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 1491, 6100 Wentworth Springs Rd., Georgetown, CA 95634. Include SASE for material return. (530) 333-2867 phone or (530) 333-2869 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, ©2004 The Artist-Blacksmith’s Association of North America, Inc.
During the 2004 ABANA Conference, renowned artist-blacksmith Albert Paley will present two lectures concerning his work and the state of contemporary blacksmithing. Paley is currently the Distinguished Professor holding the Charlotte Fredericks Mowris Professorship in Contemporary Crafts at the Rochester Institute of Technology. Paley has exhibited his metalwork throughout the world, and has executed over fifty significant commissions. For more information about Albert Paley, please visit www.albertpaley.com.
Prez sez…

ABANA members are the beneficiaries of all of this hard work. If you have a special talent that would enrich ABANA, please do give some thought to running for the Board this summer. Join a group of talented, hard-working individuals; I guarantee you that you will be well rewarded for your investment of time and energy.

There are two conference-related items that members should be aware of. First, the ABANA poster contest! Check out the ABANA web site, www.abana.org, for details. Or contact Board member Dave Mudge, e-mail: davenudge@abana.org, for details. Second, the conference will be a banner for us as an affiliate. It would be great if each affiliate would make an effort to make its presence known at the conference with a colorful banner!

Lastly, on a personal note, I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at the conference. Being from the Pacific Northwest, I haven’t had the opportunity to meet a lot of our ABANA members east of the Rockies, so I will look forward to that. See you in Richmond! Don Kemper.
Wendel Broussard began working as an apprentice farrier in his home town of Houston, Texas in 1971. A six-year stint on the California racetracks, building custom-fitted shoes for harness horses, sharpened his forging skills.

In 1983 Wendel opened the Golden Anvil Metalsmithing shop of Smithville, Texas. His interest in repoussé led to self-taught techniques and later he was privileged to attend and graduate from the school of repoussé at Les Compagnons Du Devoir in Muroz, France in 1991. His talent for ornamental iron has resulted in many jobs in both private homes and businesses. His projects include the renovation of the "Old Galveston Square," Galveston, Texas, restoration of the Denton County Courthouse, Denton, Texas, and the entrance grille for the Sinclair Building in Fort Worth, Texas.

Wendel has demonstrated at numerous conferences and workshops throughout the United States including the Metal Museum in Memphis, Tennessee, and the 1998 ABANA Conference in Asheville, North Carolina. He has also been featured on the HGTV series “Modern Masters.”

During the 2004 ABANA Conference, Wendel will address the path to designing and making architectural repoussé. This process will include the consideration of styles, techniques used, materials and job
STEVE DUNN, SMITHS GROVE, KENTUCKY

All of Steve’s knives have forged blades as he believes a properly forged and heat-treated blade has no equal when it comes to performance. Says Steve, “There are certain qualities that can be imparted in the steel that cannot be accomplished in any other way. Each knife is put through very demanding tests after heat treat, and only the ones that are superior in strength and edge holding leave my shop. Each knife is made one at a time and special attention is given to detail.

“Most of the folders I offer now are of the linerlock design as I think it is superior in strength to all the rest. I work in various Damascus patterns whether it is pattern-welded or mosaic. When I use mosaic, I always weld a 52100 center core in the middle for the cutting edge. I like to use titanium for liners, and offer anodizing if the customer wants it. A few years ago I started offering engraving as I have always strongly believed in sole authorship in my knives. I thoroughly enjoy this and hope it shows in my work.”

Crocodile knife. 4” Kris style blade with pattern Damascus. 24k gold teeth. 18k rose-gold bird. 14k gold disc on rocker bar.


Crocodile knife. 4” Kris style blade with pattern Damascus. 24k gold teeth. 18k rose-gold bird. 14k gold disc on rocker bar.
Jouko Nieminen, Master Blacksmith 
Helsinki, Finland

Jouko began studying blacksmithing in the early ‘80s; by 1986 he owned his own shop. Jouko studied at the University of Industrial Arts in Helsinki and in 1990 he earned the prestigious title of master blacksmith. His work has been included in many exhibitions throughout Europe and he has demonstrated his blacksmithing skills internationally. Jouko participated in the First International Festival of Iron in Cardiff, Wales, the 1990 ABANA Conference in Alfred, New York, the Second and Third Weltkongress der Schmiede in Aachen, Germany, and most recently at the European Blacksmith Workshop at the Total Museum in Seoul, South Korea.

Jouko produces different types of work ranging from traditional to contemporary art to functional and tool making. He utilizes various materials, including mild steel, wrought iron, stainless steel, Damascus and brass. During his demonstrations in Kentucky he will focus on the development of new forms, patinas and surface treatment involved in their finalization.

**#1 Brooch. Forged rusted steel, acid proof steel.**

**#2 Brooch. Damascus steel, acid-proof steel.**

**#3 Brooch. Damascus steel, acid-proof steel.**

**Ax, stainless damascus steel. Ash handle. 350 x 100 mm.**

**Birdsaurus, animal sculpture. Forged steel, copper, rust, 900 mm x 750 mm.**

**Candleholder (licorice). Forged steel 20 x 40 flat, height 350 mm**

**Memorial cross. Forged steel 30 x 30 square, 3 mm sheet, rusted, height 1000mm.**

**Entrance gate. Steel, height 4000 mm, width 3500 mm.**

**Memorial cross. Forged acid-proof steel, 16 x 40 flat, height 900 mm.**

**Fish skeleton. Forged steel, acid-proof steel, rust. 1200 x 550 mm.**

**Axe, stainless damascus steel. Ash handle. 350 x 100 mm.**
Peter Parkinson is a self-employed artist-blacksmith from Hampshire, England. He studied Industrial Design at the Royal College of Art in London, has worked as an Industrial Designer with both London Transport and Allied Ironfounders Limited. He taught for 25 years at the Surrey Institute of Art & Design where he initiated a BA (Hons) Metals degree course in 1982, which includes studies in blacksmithing.

Mr. Parkinson resigned his teaching post in 1992 to devote time to his own studio and forging workshop, making speculative pieces for gallery sales and undertaking public art and architectural metalwork commissions in many parts of Britain. These include works in Basingstoke, Blackburn, Bradford, Crawley, Derby, Leicester, London, Portsmouth and Southampton. He continues to teach short courses on design and blacksmithing in Britain and America. His book, The Artist Blacksmith, published in 2001, explains the role of the artist blacksmith and discusses the design and specification of forged metalwork in an attempt to provide a resource for architects and designers desiring more information on forged metalwork.

Editor’s Note: My apologies for captioning Kevin Clancy’s photo in the Winter 2004 issue of The Anvil’s Ring on page 20 with “Peter Renzetti at work.” Peter informed me, “That wasn’t me, a while back or anytime ever.” Sorry, just inadvertently adding to the legend of the “Unknown Blacksmith.” Also on page 21, Michael McCarthy is Paul Spaulding’s apprentice, not the other way around.
ABANA MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The general meeting of the ABANA Membership will take place on Thursday, July 8, 2004 at 6:30 p.m. The location for the meeting will be the Koenig Johnson Building on the campus of Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond, Kentucky.

The ABANA Board of Directors meeting will take place on Friday, July 9, 2004 at 6:30 p.m. The location for the meeting will be Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond, Kentucky. Building and room location will be announced as soon as the details are available.

VENDOR DONATION TO THE ABANA EDUCATION FUND

Any 2004 ABANA Conference vendor wishing to donate $2,500. to ABANA’s Education Fund is eligible to take advantage of all the following advertising benefits:
- A half-page advertising space in the 2004 ABANA Conference publication. The cost of the ad may be applied toward a larger ad purchased by the vendor, if desired.
- One half-page of advertising in The Anvil’s Ring or the Hammer’s Blow. The choice of publication is that of the vendor. The cost of the ad may be applied toward a larger ad purchased by the vendor.
- The vendor’s name and contact information on a maximum of four vendor-supplied banners no larger than 3’ x 8’. These banners may be displayed in a prominent Conference location as mutually agreed upon with the Conference Chairperson, Dave Koenig.
- Exclusive site choice in the vendor area, mutually agreed upon with the Conference Chairperson.

CONFERENCE

The biennial ABANA Conference will be held July 7 - 11, 2004, at Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond, Kentucky. See information on some of the demonstrators at the conference in this issue.

