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Quarterly Publication of the
Artist-Blacksmith's Association
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ANVILS
RING

Volume 31 | Number 4 | Summer 2003



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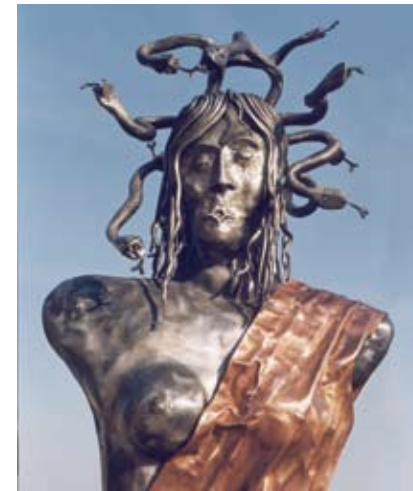
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On the Cover

Kai Schulte, Sugar Grove, Illinois

"Medusa." 6 feet tall, forged from steel. The dress is copper.



Garden gate in Stonewall, TX.

Gallery, page 45



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In case you have not heard the 2004 ABANA Conference will be at Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond, Kentucky, just south of Lexington on I-75. The dates are July 7-11, 2004. There will of course be demonstrators, vendors, classroom activities, the family program, tailgating (that's a sales activity), galleries, the big auction (with Tim Ryan presiding), plus the thrilling general membership meeting! There will be time to catch up with old friends and meet new ones. Dave Koenig, Conference Chair and ABANA Board member from Houston, Texas, has, for many months, put a tremendous amount of time into organizing all the details. We can look forward to a great educational time. I hope to see you there.

The ABANA Board has recently passed two motions that will create and fund the Endowment Trust for Education. It will be initially funded with \$150,000.00 from ABANA funds. This will help insure the future of blacksmithing by funding our scholarship program and limited grants. These will come from the interest, while the principal continues to increase in safety. This is really an important milestone for ABANA. We are growing up, and setting this money aside will help perpetuate our craft indefinitely for years to come. Bravo to Treasurer Will Hightower for the hundreds of hours spent keeping track of and managing our funds carefully to put us in a position where this is not just a dream but a reality.

Jerry Kagele, ABANA Secretary, has been overseeing the ABANA Central Office that LeeAnn Mitchell runs so efficiently. I thought his explanation of our elections in the last issue of *The Anvil's Ring* was excellent. His reason, legal knowledge, and professional business skills have brought a lot to the board meetings, not to mention his sense of humor!

ABANA has never been in such good shape financially, educationally, and with regard to our publications. Dorothy Stiegler has been running publications, lobbying for the color pages in *The Anvil's Ring* and the additional pages now provided in the *Hammer's Blow*. Rob Edwards and Brian Gilbert work extremely hard to meet the deadlines and produce high-quality material. Dan Nauman has been working passionately on the teaching program in the Education Division, now chaired by Mae-gan Crowley, and has a new series of basic articles which are now being published quarterly in *Hammer's Blow*. These are designed to help aspiring (shouldn't that be perspiring?) smiths learn the basics. If you have something to share, please send it in. For many years I have heard people ask, "How DO you get published in *The Anvil's Ring* or *Hammer's Blow*?" The reply is still the same. Send it in! I really enjoy reading the articles, though I must admit that I always look at all the pictures first! So whether you have an article or photos for *New Works*, feel free to submit them. Look on the ABANA web site or in the front of either publication to find contact information for submission—they'll be glad to hear from you.

Remember, it is our 30th anniversary year. Amazing! Spread the word; better yet, sign up a new member! We are a very diverse group of individuals and it is really wonderful to share tips and information with others regarding, "How did you do that?"

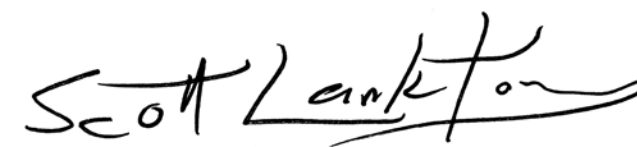
Bob Fredell has worked hard to strengthen relations with all the ABANA Affiliates, which are now equals in their own right. Please remember that all your board members are volunteers and send us your ideas for improving your association.

I want to mention that The National Ornamental Metal Museum in Memphis, Tennessee, is in the process of building a new library. Many

individuals and organizations have donated, including ABANA. Bill Gichner has donated HIS entire library. Wow! A lot has been collected over the years and a proper place to display it where smiths and others can go to conduct research will be great. If you have some money to donate to a very worthy smithing cause, this is it. Or send them work for their auction at "Repair Days" in October. I first saw that place in 1983, and it has really undergone an impressive transformation under Jim Wallace's hand, with the aid of his excellent staff.

This just in—Leonard Masters has been awarded the prestigious Alex Bealer Award! Leonard has organized and led many wonderful blacksmith tours in Europe over the years. More on this can be found at the ABANA web site and in this issue of *The Anvil's Ring*. Congratulations, Leonard!

Last, and far from least, we lost a giant recently. Carl Jennings of California passed away in May. Those who knew him will mourn his passing by celebrating the joy and beauty of life as he said he wanted us to. He was so kind and incredibly gifted and the world is a poorer place without him. Get out to that fire now and make him proud! Celebrate life and don't postpone joy. ✨



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anvil ad
not the one from last issue

get from Gene

DEAR EDITOR,

I thought this picture would be of general interest. On a recent trip to the Arabian Peninsula I saw these two smiths. The absence of stumps in the desert means you put the anvil on the ground. But no one wants a backache, so they dug some holes and shored up the sides with old oil drums. Very ergonomic.

Courtesy Dan MacLeod, Milford, Pennsylvania

DEAR EDITOR,

I got the idea to make this gas tank for a motorcycle basically to see if I could do it. The tank is 16" long, 8" tall, 10" wide. The helmet is life-size. Material for both: 32oz. copper, 19 gauge. I was working on some copper light fixtures and water fountains for a client who had a lot of repoussé and some rather wild designs, when I saw a TV show on the Discovery Channel. Jesse James was fabricating a gas tank out of aluminum using a sand bag and a hammer and, as they say, "a light went on." I



thought to myself, "I can do that!" That was the beginning of the end of my sleeping in. I would awaken at 2:00 am and try to get back to sleep, but my brain was going 100 mph designing a "copper clipper." By 4:00 am, I was out the door and at my shop, swinging away. I do a considerable amount of ornamental iron repair work and miscellaneous fabrication, so I had to pace myself. From 4 am to 8 am I would work on the tank, then from 8 am to 5 pm I would take

care of the normal workload so that I wouldn't end up a "starving artist." I figure all together I spent about 40 hours on the tank. I guess what drove me was that I've never seen or heard of a copper tank, let alone hammered details—like having tattoos for your Harley. Originally it was going to be all copper, but I figured "wrapping" a steel tank would be

safer. Copper work hardens and I thought the vibrations of the bike might make the metal brittle and leak over time.

I made a paper template of the tank and transferred it to my copper sheet metal. From there I

shaped the metal and welded the seams. I hammered, welded and grinded over and over until I had a decent "blank." Now it was time for the fun part. I had to invent a new technique (at least to me it was new) for hammering the tank designs and achieving a decent depth in the anvil and flames (3/8"). The rest of the designs were more moderate (2 1/8"). I would like to keep the technique I used my secret, at least for now, seeing how 90 percent of your readers could use the technique and make stuff that looks far better than mine.

After the gas tank was made I thought, "Well, now what?" Fenders, frame, grips, footers, helmet... I went and bought a new helmet for \$50 and tore it apart. From there it was the same routine as with the tank, with some slight changes. (See left)

I'm still deciding on whether to build a bike or buy some more tools. I guess it's an age-old curse: fun vs. tools. In the meantime, I'm working on some wild footpegs and grips. You can check them out at www.bigironart.com.

Joe Magliato, Orange, California
DEAR EDITOR,

I was wondering if the ABANA name has any roots with the passage in the Bible 2 Kings 5:12. This is where the leper Naaman

is sent to Israel to be cured of leprosy. He goes to Elisha's house and is instructed to wash in the Jordan River. His reply is, "Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than any waters of Israel?"

I found it interesting to have a river in Damascus named Abana. Sincerely,
David P. Williams, Columbia, Missouri

DEAR EDITOR,

The separation of the arts and manufacturing is strangling a lot of creative people.

In the last year I have had the opportunity to visit many blacksmith shops. One striking thing I see on a regular basis is the lack of networking within the trade and with other trades, such as glass, wood, textile, ceramic and electric. Each of these trades, like ours, has artisan experts. If you are going to build quality items that use more than your own medium, go to the trades and find what they do best. To compromise a fine piece of your art by using an accessory from a hardware chain store tells your customer that you don't know what is currently at the cutting edge in quality. If our industry is going to survive we should not compete with the products being fabricated in sweatshops in some third-world country. We should set the standard of acceptability in quality design workmanship. There have been a lot of shops that are like the plastic pink Flamingo. They were kinda fun for a while, but they really don't do anything. We must stay progressive; this also makes being alive much more fun.

The older I become (56), the more I realize the value of life. And the reward of a job well done seems to mean more. I realize now that if I had invested in tools that would have taken the abuse off my body when I was younger, I would have been able to look forward to working much more comfortably

for many more years. Once a commitment to being a blacksmith has been made, the investment in equipment is more than an asset: it allows you to work in a safer manner with less strain on your body. Yes, you can pound it out by hand and sometimes that's the only way to do it. But a power hammer should be considered. You can drill a half-inch hole in steel with a hand-held drill. But a magnetic drill or a drill press used correctly could have saved that bad bruise or that broken arm. Hydraulic presses, punches, mig welders, tig welders and forming machines will save your body as it develops your skills.

I have recently discovered that there are many people in the trades who are willing to work with us to produce a better product. Stained glass or slump glass can often transform a nice piece of work into something that is drop-dead gorgeous. A little or a lot of color can set off an item into a more saleable unit. If you talk to glass people, you will find one you can work with. The surprising thing is that they are just as happy to find you. Now both trades will progress. A fine piece of wood makes the difference if it's unique and finished well. A good cabinetmaker or wood carver can make your unique item a real treasure to be found by a customer.

The bottom line is: Quality makes the statement. "Unique" creates the interest.

Keep smiling,
Bob Graham, Tracy, California
DEAR EDITOR,

My husband is an artist-blacksmith and I met him at a blacksmith meet. I found the art of blacksmithing very sensuous, and was inspired to write a poem about the experience. I love your publication; I would like to submit my poem to you.

For the Love of a Blacksmith

The cool autumn air
caressing cheeks
crisp - fresh
Wood burning
winding bellows continue the slow burn
whee - whee - whee
spirits whispering to one another
smoke rising from the pyre in winding, wistful streams
- incense to the universe
Metal
red - hot - untouchable
molding to the vision of its creation
burning from its soul
- glowing from within

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Mail cont. from 6

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the touch of the human with the
divine
shape evolving,
- the coming of what is to be
a final statement
Metal
cold - black - hard
IS
a monument of love.
Silence
shape taken - a gift.
*Armene Margosian, Montague,
Massachusetts*
e-mail: vze3n3n9@verizon.net
DEAR EDITOR,

A colleague at work showed me
a copy of your publication, Vol.31,
Number 1, Fall 2002. I was thrilled
to see the fabulous full color photo
(New Works pg.47) of the collabora-
tive piece that I created with
Harry Foster, for my parent's 50th
wedding anniversary last year. The

memory box was originally cre-
ated in a raku pottery workshop,
and Harry's amazing talent at the
forge helped me realize my initial
vision for the piece. The ironwork
and copper leaves enhance the
metallic raku glazes, and the open
iron framework adds the necessary
breathing space to the bulk and
weightiness of the ceramic box. I
have always loved the juxtaposi-
tion of iron and ceramics, and I
look forward to more successful
collaborations.

*Danielle Dupont,
Graphic Designer
Canadian Museum of Civiliza-
tion*



ABANA BUSINESS

CANDIDATES' STATEMENTS

The Candidates' Statements for all those
ABANA members who are running for a posi-
tion on the Board of ABANA are enclosed with
this issue. Please take time to read them and,
most of all, to mark and return your vote by
the deadline of **September 15, 2003.**

As an additional incentive to vote, your
ballot is also a raffle ticket! See details on
Candidates' Statements supplement to this
issue.

2003 ELECTION TIMETABLE

May 1, 2003: Notice of election published
in the Spring issue of *The Anvil's Ring*.

June 15, 2003: Nominations deadline date,
submitted to the ABANA Central Office, P.O.
Box 816, Farmington, GA 30638.

August 1, 2003: Ballot mailing in the Sum-
mer issue of *The Anvil's Ring*.

September 15, 2003: Postmark deadline
for completed ballots.

October 1, 2003: Notification to elected
Board members.

CONFERENCE

The next ABANA conference will be held
July 7 - 11, 2004, at East Kentucky University
in Richmond, Kentucky.

CONTRACTS

Central Office contract will be reviewed
yearly and extends until 2002.

The Anvil's Ring contract extends until the
year 2004.

Hammer's Blow contract extends until
2003.

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 706/310-1030.

THE ABANA SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

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2/3 page

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linda

THIRD ANNUAL TAILGATE TOOLS SALE AND IRON ART SHOW

When: Sunday, September 7, 2003, 10 am to 5 pm, rain or shine
Where: Red Mill Museum Village, 56 Main Street, Clinton, New Jersey

Red Mill Forge is pleased to announce it will again host its third annual tailgate tool sale as well as the New Jersey Blacksmithing Association's picnic and Iron Art Show.

All are invited to tailgate their smithing tools and shop till you drop. There will be hardies to power hammers for sale. You may demonstrate, display your work, and sell your wares at this public event. The event is free to tailgaters; however, a donation to the shop would be appreciated.

The event is preceded by Saturday's festivities at Peters Valley Craft Center, Layton, New Jersey, so this makes for a fantastic, full weekend for those from both far and near. This event has grown every year, and has always been well received by the blacksmithing public.

For more information call Adam R. Howard, 908/735-4573 to reserve a tailgater's spot, or if you wish to demonstrate.

MASTER METALSMITH PETER ROSS AT METAL MUSEUM IN MEMPHIS

When: September 28 - November 16, 2003
Where: Metal Museum, 374 Metal Museum Drive, Memphis, Tennessee

Contact: Jim Wallace 901/774-6380 or Linda Raiteri, e-mail: library@metalmuseum.org

Each year, in conjunction with Repair Days Weekend, the Metal Museum presents a one-person exhibition of work by an outstanding American metalsmith. Peter Ross has been Master Metalsmith at the shop at Colonial Williamsburg's Anderson Forge for the past 21 years.

Recently Ross has been exploring the differences between the modern workman's aesthetic and that of the pre-industrial worker's. The 18th century took the natural world and the infinite variety of nature as a model, whereas the 21st-century worker sees the uniformity and measures precision of the industrialized world.

The pieces in this exhibit range from inexpensive everyday objects to luxuries found only in the most sophisticated households. They reflect our very human response to everyday challenges and exalt our creative capacity as problem solvers in the design, the material, and the mastery of the craft of blacksmithing. ✨

Bealer Award



From left to right, Peter Happny presents the Bealer Award to Leonard Masters of Concord, New Hampshire.

Leonard and his wife Lilo have been responsible for organizing and running eight different trips to Europe over the last twenty years.

Leonard Masters of Concord, New Hampshire, is this year's recipient of The Bealer Award. Leonard was presented the award by Peter Happny at the Berkshire Blacksmith Annual meet, "The Age of Iron". The event was held at the Hancock Shaker Village in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, on May 31, 2003. This year the Berkshire group hosted several ABANA Affiliates at the event. They were the Connecticut Blacksmiths Guild, the New England Blacksmiths and the Northeast Blacksmiths Association. It was a fitting occasion to bestow The Bealer Award on Leonard Masters.

Leonard and his wife Lilo have been responsible for organizing and running eight different trips to Europe over the last twenty years. The opportunities and educational experiences afforded by these travels have expanded the horizons of many people as to what is going on in the field of metal in other parts of the world.

