

The Upset

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The Jackson Oak by Bob Tomson, story starts on page 11

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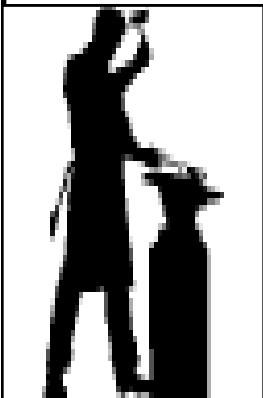
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President's Message

As the newsletter goes to press there are just a few days left until the month of May begins. What this means is that now is the time to start thinking in earnest about our MFC annual conference. The dates are May 28, 29 and 30. This year we will be having our friend Tom Clark as our main demonstrator. I am personally looking forward with great anticipation to his visit because I know that he will really put on an informative and active presentation. Most of you that were at the conference last year remember what a good job he did.

As we did last year we will again have the wine and cheese party on Friday night at 6:00. Plan on bringing your family so that they can see what we do when we are in that hot, smelly shop. I don't know about you but my wife and son had a really good time last year. How do I know that? They asked me just the other day if they could come back this year.

Another feature that we are adding this year is a silent auction during the wine and cheese get together. For us to do this we will have to have some auction items available for people to see and bid on. Instead of waiting until Saturday, bring all of your items in on Friday. We have seen in the past that blacksmith items as well as non blacksmith items are popular so use your imagination. It seems that unique items do well at the auction. Sometimes it is hard to tell what will do good and what will not do so good. The important thing to think about is that we need to have an abundance of things so that people have a good selection. We are going to invite the public to our Saturday auction so it becomes even more important to have plenty on the tables.

Our Auctioneer from last year, Mr. Anthony Goodrum, will again return to help us. He did a great job last year and I expect he will do the same this year. Please make him welcome. We can help him do better if we all work together to provide him with plenty of material to work with. It takes all of us to make the conference a success and it seems that the more of us that get involved the better time everybody has. Think about what you can do to contribute.

On Friday we will plan on working on our gate at the shop. Tom Clark will be helping at this task and I'm sure each of you will want to be in on as much of that as you can. We have to redo the hinges and Tom has a couple of good ideas so that they will look a lot cleaner. Plan on participating.

Tom will be making a talk in the auditorium on Friday night about some of the things he does. Any of you that have talked to Tom know he has some different ideas about the way blacksmith things are done. More than likely he has a good reason for his conviction. I look forward to his presentation as I'm sure you do also.

Walter Neill and Steve Norquist will also speak on Friday night and tell us about some of the things they do and how they do them. Our guests should enjoy this as much as we will.

Let's all do our part to make this the best conference we have ever had.

Please look at the MFC upcoming schedule for what we will be doing in the coming months. Please let me know what you want.

The March meeting was held at Walter Neill's shop in Oxford. I would like to say thank you to Walter and Vivian for their hospitality and also for the wonderful food. Just like last year we had a great time. Randall Minton did an outstanding demo on making hinges and also showed us the proper way to make two types of hatchets. It's nice to go up to Walter's because we always get to see some of our members that don't make it to Jackson very often.

April found us at Steve Norquist's shop with our brother blacksmith Richard Carr from the River Bluff Forge Council in Memphis being the demonstrator. Several techniques in repouss'e were shown as well as some punching using numerous tools. Thanks to Richard for a great demonstration and thanks to Steve for his generosity. We hope to see Richard and Steve both at our conference.

Let me hear from you. It is your organization. Tell me where you want it to go and what you want it to do.

Bill Pevey

May 8- Our demonstrator for this meeting, at the Ag Museum, is Bob Tomson, from Bay. St. Louis, MS. Bob will cover techniques in copper and brass. The demo will include the making of a water fountain. Bob has been working with copper and brass for 30 years. He is a long-time member of the Craftsman's Guild, a carpenter, a woodworker, electrician and boat builder. Obviously, Bob is a man of many talents. I first heard about Bob when a friend called and told me to go see the fountain at the MS. Dept. of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks office in Jackson. This fountain is a 35 foot wide and 25 foot deep triangle shaped masterpiece. It has 2 waterfalls, three trees, the largest is a 19 foot cypress and a beautiful swamp scene with lilies, cat-tails, a morning glory vine over drift wood that has four waterfalls, much too much to describe. All of this is made from copper and brass over a 14-month period. Recently I have had the opportunity to work on a project with Bob, see next page, and I can assure you this will be a meeting you won't want to miss.

May 28,29,30-The Annual MFC Conference, Friday night (6:30) will be the wine and cheese party with auction, may be a silent auction, so bring something to contribute and something to display. We are expecting Tom Clark as a guest speaker and Steve Norquist and Walter Neill will also be speakers Friday night. We are also planning on having a hands on class with Tom that Friday morning, we are planning on finishing the Clay Spencer gate and fabricate the fence to enclose the shop. The wine and cheese party will be held in the Agricultural Museum on Lakeland Dr., same as last year, and the conference demonstrations will be held at the Pavilion on the Museum grounds. We are planning on having Toney Harris and Suzy Gee, from Carrollton, MS demonstrating lampworking (glass art with a torch) and pottery .

June 12- We will meet at the Ag Museum and for a work day to finish what needs to be done to the shop. We would really appreciate your help here. Please contact Bill Pevey and let him know you will be there.

July and August will have to be announced through the mail and email. If you have any ideas for demonstrations please contact Ardell Hinton 601-856-2314.with your suggestions.

Civilization loses its treasures by an unconscious process. It has lost them before it has appreciated that they were in the way of being lost: and when I say 'its treasures' I mean the special discoveries and crafts of mankind."

- Hilaire Belloc

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Note: I have been asking for letters from our readers. I finally got two. Reminds me of the saying "Be careful of what you wish". The opinions in this section do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the membership of the MFC

Note: The materials noted, in these two letters, as attachments were left off because of space restraints. If requested, I will forward these attachments to anyone interested. Editor.

Dear ABANA members;

The source of the information presented here is hundreds of ABANA Board documents, collected and shared by members of the ABANA Board of Directors, including a past President of ABANA.

The reason this letter is being sent to an ABANA Affiliate instead to the ABANA magazines (Anvil's Ring, Hammer's Blow) is because the editors of both ABANA publications have openly told people that the ABANA Board will not allow these topics to be published. A copy of the entire set (this is only a fraction) of the ABANA Board documents, emails and bid comparisons will be available for the membership at the 2004 ABANA Conference during the days prior to the Membership Meeting.

A letter written on Sept 20, 1999 by Francis Whitaker says:

"To the Board of Directors, ABANA

As I read and reread the memos from George Dixon dated Aug. 23, 26 and 29 I find myself in a state of shock. The burning of the tape of the November Board meeting {Nov 14, 1998 - National Ornamental Metals Museum's shop forge} is reminiscent of Adolph Hitler and McCarthy. The {ABANA Board} failure to live up to the contract {98 conference contract with NC ABANA} is inexcusable. The unanswered questions must be answered and publicly.....refusing to answer casts a terrible suspicion on the non-answers.

I have always had the greatest respect for George and his untiring efforts to preserve the art of blacksmithing.

Most Sincerely,
Francis Whitaker"

Like Mr. Whitaker, I too have some questions for ABANA, especially about ABANA now and how it got here:

1) Why would the Secretary of ABANA send an email to the entire ABANA Board containing the statement, "Whoever starts this fight will wish they had died as a child."?

2) Why would the Secretary of ABANA offer to use his ABANA affiliate (NWBA) and others (CBA & Oregon) against ABANA affiliates on the legal playing field? Did these ABANA Affiliates endorse the use of their names by the Secretary of ABANA? Did they know?

3) Why does the ABANA Board keep insisting that the 1998 ABANA Conference (Asheville, NC) did not make money for ABANA when it clearly did? A past President of ABANA recently told me that the ABANA Board received at least \$37,000 cash and \$17,000 in new conference equipment. The Host Chapter, NC ABANA was paid 10% of the 1998 Conference return - getting around \$7,000 from the Asheville ABANA Conference, after many delays.

4) Why did the 1998 ABANA Conference Chairman have to spend his own money to hire a lawyer to try to get the ABANA Board to honor the contract it signed with Host Chapter, NC ABANA?

5) Regarding the bids for the ABANA Publications (Anvil's Ring-Hammer's Blow) in 2000, did the ABANA Board go with the low bid? Why did the ABANA Board give three different reasons (too high, too late, never received) why the losing bid was not accepted?

