December 2025

CLINKER BREAKER

Florida Artist Blacksmith Association

Established May 18, 1985

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF FABA



Crafted by Jordan Thomas

Our 40th anniversary was more than just a celebration of ourselves. It was a fantastic event preserving thousands of years of history by making it come alive. As an aviator, I've often gone to airshows, and although I like to look at the old airplanes up close during a static display, I am even more impressed to see them flying. The same goes goes with an antique car show. It's wonderful to see a museum piece, but it's even better to see them on the road with the driver waving at you as he goes by. The same can be said for what you do as a Blacksmith. Our 40th anniversary is not history in a museum. It is history in real life.

I enjoy telling stories when I'm teaching Blacksmith classes. I will touch on everything from Bible to the American Civil War. The reason I tell the stories as we forge the steel is to remind my students of how far we've come, and how fortunate we are to stand upon the shoulders of the great men and women who lived before us.

As I look back on this past 40 years, I suddenly realize that you are now that anchor that the next generation will stand upon as they move forward. Great job, 40 years! — David Sandlin, President

Regional Events & Information

FABA has eight regions, and regular meetings are held in each region on the following Saturdays of each month: 1st Saturday–Central NE / 2nd Saturday–NW & Greater Orlando / 3rd Saturday–SE & Gainesville / 4th Saturday–Far West & SW.

The NNE meetings will be the 2nd or 3rd Saturdays (depending on the month).

The regions have no boundaries – everyone is welcome everywhere. Come to more than one if you can!

The dates may vary, so check the schedule noted in the Regional Reports or on Facebook, or contact the Regional Coordinator.

Our meetings are informal gatherings around the forge. Prospective members are always welcome. Come for all or any part of a meeting, bring your tools or just watch. Most meetings run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and you'll want to bring a bag lunch if not otherwise noted. If you have any questions about events, please check the region's Facebook page or contact the Regional Coordinators:

Greater Orlando Region	John Hare	802-373-1190	legacy.john.hare@gmail.com
Gainesville Region	Jordan Borstelmann	352-727-8260	crookedpathforge@gmail.com
Central Northeast Region	William Thornton	386-916-6117	knifegsx@yahoo.com
North Northeast Region	Doug Hayes	910-330-7601	djhayes29@hotmail.com
Northwest Region	John Pfund	850-528-3280	johnwpfund@aol.com
Southeast Region	Peter Hill	651-635-6022	blazeblades561@gmail.com
Southwest Region	Antony Fenn	617-320-4781	antony.fenn@gmail.com
Far West Region	Christopher Sandlin	850-865-9596	Chris@traditionsworkshop.com

Florida Artist Blacksmith Association (FABA) is a nonprofit organization chartered with the state of Florida that is dedicated to promoting and expanding the horizons of architectural, artistic and practical blacksmithing while preserving the rich heritage of this craft.

FABA Officers and members assume no responsibility or liability for injuries or damage caused as a result of the use of any information, materials, design, techniques, etc., contained in this newsletter; our website, www.blacksmithing.org; our Facebook Page at www.facebook.com/FloridaBlacksmiths; any of our regional Facebook pages; or provided at meetings or demonstrations.

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Table of Contents

2 Regional Information
3 President's Message
4-5 FABACON 2025
6-7 Far West Region Report
8 SW Region Report
8 Orlando Region Report
8 SE Region Report
8 NW Region Report
8 Central NE Region Report
9 Gainesville Region Report
10 North NE Region Report
11 Jerry Grice Scholarship
11 FABA Veterans Scholarship
12 FABA Officers/Membership

Looking forward

No sooner than we finished the conference then we've already started looking forward to the next one. I wonder what's cooking? By the way, please let us know if you have something you want to see in the next year.

Of course, not everything happens at conference, our Northeast Trustee, Ben Thompson, is putting together a spring event that will give you some insight into using an induction forge. Keep an eye on their Facebook page and here in the Clinker Breaker for more information.



David Sandlin
FABA President

Over the past month I've had a couple of visitors. It's rare event and a real pleasure to have somebody drive this far out to visit us.