Leonard has been active with the Northeast Blacksmith Association and served as president in the 1980's. Since 1975 Leonard has been an active ABANA member, serving on the ABANA Board (1988-90). On behalf of all of the students of iron, we thank Leonard and Lilo for the experiences they have shown us and the opportunity to learn more about blacksmithing. ✨



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Blacksmith's
gazette

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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ABANA Business cont. from 10

bers. The purpose of the ABANA Scholarship Fund is to provide financial assistance to ABANA members at all skill levels to assist them the development of their blacksmithing skills and abilities.

1. Criteria for Selection

Applicants must show financial need, proven talent and demonstrated ability in blacksmithing. In reviewing applications, the ABANA Scholarship Committee will consider but not be limited to the following factors:

- Documented evidence that the applicant possesses a strong desire for continued and serious involvement in blacksmithing. If a novice blacksmith, the candidate must demonstrate a commitment and legitimate interest in blacksmithing.
- Quality of or potential for work as demonstrated by visual materials submitted in support of the application.
- Record of professional activity and achievement [if applicable].
- Benefit of the award to ABANA's members, affiliates and the blacksmithing community.
- Demonstrated involvement with and commitment to ABANA by the applicant's membership of at least 6 months before the submission date of the application.

Generally scholarships funds are not awarded to attend conferences. Recipients of previous scholarship awards are not eligible to submit another application for two years after the completion of the previous course of study and fulfillment of the requirements listed in Section #3.

2. Types & Amounts of Scholarships

The ABANA Scholarship categories are

- Scholarship A: Affiliate

Scholarship matching funds, \$200.00. Members using an ABANA Affiliate's scholarship funds can match those funds up to \$200.00

- Scholarship B: Funds for individual study, maximum of \$400.00.
- Scholarship C: Funds for extended study of three weeks or longer. Level of support to be determined by the circumstances of the proposed course of study, to a maximum of \$1,500.00

Note: Any monies received by an individual may be subject to taxes as added income as determined by applicable Federal and State law.

3. Responsibilities of Recipients

As a condition of receiving an ABANA scholarship, all scholarship recipients are required to share results of their learning with ABANA members and/or ABANA Affiliates. The recipient will fulfill this responsibility through at least one of the following forms of presentation: a) a public demonstration or workshop, b) the submission of an article to either an Affiliate newsletter or an ABANA publication, c) a public exhibit of works completed during or after the course, d) a lecture demonstrating the results of the course of study, e) an article published in a non-ABANA publication. This requirement must be fulfilled within one year after the course of study.

Additionally, the recipient must submit a short statement to the Scholarship Chair describing their study experience to the Scholarship Chair to be included in some form in *The Anvil's Ring*. This requirement is waived if an article is submitted to *The Anvil's Ring*.

4. Deadlines

To be considered for a scholarship, applications must be post-

marked by the following dates and sent to the ABANA Central Office:

- 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 applicant and approved by the Scholarship Committee and the President of ABANA. Alternatively, applications may be submitted after the completion of the course. Electronic applications are not accepted at this time.

Category A and B scholarship winners will be notified of awards within one month of the above application deadlines.

Review of Category C applications will be extensive and take up to two months.

Notification of awards will be made either by voice, e-mail or surface mail. Funds will be sent to the recipient within two weeks after the notification.

5. Guidelines & Instructions

Be sure to read and understand the rules for application. Partial or improperly completed applications will be rejected without review. Revised applications will be considered no sooner than the next application deadline.

Along with the Scholarship Application Form, applicants must include the following:

- Current résumé (updated within one month of application), including summary of relevant prior work or study.
- Three (3) letters of reference, two of which must be from ABANA members. Letters must be dated no more than three months in advance of the application date.
- Three (3) slides, photos or concept drawings of current work (within 6 months of appli-

cation) in protective plastic sleeves or other suitable holders. A novice blacksmith may fulfill this requirement with an essay detailing their interest in blacksmithing and future plans for accomplishment in the craft.

- Support materials describing the program for which the grant will be used: School brochure or catalog, curriculum outline, instructor résumé, etc.
- List of all current blacksmith group affiliations.

In addition to the above criteria, Category C applicants must submit detailed documentation, including a plan of study, anticipated results, application of these skills in furthering their career, and letters or reference from all master smiths with whom the applicant wishes to study.

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

The ABANA Scholarship Committee

Artist-Blacksmith's Association of North America, Inc.
PO Box 816
Farmington, GA 30638-0816
USA
706-310-1030 tel
706-769-7147 fax
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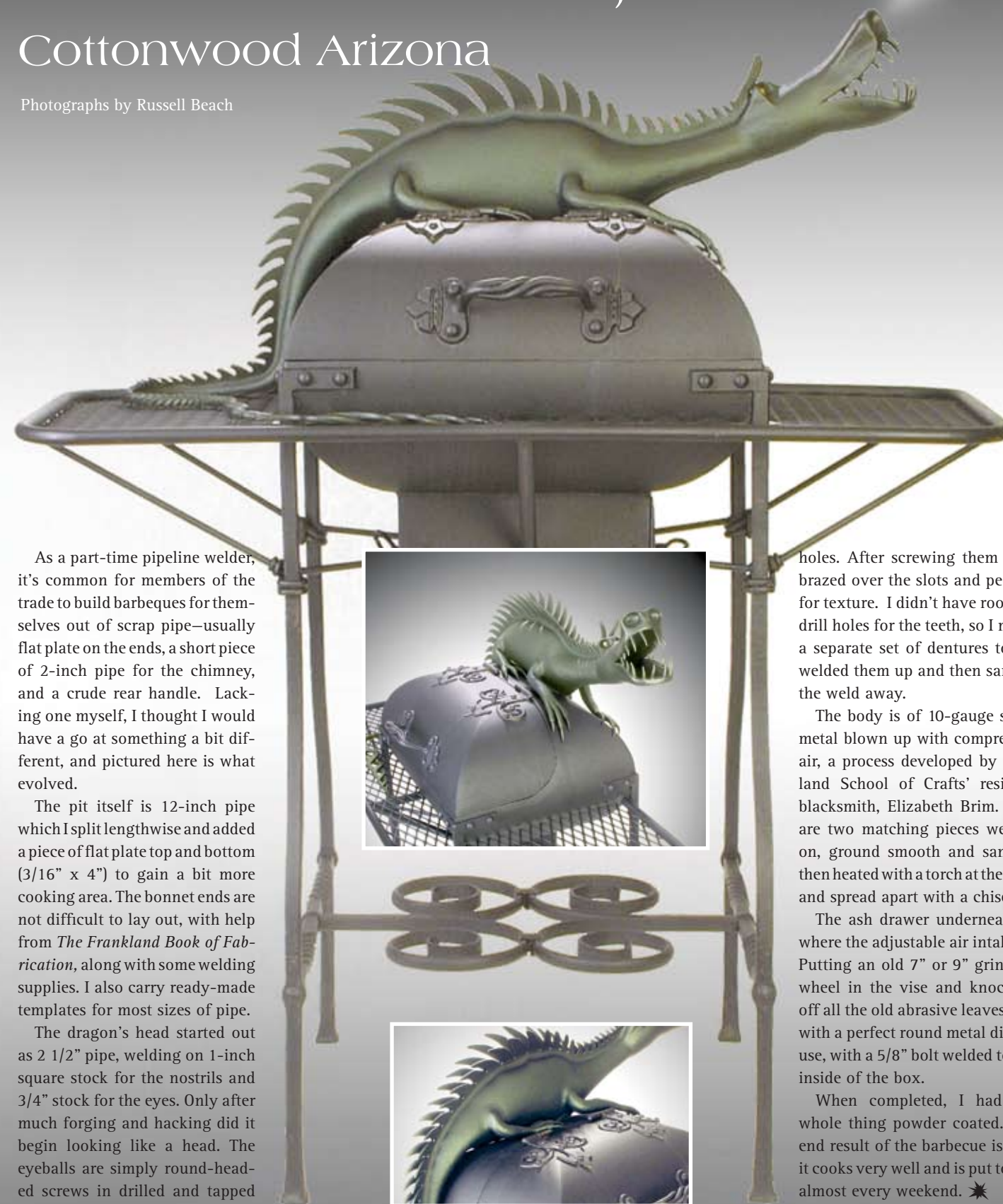
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SHOWCASE

Mark Cazaux, Cottonwood Arizona

Photographs by Russell Beach



As a part-time pipeline welder, it's common for members of the trade to build barbecues for themselves out of scrap pipe—usually flat plate on the ends, a short piece of 2-inch pipe for the chimney, and a crude rear handle. Lacking one myself, I thought I would have a go at something a bit different, and pictured here is what evolved.

The pit itself is 12-inch pipe which I split lengthwise and added a piece of flat plate top and bottom (3/16" x 4") to gain a bit more cooking area. The bonnet ends are not difficult to lay out, with help from *The Frankland Book of Fabrication*, along with some welding supplies. I also carry ready-made templates for most sizes of pipe.

The dragon's head started out as 2 1/2" pipe, welding on 1-inch square stock for the nostrils and 3/4" stock for the eyes. Only after much forging and hacking did it begin looking like a head. The eyeballs are simply round-headed screws in drilled and tapped

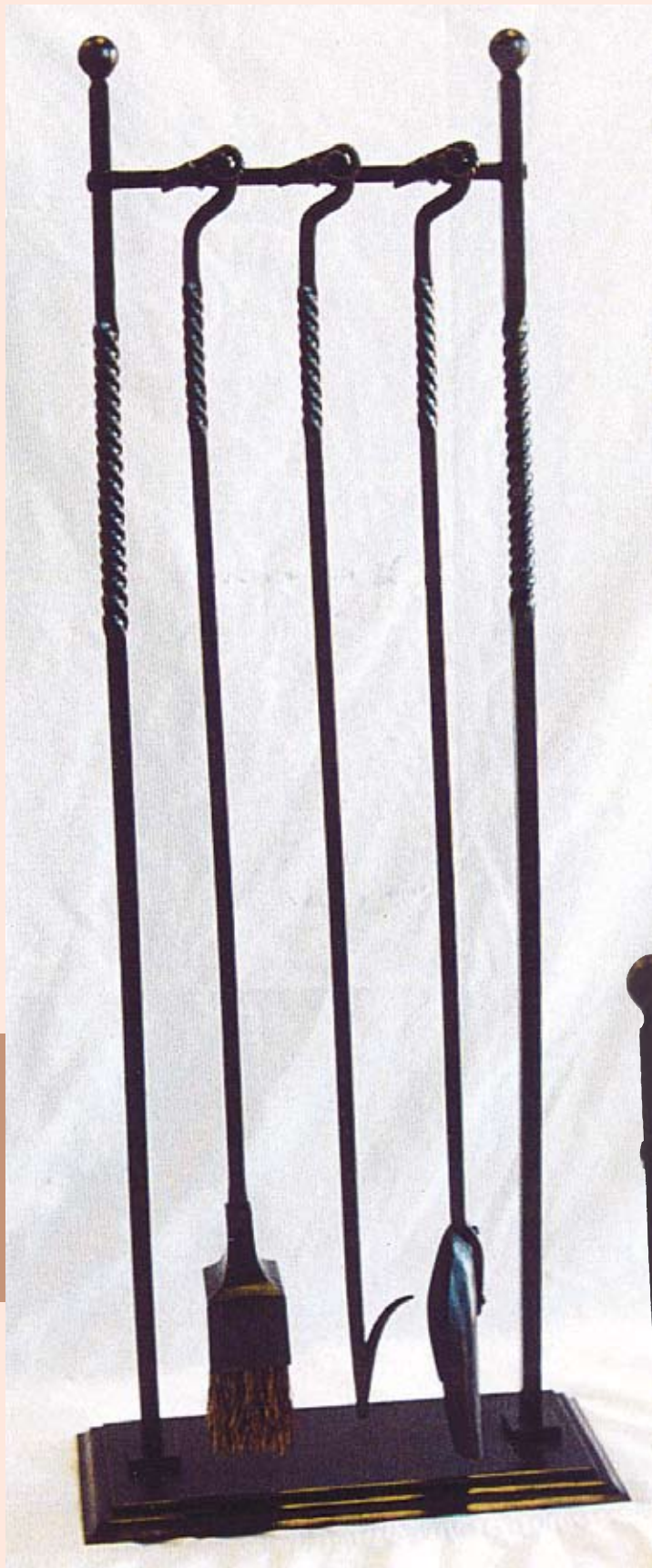


holes. After screwing them in, I brazed over the slots and peened for texture. I didn't have room to drill holes for the teeth, so I made a separate set of dentures to fit, welded them up and then sanded the weld away.

The body is of 10-gauge sheet metal blown up with compressed air, a process developed by Penland School of Crafts' resident blacksmith, Elizabeth Brim. Fins are two matching pieces welded on, ground smooth and sanded, then heated with a torch at the base and spread apart with a chisel.

The ash drawer underneath is where the adjustable air intake is. Putting an old 7" or 9" grinding wheel in the vise and knocking off all the old abrasive leaves you with a perfect round metal disc to use, with a 5/8" bolt welded to the inside of the box.

When completed, I had the whole thing powder coated. The end result of the barbecue is that it cooks very well and is put to use almost every weekend. ✨



Edward Eichholz, Wilmington, Delaware
 Back of chair is 1/2" solid square bar, twisted. The small rings are 1/4" square twisted. The hearts are 5/16" round stock. Arms are railing top cap. Arm supports and legs are 1/2" solid square, legs were split in quarters and splayed to fit the feet. Seat is white oak hand-worked by this blacksmith.

Says Eichholz, "The story behind this is that two hearts joined together with two rings (in the back) to form the knot of matrimony (the cross-brace of the legs). It is called the 'Wedding Chair,' made for my son and his wife's first Christmas."



Brent Bailey, Orland, California
 Ram's head fireplace tools (brooms, poker, shovel), mild steel. Tools are 32". The stand is 37" h x 20" w.



April Franklin, Farmington, Georgia
 "TANTO."
 11" x 2 1/4" x 1 1/2"
 15N20, 1084, nickel, ebony, steel

BUGS knife. 5 3/4" x 3/4" x 3/8".
 15N20, 1084, ash, copper, silver



Detail

Arabesque blade. 9 1/2" x 2 1/2" x 7/8". 15N20, 1084, blood wood, copper, silver



Phil Kaufman
 "Time Segment - The Path."
 24"x16"x9". Sculpted and fabricated mild steel, polychromed.



Tony Higdon, Lexington, Kentucky
 Fireplace screen. 44"h x 46"w. Forged steel, glass.



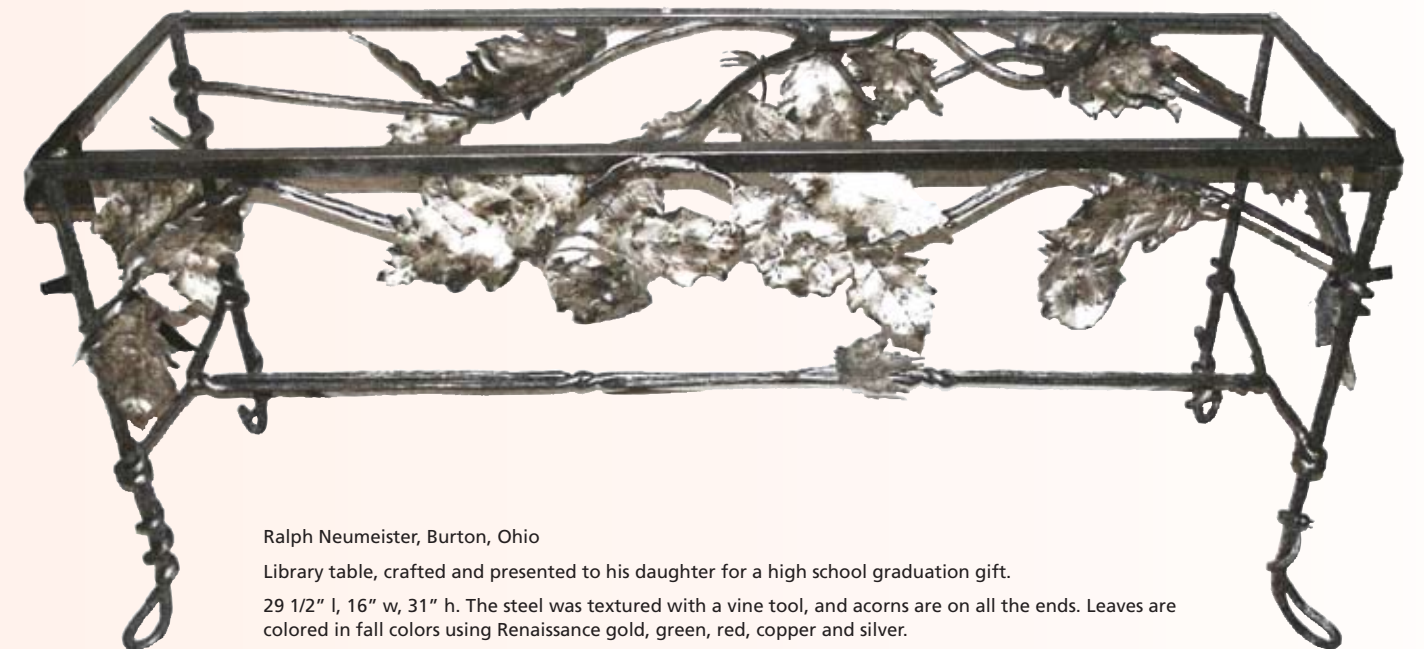
Walt Hull, Walt Hull Iron Work, Lawrence, Kansas
Balcony railing in mild steel. 8'6" l x 3'h. Designed by Walt Hull and executed by Kate Dinneen. Photos by Walt Hull.