6) Why has an ABANA Board member threatened an ABANA member with a personal lawsuit for \$1,000,000.00 for things said and questions asked on ABANA's "internet chat room" theforge?

7) Why is there ABANA Board censorship of ABANA members letters to the editors? Why was one member's advertising required to be reviewed by Board members before it was printed?

8) Why is it that one ABANA member gets anonymous nasty emails which refer to actions, or the contents of registered letters sent to him recently by the ABANA Board?

9) Does the ABANA Board allow conflicts of interest in ABANA policy issues? Does the ABANA Board allow non-ABANA issues to become ABANA issues? Has the ABANA Board gotten ABANA into non-ABANA issues? Does ABANA have rules regarding the spouse, child or business partner of a Board member or Contractor in regards to ABANA dealings?

10) Why would the Treasurer of ABANA state publicly, regarding providing answers to the membership of ABANA: "additional reviews {of ABANA finances} are beyond the duties of the Treasurer of ABANA, my time in compiling information would be billed out to the requesting party. I bill at \$60.00 an hour." Who determines the difference between normal reviews and additional reviews? Do other ABANA Board members have hourly rates for reviews and answers?

11) Why would someone who shares blacksmithing knowledge, be denied ad space (in spite of a contract) for business ads in ABANA publications in 2003 and then be kicked out of ABANA by a vote of the ABANA Board in 2004? How did our individual Board members vote?

12) What answer did the current ABANA President get from the ABANA Treasurer when he asked for the ABANA records of the 2000 Anvil's Ring bids? Who has the current President of ABANA relied on for the basis of his Board actions in 2003-04?

13) Why was it announced at the 2002 ABANA Auction that there were no reserve bids, followed by an announcement of a reserved bid for the Latane' Project Lock? Why was the selling price published as \$12,000 when the last bid was \$12,500?

14) What did the Affiliates that helped on the 2002 ABANA Conference get from ABANA?

15) How many airline tickets did the ABANA Education Committee buy and who flew where and why?

 ABANA must serve all of its members, from beginner to the advanced smiths. Remember, we were all beginners once. In the Fall of 1995, a novice blacksmith, Greg Biddle, belonging to the Bluegrass Artist-Blacksmith Guild in Kentucky, wrote a letter to the Anvil's Ring asking for a column or an article geared to the novice once in a while. The following quotes are examples of what was published by the Anvils Ring in response to an ABANA member's simple question:

"I would be willing to wager Greg Biddle that without the study of history, a sensitivity to the material and insight into the principles of design, the work will be ugly, and unless cherished by somebody's mother, recycled in short order. The Anvil's Ring cuts down on the trash." James A Wallace, Director National Ornamental Metals Museum, AR Winter 95-96.

"The professional and art smith's are the ones who provide the expertise and drive that will take our organization into the next century. The hobby smiths are the ones who supply the money and the man-power. ABANA cannot survive without both groups." Brad Silberberg, AR Winter 95-96

Remember that last sentence: "ABANA cannot survive without both groups."
 A few letters appeared in Biddle's defense:

"Regardless of what one thinks of the old issue about "how-to" content in the Anvils Ring, no member of ABANA deserves to be pilloried for two consecutive issues in the manner Greg Biddle was. I have been a professional artist-blacksmith for a long time and the egocentric and elitists attitudes I read left me cold and in no way represent what I see as either professionalism or artistic concerns." George Dixon, AR Spring 96.

"How-to" is cogent not only for the beginner, but also for those who aspire to be the next Albert Paley." Stuart Cantrell, AR Spring 96.

After looking all of this up, and reading Greg Biddle's letter in an old, pre-Jim McCarty Anvil's Ring, with the responses he received from an ABANA Editor, an ABANA Board member and the "Director of the National Ornamental Metals Museum", I decided to try to contact Greg. In March, 2004, I spoke with him. While Greg still has his blacksmith shop, it is unused. At the time he wrote to the Anvil's Ring, Greg was getting a good start in blacksmithing. He had entered his work in competitions and won notice. He was also the volunteer newsletter editor for the new Kentucky Chapter of ABANA. However, he said that the overwhelmingly negative responses to his letter to the Anvil's Ring had hurt him deeply and destroyed his desire to continue blacksmithing.

ABANA Publications policy at that time stated that a letter received from a member would be printed without concurrent commentary. Further, it stated that the following issue could contain members letters replying to a letter in the prior issue and after a single issue's replies, no more were to be printed. In fact, Greg Biddle's "how-to" request letter got concurrent rebuttal from both the editor and an ABANA Board member. Negative reply letters went on being printed for a year in Anvil's Ring after Anvil's Ring.

 In a letter to Lou Mueller about the future of ABANA, Jack Andrews wrote :

"It seems that there is a lack of interest in getting involved. Is it that part of the problem comes from an attitude of exclusiveness and not inclusiveness? I feel that it is." 1996

To make an organization work well, I would think that interaction between the ABANA Board of Directors and the general membership would be very important. Board members should deal with both positive and negative issues openly. Here are a few quotes from ABANA Board members:

"The demands of Mr Dorrill and co. {the MFC} do not interest me. It is not up to members to tell us our obligations..... We are elected to do things as we see fit." and later: "If a few strident voices are not happy with how we are doing things, then by all means I encourage them to get elected by the membership, show me the VOTES, and work within the system." ABANA Board member Scott Lankton, in official ABANA Board emails dated 9-19-99 and 10-16-99.

"I feel that people who have a strong tendency to put forth their opinions should be invited to run for the ABANA Board. If they say no - then maybe their opinions will be more thought out." ABANA Board member Clare Yellin, in an official ABANA Board exchange, 8-22-99.

While on the subject of the ABANA Board; I wrote a lengthy letter to the ABANA Board in which I pointed out the problems with the 2002 ABANA Conference. I was encouraged to run for the ABANA Board. I did not win - "no problem" - but in the phone call from the ABANA President after the elections it was mentioned that it was probably a good thing that I was not elected by the membership as it costs a lot to be a Board member. He said that it is because of the expense of socializing during the annual Board meeting get-together. I had not realized that one of the requirements was to be able to afford partying after Board meetings. I am now the Affiliate Liaison for the IVBA. I asked an "ABANA question" on that web site. One of the answers was "why don't you run for the Board again?"

 Why on earth did the ABANA Board burn the tape recording of an ABANA Board meeting (Nov. 14, 1998) at the National Ornamental Metals Museum? The tape, made with Board acknowledgement by ABANA Board member Doug Merkle.

In an email after the 11-14-1998 Board meeting, the Central Office contractor confirmed she had told the ABANA Board, at the taped ses-

sion, that if they went ahead with their decision to rehire Dixon as Hammer's Blow editor, then she would quit and let the Board handle the outcome in the ABANA Central Office. The ABANA Board then reversed itself and did not rehire Dixon. {The ABANA Central Office contractor's spouse was the publisher of The Blacksmith's Journal.} An ABANA Board member who was not at the meeting wrote to the ABANA Board:

"I am still considering legal action as a result of the Board's cavalier denial of my right to know what went on during the Saturday {11/14/98} meeting as reflected in the tape being destroyed. I have refrained from pursuing this so far since there is so much shit in the air already and I do not want to see ABANA mortally wounded. But as long as a fraction of the ABANA Board wants to pretend THEY ARE ABANA, I remain deeply troubled." ABANA Board member Tim Ryan, for whom the tape had been made - due to his absence, in an official ABANA Board exchange, 1-17-99.

After this Board meeting, ABANA Board members stated to Tim Ryan that he did not need a tape, all he had to do was ask what happened. So why destroy the record?

In the Summer, 1999 Anvil's Ring there was an article, "The Past Preserved", by George Dixon. In it Dixon told of acquiring the Samuel Yellin Tool Collection, graphics and various examples from his then employer, Clare Yellin, grand-daughter of Samuel Yellin. He also wrote of his effort to fulfill a promise made to Ms Yellin, to find a recipient for the collection during his life time and of his donation of the entire collection to the Touchstone Center, in PA as fulfillment of that promise.

The following quotes are from emails regarding "ABANA business", exchanged between ABANA Board members after "The Past Preserved" article was printed by Anvil's Ring editor Jim McCarty:

"Lou, we need to talk about the latest issue of the Anvil's Ring." ABANA Board member Clare Yellin, to ABANA President Lou Mueller, 9-23-99.

"Dear Publications Committee, Lou and Jim,
I am VERY DISPLEASED with the latest issue of the Anvil's Ring. I am referring to the article George Dixon wrote..... What I would like to know is why this article was allowed to be published without anyone contacting me...." ABANA Board member Clare Yellin, to ABANA President Lou Mueller 9-23-99.