CONTRACTS

Central Office Administrator’s contract will be reviewed yearly and extends until 2004. The Anvil’s Ring contract extends until the year 2004. The Hammer’s Blow contract extends until 2006.

REPRINT POLICY

ABANA Affiliate newsletter editors are authorized to reprint anything published in either The Anvil’s Ring or Hammer’s Blow in their affiliate newsletter.

SCHOLARSHIPS

ABANA scholarships are available to all ABANA members. The closing dates are: January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1. Information can be obtained from the ABANA Central Office, call 706/310-1000.

ADMISSION OF AFFILIATES

On April 10, 2004, a motion for admission of affiliates was passed unanimously by the ABANA Board of Directors. The two new ABANA affiliates are the Central Minnesota Blacksmiths and the Artist Blacksmith’s Association of Finland.

ELECTION INFORMATION

The Artist Blacksmith’s Association of North America, Inc. (ABANA) is run by a board of 15 directors elected by the membership. These elected volunteers serve as officers, committee chairpersons and members of committees. Five of the 15 directors are elected each year for a three-year term.

To run for election, one is required to be an ABANA member in good standing and provide the following:

A nominating petition signed by at least 10 ABANA members submitted with photograph and candidate statement to the central office by June 15 of the election year.

NOTICE OF ELECTION FOR ABANA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2004 ELECTION TIMETABLE

May 1, 2004: Notice of election published in the Spring issue of The Anvil’s Ring
June 15, 2004: Nominations deadline date, submitted to the ABANA Central Office, P.O. Box 816, Farmington, GA 30638
August 1, 2004: Ballot mailing in the Summer issue of The Anvil’s Ring
September 15, 2004: Postmark deadline for completed ballots

October 1, 2004: Notification to elected Board members. To view the complete bylaws, go to the ABANA web site at www.abana.org/ the_by_laws.html

Business meetings of the ABANA Board are held annually near the 15th of November. On the even year, an additional meeting is held at the ABANA international conference in typically June or July. Between meetings, business is conducted by phone, mail, fax, and email, followed by a quarterly board mailing, distributed by the Central Office.

Go to www.anvilmag.com

For Interviews with:
- Stephen Bondi
- Elizabeth Brim
- Gary Brown
- Fred Caylor
- E.A. Chase
- Tim Cisneros
- Doug Hendrickson
- Toby Hickman
- Tom Joyce
- Bruce Norbridge
- Bob Patrick
- Bill Pieh
- John Rais
- Frank Turley
- Francis Whitaker

Winter 2004
It was conceived on the way to my shop as the radio announced President Bush was going to war. Technique: Pure rage with a 4 lb. hammer, and tears. Statement: It could have been handled better. It wasn’t. Now they have to die for our diplomatic sins.

Photo (left) is entitled Hebrews 13:3. It is 11” x 14” in diameter. Forged steel; tractor-trailer hubcap; lock. Statement: Well, how do you look behind bar? Sort of small, weak, grotesque. But you feel better. It wasn’t. Now they have to die for our war. Technique: Pure rage with a 4-lb. hammer, and tears. Statement: It was conceived on the way to my shop as the radio announced President Bush was going to war. Technique: Pure rage with a 4 lb. hammer, and tears. Statement: It could have been handled better. It wasn’t. Now they have to die for our diplomatic sins.

Photo (right) is the Iraq Cross. These two pieces were created by David Hoopes, Lenoza, Kansas. E-mail: dhhoopes@kl.rc.com

From the Editor: Dear David, The blacksmithing metalworking merit badge was introduced at the National Boy Scouts of America Jamboree in Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia, in the summer of 2001. If you have access to prior issues of The Anvil’s Ring and the Hammer’s Blow, see the Summer 2001 issue of The Ring on page 3 for information from president of ABANA, Doug Leuen, on the subject. There is also further information on the metalworking merit badge in the president’s letter on page 3 in the summer 2001 issue of The Hammer’s Blow. Go to the ABANA web site, www.abana.org, and do a search for Boy Scouts Merit Badge and a wealth of information will come up, including all the requirements. Also, go to the Boy Scouts of America web site, www.scouting.org.

DEAR EDITOR,

I am a 17-year old living in Texas. I know how to weld and plan on becoming a certified welder. I come from a family of metal workers. My father and my brother are both welders and now I have them interested in blacksmithing. I have been interested in blacksmithing since I know it existed and that it was still practiced today. I have been working with metal ever since I picked up a mig gun back in the 8th grade.

I just recently completed my first blacksmithing-related project: a 50-lb. power hammer. It weighs 2000-plus pounds and cost me around $600 to build, but it was well worth it. I showed it in the local Future Farmers of America Youth Show and received the Reserve Grand Champion Award overall and also Champion of Metal Projects Award.

People at the show thought it was many different things: a wood splitter, a hammer mooik a really big pecan crusher B ideas other than what it is. The people who actually knew what it was told me some interesting stories of blacksmith they knew and things that they made. This got me interested in blacksmithing more. The only bad thing I found out about making a power hammer is now my dad wants a bigger one and he’s already started getting some of the parts for it. Justin Haugett, Band, Texas

DEAR EDITOR,

I remember that some time ago there were some discussions with the Boy Scouts about establishing a blacksmithing merit badge. Can anyone tell me what happened to that idea? I am a 17-year old living in Texas. I know how to weld and plan on becoming a certified welder. I come from a family of metal workers. My father and my brother are both welders and now I have them interested in blacksmithing. I have been interested in blacksmithing since I know it existed and that it was still practiced today. I have been working with metal ever since I picked up a mig gun back in the 8th grade.

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P R E V I E W S  
& N O T E S

UNUSUAL NEW GALLERY HAS OPENED
When: Thursdays and Fridays, 1 pm - 6 pm, Saturdays 10 am - 1 pm
Where: Louisville, Kentucky

Kaviar Gallery is a new art gallery which opened in February, 2004. It is unique in the fact that it is located in the middle of a forge studio. The newly renovated space includes tile floors and large windows that open onto a sculpture garden. The white walls contrast with the sooty floor of the blacksmith shop, which visitors may view through the window from the gallery into the shop.

This space has previously been used as a showroom for sculptor Craig Kaviar. By showing his own work, and the work of other artists, he hopes to create a unique experience for his visitors. The gallery not only features furniture and sculpture by Kaviar but also painting, sculpture, fountains, furniture and artwork by other artists. It specializes in presenting artists who have honed their craft for 25 years or more and the gallery gives a glimpse into how art is made.

NEW WEB SITE FOR NEW YORK STATE DESIGNER BLACKSMITHS

The New York State Designer Blacksmiths announces a new web site for their group. It is: www.nysdb.org. For further information on this affiliate, contact affiliate president Charles Canterbury, e-mail: hummingbirdforge@hotmail.com.

GRAND OPENING AT NATIONAL ORNAMENTAL METAL MUSEUM
Where: Memphis, Tennessee

On February 5, 2004, the National Ornamental Metal Museum turned 25 years old. A grand opening was held on that date. This year, after four years of fundraising, a $1.5 million renovation project is scheduled to begin on April 5, 2004. The museum will be closed for three months for the renovation.

While the gallery exhibits are the most visible aspect of the museum, its facilities offer much more, including apprenticeships for students, educational classes and tours of the smithy and metal conservation work.

For more information on the history and evolution of the National Ornamental Metal Museum see the February 2004 issue of Fabricate, the official publication of the National Ornamental & Miscellaneous Metals Association (NOMMA).

ARTSPACE GALLERY SHOW
Where: ArtsPlace Gallery, 160 North Mill St., Lexington, KY

When: June 18 - July 31, 2004

“Continuum,” Six Kentucky blacksmiths and their Mentors, will be featured at an art show sponsored by the Lexington Arts & Cultural Council at the ArtSpace Gallery in Lexington, during the time of the ABANA Conference in Lexington. For more information, call 859/225-0370 or e-mail: ihf248@msn.com.