Elizabeth Brim, Penland, North Carolina
Left, Apron entitled "Catch." Life-size. Mild steel.
Above, Apron detail.



Dale Morse & Edward Pelton, Clay Hill Forge, Charlottesville, Virginia
Hanging light fixture. Forged mild steel with case and fuse glass shade pieces. Each side has one of the five feng shui characters. Candlesticks are removable. 32" tip to tip. Shade section is 13" square.



Ralph Neumeister, Burton, Ohio
Library table, crafted and presented to his daughter for a high school graduation gift. 29 1/2" l, 16" w, 31" h. The steel was textured with a vine tool, and acorns are on all the ends. Leaves are colored in fall colors using Renaissance gold, green, red, copper and silver.



Moghul Miniature: Craftsman chasing a floral design on a round hookah bowl, pen and ink with color washes and gold. Southwest India, circa 1770. Collection of author.



The shop setup, for sinking and raising vessels. Very large truck bearings are utilized for sinking forms.



A pair of water pots called matka ghadra. These pots, 60 liters in capacity, were made by Munshi Khan of Samode.



Large wok.



Munshi Khan at work, raising a pot.

Large Rajasthani Vessels

By Daniel Kerem, Godfrey, ON, Canada

Photos by Daniel Kerem

Like so many small towns and villages in rural Rajasthan, India, Samode has a fort and a palace built by the Rawals—the nobility of Jaipur—into the foothills backing the town: an ideal retreat from the dusty heat of Jaipur.

Added to by each successive maharaja, the palace is a maze of arched walkways, hidden stairways and courtyard gardens, and its numerous painted and mirrored halls hold a treasury of Rajput art.

The town's main street, which leads to the palace, is lined with painted and carved (and now crumbling) havelis—or mansions—of a once-wealthy merchant class. The town was originally walled, its entrance secured by four

gates. Abutting the Mahar Gate is the Loharon Ka Mohalla, or blacksmiths' quarter, inhabited by a small community of approximately 30 smiths and their families, of Sunni Muslim descent.

This community, which resembles a very large extended family or clan, has its shops in the street leading up to the town gate. They work communally; their numerous products are made to meet the needs of the local peasantry as well as being exported further, all over rural Rajasthan. The work done by these men is of a production nature, specializing in agricultural implements and cooking utensils, made in proliferation at very low cost and well known throughout Rajasthan.

According to local tradition, the forefathers of these craftsmen migrated to Samode from the nearby village of Maharkala sometime between 1850 and the turn of the century. Apparently there were more work opportunities in Samode, though it is unclear if this move had anything to do with a royal decree from the maharajas of Jaipur who, since building their palace in Samode 400 years ago, had brought in entire families of artisans to execute its successive additions.

In its idyllic pastoral setting, Samode appears from a distance still part of a Moghul miniature painting. Change, though, has reached even this languid, small town, where on any given morning a battery of locally made trip

hammers create a din so loud that you can hardly hear yourself think, if making your way through the blacksmiths' section of the bazaar.

By far the most impressive and skilled work of these lohars, or smiths, are very large vessels, used for religious and social functions and seen in temple courtyards and kitchens all over rural western India. The largest of these vessels is a *tasla*, or wok, close to two meters in diameter (large enough to accommodate several people) used for deep frying and the production of sweet meats. These are often made from recycled plate, 1/4 inch in thickness, starting with a central bottom disk, to which two successive horizontal rows are attached.

The work is done entirely “cold,” beginning with cutting the plate—utilizing hammer and chisels—into the appropriate pieces, dishing them to the required radii, even to the drifting of holes and heading of rivets. No drills are utilized, nor is the material heated, for combustible fuel necessitating expenditure is reserved for heavier forging.

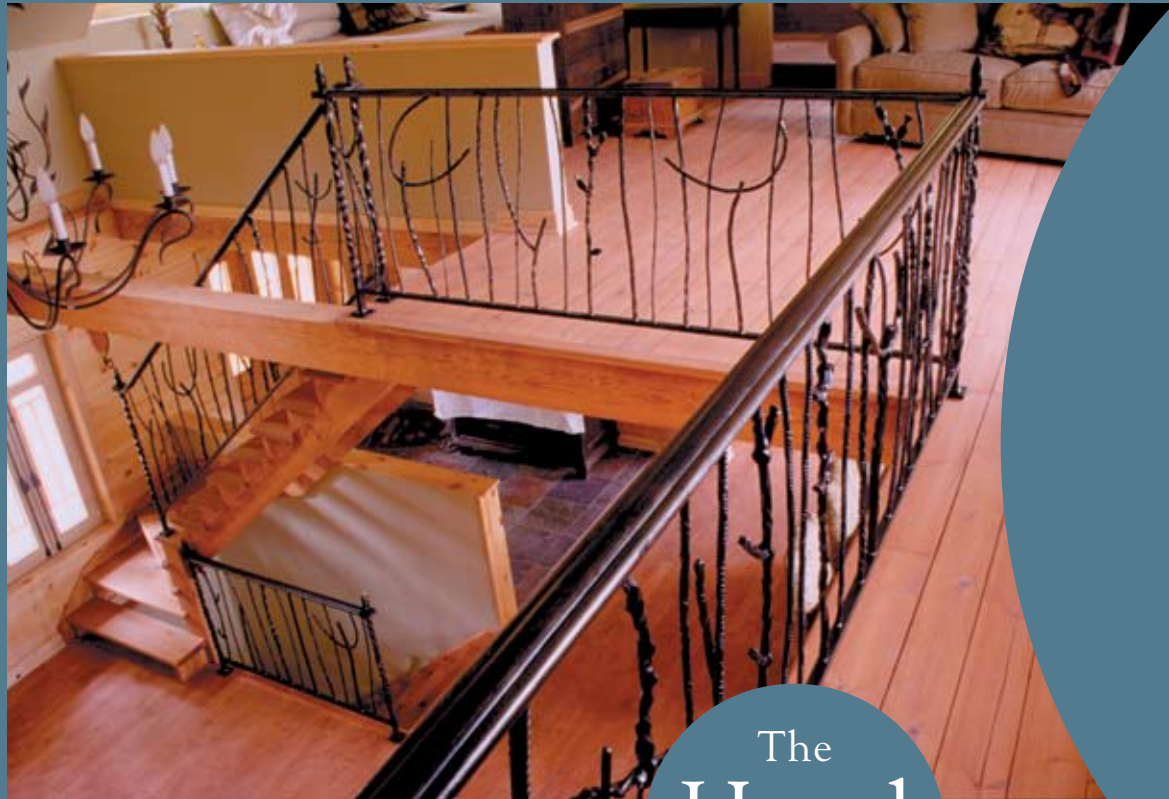
A variety of drum heads are also produced, ranging from a small size used in village temples to a very large variety, utilized by several drummers simultaneously in large religious processions, or *mehlas*.

Aesthetically, the most refined and complex of these vessels are the *matka ghadra*, or large pots, used for transporting water. Made from

six pieces of 16-gauge iron riveted together, and in several sizes, their advantage over ceramic vessels of the same shape is obvious, though the production of these is threatened by the rapid appearance of plastics on the Indian market.

For close to two centuries, the lohars of Samode have shown adaptability, both in their adoption of new technologies, in their communal methods of labor, and in expanding their markets to other urban and rural areas across the state. With the Indian subcontinent undergoing such rapid change, there can be no doubt that these attributes—the hallmarks of their ancient profession—will hold them in good stead in the years to come. ✨

Cairn Cunnane



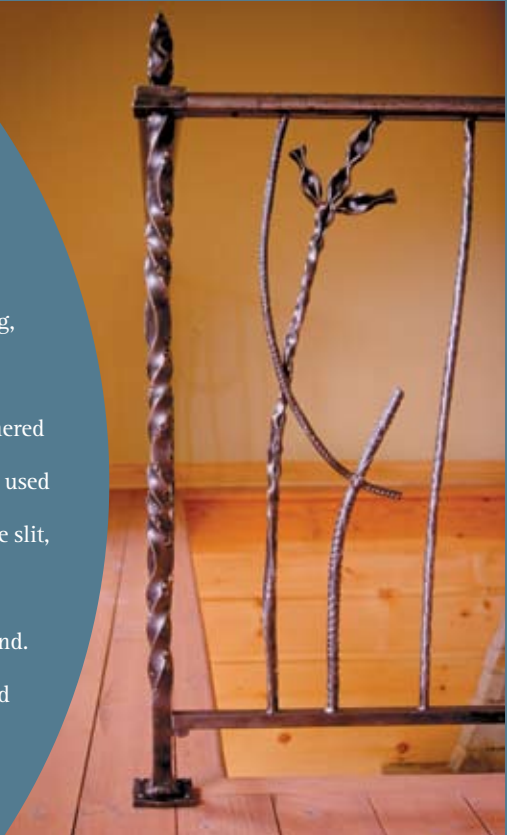
The
Hand
Rail

The railing has a total of about 40 feet and is made of mild steel solid square and round, square tube, pipe, hexagon, angle, channel, and rebar. The posts are 1 inch square, upset at the bottoms, and then, after much punching and chiseling, are twisted informally.

The finials are 1 1/4 inch square, freely power-hammered into random results. Twist and reverse twisting were used on almost all the elements. Most intersecting joints were slit, drifted and passed through, then welded for strength.

The handrail was made from pipe and 1/2-inch round. Everything was wire brushed and an oil finish was used with a clear coat on top.

This railing is called "The Strength of Calmness," which related well with the owner and location, and it was a pleasure to create. ✨



Ottawa, ON, Canada



INTERVIEW

with **ROBIN & MIKE BOONE**

BY ROB EDWARDS



Robin, Cassidy, Marley and Mike Boone holding the auction piece created for the CBA Spring Conference.

Robin and Mike Boone were demonstrating at the CBA Spring Conference in Tulare, California, when we sat down for this interview. The Boones are from Paonia, Colorado. Mike is a direct descendent of famous American pioneer, Daniel Boone.

RING: How long have you been living in Colorado?

MIKE: It's been about 14 years altogether, but 2 1/2 years now that we've lived in Paonia. It's a real small and very nice town that is essentially self-supporting. A lot of the families there participate in home schooling their children.

RING: Have you always home schooled your children?

ROBIN: No; we started them out in Montessori pre-school, went into public school because there were some great teachers in the lower grades, but the bureaucracy of public education, I think, is very detrimental to actual education potential. So based on that difference of philosophy, we began to home school our girls and now we network with a great group of people in Paonia. There are hundreds of home-schooled children where we live. Our girls are 10 and almost 12. We bring our family everywhere; they're enjoying the conference this weekend as much as we are.

MIKE: Demonstrating gives us an excellent chance to travel, as well as an excuse to do so and a committed date to get on the road, which is definitely part of our home-schooling thrust. One of our favorite parts of home schooling is traveling.

ROBIN: It's definitely at the core of our education of the children. They have been all over the country as well as to Canada and Mexico.

MIKE: We live a lifestyle that enables our family to be together. And the kids love it.

ROBIN: They were selling the Iron-in-the-Hat tickets here, so that was fun for them. They have friends from all over the country so they already knew friends who would be here, from meeting them last year at the October Hammer-In.

RING: Did your father work with his dad quite a bit?

MIKE: No, he didn't. When my father left home as a young man he moved to Washington, DC, and became a welder. It wasn't until I was almost grown that he got into blacksmithing full time. I had some

exposure to metal when I was young, but actually very little. I really didn't know what the family ties were. We would travel to Williamsburg, Virginia, and back then I didn't have any idea that that was all our family's ironwork on display—my great uncle was Daniel Boone and my grandfather was Lawrence Boone. To my knowledge, Dad didn't get into the ancestry until I got older. Bill Gichner met Dad and saw his work and said to him, 'You need to come and meet these other blacksmiths.' So Dad did and Bill immediately put him right on stage at whatever blacksmith event it was. Dad was very shy, but Bill saw that my father obviously had natural blacksmithing talent.

ROBIN: Bill Gichner also took Mike and me under his wing when we started smithing and even delivered a Little Giant power hammer to our place in Colorado. It was really great. He taught us how to run the business and how to price our work.

MIKE: He hooked us up with books and tools—just everything we needed to start up.

ROBIN: He even invited us out to demonstrate at his Bill Gichner Hammer In. That was the first time I lectured on drawing and design and Mike was hammering down in the basement at Gichner's along with everyone else. He has been a very great supporter of ours in helping us get started.

RING: Speaking of the design, is most of your work now designed by you, Robin, and production, fabrication and forging done by you, Mike?

MIKE: We do create some designs together, but Robin does the actual art for the designs. Robin has a degree in art so we started out with her drawing skills which came from a whole different frame of reference and different style, and is not always easily transferrable to making metal pieces into art. So over the years as my abilities expanded, Robin started grasping what metal can and cannot do and what is realistic to draw. So we began combining the two talents as we both grew together. Now we can really see the iron, see the ideas beforehand and then figure out how to actually produce them. It's been a long road and we've put in a lot of practice and a lot of figuring out what does work and what doesn't. Of course, the energy working between the two of us has to be very professional. We'll work the design concept, then make changes, then refine it, and then all of a sudden, boom! Something pops out that is always right. And once that's right, then we really nail down the design. That's how it works for us.

We basically start out drawing on napkins. We'll start with some ideas and say, 'Let's incorporate this element,' or we'll say, 'Let's try new joinery.' In every

project we incorporate something new that we haven't done before, thereby increasing our knowledge, talent and abilities so it never gets stagnant. We do this for our own advancement and to expand our knowledge and expand the art form.

RING: You two are certainly very popular demonstrators and I know you spend a lot of time doing that. What about your other daytime job? How do you work together when you bid a job and how do you solicit work?

MIKE: We don't; fortunately, it comes to us. It hasn't been an issue.

ROBIN: I'd like to talk a bit more about how we started producing the work together. I had the art degree and Mike had very little artistic background. But from day one, he knew how to work the metal. As I watched him learning new skills and expanding his capabilities, I began influencing him with my artistic abilities. But we hadn't gotten to a point where I knew enough about the metal and what it could do and Mike didn't know enough about art for us to really mesh. So it was definitely a long process; it's not something that just happened overnight. We worked very hard at getting our minds in sync. I would educate him about artistic relevance and design and he would teach me tapering, stretching, upsetting—all the different aspects of smithing. And then we began to come up with some really great designs together. That's when we were doing high-end art/craft shows. From those we would get commissions and our reputation began to spread. People started coming to us for commission work, including designers and architects. Mike wanted to learn how to do double tenons for a railing. So he ended up doing 400 feet of double tenons and after all these had it mastered!