"Hello Clare, I have not received my copy of the 'Ring. I do not know what was printed, but I thought we had all agreed that things from Mr. Dixon would not appear in the 'Ring without the approval of the entire Publications committee. At the very least, you should have been notified as it apparently pertained to you and your private business. This is a serious breach of Board ethics in my opinion. I am very sorry that this has happened." ABANA Board member in charge of Publications, Dorothy Steigler to ABANA Board member Clare Yellin, CC to ABANA Board, 9-24-99.

"Clare,
This is past justifying and all parties should make a full accounting." ABANA Board member, Will Hightower to ABANA Board member Clare Yellin, CC to ABANA Board, 9-24-99.

"Jim,
I was disappointed to see the misleading information on the Yellin tools, etc, published in the magazine without any warning. I thought I had asked you to give a heads-up on anything to be published regarding Geo and the ABANA Board, of which Clare is a member, so we could respond at the same time if needed." ABANA Board member Scott Lankton to Editor Jim McCarty, CC ABANA Board, 9-20-99.

"To all:
Like everything, this too has more than one side. There are time honored ways to correct publishing errors (if such exist). The next issue can correct them. There are NO libelous statements in the article. If any of it's inaccurate, it is merely a matter of interpretation, something that is not ABANA's or the Board's affair. I understand Clare's points and the biased opinions of Scott and Dorothy who have lost ALL perspective when it comes to matters involving GD. The Board needs to tend to its true business. Those who can't need to consider doing something else." ABANA Board member Andy Quittner (an attorney) to the ABANA Board, 9-27-99.

"Andy,
Are you in bed with George or what? I hope he's good. That's as nice as I can put it. I vote that the Ring be held. You are the most, oh what's the use...insulting an attorney is like pouring water on a duck." ABANA Board member Scott Lankton to ABANA Board member Andy Quittner, CC ABANA Board, 9-27-99

"Clare,
As to the article in the Anvil's Ring... It did not contain anything that was negative, slanderous or in any way could discredit you. Your claim that there is and I quote you "possible mis-statements" and if this is so and you can prove it, this is the time to clear up this controversy by making public what the real truth of the matter is.

Since elected to the Board you have contributed not a thing constructive, the reason being that you are so consumed with your personal agenda about George Dixon. All of the issues you have raised along with Dorothy's last two page commentary {about the Dixon/Steigler/Kagele confrontation at the 98 ABANA Conf Auction} are nothing more than personal. And that has been the problem...personal agendas were brought into Board business." ABANA Board President Lou Mueller to ABANA Board member Clare Yellin, CC to ABANA Board, 9-27-99.

ABANA Board member Clare Yellin has not responded in the Anvil's Ring since.
Should ABANA Board members bring their personal or business issues into ABANA Board actions? As his ex-employer and having business dealings with Dixon years before her election to the ABANA Board, should ABANA Board member Clare Yellin have participated in discussions and votes regarding Dixon? Why did ABANA's Board allow such apparent conflicts of interest to go on?

In late 1999, Anvil's Ring editor Jim McCarty told Dixon that his business ads in the Anvil's Ring were being reviewed by a few ABANA Board members prior to being printed. No other members ads were reviewed in this manner. Regarding GDs ad: "Clare, read this from Jim McCarty and let me know if you have any problems with this before I let it run." ABANA Board member Dorothy Steigler to ABANA Board member Clare Yellin, CC to members of the ABANA Board, 1-15-00.

The ad was for Dixon's "how-to" magazine. With Jim McCarty's OK, George Dixon presented the evidence to the ABANA Board, which did not respond.

An ABANA Board member asked:

"How did George Dixon receive copies of the email between Clare, Jim McCarty and myself regarding Publications {committee} business?" and "I would like the Off Board Committee {Dr. Mark Williams, Ernie Dorrill, Dan Nauman} to receive the truth." ABANA Board member Dorothy Steigler to members of the ABANA Board in emails, 5-27-00.

"At the November Board meeting, it was agreed that all information Mr. Dixon wanted printed {in the Anvil's Ring} would be checked for accuracy if it involved any member of the Board, especially if it involved Clare. What about the leak of information What's your take on that?" ABANA Board member Dorothy Steigler to members of the ABANA Board, 5-28-00.

What about the ABANA Publications and Central Office contractor bids? Who gets these jobs and how does the ABANA Board oversee the bid process?

"I noticed that some people have applied for the Central Office job. How can this be before the {official public notice of the job in} Ring came out? Dorothy, I hope you are not doing the same thing that happened in November (1998) with people being solicited and coming to Memphis {ABANA Board meeting, Nov 13, 14, 1998, National Ornamental Metals Museum} for the Hammer's Blow editor job before it was ever announced. I think this is an injustice to all involved." ABANA Board member Lou Mueller, in an official ABANA Board exchange, 3-10-99.

Anvil's Ring editor Jim McCarty was told by the ABANA Board that a Publication meeting at the Flagstaff ABANA Conference (July, 2000) would only be a fact finding meeting and that the bids would not be decided on until the November 2000 ABANA Board meeting. However, the ABANA Board did not honor that pledge. Instead, the ABANA Board voted to take the Publications contract and give it to Rob Edwards:

"Rob's proposal...will give ABANA a savings of about \$30,000 a year despite increases." ABANA Board member overseeing the bid cycle, Dorothy Steigler, in an official ABANA Board exchange.

Why does one set of Minutes from the Flagstaff ABANA Board meeting read:

"Motion #10:

Discussion ensued that showed acceptance of Rob Edwards' bid would result in the addition of a color signature to the Anvil's Ring and a savings of approximately \$25,000 during the 2001 fiscal year." However, the "same" minutes posted by the ABANA Board for the membership read:

"Motion #10:

Discussion ensued that showed acceptance of Rob Edwards' bid would result in the addition of a color signature to the Anvil's Ring and a savings."

ABANA Board member Dorothy Steigler announced in the Summer, 2000 issue of the Anvil's Ring "the ABANA Board decision to have Rob Edwards edit and publish the Anvil's Ring and to print the Hammer's Blow" citing a savings for ABANA.

"I though Jim McCarty was doing an outstanding job as editor of the Anvil's Ring, but as a result of {ABANA} Board action he is out of a job after this year. It is easy to say what savings will be gained by shifting the publications....but what if these savings do not materialize? What happens then?" Norm Larson, ABANA member, on theforge, 10-5-00.

Why, after the decision which ABANA Board member Dorothy Steigler announced in the Summer, 2000 Anvil's Ring, did the ABANA Board ask the same two bidders to submit their bids again at the November, 2000 LaCrosse, ABANA Board meeting? Why no explanation in the Anvil's Ring?

Why, at this writing, do the ABANA Board Meeting Minutes, published for the membership on the ABANA Web Site, go from the Flagstaff 2000 ABANA Board Meeting Minutes to the Seattle, 2001 ABANA Board Meeting Minutes, omitting the LaCrosse, 2000 ABANA Board Meeting Minutes?

Why did ABANA Board Member Bill Fiorini firmly state, on the official ABANA discussion site (theforge), that he had not received Jim McCarty's 2nd bid, on behalf of the ABANA Board. Why did ABANA Board Member Bill Fiorini publically reverse himself during questioning by ABANA members on theforge and acknowledge that, indeed, he had signed for the McCarty bid. He further stated that the McCarty bid was passed to ABANA President, Doug Learn. (Mr Fiorini's ABANA Board, McCarty - Anvil's Ring Bid exchange is archived and available on ABANA's "theforge").

"I contacted Doug {then ABANA President, Doug Learn} and he told me that he and Dorothy did receive the FedEx" {McCarty Bid}. The letter was addressed to the Board, but not read to or by the Board. With the difference in bids of \$13,000 along with a discrepancy in postage, I think the Board should have asked some questions.....everyone on the Board should have all information, not just the Executive Committee" {group within the ABANA Board}. ABANA Board member Lou Mueller, in a letter to the ABANA Board, January 25, 2001. Was this \$13,000 saved or more cost?

George Dixon applied for a job as an editor for ABANA in 1995. Some ABANA members were contacted regarding this application:

"George Dixon should not be considered for an editor's job because he stole Clare Yellin's tools." James A Wallace, Director National Ornamental Metals Museum to ABANA member Clay Spencer. {see attached Clare Yellin documents} ABANA member Tom Latane' got a similar call.