CALL FOR PHOTOS

Author Dona Z. Meilach is gathering photos for a new book, Contemporary Ironwork, Inside and Out.” Deadline is November 1, 2004. Contact via email: dmeilach@msn.com or phone 760/436-4395 for more information.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS - CANIRON V VIRTUAL GALLERY

In August, 2005, the Maritime Blacksmiths Association will host CanIRON V, in Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia, Canada. One feature of this conference will be a PowerPoint “Virtual Gallery.” Our intention is to showcase the widest possible selection of global metalwork in a continuous electronic presentation which will run the length of the conference. We would like to invite all blacksmiths, worldwide, to take part in this.

All interested parties are asked to provide: artist’s portrait, shop name, location, and country of origin, and three to five images of your work.

For further information please contact Brad Allen, Maritime Blacksmiths Association (902) 454-2266. Digital images may be sent to allenht@hfx.aol.ca. Photos or slides may be posted to Brad Allen, 5655 Merkel Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2J1 Canada.

Notes

While the gallery exhibits are the most visible aspect of the museum, its facilities offer much more, including apprenticeships for students, educational classes and tours of the smithy and metal conservation work.

For more information on the history and evolution of the National Ornamental Metal Museum see the February 2004 issue of Fabricate, the official publication of the National Ornamental & Miscellaneous Metals Association (NOMMA).

ABANA Auction!

Richmond, Kentucky
July 7-11, 2004

Saturday afternoon, July 10 starting at 4:00 p.m., you’re invited to attend the auction of items donated by ABANA members, conference demonstrators and vendors. This is ABANA’s major fundraising event. Come share in the excitement!

For more information visit our web site at www.abana.org.

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A hop across the Pacific Ocean in October 2003 saw Californian smith Brent Bailey join forces with Queenslanders Alan Ball for Australia’s Hot Iron Muster 2003, held in Logan Village just outside Brisbane.

This was the fourth annual Muster hosted by Alan as a skills development opportunity for Australian blacksmithing enthusiasts. “While we have some very talented smiths in Australia, we are still in the early stages of building a resource network,” said Alan. “My ABANA membership provides the ideal way to make contact with U.S. smiths willing to share expertise and a holiday in our great country at the same time.”

As with previous Musters, this year’s event began with a Demonstration Day to allow a wider audience to see some action at the forge and anvil. Several of the 50 attendees were first-timers keen to experience the magic of working hot metal, while the hardened converts traveled from near and far for the chance to talk blacksmithing and pick up some new tips from Brent.

Drawing on his background in both ornamental ironwork and toolmaking, Brent’s demonstrations began with a contemporary take on a large leaf and a split cross, followed by a finely finished chisel in H13 tool steel. He forged a cross-peen hammerhead from 410 stainless steel, drifting and adding the decorations to the hammer handle.

Sharing the techniques learned during a previous international exchange, he hammered out a fine Zimbabwean spearhead with a double offset in the blade, making it a complex exercise. Turning back to decorative elements, he made light work of the popular pineapple and rope motif, allowing the expertly executed examples much admiration.

The highlight of the day was undoubtedly Brent’s seemingly effortless demonstration of pattern welding. After showing the effect that can be achieved with wire cable, he demonstrated the welding and twisting of layers of mild and 15N20 high nickel tool steel before cutting through to expose the cross section. A quick dip into the etching solution revealed the pattern. Although time did not allow for a totally finished and polished piece, it had already completely captured the examiner’s interest. Brent’s skills were much appreciated by the audience and his ready-made hammers, punches and chisels were in big demand. Those who had secured one of the three hands-on workshops to follow eagerly awaited their own chance to continue the experience.

The first of the two-day workshops offered the opportunity for newcomers to try out their hammer hands on a kitchen utensil handle. The design called for two sides of the frame to be tapered to decorative ends, then wrapped around and riveted over the other two sides. After Brent’s initial demonstration, the fires were started. Participants warmed up by making their punches that would later be put to good use making the various holes for assembly. Once onto the project itself, sweat was soon raised in drawing out the 40mm flat bar frame. The challenge for the less experienced was to make all four taps match as closely as possible. The hanging racks were inserted with mortar and trowel joints, and a variety of hooks were made to hang the frame and hold utensils. All participants declared themselves well pleased with their completed projects.

A set of three barbecue utensils was the project for the next workshop. Brent first demonstrated the decorative handle, drawing out a 12mm square bar to form a tight scrolled end, then punching two pairs of holes to allow the bar to be looped over and riveted against itself. With all participants having previous forging experience, work began quickly on the matching handles. Once they were ready, Brent continued with the business ends of the utensils. The simple steak turner was a novelty to the class, as it is not a common tool in Australia. Along with the double-pronged fork, it was forged from the existing handles. Brent’s version of a spatula cross-pressed out of 40mm flat bar tested the endurance of the group in the sultry conditions, and all were very happy to complete that final fire-weld to its handle.

The new utensils were carried off as proud trophies to be the talking point at many Aussie BBQ’s to come.

Hands tools of a different kind were the topic for the final two-day workshop. After seeing the quality of Brent’s hammers, punches and chisels at the beginning of the Muster, all participants were keen to get started on their own sets. Being in short supply in Australia, a cross-peen hammer had top billing. Following Brent’s lead, the group got started on a slitting chisel in H11 and a drift in 4140 steel to be ready to use on the hammerhead. With these experienced smiths needing little guidance, Brent was soon back in action at the demonstration forge.

The hard-hitting expertise saw the embryonic hammerhead steadily take shape. Taking the process right through to a finished (but unpainted) hammerhead, Brent produced a fine example for the group to aspire to. Alan had pre-cut the stock and attached handles to save time for the participants, so the forges were quickly fired up while the biggest hammers emerged from the toolboxes to wait in readiness on the anvils. The enthusiasm to make an impression on the 38mm round 4140 bar saw several requests to try out Brent’s 2kg hammer. It was, however, soon surrendered when the weight began to take its toll on unfamiliar muscles. Strikers were a popular alternative with many of the group, as well as Alan and Brent rotating around the anvils. Perseverance won out, with the majority of hammerheads bring close to completion by the end of the day. The celebratory dinner at the local hotel saw a very weary group voting for a quiet night of recovery to prepare for the following morning.

Still keen for another hammer after completing the first one, some of the participants elected to work on a Swedish pattern cross peen. The project progressed quickly after Brent’s demonstration, aided by the previous day’s newfound experience. He also demonstrated his stylish centre-punch, and those who were “all ham-
mered out” were delighted to add the pyramid design with square tapers at both ends to their toolboxes.

After lunch on the last day depleted energy levels and continuing hot conditions gave rise to a popular idea for Brent to work while every one else watched. Pattern-welding easily won the vote for a suitable project. Brent elected to demonstrate a star pattern mosaic, interweaving 12 layers of mild steel with bandsaw blade and with the apexes facing each other, attached diagonally sliced a piece of 20mm square bar for two identical pieces. In the meantime Alan solid billet was squared up and then cut in half which has a high nickel content. The resulting billet in the cutter, Brent hammered it through to obtain two triangular billets with the layers running vertically to the apex. After hammering each of these into a V-shaped swage to ensure that all pieces were identical, the four were reassembled with the layers of the top and bottom triangles running at right angles to those of the sides. Forge-welding all together again formed the radiating pattern to delight the entranced audience.

Even with the barrage of questions from the onlookers, Brent’s expertise saw this project concluded in good time. He then made light fork ends for those who had missed the barbecue ural workshop. Although everyone was reluctant to see the fire extinguished, “Time” had to finally be called on another very successful Hot Iron Muster.

In summing up the event from his perspective, Brent commended Alan for his efforts to give the Australian blacksmithing community access to international resources. “My visit to Australia has exceeded even my highest expectations,” he said. “I strongly encourage my fellow smiths to take the opportunity to travel down under for a great and rewarding experience.”

Gene quickly understood the opportunity to travel down under for a great and rewarding experience.”

**NC Whisper Low Boy**
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These are photos of a chandelier I made. The vital statistics are as follows: Materials used were 16-gauge sheet iron and pure iron bar stock. The finish is sheet iron heated to a bubbly surface, and high areas were sanded with 80-grit emery cloth, coated with a boiled linseed oil and turpentine mixture, then heated in the oven at 350 degrees for 15 minutes. Finished with a paste wax. Diameter is 18".

Even though I made the chandelier and the design is essentially mine, I would like to give credit to those persons who made the design suggestions. Those suggestions were offered by: George Dixon, Curt Engstrom, Tom Latané, Bob Walsh and John Yust. 