MIKE: And that's what we do with every project. If there is a new technique that we want to incorporate or learn, we just throw it in and allow that to be part of the design. We did a railing with 900 forge welds on it and I have felt very confident with forge welding since then. By repetition you basically force the issue, so you learn. For the first 7 or 8 years that we were working together we would keep incorporating new processes and techniques into the designs so that our skill level of the actual blacksmithing part could improve. We have since mastered those skills, which then increases our possibilities of design. So now you take all those skills, add that into a great design, and it's exponentially better. Basically it was getting the various processes down really well and then moving forward with all of those processes as your helpers.

ROBIN: But now when we sit down to design something—for instance the piece that we made for the conference here in California—we knew we wanted to make something quite special for this event.

MIKE: The California Blacksmiths as a group are so very good at what they do, we had to really make it look good because we were showing those pros how to do it—not an easy task.

ROBIN: Actually, this design came together really quickly. I was surprised at how well it did. But on another level I'm really not all that surprised, because by now our minds are working together as a unit when it comes to design and figuring out how to make any kind of commission. We just get in sync almost immediately and can whip through a lot of different ideas quickly. We don't let our egos get in the way.

RING: It must require a tremendous amount of give and take.

MIKE: Yes, but we've dropped the competition part; it's no longer about ourselves. You have to allow the other person's input and release some of your own input to make it work. On a design we'll see first what the parameters are. Where does it go? What does it need to do? How much money is going to be spent on it? How much time is involved? We also have to consider any sort of function that may be involved. For instance, in this demonstration I needed to carry very few tools, be able to do it in a few hours, and make something that involves a lot of different forging processes and techniques for the teaching part of it. Design, of course, is critical, and we needed to make an attractive finished piece for the CBA auction. So those are basically the parameters for coming here to this event. For instance on this one in particular we picked the Yellin scroll flower. I haven't demonstrated that for awhile; so we decided to add that back into the demonstration, since it's such a beautiful thing to show and teach. It's a great expression of the magic of ironwork. We started with that idea and then knew we'd need some sort of frame, moving forward from there. When a part of a process seemed too difficult, we would drop that out. It looks great, but there was no way we could do that in the amount of time.

ROBIN: We had some very complex designs when we first started this. Then the reality was forging it and



"Mother and Daughter"
Chiseled and chased figures on folded sheet.
11" h x 7 1/2" w.



"Firedancer" firescreen. The positive & negative spacial relationships. Design by Mike and Robin.

putting everything together in five hours, or whatever the allotted time is. The sum of our demonstration time was a critical aspect of our design, but we wanted to try and show as many things within the time limit—upsets, chisel and chase work, the Yellin flowers, and then design—to come up with something that sums up the potential of design for my lecture, as well.

MIKE: The overall concept when we're demonstrating is very simple forging practices because that's all blacksmithing is. It's all very simple practices that are just compounded and added on top of each other to make a very complex finished product. But nothing that we forged individually was difficult. We put these all together with a fine design and then the piece looks so complex that you wonder how you can make it. That's the part that I enjoy and hopefully that's what passes on to others, so that

they will gain more confidence in their work, get their skills honed and move forward, yet really get these simple forging techniques down pat. Then you can do anything with them. Look at Yellin's work. Most of the work is very simple, but it was the putting together of all these simple elements that make it extremely complex-looking.

RING: I noticed at the auction that you split it up into the piece and into the drawing.

MIKE: Yes; that drawing is truly a wonderful piece of art in and of itself.

ROBIN: Even though it ended up a shop drawing, we used it as a template. I colored chalk over the back of it and laid it down because we needed to get this one curve off the Yellin flower to attach it to the frame. I then traced with the chalk on the back onto a metal table and the chalk showed up in order for Mike to get that arch right. So we transferred the drawing onto the table. Richard Schrader

bought the demo piece and a man named Chuck got the drawing.

RING: What is the project you're currently working on? And by the way, what is the name of your business?

MIKE: Boone Wrought Iron, which goes back to my grandfather, who used to have that name for his business. Dad uses it now, also.

The project we're on now is the Dashwood House. We are making a series of lighting fixtures—interior and exterior—that are massive cages which surround large upright posts. Off one of the corners is a hand-blown sconce. It's really a beautiful design and we feel fortunate to be working with Ted Moews and Howard McCall. Ted is a designer in Colorado who is a genius in his field. We've never met anyone who can draw ironwork who is not a blacksmith, but this guy can do it. He has a vision. He sends his drawings to Howard McCall who is one of the best draftsmen there is. Then Howard sends us the work to do. Whatever is on the drawings we make exactly as it is specified. These are really large-scale items. Only with Ted do we do someone else's designs; in all other projects we use our own designs and our own original art work. But his are of such a caliber that they're just right. It's a very unique niche that we're in, dealing with these homes and this builder in particular.

ROBIN: Yes, it's an honor for us to be working with these gentlemen. And the people for whom we're working, who commissioned the work, are very nice folks who understand fine craftsmanship. Their entire home is just gorgeous.

MIKE: They're interested in what we're building; they're not interested in rushing it. Of course we're under the gun to get things done just because it's such a huge mass of work. But it's more important for them to have the right thing that they can pass down to their children. And that really takes a lot of the pressure off us. So we're allowed to make it right, and that's more important than the time frame to them. It's most unusual in the market today. It's taken a long time to get there—to have a client like that.

ROBIN: Mike and I have decided that we want to be very selective with whom we work—even to the point where it may create lean times, but the integrity of the people we work for needs to reflect our own integrity as well. We find that that is just an integral part of our lives—that our work doesn't overpower us through our life, rather it enhances our life. It is a conclusion we came to in 1997, after we did a huge project for some people who pretty much shut the door in our faces in a rude fashion after we had worked for them for over a year. At that point the girls and I weren't seeing Mike because he was on the job 12

hours a day, 7 days a week. Our relationship was poor, and he wasn't an integral part of the children's lives during the time of this project. When that was over and they ended up being so rude to us in the end, we decided it wasn't worth it to work that way. We decided at that point to live more—that money, success and massive, time-consuming projects weren't what would make us happy.

MIKE: In defense of that project, however, I'd have to say that that job had so many forging processes in it that it was the most educational project we've ever undertaken. I got to learn repoussé, chisel and chase work, huge railing designs, and very large-scale metal work. There was an outrageous amount of business to run the project; there were always at least eight people working on the project at all times. There were at least three in my shop; my blacksmith/fabricator/builder, Rod Pickett, had three working in his shop, as well as a large power hammer person and a technical support person. It was an outrageous lesson for us. But the sheer concentration it takes 24 hours a day to try to pull off something like this was more than we wanted to do with our lives, basically selling our soul to the work versus life.

That was our crossroads, so to speak. Knock it down a notch, thanks for the lessons, no regrets, but we would like to go somewhere else with our life. And that's when we got out of our mortgage, sold everything we could sell, got a camper and hit the road. Since then we have re-set up, built another shop and everything is going phenomenally well. There is enough work to support that and now we can pick and choose the work we want to do because we're not under the pressure of a mortgage and all the so-called "normal" things in life for a lot of Americans.

RING: Toby Hickman said recently that one of the progressive steps in one's blacksmithing career is when you realize that blacksmithing is not a religion! You get above and beyond that, putting it in the proper perspective and balance in your life.

MIKE: That's it—bringing it back to balance. And that was our goal.

ROBIN: We were so out of balance that the jobs we had were just simply consuming us. On the project Mike just spoke about, we worked one full year on this one house, using all original designs throughout. We don't have a single photograph of our work there. But we needed that lesson for Mike and I to come back together and re-think our priorities. We needed to realize that working for the mortgage and the car payment was not being true to ourselves.

MIKE: Right. It's a never-ending cycle that can only get larger, it seemed to us. But the experience

is now under our belts. We've been there and done that...we've done the large-scale work and that is not necessarily the direction in which we want to head.

RING: When was that large project?

MIKE: It was in 1997 and it was nine months' worth of work.

RING: So in 1997 you hit the road and how did you end up in Paonia?

MIKE: Paonia has a very well-established community of home schooling, as we mentioned, which was a priority for us. There is also a theatre, a radio station, lots of kids, lots of organic food and a natural food store. There are working farms and lush orchards. It's a community of about 900 people. There is a lot of alternative healing going on encompassing artists, alternative energies, dance classes, three kinds of yoga, and more.

RING: How did you find out about Paonia?

ROBIN: Through friends of ours who we used to do art shows with many years ago. They would come and visit and they encouraged us to come to Paonia, where they lived. At one point we were trying to get some land and start some homesteading elsewhere. That all fell through and we didn't know what we were going to do next. We finally did drive to Paonia and fell in love from the first moment we saw the town. Since then it has only increased and it's more and more clear to us that we are in a very good place for how we are progressing with our lives. We find a lot of kindred souls there, and a lot of potential. We have a great radio station and Mike is a disc jockey for the station, as am I. Cassidy, my daughter, is a d.j. also and once a month the three of us and Marley, our other daughter, host a children's show on Saturday mornings. There is alternative news on the station, all different kinds of music—it's great community radio

Lights designed by Ted Moews. Posts are approx. 11" by 27". Top horizontal bar is 1/2" x 3" with forged-hinge eyes. Hinge pins were forged from 2" solid to create a 2" square head by 1-1/2" tall with a pin (13-3/4" overall length) that begins at 1" diameter and tapers to 7/8" for the lower horizontal hinge eyes. Torchères are approx. 21-1/2" overall. Canister size is 4-1/2" diameter. Torchères are hand sanded, then a linseed/turpentine/wax finish is applied to the pre-heated steel.



Lights designed by Ted Moews. See other photos on pages 25, 26, 27.

and that is the core of the town for us.

RING: *Did you buy a house in Paonia?*

MIKE: No, we moved onto some land with our friends and then we built a small straw bale house and the shop. We built that with just the two of us working on it, so we have that under our belts as an experience. The shop is just a simple wood frame but the straw-bale structure is what we lived in and it's all run on solar power. I run the shop off a gas generator just to operate the power tools when needed—whatever the solar can't handle. But I can run my radio and my blowers off the solar power, which is a wonderful thing.

RING: *What kind of power hammer do you have?*

MIKE: I run a 50-pound Little Giant. I also have a drill press, a band saw and hand tools and that's pretty much it. I've found that living off of the grid—or off the national power supply—I know how much

gasoline is going into my daily use, which gives me a grasp of how much of my resources I'm using to produce art work. It makes me feel better in justifying what I'm doing. I also design things around using—or not using—electricity right now. As much as we can it's more hand hammering, hand filing, using a hacksaw—things along those lines. It just seems to work a lot easier and then the trick is to design around your tools, of course, which is what we all do. As you know you're limited by your tooling and so the less electricity I use, the better I feel.

RING: *Is Paonia a pretty good area for solar power?*

MIKE: Yes. We're set. We're top rated right behind Arizona.

ROBIN: And there is also great wind potential up on the mesas where we are. One of

the greatest sights when we were coming out here to California is all the wind turbines near Barstow, in the Mojave Desert. The Solar Energy Institute moved to our town and they are really the authority on solar energy. There are a lot of people building with alternative building styles, as well as being "off the grid." It's really exciting to have that support,

because that's where we are headed. We've since moved off the land where we were homesteading with our friends and have moved into town. It worked out best that way for all of us. We walk everywhere now that we're in town.

MIKE: We follow our synchronicities, and they have led us to where we are now.

RING: *Synchronicities—can you elaborate on that?*

ROBIN: Synchronicity is basically a coincidence that is purposeful. I guess that's the best way to say it. It is the opportunities that we have in making our choices in life. Certain people will come to you or situations are created that set your path in different directions. If we pay attention to the synchronicities around us and act upon them, then we find that we're guided much better in our making of choices. So what looks like coincidence isn't really coincidence at all.

MIKE: Right. For instance, if you got fired from your job that you had been hanging onto for the money or for the security and then all of a sudden it's gone, you then have to choose what to do next, because maybe you hadn't been picking up on the synchronicities that were telling you to pay attention first. Synchronicities push you in a direction, if you'll allow that.

ROBIN: The synchronicity for us was that we were trying to buy this land to homestead out in western Colorado. And it all fell through; we were so distraught by that. But then we realized that it's got to be for some reason that we didn't get what we thought we wanted. And no kidding—very shortly thereafter our friends showed up and said, 'Come homestead with us in Paonia. We've got land, come, you're welcome to be with us.' And we did go; so this community that we were trying to create with these other people out in western Colorado was already existing in Paonia and we were able to immediately drop into this situation that was exactly what we were looking for, although it wasn't in the direction that we were thinking it was going to be. But our hearts told us that this is where we needed to be and what we needed to do. Following that and trusting that is key.

MIKE: Have you ever had a question you just couldn't answer and a few days later you ran into someone or read something that gave you the answer? That happens always if you pay attention. Therefore everyone we meet we're meeting for a reason. The trick is to pay attention to that and trust that you're going to get the answers you're looking for. Once you start realizing it and following these synchronicities,

everything happens. And it's so easy to do. You can live in the now instead of living in the future trying to make things happen, which adds fear and worry.

ROBIN: We'll soon complete the job we're working on now—it's a very large commission and we've been really focusing on that. We don't have another job set up after this one. But we know that we'll be provided for. So I'm not worried about the fact that we're going to have the rent and all these other things coming up without another commission lined up. I know that it's going to happen and the best opportunities will come to us. It may not look like what we're looking for, but we know that the opportunities are there and we'll be provided for. That has been shown to us over and over and over again.

RING: *Some people would call that just being very mindful of opportunities that are constantly being presented to you.*

MIKE: Yes, I agree. We've been married for 12 years and we've expanded our potential together and individually; we've released control over each other and now we're a much stronger unit by far.

And with design work, you reflect your level in life at all times. Your workmanship shows that—your abilities, your willingness to learn more—everything is reflected in your work whether it's your happiness or your unhappiness; it's all obvious at any given point in your life in what you're working on. Art reflects life.

RING: *What other clinics or events are you scheduled for, to do demonstrations?*

MIKE: I completed a demonstration in Georgia in May, and this fall I'll be doing a one-day demonstration locally in Colorado.

ROBIN: We also have the Rocky Mountain Smiths blacksmithing conference coming up this summer which I coordinate. Mike runs the forging competition and helps at the open forge. We're an hour from Carbondale where it's held.

RING: *Where do you envision the work that you're both doing together heading?*

ROBIN: I think as far as Mike's skill level, he is at a point where additional education and taking a leap with his skill are both coming. With our design and execution process this has come together so well, it's bound to head to higher art forms. How that will look I'm not sure. It's a mystery right now as to where we're going with our design work. I know that after we took a very large job Mike got quite burned out on hammering. So we took a break and built the shop. Now he's hammering again and he's enthused and excited about it and has a lot of new ideas. He is making wind sculptures, wonderful forgings that

sit on a pin and spin in the wind. Where we're going really is an unknown, but I do believe we're getting to the point where we're ready to make another jump in our skill level and our abilities.

RING: *Well you both certainly have a good, solid foundation, in design and in execution. It seems like you're at a point where you could go in a multitude of directions.*

MIKE: I wouldn't mind working with some master smiths and really get a grasp of entirely different perspectives. That's what is so wonderful about going to conferences and meeting other blacksmiths. You get other ideas which we can all draw from, which is so helpful. Then you can constantly expand in your growth of knowledge and production and what you can create. So I think it might be time for more education again. I love teaching and if there were a way to make money at that without being tied down every day, it would be a great way for me to go. It's a passion for me, and most enjoyable.

ROBIN: As far as our skill levels in the realm of blacksmithing, we do very well at demonstrations. We love what we do, we love to share that joy with everyone, and our demos are well received. If there were a way for us to go around the country demonstrating and if we could support a lifestyle doing that, I don't think we would turn that down. It's all about having fun; and if you're not having fun, don't do it anymore.