Why has ABANA allowed the ABANA Board to participate in conflicts of interest? If an ABANA Board member has personal interest in an issue to be taken up or decided by the ABANA Board, they have a Conflict of Interest. That Board member should not participate or vote in

regards to the conflicted issue. If an ABANA contractor has a business interest related to blacksmithing, they have a potential conflict of interest too. If the ABANA Board had followed the standard practices of not allowing a Board member or ABANA contractor with a Conflict of Interest to act on or influence related issues, most of the problems ABANA has had and still has, could be resolved quickly and forever, or maybe they never would have happened at all.

In a letter from an ABANA Board member:

"I understand that ABANA Board member Bill Fiorini has contacted an attorney in Washington state by the name of Jerry Kagele. He has offered his services with no retainer and no fee. I disagree with this action.... Mr Kagele is a personal friend of Dorothy." ABANA Board member Lou Mueller to ABANA Board, 2-25-99.

Francis Whitaker wrote to ABANA President Lou Mueller, asking about the ABANA Board's problem with George Dixon. Mr Mueller wrote back:

"Dear Francis,

George, in the process of trying to do a good job stepped on some toes. I do not fault George, the job he has done as editor of the Hammer's Blow and chairman of the Asheville conference {1998} should be praised, not criticized. George is one of those rare people who is totally devoted to preserving our heritage and our craft. In my opinion George got raked over unjustly by a few members of our Board. Three members set out to get George and managed to sway the Board. I have spent most of my time as President trying to stop this problem with members of the Board and George." ABANA Board President Lou Mueller to Francis Whitaker, 3-19-1999.

"Bill, Jerry Kagele called yesterday to see where we were in this. He is still willing to donate \$10,000 or \$20,000 or what ever it costs to resolve this issue {Dixon-Hammer's Blow, ABANA 98 Conference}. He will donate two paralegals from his firm to handle it, full time if necessary. He will pay all legal fees and expenses as a donation to ABANA." ABANA Board member Dorothy Steigler to ABANA member Bill Fiorini, CC ABANA Board, 4-14-99. {Jerry Kagele, an attorney in Washington state and NWBA newsletter editor, is currently an ABANA Board member.}

"Why are there only a few Board members advising me on this?" ABANA Board member Bill Fiorini to ABANA Board.

What have been the comments of ABANA Board members about Chapters ("Affiliates")?

"I would say that most of the editors have never seen the ABANA guidelines on how to publish a newsletter or even know if such guidelines exist. Indeed, half of the editors (bless their little hearts) can hardly use a computer." "I'm not talking about asking the chapters, they'll say anything."

ABANA Board member, Dave Mudge to ABANA President Doug Learn, CC to ABANA Board, 5-11-01.

After the Board kicked seven ABANA Chapters out of ABANA, many asked questions about both "why" as well as about the "process" used by ABANA.

The Secretary of ABANA told the ABANA Board that he had directed an attorney in his firm to prepare a "counter-strike" on behalf of ABANA. The email was titled "ABANANVIL":

"I would anticipate that attorney's fees and costs would be assessed against the complainant. These could easily approach half a million. My office is in the process of preparing the necessary pleadings to file...as well as to initiate a Federal action for damages to NWBA in Washington State. I would expect a similar action in Oregon and California. Whoever starts this fight will wish they had died as a child." ABANA Board Secretary Jerry Kagele to the Board of ABANA, 3-29-01.

For those of you who subscribe to theforge, the ABANA internet email exchange, the following exchange between members of the ABANA Board may be of interest:

"No boss, I wasn't trying to start anything, I just saw his message on theforge and thought I'd pass it on." ABANA Board member Dave Mudge to ABANA Board President Doug Learn, 5-23-01

"I totally understand and thank you for sending choice postings." ABANA Board President Doug Learn's response, CC ABANA Board, 5-23-01.

As former ABANA President Lou Mueller stated, what appeared to start with a few ABANA Board members trying to get George Dixon through ABANA, seemed to escalate over the years. Dixon posted signed letters on theforge stating concerns about ABANA and how Jim McCarty was treated. These are in theforge archives. He heard from ABANA:

"You are here-by notified and warned that theforge website is owned by ABANA...." "You are requested to immediately stop....", failure to do so "following statutory notice, is a violation of the Federal Communications Act, ICANN regulations and other applicable state and federal laws."

Signed, Jerry Kagele, Secretary of ABANA, on ABANA stationary to ABANA member George Dixon, 6-10-01.

George posted further signed statements and documents on theforge regarding concerns with ABANA. He received a certified letter from the Kagele Law Office, Spokane, WA. ABANA members Jim McCarty and Lou Mueller each got a copy sent to them by Mr. Kagele as well. The cover letter included an offer from Mr. Kagele, that "my private investigator is going to be in North Carolina in the near future and he could stop by if that is convenient for you."

This letter threatened a \$1,000,000 law suit against George Dixon, a North Carolina resident, if he did not retract his statements made on theforge and apologize by a specified date:

"This is a personal tort action and has no relationship to ABANA or the ABANA Board of Directors" states Mr Kagele, threatening the law-suit in Federal Court in Washington state. The lawsuit paperwork stated that the offense occurred on theforge. The attorney goes on and identifies the plaintiff as a "member of the Board of Directors of, and an officer of, Artist and Blacksmith's Association of North America."

Signed, Jerry Kagele, Attorney, on Kagele Law Office stationary to ABANA member George Dixon.

In 2003 George Dixon decided to run for the ABANA board - here is what happened. The campaign statements, in the Anvil's Ring, of two current ABANA Board members struck many as little more than a personal attack on another candidate. The candidate who was the object of these two Board members attention wrote a two paragraph "letter to the editor", Rob Edwards. In it, Dixon offered to be at the 2004 ABANA

Conference and answer any questions raised by ABANA Board members Kagele and Steigler statements to the ABANA membership. Dixon received a response, informing him that his letter would not be printed in the 'Ring:

"as a matter of ABANA policy all correspondence of a controversial nature is presented to the ABANA Publications Committee Chairperson."

That Chairperson is Dorothy Steigler. Rob Edwards goes on to point out that:

"Valuable space in the AR and the HB must be preserved for information more germane to the art of blacksmithing. So, any further correspondence regarding this matter should be sent to those directly involved." Anvil's Ring Editor Rob Edwards to ABANA member George Dixon, 8-26-03.

Following the election, George Dixon received an email:

"Dorothy beat you 3 to 1. But that is not the worst of it, every woman that ran beat you. Have you noticed that every time you raise your head, you lose support? Where is the mass membership uprising? They were free to vote for you." forger63@yahoo.com 9-24-03

How is getting "beat" by a "woman" worse, in forger63's world, than getting "beat" by a person?

George Dixon has received a number of "forger63@yahoo.com" emails since, some are nasty, others reference ABANA Board actions and decisions regarding Dixon. forger63 seems to know ABANA Board business, including the contents of registered letters sent to Dixon by the ABANA Board Executive Committee. In the Fall of 2003, ABANA member Dixon sent a letter to Anvil's Ring Editor Rob Edwards, complaining that his business ads had been messed up again. In response, George Dixon received a registered letter from the ABANA Secretary, Jerry Kagele.

This is from that letter:

"You are herewith notified that, effective immediately, the ABANA Board of Directors Executive Committee {the President, VPs, Secretary, Treasurer} has decided to sever all present and future business contractual relationships with you, including advertising contracts in any ABANA publication. ABANA will designate corporate counsel in Georgia to conduct communication with you or your council. Very truly yours, Jerry Kagele, ABANA Secretary", 12-26-03.

Less than a week later, Dixon received an email:

"Hey George

Looks like the ball is in your court. They even made it easy on you. All you have to do is go to GA, about as close as you can get, it ain't WA. You keep shooting yourself in the foot and no one gives a...!" forger63@yahoo.com, 12-31-03.

On January 11, 2004, George Dixon wrote a letter to ABANA Board President Don Kemper, a former NWBA President. In it he explained the problems with ABANA in the past and the problems he had with his business ads over the years. The end of Dixon's letter to ABANA's President refers to reform in ABANA.

A registered letter was sent to George Dixon, he refused to sign for this one, returning it unopened to the ABANA Board. This email arrived about a week later:

"You should have read your mail. They made it easy for you. Now you don't have to worry about what is going on. How does it feel to be the first person voted out of ABANA?" forger63@yahoo.com 1-27-04

How did forger63 know what was in the sealed envelop of an unopened registered letter, addressed to George Dixon, bearing the return address of ABANA's Georgia office, but with a Spokane, WA postmark? Current ABANA Board members have confirmed that the vote to kick Dixon out of ABANA was taken in January, 2004. By an act of the ABANA Board, George Dixon is no longer allowed to be a member of ABANA, advertise in its magazines, submit articles or attend the 2004 ABANA Conference Membership meeting in Richmond Kentucky.

