



Balcones Forge Dispatch

President's Corner

May 2024

Greetings,

We had a good turn out for our April meeting in New Braunfels. It was an eventful meeting. Rick Dawdy demonstrated making a Frederiks cross out of one inch square bar. Several members demonstrated for the public all day Saturday and Sunday. This is part of Balcones Forge's core mission.

The May meeting will be on the 11th at 9:00 am in New Braunfels at the Museum of Texas Handmade Furniture. The trade item for May will be a flower. Remember you have to make one to take one.

June's trade item will be another competition trade item. This means you keep your own item, it is judged, and the top three items will receive a prize. The trade item is something out of iron and copper.

Upcoming Meetings at the Museum of Handmade Furniture, New Braunfels

May 11

June 8

July 13

August 10

Aaron Tilton
President, Balcones Forge

Meeting is on May 11
Start time is 9:00



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We're giving away a pair of tongs!

Enter the drawing at
abana.org/tongtuesday
by midnight (ET), June 2nd
for your chance to win!

Winner announced Tuesday, June 4, 2024

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More info in the two Balcones Forge Facebook pages. (You can check out the posts without having a Facebook account.)

<https://www.facebook.com/BFCTB/>
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/688735415468063>

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

ABANA's 50th Anniversary Celebration & Conference

June 6-9, 2024 in Johnstown, Pennsylvania

We are pleased to hold our 50th Anniversary Celebration & Conference, June 6-9, 2024, in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Activities will occur in Peoples Natural Gas Park and Central Park and points in between.

Tentative Schedule of Events:

Wednesday, June 5th:

- Opening Ceremony at 4 pm at Peoples Natural Gas Park
- Competition Teams will have access to select and cut their needed materials at Central Park.

Thursday, June 6th:

- Peoples Natural Gas Park: Demonstrations, vendors, tailgating, and food.
- Central Park: Forging competition sessions, kids activities, and food.
- CraftWork Studios: Craft classes
- Made in Johnstown: Gallery of Ironwork (drop off work only from 2-5 pm)

Friday, June 7th:

- Peoples Natural Gas Park: Demonstrations, vendors, tailgating, broom making class, food, music.
- Central Park: Forging competition sessions, kids activities, craft classes, food, and music.
- CraftWork Studios: Craft classes
- Made in Johnstown: Gallery of Ironwork (drop off work only 8am-noon; Gallery opens at 1 pm with Reception from 7-9pm)
- State Theater of Johnstown: Lectures

Saturday, June 8th:

- Peoples Natural Gas Park: Demonstrations, vendors, tailgating, broom making class, food, music.
- Central Park: Forging competition sessions, kids activities, food, and music.
- CraftWork Studios: Craft classes
- Made in Johnstown: Gallery of Ironwork (Open 9 am-noon; Pick up artwork noon-3 pm)
- State Theater of Johnstown: Lecture and Auction

Sunday, June 9th: Tour the Center for Metal Arts (106 Iron Street) at 9 am.

A more detailed schedule will be released at a later date. Hope to see you there!



Lifetime Membership Award

Mr. Rick Dawdy was surprised when he received the Lifetime Membership Award at our April meeting. This is a well deserved honor. Rick was a Charter Member of Balcones Forge when the group formed in the 1990s. He has hosted meetings, taught many of us how to weld, has given demonstrations, worked countless hours behind the scenes to make sure our events ran smoothly, and so much more.

I think my first meeting was one hosted by Rick. I am glad to have been able to give Rick this award.

Arron Tilton, President

Finishes for Sealing Ironwork

By Mark Teece

Here are some of my favorite finishes for ironwork. Starting from the left.....
For interior work I like the traditional blacksmith mixture of beeswax, linseed oil and turps. I learned my recipe from Daniel Miller but there are many others



Beeswax

Beeswax can be applied directly to warm steel and just needs some buffing after it dries. Unlike many other waxes, beeswax is non-toxic and can be used on cutlery and utensils.

Paste wax

Johnson's paste wax or Butcher's Bowling Alley Wax or Lundmark clear paste is a good final coat – applied to warm metal a beautiful dark finish can be achieved. I also use Bri-Wax that comes in different shades as it was developed for finishing wood. I use the light and dark brown waxes for coloring organic forms like tree branches and bamboo.

Black wax from Sculpt Nouveau

If I want a deep black wax finish I use Black Wax from Sculpt Nouveau. Rubbed onto warm steel, allowed to dry and then buffed – Pat Quinn from the Center for Metal Arts uses this finish on his hammers.