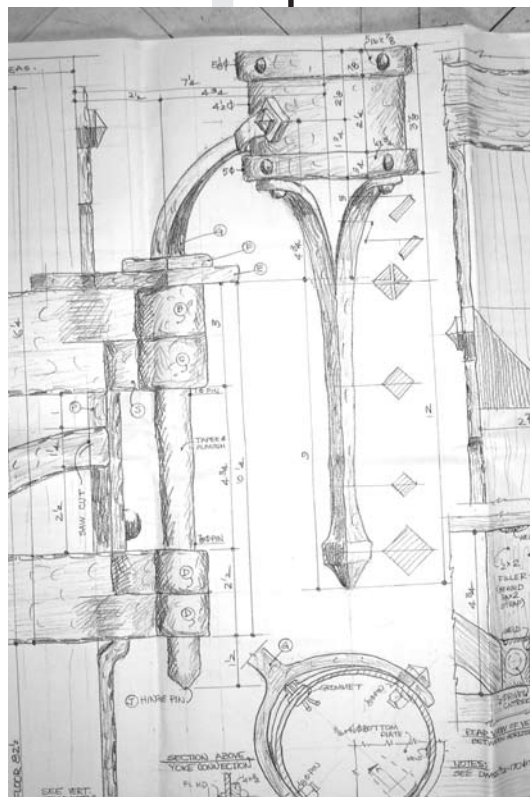
MIKE: If it turns into work, you've done it long enough. And we want to show by example that it is possible to live like we do in this day and age. You do not need to be locked in to all the nonsense of debt and everything that separates us from who we want to be and what we really want to do. It's very possible to do this, even in America.

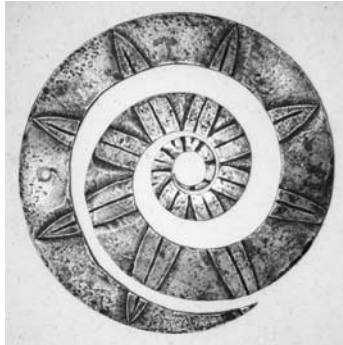
ROBIN: I was bringing up this subject at the end of my lecture yesterday. This morning a gentleman came up to me and said, 'It was so good to hear that you and Mike had gotten to this crossroads and



Lights designed by Ted Moews. See other photos on pages 24, 25, 26.

Exceptionally detailed drawing by Howard McCall.





Chiseled and Chased "Scroll with Flower." 10" diameter 3/16" x 1 1/4" stock.

That's what the demonstrations are about, piquing that interest as people think to themselves, gee, I hadn't even thought to ask that question yet! Then all of a sudden there's the answer. It's a wonderful interaction.

decided that money was not in and of itself success. I was interested in your words on simple living and being happy. I left the corporate world six months ago; 15 years I was in corporate America and just looked around me, asking what was I doing? Now he is blacksmithing full time and that is how he is making his living. He said, 'It's so good to hear that there are others out there finding alternatives also.' The fact that he came up and told me that made it all worthwhile that we were here.

MIKE: So we have made an impact in sharing our joy. And that's what it's about—our joy of the great craft of metalsmithing and the joy of these conferences, where people come from all walks of life, all backgrounds, all economic levels of society, and all different skill levels.

ROBIN: Yet everyone seems to be on an equal footing here. I am so impressed with the blacksmithing community. Having that in our lives is so important to us. This level of craft and bonding happens with blacksmithing to a degree that is unlike any other art form I've seen. There is usually a lot of competition between artists—for example, some people who do pottery hiding their glazing secrets. Everybody shares in this craft, and that is why we're so drawn to it and why we want to participate in it.

MIKE: We are sharing everything we know, and everyone here is doing the same thing—bringing their work to show and sharing their ideas. It's very normal in the blacksmithing community to give tips to others on how to speed up a job, or how to enhance it. You can see the results: the blacksmithing skill level is just outrageous in this country. Since ABANA started and the other groups have formed, it has hastened the day when so many of us have learned the craft so well, by the sharing of knowledge. That is a grand lesson for the whole planet right now, that if we could all just work together, share and not be competitive, everyone benefits. The skill levels of blacksmiths are increasing dramatically. You don't need to learn all the mistakes yourself; someone else has learned those mistakes and they are willing to show you how not to do that.

ROBIN: And if you're open to receiving that information, then your situation is enhanced—your own life, your skill level, how you look at smithing is increased and the excitement is brought up more and more. And then that carries over into the rest of your life and your work.

In my case, I know design; I have an artistic eye. It just comes out of me and is part of my existence. To then try and put it all in a package and present it to people who may not have that understanding or

comprehension was terrifying. I was so intimidated just thinking about it. But I put it all together and then just opened myself up. I thought to myself that I am worthy of these people sitting in front of me and having them learn from me. I have something to share. Once I looked at it like that, it all fell into place for me. All I'm doing is sharing my heart and sharing my knowledge.

MIKE: It's honest and genuine.
ROBIN: And presenting it is one woman's perspective. This is the way I do this. But it's not the only way to do things artistically. This is what I have found to be helpful and what I personally think is necessary. These are things that I've learned. These are the books I got it from. I like to bring to the mind of blacksmiths the importance of design. The importance of design exceeds that of your skill level. Someone was saying that you can have a well-designed and well-executed piece and it will sell right away. You have a well-designed piece that is marginally executed, it will sell before something that is poorly designed and well executed. At the bottom of the list, of course, is something that is poorly designed and poorly executed. So the design is not more important, but it is something that people know instinctively and what is most important to the eye. I think it's fascinating, and the potential for others to understand that is gaining prominence as education is spreading and people are getting more skills under their belts. They are definitely, as a whole, understanding the importance of design.

MIKE: Another thing we find is that people are exceptionally receptive. Once you begin the demonstration, either in the shop or of the drawings, people get very enthusiastic and the demo gets quite interactive. That's what the demonstrations are about, piquing that interest as people think to themselves, gee, I hadn't even thought to ask that question yet! Then all of a sudden there's the answer. It's a wonderful interaction.

ROBIN: One of the reasons we're so thrilled about being in the blacksmithing community is that sharing of knowledge and then acceptance. You don't hear about people at conferences talking about politics or religion—people just put all that division aside and they come together for their love of smithing. That drew me in. I came from a very competitive artistic background and rejected it. I fell into this group of blacksmithing people and they embody the potential that all humanity has to share: knowledge, tolerance and acceptance. And we're in it!

RING: Thanks so much to both of you; I've certainly enjoyed hearing your personal ideas as well as those

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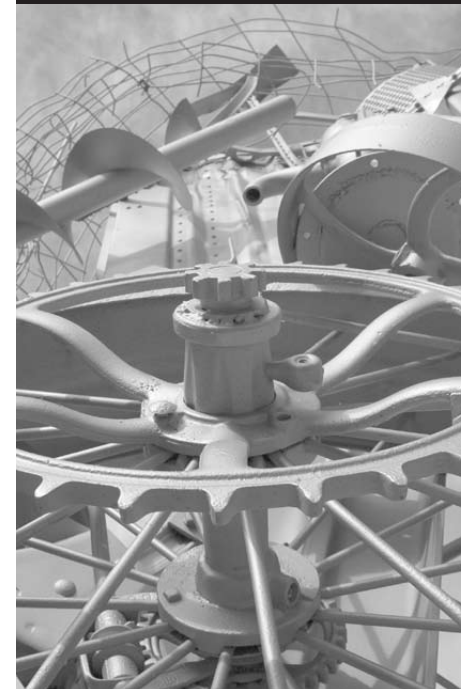
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ReConfiguration Arches

of Albert Paley



The ReConfiguration Arches, by sculptor Albert Paley, have recently been installed at The Hotel Pattee in Perry, Iowa, and they are huge – in all respects of the word! Howard and Roberta Ahmanson, owners of the Hotel Pattee, commissioned the site-specific sculpture.

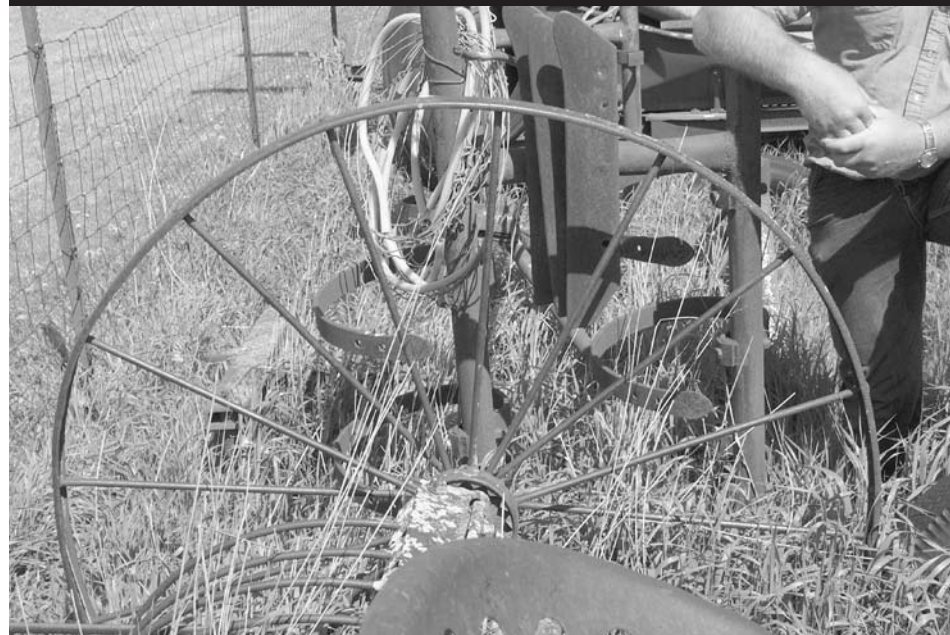
When initially invited to create a sculptural work for Soumas Court, adjacent to the hotel, Mr. Paley envisioned a work that was truly “of the area.” The newly named ReConfiguration Arches have been produced from thousands of found objects that represent Iowa’s cultural heritage and landscape. Paley culled objects from Iowa foundries, farms, and salvage yards, including a tractor combine and plow parts, the harp of a piano, old roller skates and sleds, even a kitchen sink. Old railroad switches, tie plates, rails and rail fragments comprise the basic structure of the arches, and reference the vital importance of the railroad to the founding of Perry. Notes Mr. Paley: “A public artwork brings a dimension to a city that is not otherwise there. The art helps develop a sense of place. It works in a symbolic context also, to bring a focus and identity to a community.”

The work is filled with details and nuances intended to engage people visually while producing a certain emotional response. “Public art in the best circumstances does that,” says Paley. “The arches will act as a shared memory base of people and place.”

In the spring of 2003, Mr. Paley spoke at a public forum on the importance of the sense of place on creative activity, the role of artists on culture in their communities, and the relationship between artists and the communities in which they live. ✨



"A public artwork brings a dimension to a city that is not otherwise there. The art helps develop a sense of place. It works in a symbolic context also, to bring a focus and identity to a community."



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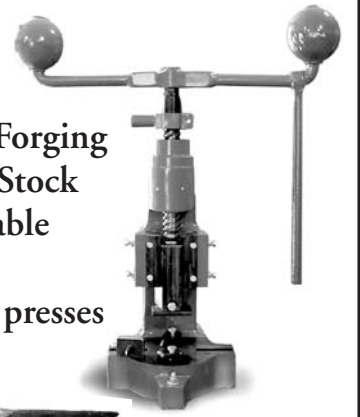
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ANDY WALLACE
STEVE FROEMER



Front of finished gate



Neptune Gate

By Eric Moebius
Last of a three-part series

The Neptune Gate Project represents a unique experience in contemporary blacksmithing. Three artists with very different styles and experiences were brought together to collaborate on the design and execution of a major public ironwork project. The concept and setting of this project on the lakefront of my hometown, Milwaukee, was a high point in my blacksmithing career for several reasons. First and foremost was the style of ironwork the project demanded. The Villa Terrace Museum contains the works of Cyril Colnick, including his great 1893 masterpiece. This set a very high standard for quality that we would have to achieve in our work. I have centered my career on the use of traditional blacksmithing forms and techniques. My challenge has always been the subtle interpretation of

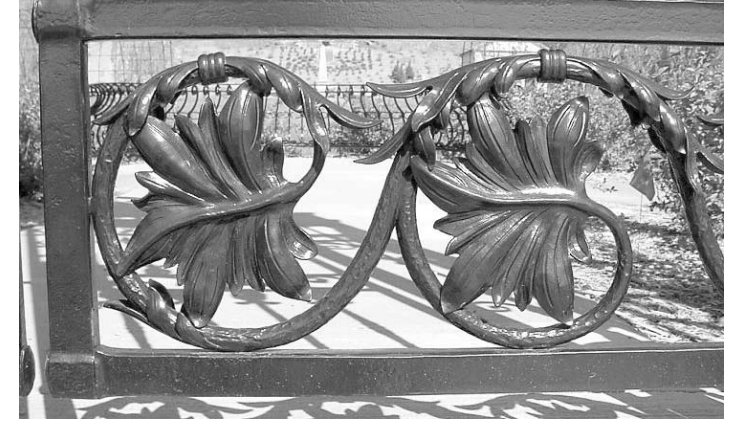
forms with an emphasis on positive and negative space. The surface textures and finishing techniques I have developed come from the inspiration of two master blacksmiths. First was a visit in 1971 to the Yellin Ironworks and second was the work and theories of Tom Bredlow. Both men's work made me look at the surface of the material rather than just concentrating on the lineal and spatial qualities of a design. The effects of the fire and the way certain tools are used on the material develops a surface quality which may be described as "elegant."

A second high point was creating an exterior piece of architectural work that could be enjoyed by anyone. Private commissions have always left me with a bittersweet sense of satisfaction.

We decided to use mortise and tenon corners and hot-punched holes. We have always used the master smith and striker method for joinery. I am lucky to have the most accurate and skillful striker I have ever encountered, my brother Jeff. We use almost no verbal communication and he is able to anticipate exactly what I need done, making this a very rapid and accurate process.

The process of working with other blacksmiths and a committee from the Museum was the first hurdle to cross. After early discussions about design and the scope of the project we began to discover a working relationship. A basic outline was given to us by the landscape architect, Dennis Buettner. Both Tom and Dan came up with sketches of elements and forms, which began another discussion with the Museum Board. The monetary considerations began to rise and a new understanding of the importance of this piece to the Museum Garden Project was established. I have always approached the design process with a complete mental conception. This was a new experience looking at sketches from two other smiths and trying to see the project as a whole. Having been involved with exterior architectural work, I knew what engineering would be needed. We had a meeting at which I proposed a full design for the gate; both Dan and Tom agreed we should use it and submit a presentation drawing to the board. The reaction to the framed rendering of the gate was unanimous.

It was decided to divide the work up to be done individually in each shop. We decided to have my shop be the general contractor and a contract was completed. I would be creating the entire framework, the curved section and their decorative elements, the gates, and managing the installation. Tom and Dan would be doing the figure, fishes, and decorative elements. I began my work right away. Full-scale drawings and mockups were made of the entire piece. The challenge of making the frame and having the overall look blend with the very intricate design elements was incredible. Each bar was heated, hammered, and textured. Although modern welding techniques were used, I wanted the joints to have a soft, flowing, and rounded feel with no sharp corners. The resulting effect was a look as if the entire framework was forge-welded, mortised, or split from one piece. After three months, the entire framework was com-



pleted and I was able to give exact spaces and dimensions



for the decorative pieces.

Tom and Dan began work on their respective pieces. I was able to begin work on the curved sections as well as the large leaf and branch forms. When Neptune and the sturgeons arrived and were installed, the entire piece came alive. I was now able to start the most rewarding assignment, the gates. With 25 years of experience in traditional gate construction, I was excited to begin. We decided to use mortise and tenon corners and hot-punched holes. We have always used the master smith and striker method for joinery. I am lucky to have the most accurate and skillful striker I have ever encountered, my brother Jeff. We use almost no verbal communication and he is able to anticipate exactly what I need done, making this a very rapid and accurate process.

The internal pieces in the gates were hand forged and the 72 leaves were begun. All of the leaf forms were patterns



I developed and were hot-forged using 11-gauge and 14-



gauge steel. All flat leaves were done in doubles so they are the same on either side of the gates. The patterns are first worked out in 14-gauge lead sheet, which is available as roof flashing. I can use the same hot-working tools on the lead and see how the metal will move. We do not cold work the surfaces or planish the leaves because we want to maintain a fire-textured surface. A great deal of hot work is done with copper hammers on steel, copper, wood, and aluminum stakes. We have over 200 leaf-working tools to handle any form.

When we attach leaves to stems, we form the leaf over the branch and mig weld them on. After grinding and filing, the joints are textured with chisels and pattern punches to blend smoothly. Because this piece is in such a public place, we had to vandal-proof all of the leaves with hidden pins or forge them out of heavy material.