"When you come on the Board, you have a responsibility of operating and preserving the organization. You must put the best interests of ABANA first. If your feelings can not be checked at the door you should not be on the Board." Lou Mueller to the ABANA Board, 3-10-99.

If this would have been done and be done today, ABANA would not be having the problems it is today.

Mindy Gardner
ABANA Member
2004 ABANA Conference Demonstrator

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR, continued

Hi,

As we all know all too well, there has been 'trouble' in ABANA for some time. While not all of it relates to me, too much of it does. I have tried to resolve or end the varied issues, with the small, recurring group of 'players'; to no avail. Until this year, I have done so through established channels of ABANA. It has not worked. Indeed, trying to resolve the "last issue" has become the current issue more than once.

By broadsiding me in the last election flier, the Candidate's Statements in the last election were 'noticed'. Two sitting Board members made it clear who was standing for ethics and the needed reform of the ABANA Board. In this way, members with information were shown who to give it to. Around New Year, 2004, I was given an opportunity to understand just about all of the "troubling, ABANA issues". A past ABANA Board member gave me 100's of ABANA documents. Another Board member contributed a cache of emails and ABANA expense documents. I, in turn, passed the entire compilation on to reform minded ABANA members after I was kicked out of ABANA, largely by Board members named in these documents.

My concern, regarding rebuttal, was "how to focus" all of this in the minds of ABANA members. I decided to turn to those named in the Board documents for their unwitting help.....

There is a saying about one's opposition:

"God let them understand me. Those who do not, let me convince. Those who I cannot convince, God, please twist their ankle so I know them by their limp."

I decided to get the usual cast of characters to call their usual list of associates and remind them, for me, of the sordid chain of events of which they had been 'players' over the years and about which they had used misinformation to sway their listeners. Knowing, from past experience, that these people would be ready to hit the phones and emails if they had half of a reason, I handed each of them a "reason and a half".

First, I offered each of them a polite opportunity to drop all of "this", and waited for a response. A few did respond. To those who did not want to drop their animus, within the context of ABANA, I sent another communication. In a series of personalized letters, relating to their past actions or words within ABANA, I did my best to let each individual bluntly know what I thought of them and what they had for liabilities. In a metaphorical sense, the personalized letters "kicked 'em in their ankle", so their "limp" would be noticeable ("The Lord helps those who help themselves.").

It has worked well to date.

Several recipients, outraged Board members, have done as projected and loudly "limped". Some of ABANA members, to whom they "limped", called me and asked me to explain why I sent such a letter.

Explain I did, and do, and will.

Those who have asked me to explain go off concerned, just not concerned with me..... (They are very cool documents to have shared.)

I have no wish to continue this, in any manner. (Which is why I gave the documents away)

The membership will now get to decide to act, or to let it slide.

I do wish to address accusations made, in the context of ABANA by ABANA Board members, about or against me:

1) I did not steal nor did I extort the Samuel Yellin tools, graphics or examples from Clare Yellin. I was offered the tool collection, etc, when she closed her grandfather's shop. The paperwork is included here. The dates of the paperwork range from the receipt, 9-9-92, to a certificate lauding me and my efforts in the context of "Samuel Yellin" dated 12-21-92. All are signed by Clare Yellin and the laudatory certificate comes almost 4 months after the tool transaction..... no theft and no extortion.

2) I did not steal money from the 1998 ABANA Conference. In fact over \$37,000 in cash and \$17,000 in new equipment was turned over to the ABANA Board by the '98 finance chairman, Lou Mueller. The "take" would have been larger but for the costs of accommodating an extra 700 people over our projections of 1,000 attendees. This meant real-time additional expenses at retail, not the preplanned orders and purchases in bulk and at wholesale from a year before. The mark of that 1998 Asheville Conference was that it expanded to accommodate

Continued from pg. 10

1,700 people instead of 1,000 people as planned....and no one noticed or did without, and it still made a profit for ABANA.

ABANA needs a general audit of the past decade. The continued misrepresentation by the ABANA Board just causes potential future volunteers to have 2nd thoughts.

3) In 1998, ABANA changed from paying editors when they invoiced, to paying editors quarterly, in advance of each issue. In the run-up to the 98 Asheville conference, and while battling the Board's Executive Committee, I got behind on several Hammer's Blows. For this I apologized. The 1998 ABANA Board decision was to rehire me (Nov, 14, 1998). However, Board members were swayed, by the Central Office Contractor, against rehiring me. She stated all of this in an email sent after the 98 Board meeting. The Board did not dismiss me as editor due to anything relating to my work as editor.

4) After repeated, and now documentable provocations, within ABANA, I lost my temper with Dorothy Steigler at the 98 ABANA auction. I apologized to her later that same evening. In spite of how that event has grown in the retelling, I will still stand by my apology to her. While I have come to resent how the 'retellings' now have grown to have me sounding like a Rap song writer, I guess that is life.....

5) I do not have a "woman problem". This is a product of the disinformation mill that goes under the name of the ABANA Board. I worked for and ran the forge-shop of a woman in Philadelphia for 4 years. My publisher, now, is a woman. I have been married to one woman for 30 years. Trash-talk like that is not only demeaning, it tarnishes the elected offices of ABANA which generate it in their emails, over their signatures.

6) "Take your meds" is another line of the same demeaning pedigree as the "woman problem". It too is not true, nor does it reflect well on the teller of the tale. It, and too many like it, appears in print in inter-ABANA Board email and faxes over several years.

From the problems within the ABANA Education Committee today, to what happened to Jim Batson in the past as well as through Jim McCarty to me..... a small group on the ABANA Board have caused a recurring mess.

I think you get the drift, and none of this is totally new to anyone.

The actions and statements of Directors of ABANA have been unwarranted and unproductive.

From phone calls to emails, 'this' could not have the 'legs' it has had, or the effect it has had, without using the blacksmith community of ABANA. Misuse of elected ABANA office has given too many people an inappropriate forum for their attempts to exorcise personal demons or salve personal egos. Too many other ABANA Board members "failed to notice" the misuse of ABANA going on during their watch.

I do not have any demands of ABANA or its Board or members.

While I believe that the ABANA Board Executive Committee's cancellation of my advertising contract is unjust.... I imagine less partisan Board members will prevail and that 'access' will be restored. I have not and do not seek compensation or retribution. ABANA is worth reforming.

I do ask that ABANA is no longer allowed to be used against individuals or for the benefit of Board members, their families or their business associates.

I have only used a lawyer to write to the Board, or related people, when they 'act badly', refuse to reply to me and continue to 'act badly' at my expense. I have never sued ABANA, or anyone, not even close.....

While it is true that there will always be those who choose to act badly, it is also true that those who do are few in number. One other truth is related to all of "this"; those few who 'act badly' can only have the disproportionate impact that they have had, when other people let them. It is best if one establishes the truth before one facilitates an untruth.

It is way past time for the ABANA blacksmith community to resolve to move past "this" now and forever.

Regards,

George Dixon, Metalsmith



Walter and Vivian Neill (that's Walter on the left) hosted the March meeting of the MFC. As was the case last year they served a wonderful lasagna and salad for lunch. There was a motion made to have all the meetings at Walter's shop in Oxford. You can tell by Vivian's smile that there might be such a thing as "too much of a good thing".

Joking aside, this event is one of the highlights of our year. Thank you very much for your hospitality.



Randall Minton was the demonstrator for the meeting. He showed us several types of hinges and the processes to accomplish these tasks. Randall also show us how to make a tomahawk with a tool steel cutting edge forged on the working end. Randal is a very talented blacksmith and has a real love of, and a knack for, teaching. It really works out well for the MfC members to be able to come to Oxford and meet at Walter's "dream" of a blacksmith shop.
Thanks Randall, Vivian and Walter. See you next year in Oxford



Assorted shots of the March meeting in Oxford

Controlled Hand Forging
UPSETTING

By Peter Ross
Illustrations by Tom Latané

Originally published in the Hammer's Blow, Volume 12, #1, Winter 2004, and appears courtesy of ABANA.

UPSETTING

Definition:

Upsetting increases the cross-sectional area by deforming existing material instead of adding material.

Upset 1" of the end of a 1/2" square bar by 25% (drawing of finished shape)

Intent:

The student will learn the basic principles for upsetting the end of a bar efficiently, practice the methods, and be able to produce accurate results.