Renaissance Wax

I use this wax on small pieces including jewelry as it is applied cold and seems to hold up well. It is more expensive than the other waxes but a little bit goes a long way. It was developed in the British Museum Research Laboratory so it must be pretty good! Available online. See the next page for a cheaper homemade version!!

Exterior finish - Penetrol

For exterior work I have used primer and paint but recently I was introduced to Penetrol as an exterior finish. Penetrol is an oil-based paint additive but used on its own it provides an excellent smooth and clear finish on steel. This finish shows off all the textures in forged ironwork.



It does take a long time to dry/cure, maybe 1-2 days. And I have seen people use it on rusted steel where it inhibits rust formation. Available at hardware stores in the paint aisle.

Traditional blacksmith finish

I learned my recipe from Daniel Miller:

- 2 cups Boiled Linseed Oil
- 8 cups Turpentine
- 1/2 cup Shaved/pieces of Beeswax

or another variation from Doug Merkel

- 1 cup Johnson's Paste Wax
- 1 cup Boiled Linseed Oil
- 1 cup Turpentine
- 1/2 cup Shaved/pieces of Beeswax
- 2 tbsps. Japan Dryer

Japan Dryer is used by artists to speed the drying time for oil paints and is available at art supply stores. Beeswax should come from a local beekeeper! The remaining ingredients can be obtained at most hardware stores.

Put all the ingredients into a glass jar with the lid on very loose. Set the jar next to your forge (not too close) to get the mixture to melt and watch out for open flames (this stuff is flammable). Once everything is melted, tighten the lid and shake madly until you have an even mixture and the beeswax is in solution. Release any pressure in the jar by opening the lid carefully. As it cools it will become a soft paste. Keep the lid on when you're not using it and sometimes in the winter you need to warm it up next to the forge again. Remove all scale with a wire brush and apply the wax to warm steel with a brush, rag, or your fingers. Let it cool and buff with a cloth. You can add multiple coats.



Tom Lupton donated a nice pistol and rifle cartridge display to the Texas Ranger cabin at the Texas Handmade Furniture Museum. Accepting is curator Justin Ball.

Photo by Jerry Achterberg.



Balcones Forge

Blacksmiths of Central Texas

Membership Form

Family Membership Annual Dues

(January through December)

\$25.00

Balcones Forge, an ABANA affiliate, is a nonprofit organization whose primary focus is education in the area of blacksmithing. Membership entitles the adult family members: attendance to all Balcones Forge functions at the reduced member rate; access to the library of blacksmithing books and videos; a subscription to the monthly newsletter; and the opportunity to increase your knowledge of blacksmithing and related topics through participation in monthly meetings, special workshops and demonstrations.

Date _____ New Member _____ Renewal _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____ Email _____

Blacksmithing skill level: Beginner _____ Intermediate _____ Advanced _____

Primary Business/Occupation _____

Can you... Host a meeting? _____ Write an article? _____ Demonstrate? _____

Are you an ABANA member? Yes / No (circle one)

In consideration of the Balcones Forge Blacksmith Association providing demonstrations and open forge meetings available and granting permission to enter the area of meetings, I, individually and as parent or guardian of the minor child attending such meetings, hereby waive all claims for damage and/or loss to my person or property, or the person or property of such minor child, which may be caused by an act, or failure to act of the Balcones Forge Blacksmith Association, its officers, directors, agents or employees and the hosts and demonstrators. I understand that there are inherent dangers in blacksmithing and I assume all risk of all dangerous conditions in and about such meeting and waive any and all specific notice of the existence of such conditions. By signing this waiver, I acknowledge that I have read and understand this waiver.

X _____ Date _____

Bring your completed form to the next meeting or send to:

Balcones Forge
PO Box 14, Dime Box, TX 77853

To pay with credit card, please contact Rudy@BalconesForge.org

Please make check payable to "Balcones Forge."

2024

Upcoming Meetings of Balcones Forge

May 11th. Museum of Texas Handmade Furniture, New Braunfels

??June 15th. Pioneer Farms, Austin??

July 13th. Museum of Texas Handmade Furniture, New Braunfels

August 10th. Museum of Texas Handmade Furniture, New Braunfels

All meetings start at 9:00 am unless otherwise noted.

Demonstrators Needed

Balcones Forge is often asked to demonstrate at different events and locations around Central Texas throughout the year. These are missed opportunities to share our skills with the public and continue our group's core mission. Some events ask for the blacksmith to be dressed in old time clothes to go along with their historical days and some just want you to show up in work clothes. Many times, they just want someone to light a forge, show basic blacksmithing skills, and interact with the public. Making nails is a great way to do that and work on your hammer skills!

