping must be enclosed with the accepted entry. No CODs. Work will be insured while on exhibit at The Pumphouse Regional Arts. Insurance for the work in transit is the responsibility of the artist.

Sales: The Pumphouse Regional Arts Center takes a 30% commission on any works that are sold. The 30% commission comes out of the listed sales price, so the price should include that commission.

Important Dates:
• Entry Deadline: Slides and entry form must be postmarked by January 15, 2002
• Notification: Notification of acceptance and loan forms will be mailed to selected artists by February 20, 2002
• Work due at the gallery: May 16-19, 2002
• Exhibition begins: Tuesday, May 22, 2002
• Reception: June 6, 2002
• Exhibition closes: June 29, 2002
• Work returned: July 1-3, 2002

(Please see Entry Form on following page.)
ENTRY FORM

“Forging Traditions: ABANA 2002 Juried Exhibition”

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City: __________________ State: ____ Zip/Postal Code: ________ Country: ______
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Fax: __________________________________________

Descriptive list of images: Include title, materials/techniques, dimensions, year created.

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Note: Any entry and its reusable shipping carton must fit through a doorway that measures 38” x 82”.

Checklist for materials:
☐ Entry form
☐ Slides
☐ SASE

Send to:
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PO Box 816
Farmington, GA 30638-0816

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REAL ESTATE FOR SALE: Scenic Route 100 North, Pittsfield, Vermont. Blacksmith/wrought iron shop, 3900 sq. ft. Large shop, fully equipped. Large showroom and a large apartment, 3 bathrooms and a storage barn. Located on two acres with plenty of parking. E-mail: mtforge@globalnetisp.net or telephone: 802/746-8822.

BOOKS AND VIDEOS

“MOVING METAL, The Art of Chasing and Repoussé”, by Adolph Steines, translated from the German by Judy and Winifried Berger, is a long-overdue treat for blacksmiths, jewelers and all other metal-workers. No other text in English covers this subject in similar depth and detail. This unique, profusely illustrated reference work covers design transfer, chasing, repousse, sinking, raising, surface treatment and much more. Hardback, 8” x 10,” 131 pgs., 218 photos/drawings. ISBN 0-9707664-9-1.

Prepaid: Blue Moon Press, Blue Moon Rd., Huntingdon, PA 16652. $32.95 plus $3.00 S&H. Pennsylvania residents add 6% sales tax. E-mail: books@bluemoonpress.org. See our ad on page 60.


How to rebuild a Nazel power hammer, a 1½-hour tape and information. $50, postpaid. Bob Bergman, 608/527-2494.

OPPORTUNITIES

We are looking for a person who is seriously interested in learning the art of blacksmithing through self-motivation, instruction, and position at a historical blacksmith shop under the direction of artist blacksmith Payne Junker. Paid position will include instruction under Payne Junker and running a small blacksmith shop doing demonstrations in historical blacksmithing technique. Some experience would be helpful (can you make a hook?). Position available from late May through mid-October. Interested parties should contact: Junker Studio, 422 Ethan Allen Road, Chester, VT 05143. Phone: 802/875-3986.

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