BOB FREDDELL
ZIMMERMAN, MINNESOTA

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$7995 complete with base, combination drawing and flat dies. This hammer has unbeatable control!
A set of bookshelves on the wall above a staircase seemed like an easy “honey-do” project. A quick trip to the discount store, screw in the rails and pop in the brackets, job finished—not quite. She wanted “simple” hand-wrought brackets with a swirl or two, and would a leaf be too difficult to attach? Years passed and the inevitable meaningful discussions ensued each time she stumbled over the boxes of books. Several designs were discussed and discarded. In a snit I went to the shop and proceeded to build bookshelves, not copying someone else, but my way!

A six-foot seven-inch span and standard studs in the wall resulted in six brackets for each of the four shelves. They were designed to both support the shelf and to act as bookends for the shelf below. Art books are often oversized so two shelves are 12” wide and the other two are 10”. The brackets determined the vertical spacing, roughly 12”. Each shelf features different foliage. As I completed each, my sense of adventure increased, causing me to look for more interesting models to reproduce. The first set was entirely of steel. The final set completed was the birch branches. The branches are of steel, the leaves of copper, and the leaf stems are brass.

Leaves were repoussé and chased and the stems welded and filed. Leaf parts and stems were brazed together. Completed brackets were flame finished and coated with a wax finish while still warm. Shelves were made of birch plywood with oak edge trim and a varathane finish. Mounting screws were brass round-headed wood screws.

The project was a huge success and resulted in an additional smaller and less elaborate set of shelves in another location. My wife is still finding blacksmith books scattered about the house! Where do I put the next set of shelves?
Blacksmithing in Yorubaland

By Caleb Kullman, Kullman Architectural Blacksmithing, Fort Collins, Colorado

In 2002 I was fortunate enough to spend eight months conducting anthropological fieldwork among Yoruba blacksmiths in southwestern Nigeria as a U.S. Fulbright Scholar. I conducted this research as part of a master's degree in anthropology, which I am currently pursuing at Colorado State University. I chose to carry out research among Yoruba smiths because of my interest in the African ironworking tradition but also because historically, Yoruba blacksmiths, along with hunters and warriors, have been the primary worshippers of Ogun, the Yoruba god of iron and warfare. While practicing traditional Yoruba religion, these blacksmiths are also devout Christians or Muslims. The general focus of my ongoing research is the blending of world religions, such as Christianity and Islam in their various forms, with traditional Yoruba religion.

Nigeria is known as the “giant of Africa.” With a population of between 125 and 135 million people, depending on whom you ask, it is Africa’s most populous country. It is also one of the world’s poorest, with a per-capita yearly income of only $290.00. In addition to being populous and poor, Nigeria is a very ethnically diverse country with over 250 languages spoken by various ethnic groups. Because Nigeria was a British colony until it gained independence in 1960, English is the official language. The Yoruba are the largest ethnic group in sub-Saharan Africa and the largest single group in Nigeria, with over 30 million people identifying themselves as Yoruba. Geographically, Yorubaland occupies the southwestern portion of Nigeria, from the Gulf of Guinea north and east to the River Niger. During my stay, I lived in a small town called Modakeke, which is near the larger town of Ile-Ife, in Osun state. It is considered by Yoruba to be the point where the gods first descended to earth from heaven and is thus the cosmological center of the world, the place where civilization began. Today Ife (which is about 100 miles north of Lagos, the largest city in Nigeria and in sub-Saharan Africa) is a city of about 250,000 people and is home to one of the most prestigious universities in Nigeria. Despite many modern changes, there are still many blacksmiths operating in the town and in outlying villages. YORUBA BLACKSMITHING

The blacksmiths with whom I spent most of my time primarily produced agricultural hand tools, which they sold directly to customers at their forges and at local markets. The agricultural sector of this part of Nigeria is composed of two primary components – small scale subsistence farming on small plots cut out of the forest, and larger scale plantation agriculture in which cocoa, palm oil and citrus fruits are the primary products. The blacksmiths produced tools that farmers use in these activities such as hoes, machetes, sickles for harvesting.

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28 Spring 2004 | Anvil’s Ring

ABANA 2004
Richmond, Kentucky

July 7-11, 2004

The 2004 ABANA Conference will take place on the beautiful campus of Eastern Kentucky University (EKU), in Richmond, Kentucky. The conference will formally begin with the Opening Ceremony on Wednesday evening July 7, 2004. Thursday, Friday and Saturday will be jam-packed with forging demonstrations, classroom activities, galleries, family programs, vendor activities, tailgating sales, the Saturday ABANA Auction, a membership meeting and of course time to visit and plan for the future. Your comments and suggestions regarding the 2004 ABANA Conference are welcome. Please address them to darekoenig@abana.org

www.kayneandson.com

E-Mail: kckullman@colostate.edu
They believe the power of Ogun resides in the stones. Many of the shops have been in their present locations for generations and the stones gathered by the grandfathers or great-grandfathers of the current occupants, still in use, are polished by years of forging steel. If a smith wants to replace a cracked or worn-out stone, he must perform a series of rituals so that Ogun can lead him to a proper replacement stone in the bush and bless the new anvil.

The smiths perform lighter finishing work over a small steel anvil, usually an old truck axle set vertically in a stump in the ground, with the large disc portion set about 16 inches off the ground. The smith usually sits on a small stool while tending the fire and working on the finishing anvil. An assistant, many times a son of the smith, helps by pumping the skin-covered wooden bellows. In the area surrounding Ibadan and Mosobalake, where farmers produce a lot of palm oil, the blacksmiths burn a charcoal made from palm kernel shells, which are in plentiful supply. In other areas of Nigeria where palm oil is not produced in such quantity, the smiths use hardwood charcoal to fire their forges. Most of the smiths use traditional hammers, which are club-style and solid steel, for most of the work. They typically have several sizes ranging from small planishing hammers to heavy sledge hammers, which they use for different operations. They use tongs, punchers and chisels, which are similar to our own modern, western tools. Scrap steel from automobiles is the primary source of raw material for the smiths and most smiths have a good working knowledge of what types of car parts make good tools.

Forging an axe for splitting wood.

The men in the background are pumping the bellows when the iron is in the fire. The bellows are set into the ground behind the clay fire wall, which serves to protect the bellows operator from the heat of the fire at its base.