Dan brought over some of his elements and I installed

All flat leaves were done in doubles so they are the same on either side of the gates. The patterns are first worked out in 14-gauge lead sheet, which is available as roof flashing. I can use the same hot-working tools on the lead and see how the metal will move. We do not cold work the surfaces or planish the leaves because we want to maintain a fire-textured surface.

them. I then completed the vase-forms in the main columns for Dan's trident forms. Finally we were able to see how the different approaches each smith used would work together. These differences are what make the Neptune Gate unique.

The entire piece was designed and engineered to be broken down into sections to go through the finishing process. It was sand-blasted with a fine media, inside and out. The hollow parts were made with drain holes so they could go through the submersion undercoating process called E-coating. This electrically charged coating can actually coat metal-to-metal surfaces internally. The entire piece was powder coated in a satin black finish.

With a deadline approaching, we began the installation. After mounting the columns, we put the entire framework together and the fit was just right, everything was plumb and square. We had people from the Museum watching as we were ready to hang the gates on the hinges. In 30 years of blacksmithing, the next moment was the most satisfying, when I swung them closed and the latch was engaged, they hung perfectly! Needless to say, we acted like it was an everyday occurrence.

The Neptune Gate represents a collaboration of three artist-blacksmiths who were hoping to set a new standard for quality ironwork, much like Mr. Colnick did at the beginning of the last century. I feel that the essence of sharing knowledge and working together that I witnessed at the beginning of ABANA is shown in this project. I am grateful for having the group behind me; Jeff, Gary Stewart, and Jed Krieger, who worked incredibly hard to maintain the strict adherence to quality necessary to complete the Neptune Gate. ✪

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Apprentices display a team project. (Note: these boys are obviously younger than trade-school students in the United States, who begin after high school.)



Otto Weisleitner, Image Maker

The blacksmith will no longer be the soot covered, simple, old fashioned workman who made copies of antique ironwork, but a member of Otto Weisleitner's High Tech profession.

New Apprentice Training Requirements for Smiths in Austria

High Tech for the Ancient Blacksmith

TRANSLATED BY ROBERT A. RUHLOFF
REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM HEPHAISTOS

After the changed trade name for smiths, new regulations for apprentice training, which consider the present and future demands on the trade, have been worked out.

Names are prophetic. The smith, who is now a "forging technician," will also have a changed apprenticeship. New directives have been presented to the Ministry for Trades and are awaiting action by the Parliament in Vienna. They contain instructions for the use of new materials and new technology.

When the head of the Trade Union in the province of Braunau, Peter Lechner, completed his apprenticeship as artist-blacksmith during the 1950s, there were three forge classes because of the great number of apprentices. The scope of the trade, in its basic handwork, was clearly defined.

As Lechner participated in the development of new apprentice training guidelines he recognized the changed demands, and the present-day requirements for the smith's trade.

Under points four and five of the 32 sections of the proposed new requirements are, for example, "free-hand drawing", and "basics of style" from Roman to modern. The coming smiths of today are still in a handwork trade, but no longer in a formal tradition which they can take over and carry on; rather, in consideration of what has been done before and with some view of what is coming, each must work out his own form of expression.

"The customer no longer accepts the lumpy iron," said state trade director Otto Weisleitner to the Austrian smiths, who have persisted in a form and style of past centuries.

Instead of complaining of the lack of sales for their products, they should adapt their designs to the demands of today's markets; from the side of the architects there are loud complaints that blacksmiths have slept through recent development. There is increasing use of metal in architecture, but new design, new material and light construction are demanded.



Fine forging with the air hammer.



CNC (computer numerically controlled fabrication) is included in the apprentice training.

The new training program will accordingly include work in statics and rigidity, as well as welding; the working of other materials, such as aluminum, bronze, brass and stainless steel; and an introduction to CAD and CNC (computer assisted design and computer numerically controlled fabrication). Forging will continue to be a central point.

The trade schools will be equipped accordingly and, for apprentices whose schools do not offer the new technologies, courses will be offered at the expense of the trade union.

At a meeting in April this year, representatives of the state commission, the trade union and the manufacturers, the new program was unanimously approved. For the president of the smith's trade union section, Ernst Peischl, this means "a view of the future, which will be a part of the smith's life"

While Peischl, in this country, hinted at a bureaucratic attack on "designer-smiths," he could accept "forging technician" in Austria. (The deputy minister for trade was one of the principal actors in the dramatic battle over

the preservation of trade names.)

In consideration of the declining interest in the blacksmith's trade, which has been continuing in Austria for many years, the state minister for trades and his representative believe the modernization of the training program, and the new name, will improve the image of the trade. The blacksmith will no longer be the soot-covered, simple, old-fashioned workman who made copies of antique ironwork, but a member of Otto Weisleitner's High Tech profession. ✨

Translator's note: This was a long struggle in German because the generally used name for the blacksmith was "schlosser," or locksmith, although blacksmiths had not made locks for more than a hundred years. There has been a similar problem in the United States, first to teach that no, the blacksmith does not shoe horses, and then to get acceptance of "artist-blacksmith."

Adolf Steines was born in Trier, Germany, and in 1950 began his metalwork apprenticeship in the family business, followed by two years as a journeyman in Germany and abroad. Adolf studied sculpture under Professor Benton in Venice in 1957 and in 1958 studied design and architecture at the Academy of Arts in Stuttgart.

Since 1963 Adolf has worked as artist-blacksmith in Bekond, Germany, creating contemporary and traditional works in iron and bronze. In 1984 he was awarded the Artisan Craftsman Prize of the year from the city of Trier as well as the Award for Contemporary Blacksmithing at the International Blacksmith Exhibition, Lindau/Bodensee. ✨



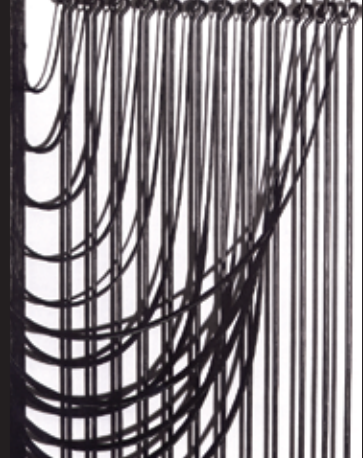
Entry gate – the design follows the historical style.



Staircase with candelabras – Electoral Palace in Trier, Germany. Banister, window grilles and candelabras follow the historical style.



Portal for the Royal Palace, Saudi Arabia. 4.80m x 2,80m.



Divider - height: 3m - forged iron, contemporary.



Wall relief - copper, repousse, painted.

The Work of Adolf Steines

Trebetastr, Germany

C. Carl Jennings

1910-2003

Carl Jennings, blacksmith, artist, gentleman and friend passed over on May 18, 2003.

From cabinet pulls to window mullions, from front door to Carl's ingenious version of a commode, the relationships of metal to wood to ceramic, glass and stone, reflected a rare understanding of materials and place.

In many ways, Carl was just like millions of others: he was born (Marion, Illinois), went to school, got a job, and later started his own business. It was in those similarities that Carl was different.

School was not mainstream college, but rather the California College of Arts and Crafts. His early jobs were in blacksmith shops; his business, El Diablo Forge, was started at a time when decorative anything was out of vogue; and ironwork was entering the Dark Ages. While rooted in the Arts and Crafts tradition, Carl's visions and interpretations of the world were his alone.

He operated El Diablo Forge in Lafayette, California, until 1969. During that time, he specialized in architectural ironwork for a wide range of clients, including signs for Christian Brothers Winery and railings and light fixtures for Chapel of the Chimes. It is in the latter where his family will hold its final farewell to Carl.

In 1969 Carl moved his shop to Sonoma, where he had started building his inspiring home. Centered around a steel and copper stove, complete with glass doors, integral oven and internal water jacket, the blacksmith's craft set a tone which resonated throughout the structure. From cabinet pulls to window mullions, from front door to Carl's ingenious version of a commode, the relationships of metal to wood to ceramic, glass and stone, reflected a rare understanding of materials and place.

Carl was known as an exceptional problem solver (he pioneered the use of the hydraulic



Carl Jennings holds the copper repoussé he made during the ABANA conference at Sloss Furnace complete with conference logo, date and location. It went to Bill Manley, conference chairman, for \$2,000 at the auction.

press to form seamless tubes), but was never afraid of tedious work. His famous terrazzo tub in his Sonoma residence was done with a quarter-inch drill motor and several handfuls of grinding stones.

In 1988, Carl was elected to the College of Fellows of the American Craft Council and the same year received the Alex Bealer Award for Lifetime Achievement from the Artist-Blacksmiths' Association of North America, Inc. (ABANA). Late in the same year, Carl began working on a new sculpture series in preparation for a one-person exhibit, which opened at the Metal Museum in 1990. Accompanied by wife Elizabeth, Carl traveled to Memphis where he was honored as Master Smith for that year.

His ever-present spiral-bound notebooks are now complete and hammer laid by. Carl leaves us the lesson of what it means to be an artist-craftsman.

Several years ago Carl made a gift of eight forged steel vessels to the Museum. The collection will be exhibited later this summer. ✨

Jim Wallace, Director National Ornamental Metal Museum

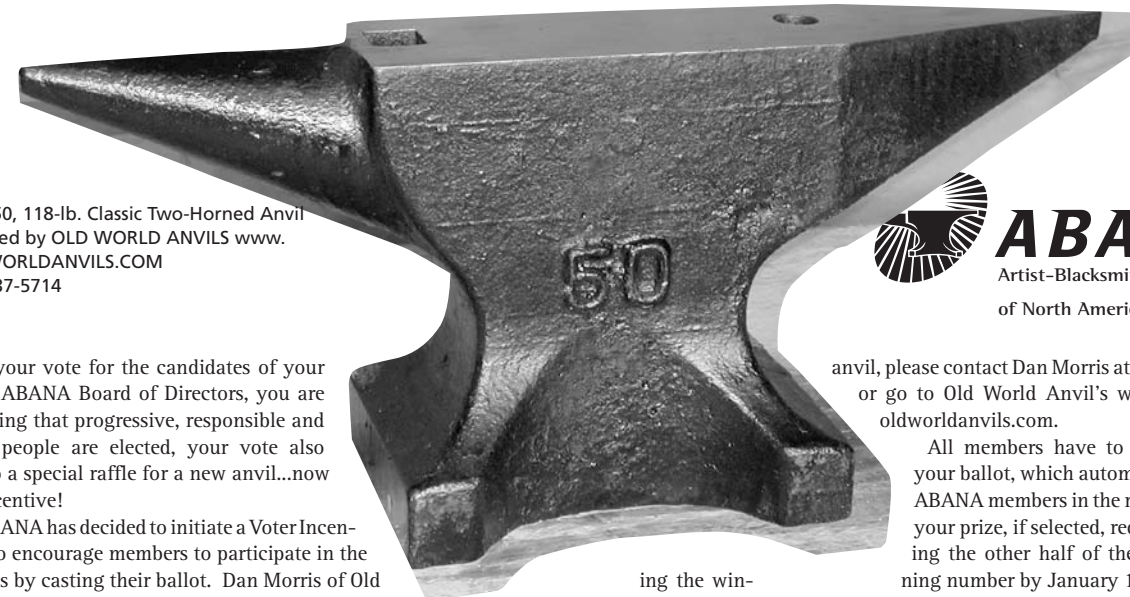
Editor's note: Carl Jennings and his work will be featured

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By casting your vote for the candidates of your choice for the ABANA Board of Directors, you are not only ensuring that progressive, responsible and hard-working people are elected, your vote also enters you into a special raffle for a new anvil...now that's voter incentive!

This year ABANA has decided to initiate a Voter Incentive Program to encourage members to participate in the election process by casting their ballot. Dan Morris of Old World Anvils has graciously donated a type 50, 118-lb. classic two-horned anvil as a raffle prize. Any questions about



anvil, please contact Dan Morris at 888/737-5714 or go to Old World Anvil's web site: www.oldworldanvils.com.

All members have to do is mail in your ballot, which automatically enters ABANA members in the raffle. To claim your prize, if selected, requires presenting the other half of the ballot showing the winning number by January 15, 2004. If no

entrant responds, a second number will be selected.

The winning number will be posted on the ABANA web site www.abana.com.

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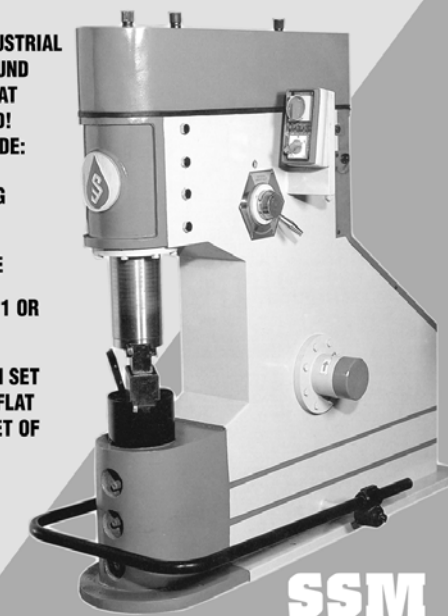
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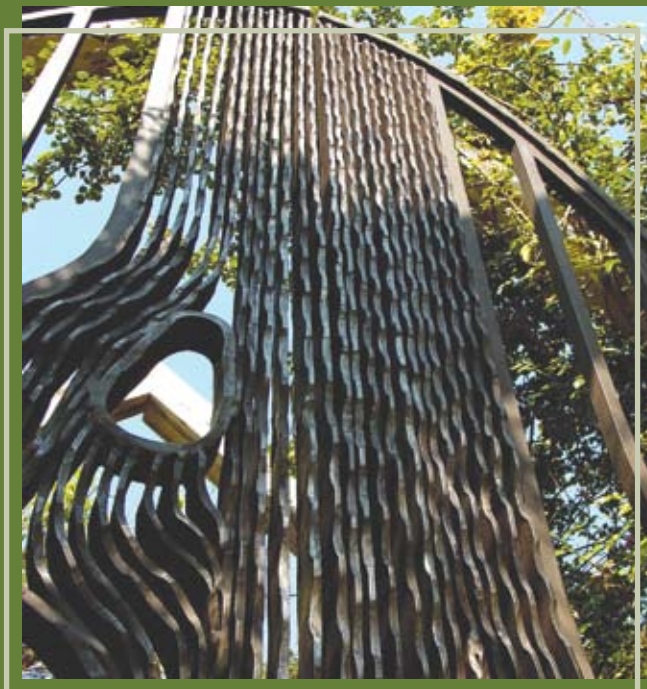
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Gallery



Entrance gate to St. Stephen's Episcopal School, Austin, TX.



Garden gate in Stonewall, TX.