Tools needed: basic tools only, including a square.

Materials:

14" of 1/2" square mild steel

Method:

The bar is hammered end-on. This shortens the bar and causes it to swell where it is hot.

In order to work efficiently, the following conditions must be met:

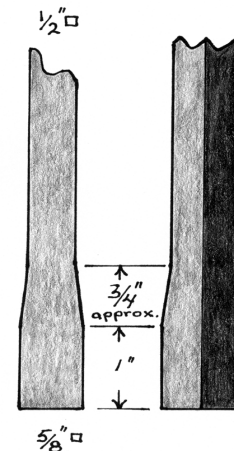
1. the bar must remain straight.
2. the bar must be at a very high heat
3. the bar must be hit hard

Managing these factors is more difficult than it might appear. This is one

process where almost everything works against you.

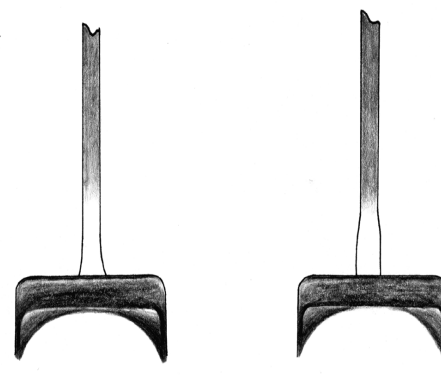
Since hot steel bends so easily, it is very likely for a bend to start even while striking on end.

Once even a little bend starts, almost all upsetting ceases and the blows simply cause more bending. (If you have ever tried to drive a nail once it has bent even a little bit, you will understand the situation.)



The finished shape.

of



Upsetting with lighter vs. heavier blows

Very little is accomplished unless the bar is at its softest. At a medium-orange heat or below, results are almost negligible. Therefore, it is crucial to start at the highest heat and work quickly.

As a practical example, try to make a small section of rope swell by pushing from both ends. If you hold too far apart, the rope will bend. It only swells when you keep everything straight and localize the work area. Also, compare the resistance between upsetting and bending the rope. It will bend with much less force. This illustrates the necessity of following the three requirements when working steel.

Factors to consider when upsetting:

1. The size of the hammer affects the results. A light hammer can be used faster, but since it has less mass, the blows work only the very end of the bar.

A heavier hammer will have a deeper effect.

If too heavy, the hammer cannot be used fast enough, adding extra heats. For this exercise, a hammer between 1 1/2 and 2 pounds will be adequate.

2. The length of the heat is very important. If too long a heat is taken, the bar will bend rather than upset.

3. The end of the bar affects straightness. Even though the end of the bar will deform during upsetting, how it looks at the start is crucial. If the end is not square to the bar length, the first blow will cause bending.

Additional blows only exaggerate the condition.

If this continues, there is no easy way to correct the problem.

The likelihood of any smith holding and striking the bar perfectly plumb every time (or even once, for that matter) while working as quickly as possible is slightly less than winning the lottery. Most experienced smiths count on the bar bending frequently. There is almost no way to prevent this.

The object is to notice bending as soon as it occurs and correct it right

away. The sooner a problem is noticed, the simpler (and faster!) the

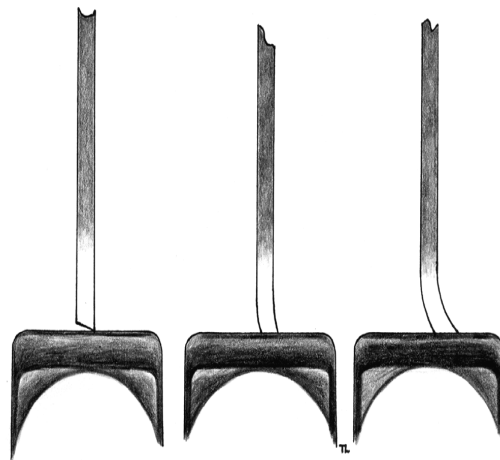
correction can be made. This sometimes means only one or two upsetting blows

between straightening, so the key to upsetting is to work quickly and make constant corrections.

4. How solidly the bar is supported will determine the effectiveness of each

blow. A bar backed against the anvil will upset much faster than one

supported in the hand.



A bar end that is out of square causes bending.

A bar can be held in the vise for upsetting. However, there are some serious drawbacks to this method. For one thing, the vise will pinch the bar (especially at very high heat) and leave scars. For another, it is awkward to straighten a bar while it is clamped in the vise. Proper straightening is best done at the anvil, and it is quite slow clamping and unclamping the work every two or three blows. Finally, the vise is an effective heat sink, and cools the work appreciably.

5. You have the choice of holding a short bar with hot end up or down. If down, the length of the bar absorbs some of the blow, so less is accomplished. If the hot end is up, the blows fall directly on the heated end, which is good. However, it's much harder to hold the upper end steady if you grip at the bottom and strike at the top. You will also get many scale burns on your wrist. Holding the cold end up with the heated end down on the anvil face is the best compromise.

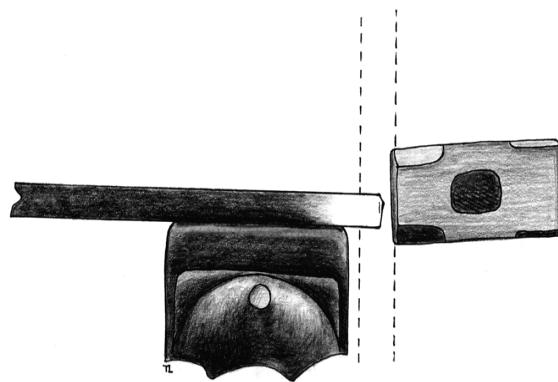
Note: it may be tempting to use tongs to hold the bar, enabling you to hold the hot end up after all. This sounds like it solves all the problems, but in fact it can slow down the quick changes from upright to straightening to upright so much that extra heats will be necessary. It is better to learn the proper hand grip method.

Step One:

If you are starting with a bar with an uneven end, you must square it first. To do this you will upset the very tip of the bar. Since only a small area is to be worked, you can usually do this easily in one heat. Hold the bar so that the hot end projects beyond the far edge of the anvil an inch or two and strike the end of the bar. You will be hammering almost directly towards yourself and bracing the cold end of the bar against your thigh. Remember to keep straightening as necessary until the end of the bar is square to its long axis and the original dimension (in this case, 1/2" square). Check with your square if necessary.

Note: It is possible to start with a bar that has been cut hot on the hardie, but only if it has been cut evenly from all sides, leaving the resulting burr centered on the cut end. After the first one or two upsetting blows the burr will be gone. An uneven cut will leave an off-center burr and this will guarantee bending.

Now for the real work. Take a near-welding heat on the end of the bar. It is important to heat only 1-2 inches. Even with the best of intentions, the heat is sometimes too long. In this case, quickly quench all but the area to



Bar and hammer in position.

be upset. The fastest method is to submerge the long end of the bar (along with your arm) in the slack tub. This works well with a short bar such as the one in this lesson. If you move the bar around in the water it will cool even faster than holding it still. Remember, wasting time at the tub means the bar will be much cooler by the time you are ready to strike. Best results come from heating the bar correctly so you can go directly to the anvil.

Target:

If you have taken a good heat, you should be at the anvil and ready to strike within 1 or 2 seconds. If quenching is necessary, try to take no more than 3 or 4 seconds from fire to striking the first blow (beginning of step 2).

Step Two:

Hold the bar upright on the anvil and strike the upper end two or three quick, hard blows. Look frequently at the hot end as you are working. As soon as you see the bar bending, stop upsetting and straighten, using as few blows as possible. Overzealous straightening can lead to drawing out the bar... negating your progress. You do not need to get the bar perfectly straight, but close.

As soon as possible, return the bar to upright and strike two or three more upsetting blows. Continue in this manner until you have slightly exceeded the target dimension, taking additional heats if the bar cools below a medium orange.

Note:

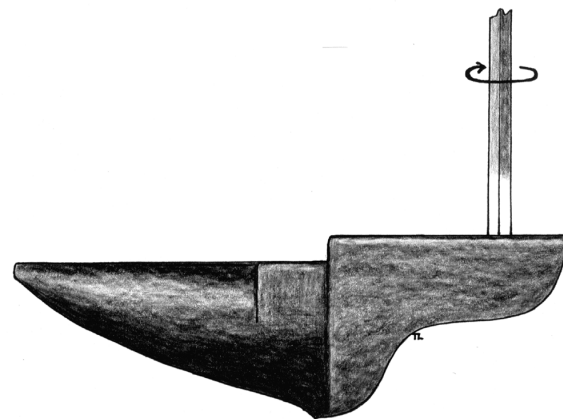
While checking for straightness, remember also to keep watching the end. If you see the end of the bar going out of square, you must stop upsetting and correct as illustrated in step 1.