Ogun Worship

One of the most interesting aspects of the lives of the blacksmiths is their religious beliefs. Unlike in the US and Europe, where participation in world religions is waning, religion is still a central part of life in Nigeria today and people are very devout believers. This is certainly true among the Yoruba smiths. I spent time with Christian smiths of various denominations and with Muslim smiths. Despite their participation in a world religion, all of the smiths also practice some form of traditional worship to Ogun and/or other Yoruba deities (the Yoruba pantheon consists of approximately 401 saints, or deities). When I asked them how they could practice more than one religion, they generally replied that they had been born into a family of smiths that had always worshipped Ogun and how were they supposed to stop? Our western practice of monotheism, which excludes all other forms of “pagan” worship, is certainly not practiced in Nigeria. The blacksmiths’ shops have small altars to Ogun, upon which the smiths make offerings on a regular basis - sometimes daily or weekly, depending on the smith. These offerings usually consist of a sprinkle of salt, a few drops of palm oil or palm wine, roasted yam and kola nut. Once a year, the smiths have a large celebration in which they give larger offerings to Ogun. I was able to attend two of these larger celebrations at two different shops. These yearly celebrations include extended family members, who often travel long distances to make offerings to their god and celebrate with family. Ogun is a powerful god in Yorubaland, often associated with war and violence, in addition to iron and blacksmithing. But he is also associated with progress, technology, and prosperity. If a person is having trouble at work, is poor and cannot get out of debt, or is planning a long journey, they will often go to see a babalawo, or sorcerer, to ask for a blessing.
Ogun, among other things. As a result, people often come to the Ogun shrine in their local blacksmith shop to ask Ogun for assistance in matters such as asking for a pay raise or promotion at work, or for safe travel, free from automobile accidents. The shrines to Ogun in the blacksmith shops are the primary places where people in the community make such offerings to Ogun. Some research has shown that many African ethnic groups believe that smiths have control over supernatural forces and magic. This is certainly true in Yorubaland, where belief in magic and sorcery is still widespread, and Yoruba blacksmiths’ power is proven at spells for the blacksmith. This is certainly true in many African ethnic groups, where people are desperately poor and crime is rampant, the fact that their blacksmith’s tools are never disturbed is a powerful statement about the respect they receive in the community. The local babalawos also ask the smiths to make various small charms out of steel, which the babalawos utilize in their practices. In addition, the forging process is believed to release the power of Ogun, which the blacksmith is then able to collect. I once saw a blacksmith treating a young woman who had been bitten by another woman during a fight. She came to the blacksmith to have him make a poultice from some herbs, using the scale from the forged iron on the floor of the shop, and the water from the quench tub — these items are imbued with the power of Ogun. The woman trusted the smith to provide her with a poultice that would utilize Ogun’s power to protect her from any soreness that could have been transferred with the bite. I found the blacksmiths to be suspicious of me at first, but then very open once a mutual trust was established. They are unfortunately very poor as are most “traditional” Yorubas in Nigeria (i.e., without higher education and civil service jobs). The agricultural sector of the Nigerian economy has been greatly neglected by the corrupt government since the discovery of oil in the Niger River Delta in the 1950s. This has hurt the blacksmiths because fewer and fewer people are farming and buying tools. Fortunately, I found that most people who were farming still preferred to buy tools made by local smiths rather than imports from abroad because of the power of Ogun imparted by the smith during their manufacture. Despite the differences in language, culture, history, and living standard, the daily activities the Yoruba smiths engaged in were quite similar to blacksmithing practices in the US. In such a foreign land, this familiarity was comforting for me during my stay. The language of forging iron is truly universal.
Some gas forge designs that have been available for several years were mostly reconstructions of store-bought equipment or complicated and time-consuming projects. Recently, however, many inventive people have refined homemade gas forges into an efficient tool for blacksmiths. The Internet has facilitated the “build a better mousetrap” approach with countless people contributing to contemporary gas forge construction. Fortunately, through Gas Burners for Forges, Furnaces, & Kilns, a consolidation of these efforts is funneled into a very fine and well-tuned forge. And the forges may be built with basic skills.

Ideally, any fabrication of gas forges should begin with a discussion about safety. And it does so here with excellent instruction about propane tanks and tool safety. The designs are for atmospheric burners using propane for fuel. Four sizes of burners are beautifully detailed, including 1/2”, 3/4”, 1” and 1 1/4” sizes. To add to the function, the Advanced Options section in this edition should optimize fuel usage, allowing more cost savings. A very detailed material and tool list accompanies all designs with wonderful directions.

The actual forges are built from propane bottles. But these include a full bottle, a clamshell for farrier use, and a furnace for foundry, pottery or glass work. Construction details include insulation, fabrication of doors, legs and carrying handle. Externally, the valve system design and a unique, insulated forge cart design are also shown.

Michael Porter’s fine illustrations match his excellent writing style. This shows through in the Dedication...to the future of the arts and crafts, allowing a forge for the people. Gas Burners for Forges, Furnaces, & Kilns...
MEMBERS’ EXHIBITIONS

The 2004 ABANA Conference, to be held on the campus of Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) in Richmond, Kentucky, will feature two separate venues for the exhibition of members’ work. One venue will be formal, the other informal. The formal 2004 exhibition of ABANA members’ work is entitled Overview: Works from the ABANA Membership,” and will be presented at EKU’s Giles Gallery, a beautiful 2,500 square foot two-level setting. The Walk-In-Gallery, the more informal setting for ABANA members’ work, will be presented in the Perkins Building.

OVERVIEW:

“Works From the ABANA Membership”

ABANA members who wish to have their work exhibited in a professional manner at the Giles Gallery will please read and agree to the following:

• All work must be sent to the EKU address listed below and be received on or between June 11 - July 2, 2004. No late shipments are accepted for exhibition!

TO:

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• Included with the shipped work must be two copies of an information sheet about the work which contains the following: artist’s name, title of work, year, techniques and materials used, and complete shipping address for returns.

• Contributors to “Overview: Works From the ABANA Membership,” are encouraged to volunteer a maximum of two hours of their time in the gallery for the purpose of hosting and sharing information about the exhibition with the ABANA membership and the public. This kind of participation augments ABANA’s ongoing mission of promoting quality blacksmithing.

• Each contributor is responsible for the shipping costs of his/her work to and from the exhibition. Contributors may retrieve their work from the Giles Gallery Sunday morning, July 11, 2004. Items not retrieved on July 11 will be shipped by Elizabeth Brim, Exhibitions Chairperson, from Richmond July 11, 2004 via UPS ground / freight collect (CDD).

SIZE RESTRICTIONS

ARE AS FOLLOWS:

The maximum weight is 150 pounds (US). The maximum size is 130 inches total girth.

To calculate maximum size, calculate the length + width x 2 + height x 2.

• While “Overview: Works From the ABANA Membership” is not a juried exhibition, Elizabeth Brim will have the final decision concerning the display of the work based on size and space considerations.

“WALK-IN-GALLERY”

The informal Walk-in gallery will be located in the Perkins Building near the registration area. This exhibition is open to all ABANA members who offer submissions at the time of registration. These items must be retrieved by the owner no later than Sunday, July 11, 2004.

AUCTION EVENTS

Silent & Live Auction Donations

The conference auctions are critical fund-raising events for ABANA. Tim Ryan is in charge of these events at the 2004 Conference and is inviting all members to donate examples of their work, tools or smithing-related items to ABANA. Tim and his crew will make every effort to get the highest price for your donation through either the silent auctions or the live auction. The live auction is scheduled to begin at 4:00 PM Saturday afternoon, July 10, 2004. Auction items can be donated during registration or during the Conference.

IRON-IN-THE-HAT

This year’s ABANA Conference will once again feature Iron-In-the-Hat. Please consider bringing an item for donation to this worthwhile event. All proceeds benefit the ABANA Scholarship Fund. Please donate Iron-In-the-Hat items at the time of registration in the Perkins Building.

Look for more details about the 2004 ABANA Conference at the ABANA website: www.abana.org.
A Conference Educational Opportunity

The Ozark School is looking for 12 blacksmiths to produce an Alfred Habermann-designed project at the Ozark School—repousse class June 28–July 2 at the Ozark School, in Potosi, Missouri. From this class, four to six people will be chosen to reproduce this item at the ABANA auction. The Ozark School will also be collaborating with Habermann himself the week of June 28–July 2, 2004. 

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Alfred Habermann Workshop

June 28–July 2nd

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<td>2002 ABANA Conference CD</td>
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<tr>
<td>337 images from five exhibitions and demonstrations held during the Conference in La Crosse, WI. Photographs taken by Sandy Andrews, ABANA Conference photographer, and Brian Gilbert, editor of the Hammer's Blow.</td>
<td>$20</td>
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<td>Gas Forge Plans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recuperating gas forge plans donated by Bob Guenter and Sandra Lake. Full-size blueprints included: 22 pp. drawings/photos</td>
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<td>Simple Air Hammer Plans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donated by Ron Kinyon of Arizona. 30 pp with photos and illustrations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Modified Treadle Hammer Plans</td>
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<td>Donated by Hans Pest of Ohio. Step-by-step plans, 20 pp with 15 b/w photos</td>
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<td>Pattern Cut-Out Device Plans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donated by Hans Pest of Ohio. How to build device and stand. 20 pp. diagrams + photos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Index of Anvil's Ring Issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spiral bound, 128 pp.+ topics to reference back issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Five Years</td>
<td>$25</td>
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<td>Spiral-bound photocopies of The Anvil's Ring early issues, Vol. 1#1 through Vol. 5#1</td>
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<td>1998 Conference Demo Notebook</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demo handout and illustrations. 60 pp.</td>
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<td>Anvil's Ring Back Issues</td>
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<td>Best of the Hammer's Blow Back Issues</td>
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<td>Size: M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL</td>
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<tr>
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<td>One-time leasing for Shipping &amp; Handling</td>
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#### Bulk Orders

For orders to be shipped overseas add 50% of total sales to cover shipping costs:

- Overseas TOTAL Only: $3

#### ABANA STORE

For Membership information shown in this box only to:

**ABANA • PO Box 816 • Farmington, GA 30638**

Phone: 706/769-7147 Fax: 706/769-7147

Payment must be made in US funds. Checks written on a foreign bank account will not be accepted for "US funds" face value. Please call the ABANA office if this is your only method of payment available.