Boxy Bellows

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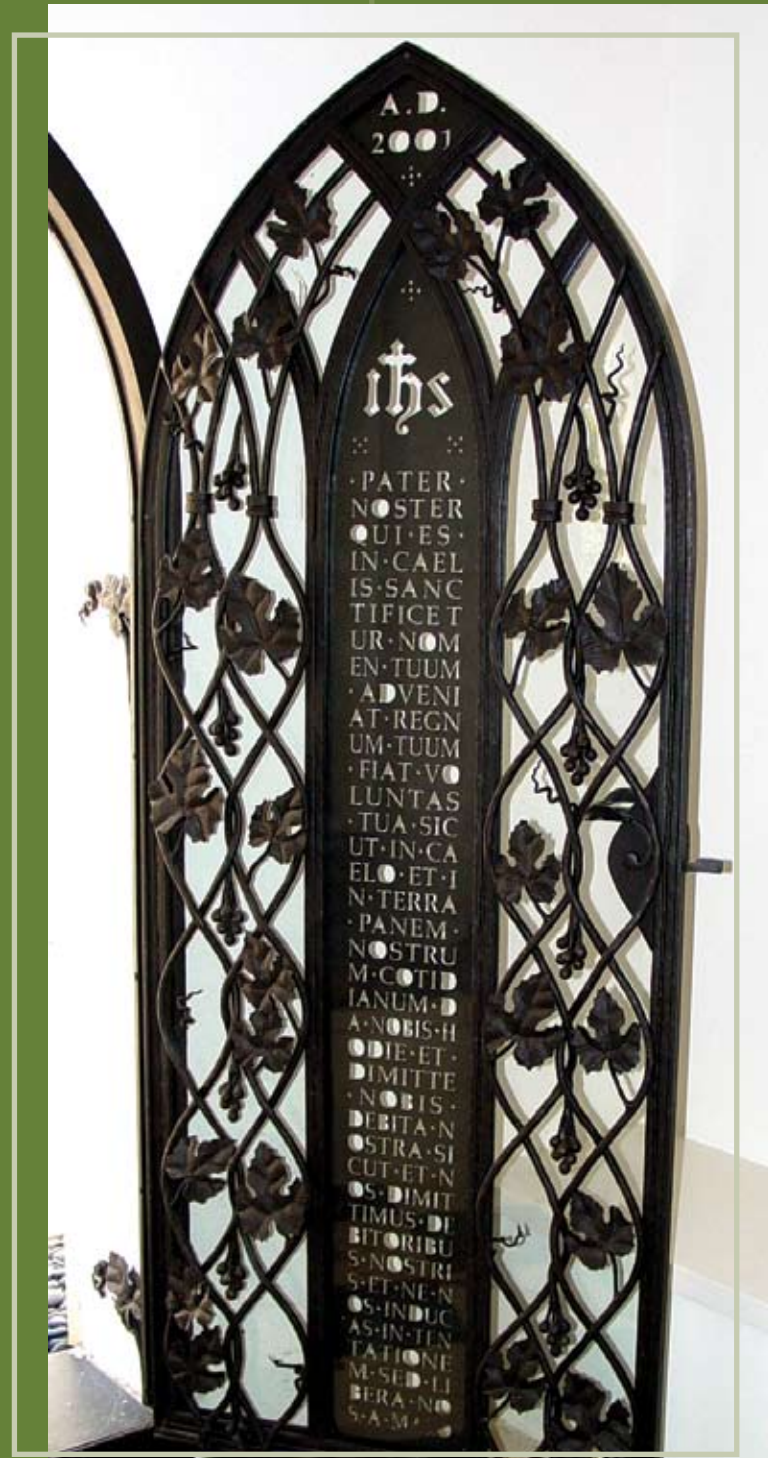


Wildflower



Cross

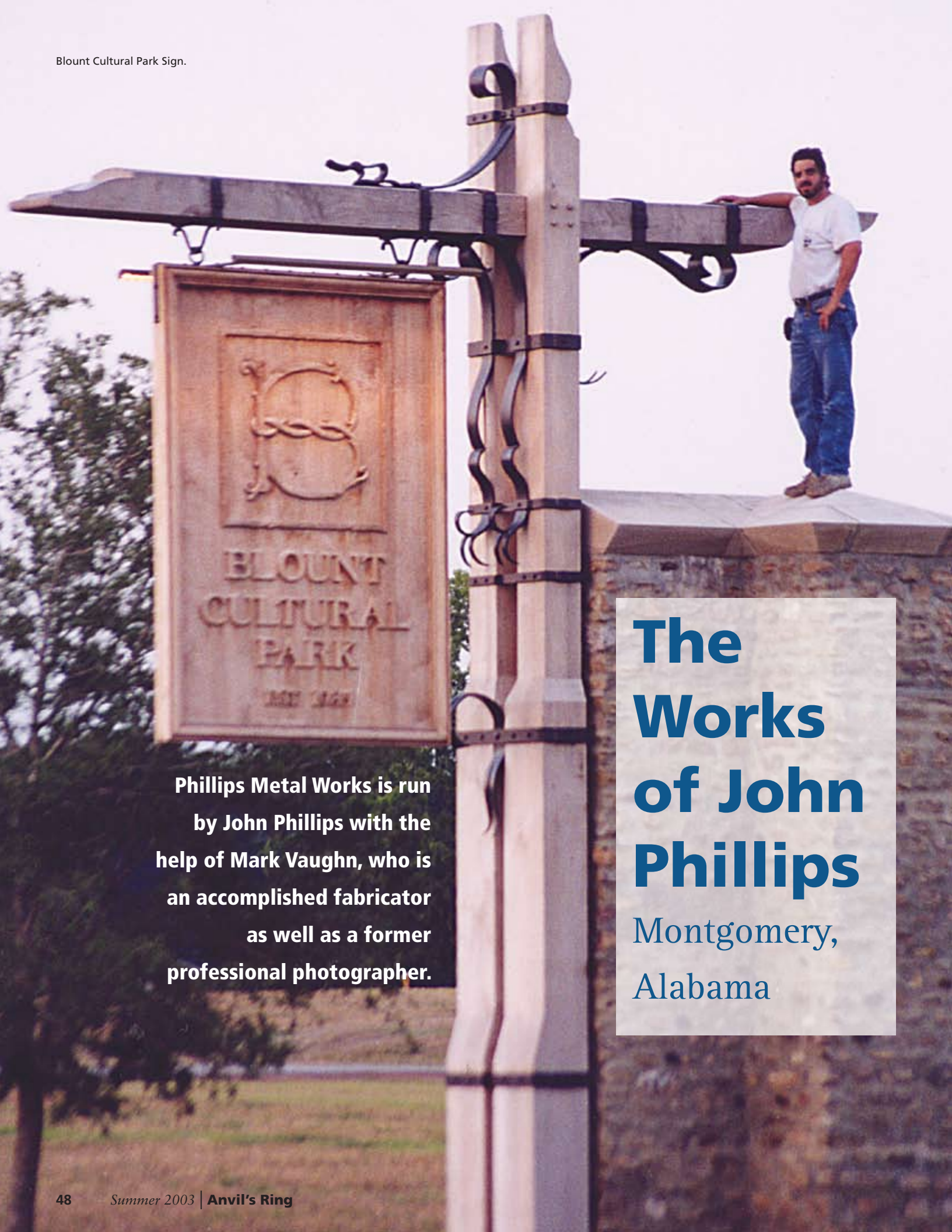
Wildflower Cross inside chapel. Chapel door shown on next page.



Chapel



Chapel Door, Austin, TX.



Phillips Metal Works is run by John Phillips with the help of Mark Vaughn, who is an accomplished fabricator as well as a former professional photographer.

The Works of John Phillips Montgomery, Alabama

The rich history of ironwork has endeared with many attributes, from the warmth and safety of twisted bars and honed edges to the natural beauty of fluid and flowing forgings.

Properly designed work can beckon or repel, simulate strength or accentuate delicacy, and inspire awe and even amazement. Most important of all, blacksmithing has always symbolized toil turned to purpose.

It was my admiration of these qualities that prompted my start in blacksmithing 14 years ago. I am still intrigued by the limitless possibilities contained in a piece of steel and the endless number of ways to achieve a finished piece. The hardest part of a commission is to pick a starting point.

The "Union Headboard" is a good example of finding a starting point. The headboard was a blank slate project – just build whatever you want and call us when it is ready. What started out as a wedding present turned out to be an anniversary present! I knew that I wanted to do something with an Art Nouveau feel, so I pored through all of my books for ideas. One evening as I was looking on the Internet I saw a railing that Enrique Vega had forged out of some extremely large bars. And there was my inspiration. I adapted his double humps with some ideas of my own and got to work. A year and a half later and it was done. The nicest parts of this project were that I had the time to build it exactly like I wanted and that it went to a good home.

One of the most interesting projects I have worked on was for Blount Cultural Park. Mr. Blount started out in rural Alabama digging ponds with his brother in the 1940s. In the next fifty-odd years his company had built the Superdome, launch pad 39A at Cape Canaveral (Apollo 11), a two-billion dollar university in Saudi Arabia, and many other notable projects. Mr. Blount's life story is the American dream come true.

On the home front, Mr. Blount had built his estate into a replica of the English countryside. He built the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts in his backyard (a BIG yard – 300+ acres) and donated it to the city. Enamored with Shakespeare, Mr. Blount built the fifth largest Shakespeare Festival in the world directly behind his house so that he and his wife could walk to

the plays. He also built a major Shakespeare Garden next to it. As a final farewell, Mr. Blount has turned his estate into a cultural park and opened it to the public. I had done work on his family chapel (fencing and interior), so I was especially excited to be contacted about building the signs for the park.

We built four signs for the park; one was quite large. It was particularly challenging as it had to be built in the shop, taken apart, then reassembled and erected with a crane on site. We built a special set of sawhorses that would hold up the posts and keep them at the proper dimensions for fitting the straps. The most exacting part of the job were the scrolls that had to meet the brackets at just the right places with virtually no room for error, since the position of the straps were predetermined. Fine tuning a 1/2" by 6" scroll that is six feet long is not your casual stroll to the anvil!

After the Blount Cultural Park sign was finished, I had a customer ask me to build a mailbox similar to the signpost. I had been talking to Ken Mankel about custom building a very large forge for big scrolls, so I went ahead and ordered it. It is a six-burner, 800-pound forge with doors on three sides so I can pull long pieces out of the side, rather than through the end. This makes it much easier for two people to handle both ends of a heated bar and allows me to put large scrolls back in the fire to heat them in the curved sections to tweak them.

Before I even had a chance to unpack the forge and fire it up, another customer approached me about replicating a sculpture I had made from twisting a piece of 1/2" by 6" flat stock into an abstract "dancer". The only hitch was that it had to be much bigger and it had to be done in three weeks for his daughter's wedding. So Mr. Mankel's new forge had its first project – a 36"-long heat on a piece of 1/2" by 9" flat stock to be twisted 180 degrees to form our sculpture. After recruiting Bob McQueen to lend a hand, Mark and I heated the piece and all three of us twisted it. Moving it about 30 degrees per heat, it took a few hours to get it around. Finishing the extremities in the large

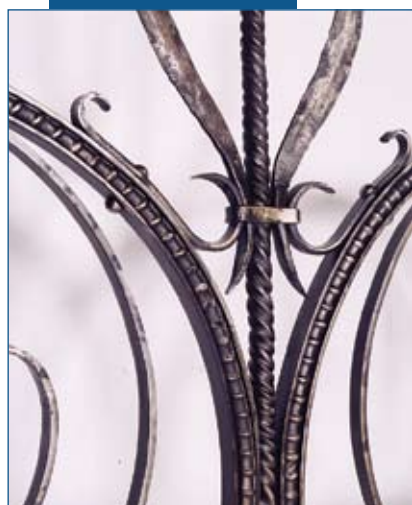


Lantern Stand.



"Sundancer"

"Knocking on Osama's Door" door knocker. Hand-forged from steel, mounted on heart pine salvaged from a local barn. The double eagle heads signify our nation's strength and vision. It is a functional door knocker.



"Union" Headboard, king size.



forge was a snap. This project was especially rewarding, as the client was very active in the design phase. He would stop by at each step of the project and we would plot and plan the next steps.

My latest project was a pair of lantern stands for an estate in Birmingham. The client was also very involved in the design of the stands. They had to set on stone platforms, next to steps that led up to the house. The biggest design challenge was to get the scale right. The client had already purchased a pair of large Bevelo lanterns, so we had a starting point.

We loosely worked from a picture that her architect had provided to come up with the design. I then scanned the drawings into my computer and used Adobe Photoshop to superimpose the drawings onto a photograph of their house. This allowed me to adjust the scale of the stands to a good height. I then created a full-scale mock-up of the stand and put it in place to make sure we were on track. The computer mock-ups made it much easier for all of us to see the final product.

The lantern stands took more than 300 hours to complete. Some interesting facts about the stands: The feet are 1" by 2 1/2" flat bar. As you progress toward the middle, the stock changes from large flat or square, to smaller flat to round. This helps give it some depth. The textures also change on each layer. All of the hammer work was done with a 25-pound Little Giant.

It is very important to remember that it is my clients who make this work possible. My work is very labor intense and therefore relatively expensive. While it is fashionably artistic to loathe those with means, it has been my experience in working with affluent clients that most of them are a joy to work with. I believe that my clients have a special appreciation for the mental effort, inventiveness and discipline involved in creating ironwork, as these are probably the same values that brought them success.

Since the job of blacksmithing leaves a lot of time to ponder all of the world's problems, I have come to a conclusion: Contemporary blacksmithing is, in large measure, a celebration of our country's abundance. According to Andrew Taylor, democracy is a progress from bondage, to spiritual faith, to great courage, to liberty, and to abundance. Blacksmithing has played a significant role in all of these steps, from the great architectural works that adorn the European churches, to the flintlocks of our patriots, to the utensils that allowed the explorers and pioneers to venture West and create our great country. Two hundred years later, it is the blacksmith who celebrates our country's abundance with ornamental and sculptural works. ✨

BOOKS OF INTEREST

The following books were (and are) significant teachers of mine:
Foxfire 5 - given to me by my brother, this book started me thinking about blacksmithing as a career.
Edge of the Anvil - first practical book that I found - was my first real instruction.
Samuel Yellin Metalworker - definitely set the bar for quality - very intimidating.
Wrought Iron in Architecture - great resource for historical styles.
The Art of Albert Paley - inspired freedom in design and forging.
 All of Dona Z. Meilach's books - great design inspiration and documentation of contemporary work - it's very interesting to look at her first book, *Decorative and Sculptural Ironwork*, and see how contemporary work has progressed in the current books.
Metzger - Basics of Style for the Artist-Blacksmith - just found this book - wonderful history of the development of style with great thoughts and designs. I still reference a lot of these books and read every book that I can get my hands on.

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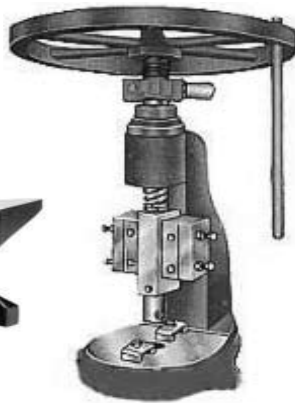
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CALENDAR

AUGUST 30 - 31

Early American Wrought Iron Conference. Delaware Agricultural Museum & Village, Dover, DE. 302/734-1618. See web site: www.agriculturalmuseum.org.

SEPTEMBER 5 - 8

7th Annual Bighorn Forge Conference with demonstrator Dorothy Stiegler. Kewaskum, WI. Dan Nauman 262/626-2208. E-mail: bighorn@alexssa.net.

SEPTEMBER 6

Third Annual Pig Roast. Peter's Valley School of Crafts, Layton, New Jersey. Call 973/948-5200.

SEPTEMBER 7

Annual tailgate tool sale at Red Mill Forge, Red Mill Museum Village, Clinton, New Jersey. Also NJBA picnic and Iron Art Show. Adam Howard 908/735-4573 to reserve a tailgater's spot, or if you wish to demonstrate.

SEPTEMBER 12 - 14

Northern Rockies Blacksmiths Association Fall Conference. At Steve Fontanini's Shop, Jackson, WY. 307/733-7668.

SEPTEMBER 13 - 14

North Texas Blacksmiths Association 2003 Hammerfest with demonstrator Corrina Mensoff. Bridgeport, Texas. See the NTBA home page at: www.flash.net/~dwwilson/ntba/. To register contact Verl Underwood 817/626-5909. E-mail: vauder@aol.com.

SEPTEMBER 27

Sims 2003 Conference with demonstrator Tom Joyce. Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL. Registration 8 am, demo at 9, evening auction and lecture follow (auction donations appreciated!). Send \$25 pre-registration to SIMS: Allyn Bldg., Rm. 113, Carbondale, IL 62901. Amy Winkel 618/549-1746 or Angela Bubash 618/549-1672 for more info.

SEPTEMBER 27 - 29

Southern Ohio Forge & Anvil Quad State 2003 with demonstrators Hank Knickmeyer, David Norrie, Tal Harris, Susan Hutchinson and Lawrence Smith. Troy, OH. Frank Woolley 937/368-2110.

OCTOBER 3 - 5

Northeast Blacksmiths Fall Hammer-In. Olivebridge, NY. Jonathan Nedbor 845/687-7130. E-mail: jonned@hvc.rr.com.

OCTOBER 4 - 5

Fall Festival, featuring over 150 juried and nonjuried craftsmen. John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, NC. 800/FOLK-SCH. See web site: www.folkschool.org.

