

ABA To Host National Conference

Because of ABA's outstanding success as an organization and the dedication with which its members have worked to expand the knowledge of blacksmithing, it has been chosen as the host organization for the 1982 national conference of ABANA (The Artist Blacksmith's Association of North America).

The site of the conference will be at the Cedar Lakes Conference Center at Ripley, WV, home of the ABA blacksmith shop supported by the West Virginia Dept. of Education.

During the past three years, ABA has been working toward this conference. The opportunities afforded by this conference in our own backyard are a chance of a lifetime for all ABA members. Over 500 smiths from the United States and Canada as well as smiths from all around the globe will be gathering for four days to exchange their knowledge of blacksmithing. Ongoing demonstrations by national and international smiths will provide a wealth of knowledge and skills for smiths of all levels. A special site will provide continuous demonstrations of "bread-and-butter" items—experienced production smiths forging their best mon-

eymakers. Besides the demonstrations, there will be: an exhibit of current works by attendees; blacksmithing films; slides; lecturers; and the overwhelming exchange of information that occurs with the bringing together of so many smiths.

ABA has lots of work to do and needs lots of hands to help make this conference a success. If you want to become a part of this conference, offer your help now by contacting one of the conference committee members where you feel you can help.

From the August 1981 ABA Newsletter

*From the ABA
archives:*

WHO IS ABANA?

Although it seems almost impossible, there may be some people who have never heard of ABANA.

About 60% of ABA's members are already members of ABANA.

The Artist-Blacksmiths' Association of North America started in 1973. It is a non-profit organization run on a volunteer basis dedicated to the expansion of knowledge on the art of blacksmithing. It holds a national conference every two years and publishes a quarterly journal, "The Anvil's Ring", which is approximately 50 pages long and covers blacksmithing around the world as well as tips and techniques.

"The Anvil's Ring" has become a forum for the exchange of ideas and information between blacksmiths. New services provided by ABANA include: a slide lending library--to be expanded to include film; a published list of available demonstrators; and a complete membership list.

ABANA now consists of over 1500 members and is growing daily. This organization is highly recommended to all ABA members and anyone who has an interest in blacksmithing. The annual membership dues of \$25.00 is small compared to the wealth of information provided year after year.

Pete Minier, Editor

From the August 1981 ABA Newsletter



Dave,

I attended the 1982 conference but I was not one of the workers. I remember that Joe Humble was ABANA President.

Joe Volz (above) was my favorite demonstrator. He came to the US in 1928 from Germany.

After the conference, my son, Jeff, and I spent a week with Joe at his home in Mahopac, NY. We had a great time and learned a lot.

Joe Harris

Photo from Jan 1983 ABA Newsletter

Blacksmiths pitch horseshoe stereotype for that of artist

Charleston Gazette, May 21, 1982

By Kelly Messinger

The two Germans and the American sweating in the humid afternoon spoke few words, but each knew exactly what the other was trying to say, for in the rolling hills of Cedar Lakes this week, the hammer sings a universal language.

Others came from France, Austria, and England—more than 700—for the 1982 National Conference of the Artist-Blacksmith's Association of North America.

This breed of blacksmiths does not rely on crude hammers and anvils to craft only horseshoes. In fact, it pleases exhibition director Skip Roberts to say there isn't a single horseshoe in the place.

Machines that pound metal and large furnaces with electric fans have replaced the image of the village smithy under the chestnut tree. Most of the metal is still worked by hand though, including large pieces, which may require three or more people manipulating them.

"When you forge in a group, you are more like a family," said Manfred Bredohl, a demonstrator from Aachen, West Germany. Teamwork is important, and being able to know what is expected from the blacksmith makes the job smoother once the group understands each other, he said.

Speaking in slow, smooth English, the 38-year old Bredohl said he constructs useful articles and free-form art sculpture. He creates decorative pieces for buildings, such as window grilles and railings.

Before beginning a demonstration for the crowd, Bredohl, his curly brown hair pasted to the sides of his face with perspiration, said, "We'll see what we can do with this little hammer."

His "little hammer" was a machine as tall as himself, in which he inserted an orange glowing iron rod between two continuous striking piston-shaped parts.

Not far from Bredohl, Dorothy Stiegler walked the grounds and talked about her life as a blacksmith. She began swinging her hammer in 1975 at age 30. The Rochester, Wash. native and former radiology technician works with her husband. This is their full-time employment, which is unusual in this country, she said.

"You have to feel you are invincible," she said. "Don't ever say you might not make it. We feel so many people give over their philosophies to their bosses and don't have any for themselves. In smithing, you can feel really productive."

Stiegler's 14-year old son helps out at their shop. "Smithing is a trade you can pass on to your children," she said. She also has an 11-month old daughter "who spends a lot of time in the forge" due to her mother's designing and forging.

"My husband, Ed, does the finishing details," she said. "We don't aspire to be rich, but we feel comfortable. We're willing to work at it."

Stiegler's long-range goals are to have a larger shop and

work on a national or international level, such as constructing cathedral gates.

Various items are on exhibit during the convention, which continues through Sunday. Guns, knives, traditional tools, tables, chairs, toys, mobiles, free-form sculptures and armor are displayed by different craftsmen.

Some are for sale and others are for display purposes only, Roberts said. "They are showing off for each other and not pushing sales. That's not our aim."

Joe Harris submitted this article. A large photo of Stuart Hill forging a frog from 1" stock accompanied the article. However, due to the age of the newsprint, the photo did not scan well. The lead headline in that day's newspaper was "Britain, Argentina poised for war; talks dead".

Hi Dave,

The 11 mo. old daughter spoken of in this article is Tyana. She is now 21 and mid-way through with her Senior year at college, majoring in Astro-Physics. She demonstrated at the 2000 ABANA conference in Flagstaff and did an exceptionally nice presentation. She also was on the American team demonstrating in 2002 at LaCrosse. Ty loves the forge and anvil work almost as much as she likes crunching numbers and looking at the universe!

*Dorothy Stiegler
Photos courtesy of Dorothy Stiegler
Photos: Ty at Ripley in 1982 and at LaCrosse in 2002*