---

**SALES ORDER ADDRESS**
MAIL, PHONE or FAX your order to:

BookMasters, Inc. • P.O. Box 388 • Ashland, OH 44805

Phone: 1-800/247-6553 • Fax: 419/281-6883

**www.abana.org** (click on ‘Abana Store’ to link to BookMasters)

Payment must be made in US funds with a check drawn on a US bank. Checks written on a foreign account will not be accepted.

**MC or VISA#:**

Exp. Date: Day Phone #:

For Orders to be shipped overseas Add 50% of total sales to cover shipping costs:

- Overseas TOTAL Only: $3

For U.S. Orders

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### Rental Total $50.00
The following video rentals are available for ABANA members only. Rentals must be returned by mail no later than the 6th day of possession. Please limit requests to 10 hrs of video time per order.

If you would like to receive a descriptive list of the video titles ask for the free ABANA Library brochure by calling the Central Office (706) 769-7147 or visit www.abana.org and click on 'Education' to find the descriptive list and order form.

### Video Tapes

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By Rob Edwards

This interview was held recently at Arden Forge in West Chester, Pennsylvania, Pete Renzetti’s blacksmith shop.

RING: How old is this shop, Pete?

PETE: As far as I can tell, the forge itself is probably from around 1750. It was built as a blacksmith shop, single forge and anvil, and was a single story with an A-frame roof.

RING: So there’s quite a tradition in this building, all by itself.

Clare, being the granddaughter of the renowned ironworker Samuel Yellin, you are part of a lineage of American blacksmithing. How did you fit into the picture of working in a 1750 forge with Peter Renzetti and Chris Tierney?

CLARE: I started in my grandfather’s business, at his shop in Clare, being the granddaughter of the renowned ironworker Samuel Yellin. It was built as a blacksmith shop, single forge and anvil, and was a single story with an A-frame roof.

RING: So there’s quite a tradition in this building, all by itself.

Clare, being the granddaughter of the renowned ironworker Samuel Yellin, you are part of a lineage of American blacksmithing. How did you fit into the picture of working in a 1750 forge with Peter Renzetti and Chris Tierney?

CLARE: I started in my grandfather’s business, at his shop in Philadelphia, then it became my grandmother’s business, passed to my father, then to my mother. I started in 1987 but began working with Peter at Arden Forge in the fall of 1992. We were closing up the Yellin shop on Arch Street, and Chris was involved in the phasing out of the building, and he came up to Pete’s shop also.

RING: Chris, I understand you have a foundry back in Pennsylvania. I have a couple of years’ worth, stemming back to the early ’70s in San Francisco. RING: What started you in metalworking?

CHRIS: I was always in the arts—art school—following that line of interest. But I wanted to learn more about fundamentals, not so much the creativity in art. There were a number of sculpture professors I had who showed me how to make sculpture—look ‘real world’—but not really telling me how a welder works. I wanted to know the fundamentals of the craft.

RING: Chris, I understand you have a foundry back in Pennsylvania. I have a couple of years’ worth, stemming back to the early ’70s in San Francisco. RING: What started you in metalworking?

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RING: Pete, how is it to have so much more activity in your shop now? First tell us a bit about how you got here.

PETE: I came from the arts and crafts community in Arden, Delaware. They had a forge as part of the arts and crafts movement. When I started blacksmithing the about the age of 16 as a hobby. In 1968 the son of the founder of the Arden community died and there was still a lot of the equipment, tools and patterns in the old forge building. I was doing something interesting to do, and maybe we could work something out. I had also been involved with the Yellin shop in years prior, in some of the workshops they had conducted there.

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RING: How did you get started? That set up for me the opportunity to buy it. So my father and I worked for a number of time. To another and some people steered me to the old James Dilworth forge and the house and log cabin. I asked the price and it was way over my head. I came back the next year and they were offering considerably less, but it wasn’t on the market itself, and forges; they’re really special. A lot of the equipment who was in the real estate business suggested we try to negotiate something. We did; they liked the idea of having a blacksmith come back and start the old forge again. We came up with a figure that was reasonable, a method of payment that was affordable, and they were very flexible with me in allowing me the privilege of coming here to work and open the shop. So I started in September of 1975 restoring the buildings and operating the shop.

RING: I did work for the National Park Service in Washington, D.C., the Smithsonian Institution, and Winterthur Museum, and different places around the country restoring some of the old historic sites. The Douglass Powder Mills at The Hagley Museum was another large restoration project. I reproduced some of their tooling—it has a broad spectrum of work. And I also worked on stringed instruments. It all sort of tied together and I turned my hobby into a business and was very fortunate with the opportunities it afforded me.

RING: Over the years I developed quite a collection of antique hardware. In the late ’60s and early ’70s I was getting tired of doing that type of work. The big boom in restoration was starting to slow down and I didn’t want to become a manufacturer and do wholesale work. So I was looking for something else to do. I thought about selling the business and moving back to Delaware where my birth home is, to have a private studio there and do my own thing. But in 1973 we started ABANA. Twenty-eight guys and I got together in Lampkin, Georgia, and had a weekend of fun there. That’s how ABANA was born.

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RING: So how have things changed since then?

PETE: There was still work on the books that Clare needed to have done. There were 10 or 12 guys at the shop then. I told them that whoever wanted to come out and work with us, there was plenty of room, but Chris is the only guy who stayed with it. So Chris, Clare and I worked together to get things done. The first couple of jobs impressed the architects enough for them to know that we weren’t fooling around with our work. It also challenged me in a variety of other ways. There were new materials, as well as new tools and a miniature hammer that we developed. I love to design tooling and to figure out how to make things. My machining and tool and die-making background comes in handy. From my sculpting background, I’ve had to make dies for manufacturing a company in the ’60s. His shop was right around the corner from where I worked but I never went there to see it. I had other things on my mind and other goals at that time, and it was way before I got involved in the blacksmithing work.

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RING: So how have things changed since then?
To forge complex forms, I then have the wax dies cast in tool steel.

RING: It sounds like, in each case, there were doors that Clare Yellin, Peter Renzetti & Chris Tierney

had two. The log billets go back and you spread the all one piece. It was a central andiron as opposed to in the '20s of an andiron with a large Phoenix on the idea. This andiron was done for the Bok family back Chris had made. I found it to be another possible andiron need a firescreen. It never really came about until I was coupled it with nice andirons. It would be specifically something combining a wood grate inside a fireplace and

a job in the Adirondacks, a new client. It's going to be for many jobs together since then. We recently got a call for opened into another and then another. We've worked on restoration work for Bryn Mawr College, working on that every day is fantastic--even today we're doing some

streamlined in their process. We love the work so much that we don't want to abuse that either, so we want to make that installation as efficient and as accurate as possible. The care you take up front makes a lot of difference in the end. When people see things happen very quickly and efficiently, that is a major selling point to clients and it's also one of the main things that clients talk about to another person who might want work done, saying something like, 'You should have seen these guys install this, it went in so easily—bing, bang, and it was done!'

RING: Clare, could you fill us in on a brief history of the Tolkien business?

CLARE: In a nutshell, my grandfather started the business in 1909, running it until 1940. He died in October, 1940. My father was at that time in his last year at the University of Pennsylvania School of Architecture, which was a five-year program. He graduated from college in May, 1941, and was then drafted into the army three months later. He served from August, 1941 until November, 1945. Because my dad was still in school, my grandmother took over the business, not having any experience in the metalworking shop. She ran the business until my father returned home. Then she turned the business over to me. My father ran it until his death in July, 1985. When he died my mother Marian was active in the business until the latter part of 1992. I didn't get active in the business until 1987 when I moved to Atlanta, after having lived in Atlanta, Georgia, for almost 14 years.

RING: What were you doing during your years in Atlanta?
Clare Yellin, Peter Renzetti & Chris Tierney

**PETE**: Structurally, it stiffened up the whole piece. It didn't change the edge of the piece with the quarter-inch round but it also gives strength to the sheet metal and it was quite attractive when we finished it and highlighted it. It's nothing that I invented—we're borrowing from the old masters all the time. We just cut it up in little pieces and soldered it around in a new way each time, so to speak.