What can be done to minimize the time used in straightening? Many smiths will rotate the bar 1/4 or 1/2 turn between blows to keep minor mistakes from compounding.

Occasionally, a correction can be done without much interruption. If the bar end goes out of square and causes a bend, bending the bar in the opposite

direction will address both corrections (straightening the bar, and squaring the end) at once. Remember, reducing the interruptions to actual upsetting means fewer heats to accomplish the goal. Every second saved counts.

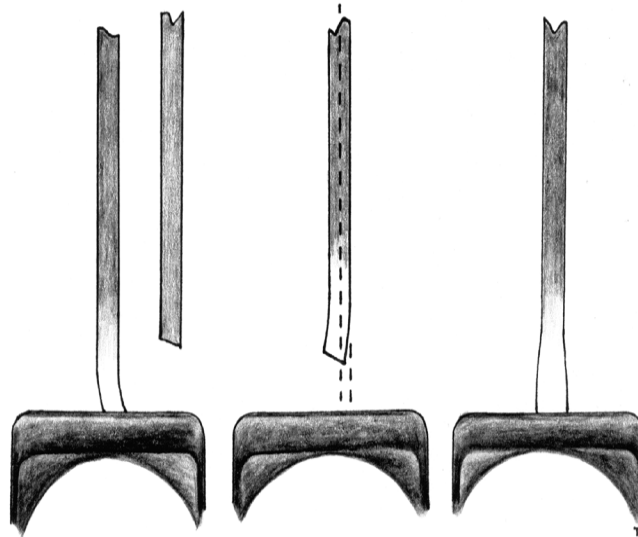
Step Three:



Holding the bar on the anvil top.

Smooth and straighten the upset area, being careful to draw the bar just to size. A lower heat (dark orange to bright red) is best for this step. Check the bar dimensions to confirm it is square in cross section, straight, and proper size (5/8"). Correct as necessary (see lessons on drawing, straightening, bending)

Target:
 With practice this exercise may be accomplished in one heat, though a beginner may take two or three at first. The finished upset section should be within 1/32" of the intended 5/8" thickness and the bar should be straight and square.



Thanks to Brian Gilbert, editor of the Hammers Blow, for allowing us to re-print this article.. Membership in ABANA brings the Hammers Blow and The Anvils Ring to your mailbox quarterly. Obviously, there is a wealth of information available by joining.



ABANA

Name: _____ e-mail: _____
 Address: _____ www url: _____
 City: _____ Phone: _____
 State: _____ Zip/PC: _____ Fax: _____
 Country : _____

Type of Membership New Member Renewal
 Regular - \$45.00 Contributing - \$100
 Student - \$35.00 Library - \$35.00
 Senior (65+) - \$40.00 Overseas Air - \$80.00

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 Visa Mastercard Expiration Date: _____
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ABANA Chapter Affiliation: _____
 Application may also be made at the ABANA web site:
www.abana.org

LeeAnn Mitchell
 P.O. Box 816
 Farmington, GA 30638 Phone: 706.310.1030
 Fax: 706.769.7147

M E M B E R S H I P A P P L I C A T I O N

THE JACKSON OAK PROJECT

By Jim Pigott

The coolest things can happen when you least expect it. This adventure started with a phone call. The caller told me that if I thought I was making fountains I should go see what a 'real' fountain looked like. I was directed to the Jackson, Mississippi office of the Mississippi Dept. of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks located at 1505 Eastover Drive.

Being the curious sort that I am I went immediately and was astounded at what I saw. This 'fountain' is a 35 foot wide, 25 foot deep triangular shaped masterpiece. The scene is of a typical Mississippi swamp with a 19 foot cypress tree, a cottonwood tree and a smaller oak tree bordering a two tiered waterfall. The second waterfall is approximately a 6 foot sheet of water



Morning glory vines on drift wood

spilling into a pool of lily pads, cat-tails, bamboo, water lilies and lotus that are highlighted by a drift-wood log covered with a cascading morning glory vine, all made of brass and copper sheets. I couldn't begin to do the patinas justice, You have to see it , this is worth a special trip.

How often do you see work that makes you 'need' to meet the artist? Probably, not often enough. Luckily, Bob Tomson is alive and well and living in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi. I sought him out at the Craftsman's Guild Chimneyville

Show in Jackson and followed him around, like a puppy, for 3 days. He graciously answered all my questions and offered to teach me anything I wanted to learn. He told me the Wildlife project had taken him 14 months to complete. During this time his wife, Gail, some of her work is in the wildlife fountain, died from cancer. He also suffered from carpal tunnel (over 400,000 hammer blows) and the fumes from brazing so many yards of brass.

The result of his efforts is a work of art of sufficient beauty to proclaim, "Created by a Master"

So, where does the "Jackson Oak" come in? In my conversations with Bob he mentioned that he had



Lily pad waterfall

another project in mind. The Wildlife project had given him an appreciation of larger projects and he was interested in doing more than the table-top fountains he had been making for 30 years. His new project would be a substantial undertaking, a 20-foot oak tree made from sheet brass. The design would evolve from the elements of three ancient oaks in the Bay St. Louis area. Bob said that this could prove to be a little too much of an undertaking for one man so I took the bait and said I would help, as a matter of fact, I said I could probably get some of our MFC members to



help also. This would be one helluva learning experience for anyone participating. We agreed to touch base after the first of the year and make it happen. Bob called me around the first of March and told me there had been a change of plans. He had gotten a commission to create a swamp scene for a homeowner in Diamondhead, Dr. and Mrs. Gerald Jackson (Jackson Oak). The commission included a 10 foot brass tree. What an opportunity, to be able to work on this tree and develop a lot more skill going into the twenty footer. When I met Bob, in his shop in the Artist Co-op in Bay St. Louis, he had already recruited Dale Simmons, a potter from the area and Sid Dale of Mandeville, La., a metal artist and retired Marine Colonel and Viet-Nam helicopter pilot. What a crew.

Bob had never worked with anyone else in his shop before except his wife Gail but if he was concerned it wasn't apparent. He immediately showed us how to braze brass, which is way different from brazing copper or steel, and set us to work on various parts of the tree. The concept was to cut triangular shapes



from .032 brass sheets and roll them into cones and braze the seam.

Then

wedges were cut from the cones and the gaps brazed to create the gnarly roots, the trunk and the limbs of the tree. This process went on for days until we brazed what seemed to be miles of brass until all the parts were made, the brazing was ground and cleaned and the tree was ready to assemble. The whole project took 300 man-hours to complete. I was able to work 49 hours and Sid had 44 hours. Bob did the rest, including the time it took to teach, answer questions and correct our mis-



takes.. When you have the opportunity to spend many hours on a technique like brazing brass, it is amazing how fast your skills develop. This was such a great experience. Check out the pictures below showing how the tree progressed.



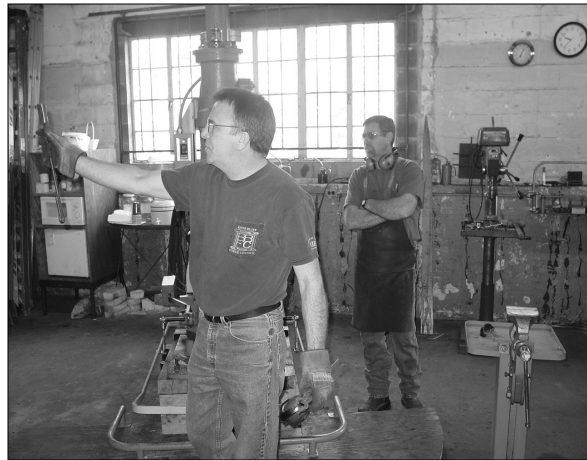
The last picture on the previous page showed the Dr. and Mrs. Jackson and a friend visiting the shop to check out the progress. Seeing the bright yellow tree, without the patina, had to be a little scary for them. Their fears were laid to rest on the delivery day. The patina process had turned out so well that it did not look like the same tree. The colors blended with the exterior and interior schemes so well that it seemed the house was made for the tree.