OCTOBER 10 - 12

Northwest Blacksmiths Association Conference with demonstrators Jorgen Harle and Paul Thorne. Mt. Vernon, WA. Mark Manley 503/873-8918. Web site: www.blacksmith.org.

OCTOBER 17 - 19

Repair Days Weekend and Auction. National Ornamental Metal Museum, Memphis, TN. Linda Raiteri, 901/774-6380 or e-mail: library@metalmuseum.org. See web site: www.metalmuseum.org.

OCTOBER 18

3rd Annual Hammer-In at Frontier Culture Museum, Staunton, VA. Demos, contests, Iron in the Hat and more. Russ Stallings 540/332-7850 X167 or e-mail: rstallings@frontiermuseum.state.va.us.

OCTOBER 18 - 19

Appalachian Blacksmiths Association Fall Conference with demonstrator Tal Harris. Cedar Lakes Park, Ripley, WV. Dave Allen 304/624-7248. E-mail: anvilwork@aol.com. See web site: www.appaltree.net.

OCTOBER 25 - NOVEMBER 30

Blacksmithing Show of contemporary blacksmiths' work. MINE Metal/Art Gallery, 177 Grand St., Brooklyn, NY. Kristina Kozak 718/963-1184. E-mail: kkozak@mind-spring.com. See web site: www.minemetallart.com

NOVEMBER 1

Blacksmith Auction. Featuring unique, handcrafted blacksmith items for sale. John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, NC. 800/FOLK-SCH. See web site: www.folkschool.org.

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<http://lanetalsmiths.org/news/page4.htm>

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EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

AUGUST 15 - 19

Forging a Bracket with Peter Ross. Peters Valley Craft Center, Layton, NJ. 973/948-5200. E-mail: pv@warwick.net. E-mail: www.pvcrafts.org.

AUGUST 17 - 23

Intro to Blacksmithing with Buddy Leonard. John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, NC. 1-800/FOLK-SCH. See web site: www.folkschool.org.

AUGUST 17 - 29

Hand-wrought flatware with John Cogswell. Haystack Mountain School of Crafts. 207/348-2306. E-mail: haystack@haystack-mtn.org. Web site: www.haystack-mtn.org.

AUGUST 18 - 24

Welded Projects and Sculpture for the Home and Garden with Norman Ed. Snow Farm: The New England Craft Program, Williamsburg, MA. 413/268-3101. E-mail: info@snowfarm-art.org. Web site: www.snowfarm.org.

AUGUST 18 - SEPTEMBER 5

Blacksmithing class with Frank Turley. Turley Forge Blacksmithing School, Santa Fe, NM. 505/471-8608. E-mail: teeweld@msn.com.

AUGUST 22 - 25

Tool Making for the Colonial Home with Lucian Avery. New England School of Metalwork. Auburn, ME. 888/753-7502 or 207/777-6211. For complete course schedule, call or see online at: www.newenglandschoolofmetalwork.com

AUGUST 22 - 26

Red Hot Basics with Scott Lankton. Peters Valley Craft Center, Layton, NJ. 973/948-5200. E-mail: pv@warwick.net. E-mail: www.pvcrafts.org.

AUGUST 24 - 30

Viking-Age Domestic Iron with Fred Mikkelsen. John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, NC. 1-800/FOLK-SCH. See web site: www.folkschool.org.

AUGUST 24 - 30

Traditional Process: Contemporary Design with Doug Wilson. Penland School of Crafts, Penland, NC. 828/765-2359. Web site: www.penland.org.

AUGUST 25 - 30

Sculptural Tables with Michael Saari. Touchstone Center for Crafts, Farmington, PA. 1-800-721-0177. Web site: www.touchstonecrafts.com.

AUGUST 30 - SEPTEMBER 1

Welding for Women with Pat Bennett & Alison Safford. Snow Farm: The New England Craft Program, Williamsburg,

MA. 413/268-3101. E-mail: info@snowfarm-art.org. Web site: www.snowfarm.org.

AUGUST 29 - SEPTEMBER 2

Sculptural Steel with Christina Schmigel. Peters Valley Craft Center, Layton, NJ. 973/948-5200. E-mail: pv@warwick.net. E-mail: www.pvcrafts.org.

AUGUST 31 - SEPTEMBER 6

Home & Garden Blacksmithing with Bill Epps. John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, NC. 1-800/FOLK-SCH. See web site: www.folkschool.org.

SEPTEMBER 4 - 8

Blacksmithing Workshop: Steel Sheet Forming with Hoss Haley. Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, Deer Isle, ME. 207/348-2306. E-mail: haystack@haystack-mtn.org.

SEPTEMBER 5 - 7

Smaller Than a Shoe Box with John Rais. Touchstone Center for Crafts, Farmington, PA. 1-800-721-0177. Web site: www.touchstonecrafts.com.

SEPTEMBER 5 - 8

Forged and Fabricated Tools: How They Apply to Getting the Job Done with Ralph Sproul. New England School of Metalwork. Auburn, ME. 888/753-7502 or 207/777-6211. For complete course

schedule, call or see online at: www.newenglandschoolofmetalwork.com

SEPTEMBER 7 - 13

Fundamentals of Blacksmithing with Tony Holliday. John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, NC. 1-800/FOLK-SCH. See web site: www.folkschool.org.

SEPTEMBER 12 - 14

Treehouse Iron with John Pollins. Touchstone Center for Crafts, Farmington, PA. 1-800-721-0177. Web site: www.touchstonecrafts.com.

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Beginning Blacksmithing with Susan Hutchinson. John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, NC. 1-800/FOLK-SCH. See web site: www.folkschool.org.

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Intro to Bladesmithing with Don Heathcoat & Charles Ochs. Bill Moran School of Bladesmithing, Washington, AR. Call Texarkana College, Scotty Hayes 902/832-5565, X 3236.

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Blacksmithing I with Herb Nehring, Dick Reynolds, and John Sarge. Tillers International. 1-800/498-2700. E-mail: TillersOx@aol.com. Web site: www.wmich.edu/tillers.

SEPTEMBER 19 - 21

Making the Hammer Create What your Mind Sees with Bob Elliot. Touchstone Center for Crafts, Farmington, PA. 1-800-721-0177. Web site: www.touchstonecrafts.com.

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Beginning Blacksmithing (Weekend) with Ron Howard. John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, NC. 1-800/FOLK-SCH. See web site: www.folkschool.org.

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Basic Blacksmithing Techniques with Elizabeth Brim. John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, NC. 1-800/FOLK-SCH. See web site: www.folkschool.org.

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Steel Chimes & Bells with Dave Olson. Touchstone Center for Crafts, Farmington, PA. 1-800-721-0177. Web site: www.touchstonecrafts.com.

SEPTEMBER 28 - OCTOBER 3

Blacksmithing Basics 102: The Next Step with Dan Tull. John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, NC. 1-800/FOLK-SCH. See web site: www.folkschool.org.

SEPTEMBER 28 - OCTOBER 4

Welded Projects & Sculpture for the Home & Garden with Pat Bennett. Snow Farm: The New England Craft Program, Williamsburg, MA. 413/268-3101. E-mail: info@snowfarm-art.org. Web site: www.snowfarm.org.

SEPTEMBER 29 - OCTOBER 3

Damascus with Bill Fiorini. Bill Moran School of Bladesmithing, Washington, AR. Call Texarkana College, Scotty Hayes 902/832-5565, X 3236.

OCTOBER 3 - 6

Idea Formation; Material Exploration with Maegan Crowley. New England School of Metalwork. Auburn, ME.

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OCTOBER 5 - 11

Wizard Heads, Horse Heads with Steve Williamson and Clay Spencer. John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, NC. 1-800/FOLK-SCH. See web site: www.folkschool.org.

OCTOBER 6 - 10

Handles & Guards with Scott Taylor. Bill Moran School of Bladesmithing, Washington, AR. Call Texarkana College, Scotty Hayes 902/832-5565, X 3236.

OCTOBER 10 - 13

3-D Blacksmithing with Peter Happny. New England School of Metalwork. Auburn, ME. 888/753-7502 or 207/777-6211. For complete course schedule, call or see online at: www.newenglandschoolofmetalwork.com.

OCTOBER 11 - 12

Artistic Smithing Clinic with Bruce Woodward, Herb Nehring and John Sarge. Tillers International. 1-800/498-2700. E-mail: TillersOx@aol.com. Web site: www.wmich.edu/tillers.

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Basic Techniques-Beautiful Results with Vance Baker. John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, NC. 1-800/FOLK-SCH. See web site: www.folkschool.org.

OCTOBER 13 - 17

Advanced Damascus with Tim Foster. Bill Moran School of Bladesmithing, Washington, AR. Call Texarkana College, Scotty Hayes 902/832-5565, X 3236.

OCTOBER 13 - 31

Blacksmithing class with Frank Turley. Turley Forge Blacksmithing School, Santa Fe, NM. 505/471-8608. E-mail: teeweld@msn.com.

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Appalachian Blacksmiths Association Fall Conference with demonstrator Tal Harris. Cedar Lakes Park, Ripley, WV. See web site: www.appaltnet.net or contact Dave Allen 304/624-7248 or e-mail: anvil-work@aol.com.

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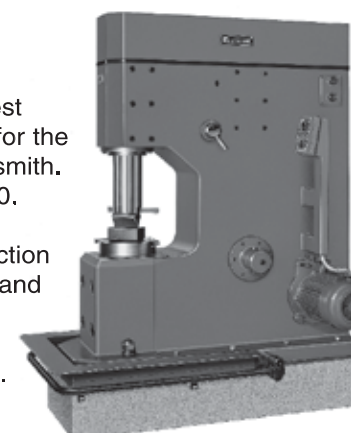
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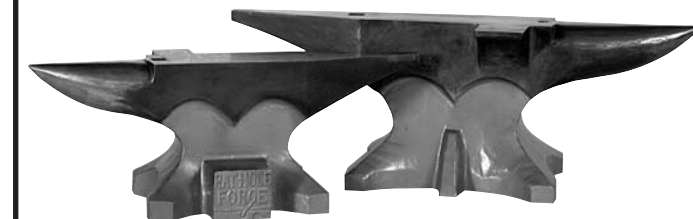
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European Travels by Henry Brock

Last of a 4-Part series

For this fourth and final essay on my Thomas J. Watson Foundation-funded travels to visit blacksmiths in Europe, South Africa, and Japan, I have decided to narrate a selection of photographs to better make use of the colorful, glossy pages of *The Anvil's Ring*. In January and February I was moving around in Ireland and England, north to Scotland, and then in mid-March I flew down to Cape Town, South Africa. Japan is the last stop before returning to the USA this August.

The First Iron Bridge, Ironbridge Gorge, England

After a brief visit with blacksmith Antony Robinson (we had a grand time, listening to Wagner, discussing religion, and burning brandy off bananas) I caught a bus to Ironbridge Gorge and spent a few days here, exploring the attractions and for the first time in a long while being on my own. Having those three days at Ironbridge was a nice opportunity to be introspective, and so I was. Mainly I decided that I quite liked what I was up to, and set off to find the next blacksmith.



The First Iron Bridge, Ironbridge Gorge, England

Ted Channon and The Coachman bid me farewell Clonmel, Ireland

I am not much of a drinker (sorry to alienate those among you for whom "drinking beer" and "blacksmithing" are symbiotic actions), but I must say I was put through my paces upon arrival and departure in Clonmel. Ted Channon, aging but spirited blacksmith and farrier, and his family of award-winning horseshoers gave me such a nice welcome that I didn't really feel like waking up the following day. I managed, though, and later accompanied Ted's son Joseph for a day of shoeing out in the countryside. He says his record for doing all four feet from the time of opening the car door to driving off is 16 minutes; I was duly impressed by his "unhurried" pace that day. There is good reason why part of the Channon children's inheritance will be in horseshoes.

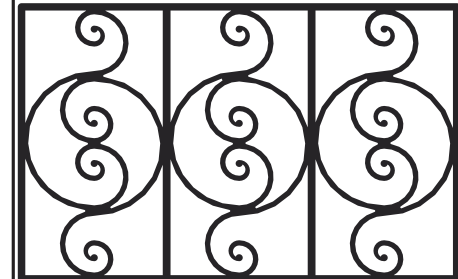
Ted Channon, aging but spirited blacksmith and farrier, and his family of award-winning horse-shoers gave me such a nice welcome that I didn't really feel like waking up the following day. I managed, though, and later accompanied Ted's son Joseph for a day of shoeing out in the countryside.



Luke of RootForm, at the hammer in Cape Town, South Africa



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Wildfire The Blacksmith Forge, Cape Town, South Africa

Robin Hanney, right-hand man of Conrad Hicks at The Blacksmith Forge, seems to live for the sake of shaping hot iron, and his many stories of past exploits were stoked with his boundless energy. When I stopped by with some fellow Watson Fellows who were also in Cape Town, Rob gave us a quick demo of what he calls "the wildfire," drawing out in one heat a piece of iron to the limit of one's reach on the power hammer. If only the Guinness Book of World Records would add this to its roster, I wager Rob Hanney would hold the title.

Albert Faasen and John Allesandri at the Flying Cow Studios Cape Town, South Africa

Albert Faasen, machinist and toolmaker for The Blacksmith Forge, took it upon himself to show me around Cape Town and the surrounding countryside, and one of the places we stopped was just down the road from The Blacksmith Forge. John Allesandri of Flying Cow Studios makes brass gongs, among other things, for use at big Cape Town trance parties; he said he had to make them out of thicker brass plate (3 mm instead of 2 mm) because "the guys would take off their shirts and just beat on the gong as hard as they



Ted Channon and The Coachman bid me farewell in Clonmel, Ireland



Albert Faasen and John Allesandri at the Flying Cow Studios, Cape Town, South Africa

could, to impress the girls you know, and would end up punching holes through the thinner metal."

Luke of RootForm, at the hammer Cape Town, South Africa

The guys at RootForm were a nice, industrious motley crew and their shop was peppered with experimental forms in iron and multimedia; it reminded me of the exciting, sensory-overload feeling of walking as a young boy with my mother into the university art department where she was enrolled. Sight and smell and sound all mixed, indicating that here was a place where things could materialize. This is one of the reasons I like visiting blacksmiths and their laboratories, to capture that feeling.

The evening of this photograph was the christening of their new hammer, an electric-motor driven spring hammer designed by Mario of RootForm and built by the group with parts from all over; a real team effort. They broke a bottle of champagne on the new machine, pounded some iron, and blew an anvil in the front yard to top things off.

Mt. Fuji and Lumber Yard Yamanashi, Japan

I arrived in Japan on 17 May 2003 after about 23 hours of flying time from Cape



Mt. Fuji, Japan, and lumber yard, view from the road.

Town and was met by Mr. Junji Kawai and his employee, Mr. Kazunari Sakaki. They have been of great assistance to me in arranging future visits with other blacksmiths and in treating me to some of the specialties of Japanese cuisine (I still miss inexpensive crunchy peanut butter, but the inexpensive raw fish quite makes up for it).

Kawai-san has also helped in planning my route by bicycle north to Hokkaido, finding maps and contacting blacksmiths along the route. The transportation system in Japan is quite adequate for my needs, but after 9 months of taking trains and planes and automobiles I felt the need to get some exercise.

From Monday 26 May to Friday 30 May I cycled about 320 kilometers from Matsumoto (where I went with Mr. Kawai and Mr. Sakaki to a craft fair) back to Tokyo, visiting several blacksmiths along the way. This photograph of the famous Mt. Fuji was taken along Route 137.

Much has happened to me throughout these travels, and I have happened along to many blacksmiths since I left the US at the end of July 2002. I predict that this year of blacksmith hop-scotch will be one that I will look back upon and continue to digest for the rest of my life. I am wholeheartedly grateful to all the kind folk who have welcomed me; because of them these past ten months have been thoroughly enriching. The blacksmithing community is a fine one, and I am glad that this old craft has persisted and forged itself a path for the future. ✨

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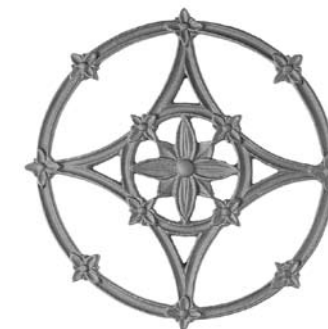
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