**CLARE**: We're around the Yellin work so much that it's all a real part of our blood. I believe that all the guys truly cared for my mother, and had great respect for her.

**RING**: How much of your work now is restoration as compared to new projects?

**CLARE**: There was very little of Yellin into most everything we do. I beg, borrow and steal from my grandfather's designs or tradition. We're not always using the same material that was there originally. It's very common to see a Yellin piece that has iron or bronze accents.

**PETE**: I'm not sure what the material was then that was used, but it certainly was very similar in appearance. It was not like the reddish sili-con bronze or a red brass, it was more of a golden brass, or golden bronze.

**RING**: It wasn't really a forge-able material back then because I think some of the bronze still had a bit of lead in it. But it was workable enough that you could do repousse with it. For example, at the Bok Tower in Florida there is a beautiful repoussé door made out of bronze. The staff keeps the door highly polished. Edward Bok, a patron of my grandfather's, created a special sanctuary with a carillon tower and a bronze door made out of bronze. The staff keeps the door highly polished.

**CLARE**: There were several projects I can think of where we all learned a lot.

**RING**: In those days was naval bronze available?

**PETE**: Properly and carefully heating iron so that it got a good, thorough heat and bringing it up to where it would be forge-able material back then because I think some of the bronze still had a bit of lead in it. But it was workable enough that you could do repousse with it. For example, at the Bok Tower in Florida there is a beautiful repoussé door made out of bronze. The staff keeps the door highly polished. Edward Bok, a patron of my grandfather’s, created a special sanctuary with a carillon tower and gardens in central Florida. Yellin completed the work in 1929. A lot of the other bronze elements were used in architectural ways in cap rails, for example—it was more of a machining type of material. You didn’t see much forging in the bronze. At the Yellin Exhibit at the Rosenbach Museum and Library (the exhibit closed March 31, 2003), there was a fragment of the door that was made for the Crocker family in California. The client originally wanted copper and I have correspondence of the piece to see how it was put together and what is possible and what is not possible. You might have something that has been pierced through and then either side there’s an object that can’t fit through that hole. So how did they put that together? Was it a forge weld? Was it done with a gas torch and fused? Was it a mechanical joint that’s hidden inside the joint where it pierces? There are all these different things that show up when you clean a piece and you’re able to see the surfaces and the textures, as well as the design and the construction—how it was put together and what fits your mind’s eye and what doesn’t. That’s when we ponder these things, we look at, take a pencil and make some sketches, asking: did they do it this way? Or did they do it that way? We play around with that for awhile until we come up with ways to reproduce the piece that was done. Or maybe we’ll make another piece that is similar to the original one and have it look the same with the same set of design qualities. We now have technology that allows us to use TIG welding and silver soldering, as well as other types of working metal that weren’t available to them back then.

**RING**: In those days, say around 1925, essentially what they had was a forge, gas torches and the hand tools.

**CLARE**: While they were responsible for some of the most incredible forge welds I’ve ever had the pleasure of seeing, it’s amazing how many gas welds are on the old ironwork. Many of them you just can’t forge weld that accurately.

**PETE**: Properly and carefully heating iron so that it got a good, thorough heat and bringing it up to where it would have been forge-able. Bronze weather vane, private residence 2001. (Photo by Rob Edwards). Wrought iron rail removed and restored, Crocker Residence, Pebble Beach, CA 1929. One was a front door which was a grille for a wood door which features a peacock. Another was a door going into the family’s conservatory featuring two herons. One heron has its head up picking some grapes and the other heron, both in repoussé, has its head down picking up a frog. An absolutely stunning door! These doors were really dirty and they needed cleaning, so we restored them. They came back here and boy, did we love having them. When the paint, dirt and grime were all removed, you could really take it all in and see how this was so beautifully put together. It was wonderful.

**PETE**: There is a lot of evidence that is left on the job where you can see what kind of tool was used, whether
PETE: That's true, but you don't have a leg up on the material. That was the very best material to start with. Having the refined wrought iron that he had to work with you would be amazed at how far you can move this material and the way it reacts to splitting, carving, stretching, compressing and welding. Even though you might have the skills and the knowledge of practicing traditional techniques, if you don't have the same materials, you run into the obstacles of modern materials: carbon steels, alloy steels and things that don't react or behave the same way as their materials did.

RING: Where did he get his wrought iron?

CLARE: It was mostly from Sweden.

PETE: Yes, we do figure out how to do them with the modern materials. Fortunately, I have some wrought iron stock that I was able to get. American made. It was one of the last made in the U.S. and it is still pretty good material, but nothing like the high quality of the Swedish iron. But it does have the qualities and characteristics that wrought iron has to, too. Like being hot-worked and patinated. There are subtleties that occur which you see when you work metal—the way the hammer mark is left on the material and the way the material softens when it's heated and scaled and manipulated. Wrought iron is your softest material and carbon steel would be your hardest material. So when you go to work metal, you direct the things and a lot depends on the base and you sell a lot of it and you advertise a lot of it. People often ask me, 'How long is it going to take for me to make a living at this?' I reply that first of all, you have to be happy with what you're doing. Because if you're not happy with what you make then the people you make it for are not going to be very happy either, because they're going to see that you're not happy and it's going to show in your work—it will come out. Some of it you have to eat along the way, but the education is what you get from that process. But at least you get paid for providing a good-quality product and you give every client your best effort. If you start to sell yourself short and give a client something that only looks good but doesn't last real long, then that comes back to bite you. I've always liked saying, 'You never get a second chance to make a first impression.' Money always comes from a good anything—a good service, a good product, a good lesson, and so on—so you have to be happy with what you do.

RING: What is next on the agenda for the three of you?

CHRIS: We still have fun with just regular mild steel, too. We can go hotter with mild steel.

PETE: Yes, we can do a lot with mild steel, but there is a difference when you get into the subterfuge areas like working leaves and ornaments that are more delicate on a piece. We see a lot of the gaiety that Yellin carved and the way he treated pieces of metal where he did a lot of peeling, scrolling and splitting—just amazing stuff they did. Because of wrought iron's grain structure and its lack of toughness, it's a very pliable metal. Wrought iron is your softest material and carbon steel would be your hardest material. So when you go to work metal, you direct the things...
or the architect or the client in the preliminary areas of negotiating a job. We don’t push ourselves on the client, we say let’s do something small, so you can see if you like what we do. Then things blossom from there. The last thing you want to do is pressure a client; if they want to, they’ll spend it, because they have it. But they also want to know that they’re going to get the value out of what they are spending. That takes an education because we’re not a manufacturer. We don’t have a catalog where we sell numerous items off the shelf. We tailor it to the client and that’s not just fitting their space but their likes and dislikes, their attitudes, as well as the sense of utility of the piece of work. It teaches us a lot, as well.

CHRIS: Sometimes we’ll follow a design thread throughout the whole job. For example, the client may have a distinctive pattern in a stained glass window. We’ll think of how we can extend that pattern into another area of the room, such as in a railing, for example.

CLARE: There are some jobs that are hard to see go out the door because we enjoyed working on them so much. We hate to part with them. We’re a lucky group, but we all work hard at it, too.

CHRIS: We all work very closely together.

CLARE: And we all have an opinion; we all put in our two cents when it comes to how we want the piece to look. Sometimes my opinion rules, sometimes Chris’s does, and sometimes Pete’s. Sometimes we all agree. But it’s the end result that matters.

RING: It’s been so interesting to hear about the continuation and the progress of the work of the Yellin shop from you three; your projects, both past, present and future are fascinating to learn about. Thanks to all three of you for taking the time out from your very full schedules to talk with me today.

CLARE: It was our pleasure.

Profile

Dan Nauman,
Kewaskum, Wisconsin

The wine rack was a donation for an auction to raise funds for Habitat for Humanity. Dimensions are 24” x 34” x 8”. All leaves were made cold, utilizing French repousse-style workmanship. The leaves were gas-welded onto the vine, utilizing the oxyacetylene torch. The snub-end scrolls were formed without the use of peripheral tooling. The edges of the bottom 1/4” plate were ball peened at an orange heat to give a more organic feel to the overall piece. The lattice is 3/16” x 3/4” mild steel with hammer-beveled edges. The entire rack is hand-forged mild steel. The photograph was taken in the wine cellar of the Cedar Creek Winery, which is directly next door to my shop in the historic Cedar Creek Settlement, Cedarburg, WI.