On a personal level, this was excellent experience, to have been even a small part of the construction of this project. Now I am ready for the big one. By the time you read this Bob will have probably started the 20 foot oak. This should take a good bit of time. He has invited anyone that is interested to join him in its construction. Would you like to spend a week-end or a week on the gulf coast participating in this project along with others from around the country. We will learn a lot and have a great time doing it.. If you are interested contact me (editor info on page 2) to make arrangements.

JACKSON OAK, AT HOME



APRIL MEETING, MFC



Richard Carr was our demonstrator for April. Richard is a long time member of the MFC and lives in Memphis. He is the past-president of the River Bluff Forge Council and a blacksmith by trade. Richard has become a good friend to a lot of MFC members over the years and it was a pleasure to have him in Jackson. The demonstration was held in Steve Norquist's shop and lasted all day. This was quite a feat for Richard since he had taken the "Tommy Ward 'after midnight' tour of Art Deco Buildings in Jackson" the night before. Richard did a lot of work on the power hammer demonstrating tooling and how to apply it's use to decorative work. Thanks for your contribution Richard, we appreciate you.



With the power hammer and tooling Richard is able to create a mass in his design that would be almost impossible with hand tools. Above are two candle holders, can you see the elephant?

An Oklahoma Power Hammer in Mississippi

In January of 2003 I finally located a Little Giant Power Hammer that met all my requirements. It was within my budget (in other words, what my wife said I could spend on it) and within a reasonable driving distance of Meridian. The hammer was in London, Arkansas, and in the possession of Ron Newton. After speaking with Ron on the phone several times we came to an agreement and I drove up to London to pick up and transport my new toy back to Meridian. I don't remember exactly how long the trip took, but it was dark when I left and dark when I got back.

After getting the Hammer unloaded with the front end-loader on my father-in-laws tractor, I had enough room to get it into the shop, and just inside the door. Which worked out, because that is where I wanted it anyway.

I emailed Sid Seudmeier in Nebraska and gave him the serial number; Sid got back with me and told me a little history of the hammer. My hammer, #1110, (the number is located on the spine) was an "old style" and came off the assembly line on January 9, 1907. The hammer was originally sold to a blacksmith named M.E. Marshall, in Ivanhoe, Oklahoma. That is about all Sid could tell me, so I decided to do some research on my own.

I found a website, www.searchtexas.com/history/follett/ this website tells the chronicle of Ivanhoe, Oklahoma, starting in about 1880. In 1906 there is a listing for a Jack Marshall who owned the blacksmith shop in Ivanhoe. I don't know if Jack and M.E. Marshall are one in the same, or maybe Jack was a son or brother to M.E. Marshall. In 1909 the town of Ivanhoe actually "moved" two miles south and one mile west. This move was to take advantage of the new railroad tracks that had been laid. Since my power hammer was purchased new in January of 1907, there is not much doubt that it traveled with the town.

Ivanhoe, Oklahoma, actually stayed in one place for about eight years. Then in 1917 the town moved once more (again attributable to the railroad lines). This time the town moved six miles south, but, into the state of Texas and the name was changed to Follett. Once again, there is no reason to believe that Little Giant # 1110 did not make the move.

There is a photo on the web site taken about 1917 of two South Ivanhoe blacksmiths', John Reid and Harry Kamp. In the far right of this photo there appears to be a Little Giant Power Hammer. I have wondered if it could it be my hammer. After this, I have no clue as to where the hammer spent the next eighty-six years. But it had found a new home in Meridian. Like most hobby smiths I wish I could spend more time banging on metal and less at my real job, anyway reality happened and it was about a year before I got around to setting up the hammer.

At some point in its life, someone had drilled two holes in the top left side of the frame and mounted a 2 hp motor directly to the frame of the hammer. This was actually not a bad arrangement, but the belt running from the motor to the friction pulley (clutch collar) had been left as a 3 ½ inch line shaft belt. I had seen other power hammers in operation, and I did not think my hammer was hitting with enough force, so I called Benny Crevitt and Harold Mazingo, two well-known Mississippi blacksmiths and had them come take a look.

The motor did not have a standard pulley on the working end but a 3 ½ inch metal shaft that was covered with compressed leather washers running the entire length, in order to grip the line shaft belt. Benny and Harold thought that this was where we were loos-

ing power to the hammer. So we replaced the shaft with a standard two groove V-belt pulley.

Where the line shaft belt had a pin, and could be removed without unbolting the crankshaft, the new V-belts had to go around the friction pulley (clutch collar). This presented the most cumbersome part of the operation. But, Benny and Harold, having done this before, used a piece of rope attached to the rafters to assist in lifting the clutch collar and crankshaft.

While we had the crankshaft unbolted, Harold and Benny inspected the babbitt bearings. Surprisingly they were in good shape and drenched with oil. The only bit of bad news was that the front bearing had a small corner piece cracked off the right side. Harold and Benny agreed that it was not enough to worry about.

After getting the crankshaft and clutch collar bolted back in place. Harold and Benny checked the wooden clutches and decided that they needed to be adjusted. So I got a lesson in that particular operation. They also pointed out to me that several of the parts were not original factory parts. The biggest of these being the clutch pivot. But for now "...if it aint broke, don't fix it..." is my motto.

After that (except for a few minor electrical problems with my electrical wiring) we threw the switch and the Little Giant has been hammering along, hard and fast since then. Harold and Benny showed me all the places that needed to be oiled, and I have come to the conclusion that if oil is not dripping off the surface, then it does not have enough. I hope to keep it well oiled and hammerin' for another ninety-seven years.

Vance Moore
Meridian, MS
southpilo2@aol.com

We also hope you have another 97 years to hammer.
Thanks for the article,
Vance.
Your appreciative editor.



Pictured above, Harold, Benny and Vance.

President's Letter

March, 2004

Dear ABANA Members,

There are only four more months until ABANA's big biennial event starts in Richmond, Kentucky. In fact, as I write this, Board Member/Conference Chair Dave Koenig is on the conference site at Eastern Kentucky University with key conference members going over final details/locations and eliminating all possible snafus! Yes, there will be LOTS of last minute items to cover, but Dave's crew is mightily trying to eliminate all possible problems!

I ask your help in handling the rest of any problems that might occur. ABANA is an organization of volunteers. Board members, of whom I am VERY PROUD, volunteer a tremendous amount of time to your organization, but the conference is every member's opportunity to help the artist- blacksmithing community!

How, you say? GLAD YOU ASKED! Well, first let us review some of what it takes to make the conference happen. Dave's last progress report lists:

- 1- Individuals with specific area responsibilities: 20+
- 2- Honored guests: 6
- 3- Demonstrators: 18 / 19
- 4- Teaching stations / programs: 11
- 5- Station setup/ oversight: 27+
- 6- Gallery/ auction/ tailgate: 13

And this is just a start! Because YOU are needed too! First, register to attend now. If you are not there, you will not have the opportunity to come away with the new ideas every conference offers! This is reason enough for anybody! You will also miss the networking that comes when artists from around the world gather in one place. A new idea /technique sparked by other's work in demonstrations, galleries, etc. will not find its way into your future works. And maybe, most importantly, you'll miss the fun of participating with so many other blacksmith volunteers.

Secondly, the aforementioned list of approximately 80 volunteers and is just a small part of the membership that it takes to do all the tasks at the conference. So I am asking you to not only attend, but also look for a way to make the conference better because of your efforts. If you are willing to roll up your sleeves, contact Bob Fredell, Volunteer Coordinator, and become an "official volunteer". Bob can be reached at (763) 389-5119 C.S.T. or via email fredell@sherbtel.net

Hope to see you there! And I am looking forward to meeting you and saying "Hello"!

Don Kemper
20100 NW 61st Avenue
Ridgefield, WA 98642
(360) 887-3903

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The Traditional Metalsmith
Blacksmithing: Illustrated & Explained
 By George Dixon, former Head Blacksmith
 Samuel Yellin Metalworkers

Volume 1, Number 3
July 2000

Blacksmithing is an art defined by how you do it. Blacksmithing is a craft by process.

Topic: Drawing & Layout, pg. 7

Motif: Floral, Folded Sheet, pg. 8

Tooling: Layout Tools & Techniques, pg. 10

Architectural Iron: Rails #1 of 4, pg. 12

Gallery: Railings, pg. 18

Topic: Jigs, Fixtures & Forms, pg. 2

Motif: Picket Motifs, pg. 4

Tooling: Split Picket, pg. 8

Architectural Iron: Rails #2 of 4, pg. 12

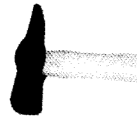
Gallery: Pickets & Panels, pg. 16

Panel Detail: French, 18th century.

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