The complex is an 1864 vintage three-story building which originally served as a woolen mill. This mill produced clothing and blankets for soldiers in the Civil War. The high bid for the rack was by the owner of the winery, and it is now displayed in the winery’s tasting room.

The Suffolk Swordfish-style latch is a replica of a sketch in Albert H. Sonn’s “Early American Wrought Iron,” plate #46, figure 2, on page 124. It is not quite as large as the original, which was 39 1/2” overall. This replica is 29” overall. The cusps were cross-peened from the parent bar, and then the pattern was cut out with various curved and straight chisels. I then refined the pattern with a file. The handle was forged into a swedge to produce a half-round shape. The tips of the “swords” were bent at 90 degrees and nailed into the entrance door of my Cedar Creek Settlement shop. Hand-forged mild steel.

Editor’s Note: Thanks very much, Dan, for your article. These are the kinds of captions that supply our readers with the knowledge to execute their own work, with yours as an inspiration.

Exterior wrought steel lantern, private residence, 2004
Mike Kimpton, Garrettsville, Ohio
Textured frame mirror. 18" diameter. Forged and fabricated mild steel. Photo by Jerry Anthony.

Kirsten Reese, Belgrade, Montana
Square vessel. 24" x 12". Forged steel. Round vessel. 18" x 10". Forged steel.

Jerry Spiker, Prairie Wolf Forge, Sidney, Nebraska
These pictures give a good idea of how the hummingbirds are used for the curtain rod. Closeup of hummingbird and morning glory. The hummingbird’s body is forged from 1" plate. The body is 4.5” from head to tail. The wing span is 6”, and the wings are made from 14-gauge steel. The finish was achieved using gilder’s paste.

Dale Morse, Gordonsville, Virginia
Door knocker. 12" h x 12 1/2" w. Forged and fabricated steel, river stone. Photo by Sandra Bilous.

Door knocker, detail.

Daniel Watson, Driftwood, Texas
Rapier. Weight: 3 lbs. Overall length: 43”. Blade length: 36” to ricasso. Blade thickness: 1/8” with distal taper. Handle: Bone (“Texas ivory”). Guard: Hand-forged blued mild steel. Pommel: Blued mild steel. Steel: Techno-Wootz™ Damascus. Finish: Damascus. The pattern is hammered into the blade during the forging process (for this sword, a spider web design). Blade was polished, then acid-washed to bring out the Damascus pattern. A belt sander was used to grind the blade into its final shape. Note: Regarding the blade close-ups in the rapier photo. It is the same side of the blade shown on both sides; it’s just “mirrored” on the photo for symmetry.
This sculpture is a central piece of a wine cellar interior and a stair railing at the same time. The young branches grow up, towards the light, twisting with each other and then straightening out again so that they can join once more and produce a fruit—a cluster of grapes, which tempts one to reach out and feel its warmth. This work was a joy to do. I enjoyed making the elements: leaves with ladybug, poppy flowers, wild flowers, branches and grape clusters all by hand. There were more than 160 individual grapes assembled, all of different sizes, which were turned into one intricate ensemble.

Each leaf has its own identity, forged from pieces of different-sized metals, each unique as nature itself. The wood texture of the grape vine looks life-like. The trunk was sculpted as if it were made of wax. The base was made of 6" diameter pipe with 3/16" wall thickness. It was heated more than 15 times in propane to forge the bark wrinkles and wood texture, and to hold the branches sprouting from it.

The process brought enormous satisfaction; I didn’t want to finish this work. After completing some parts I left them for a period of 5 to 10 days so that I could enjoy them longer. Multiple warming of parts created unique designs. Using a hand hammer and a power hammer, a fabricator can create very unusual effects, and can wonder endlessly at the potential of simple iron.

Throughout the job, some interesting techniques were used. For instance, 95 percent of the project was made with a power hammer (160 kilos of ram weight) and a flat, basic square pin. It would be hard for someone to imagine how it was made, and to get those results with this monster. Using this hammer in a nontraditional way, not just for mechanical forging, allows the machine to become a magnificent art instrument that can produce amazing results.

I did not use a computer program to make sketches for this job. Pencil and paper will still be around for a long time because the hand-sketched drawing contains part of the artist’s soul, just like the hand-forged work it initiates.Forging always conceals its mystery that the blacksmith is a magician, healer and sage. Because the blacksmith uses iron, water, air and fire—the four original earth elements—all universes are fitted on one small forge.
ROBERT GARDNER AND ERIC VELLECCA  
LOXAHATCHEE, FLORIDA

POOL GATE

Our clients of this pool gate wanted something fanciful to match the atmosphere of their pool/garden area. The rabbit riding the tortoise is in reference to their company’s logo. The flowers and creatures were all hand forged and fabricated in bronze. The frame and most of its inner elements were all riveted together. The scroll work in the bottom section is constructed of forge-welded elements.

In order to make the pool gate self-closing, we chose to offset the hinges, making it open upward as it moves outward. We find this to be more functional as well as aesthetically pleasing.
George Greenamyer designs, fabricates and installs large public art sculpture. He is awarded commissions through national public art competitions and has sculptures in various areas of the country, the majority in the Northeast.

Blacksmithing has been a major component of George’s sculpture since the early 1980s. He also teaches blacksmithing along with welding, foundry and drafting at Massachusetts College of Art, where he has been teaching since 1968. He would be the first to admit that he is not a traditional smith. However, the length and breadth of his work is worthy of notice by others interested in blacksmithing, if only to show another use. He considers bronze to be “European” and enjoys the “American Industry” look of blacksmithed steel that shows off the direct process through the hit marks. He also likes the fire, the heat and the smell.

George admires cast piggy banks and folk sculpture, the influence of which can be seen in his work. However, he was trained in art with a BFA at the Philadelphia College of Art (now University of the Arts) and earned his MFA degree from the University of Kansas at Lawrence and cannot be considered a “folk artist.”

George has been working with a mechanical engineer since 1993 to realize several kinetic sculptures: wind indicator/sculptures, whirligigs and sculpture that include figures that are timed to move with a clock.

Photos by Beverly Burbank

Penn Station, NY

The centerpiece of the North Room is a 9 foot long N.J. Transit electric locomotive with a 3 foot tall engineer. Ten figures, including beach goers, a businessman, a fisherman and shoppers, move from the back of the locomotive into classic New Jersey shore beach house. John Holland on his submarine moves around the perimeter of the room by means of a conveyor system of the type used in auto manufacturing plants. Other moving, hanging sculptures in this room, but not shown, are King George III and his troops fleeing Trenton and George Washington and his men in a boat with Revolutionary flag flying.

Photos by Beverly Burbank

Penn Station, NY

The South Room features a historic iron forge in the Pinelands of New Jersey, with a moving water wheel and three workers lowering their iron back and forth under a moving hammer. Molly Pitcher and The Seal of Newark, with Liberty and Justice, are next on the central truss. An early Edison phonograph with moving parts and a movie maker with the first movie camera complement the figure of Edison on the truss on the side holding a glowing replica of one of his early light bulbs. A flying New Jersey Devil and Mr. Peanut and Miss America and her attendants in an Atlantic City life boat move around the perimeter of this room.

Photos by Beverly Burbank

Penn Station, NY

The overall dimensions of sculpture in the South Room are 12’h x 30’l x 14’w. Figures are 2 to 3 feet tall, forged, fabricated, painted. Commissioned by New Jersey Transit with the assistance of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, 2002.

New Jersey on Parade, North Room, overall dimensions of sculpture in this room: 12’h x 28’l x 14’w.

The South Room celebrates Batsto, a historic iron forge in the Pinelands of New Jersey, with a moving water wheel and three workers lowering their iron back and forth under a moving hammer. Molly Pitcher and The Seal of Newark, with Liberty and Justice, are next on the central truss. An early Edison phonograph with moving parts and a movie maker with the first movie camera complement the figure of Edison on the truss on the side holding a glowing replica of one of his early light bulbs. A flying New Jersey Devil and Mr. Peanut and Miss America and her attendants in an Atlantic City life boat move around the perimeter of this room.