First up, Doug and Stella Hayes dropped in for a few hours at the workshop where we swapped a couple of the stories about all the good things that happened during the conference. I think the most important thing was how many new Blacksmiths felt the heat of the forge and told us they'd be back.

A few days later that same week, Jordan and Shiloh Thomas came by on a visit and spent the night. Jordan is not one to let the grass grow under his feet. When visiting the workshop, he jumped right in and finished the welding on two of the John Pfund "Susie forges" so that they would have fixed blower motors instead of hairdryers. A day or two later, Angie came by and wired up those motors. The last forge modification was finished by Jack Fortenberry.



So now in the Far West, all four of our forges have been modified with fixed blowers and sliding gates. As a little extra, we also added rheostats so you can adjust the air volume that way if desired. Thank you team for all your hard work in giving these forges a significant midlife update.

By the way, in my last column I mentioned that I had come home to repair some water damage in my home. Well, the job is done! As of last night my head is now above water.

Pray your fuel stays dry and your anvil rings true throughout the year.

— David Sandlin, President

Support our FABA business members

DAMASCUS SPONSORS

David Sandlin - Traditions Workshop - Ft. Walton Beach, FL
Jake Pytlik - Warehouse Services Inc. - Naples, FL
Doug Hayes - Iron Osprey Forge - St. Augustine, FL
Benchmark Abrasives - Flagstaff, AZ

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Rick Smith - Gainesville, FL
Nicole Horenstein - High Springs, FL
Mark Fillmore - Naples, FL
Cameron LaFrance - Micco, FL

Interested in being a FABA sponsor or expanding your sponsor listing? Contact FABA President David Sandlin at President@blacksmithing.org and include your business name, tag line, and contact information.

2025 Annual Meeting, Gallery & Auction



FABACon 25's Exchange Item: "Something That Opens"



Elmer Roush receives the Honorary Doctorate of Metal Arts Degree from President David Sandlin



Doug Hayes receives his Certificate of Journeyman Blacksmith Skills from FABA



The Annual Ringing of the Anvil



The Silent Auction











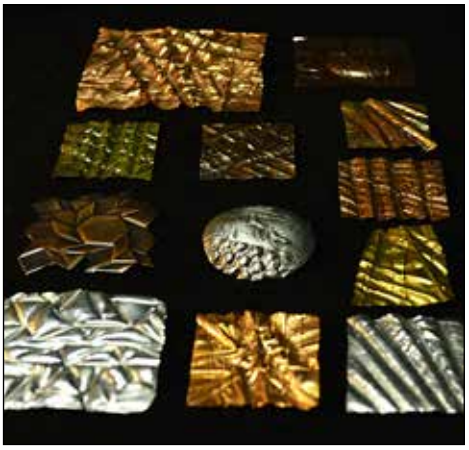

PH
Blaze Blades
MagnaCut













Far West Forging Competition, Timber Creek Distillery

The day dawned clear and a little bit cool with a nice breeze. Even before 9 o'clock, the competitors were showing up and as soon as Timber Creek distillery opened the gates we were in and setting up our tent for this event. 11 people chose to compete. By 10 o'clock everything was ready to start with five coal forges, one gas forge, 10 anvils and a power hammer; the starting hammer dropped at 10 AM. The rules were simple. This was a no holds barred competition. You could bring your own tools and supplies if you wanted to, but there was also plenty to choose from out of FABA tool boxes and the Traditions Workshop scrap buckets. Available materials ranged from 1" x 1" square bar to 1/4 by 2 inch flat bar; there was even some rebar if so desired. Criteria for evaluation was simple: Make a pizza cutter that 1. could cut pizza and 2. looked cool.

Normally Cam and Aaron judge these events, but they decided to hand that responsibility over to their primary pizza Chef, Janet. Janet decided to call in a couple of friends to help her with the judging later in the afternoon, but this battery of judges made it clear that traditional style was not required.

The day before the competition Christopher Sandlin, with the help of Jack Fortenberry, made up a storyboard on how to make a classic pizza rocker. Since we had a couple of people who had zero experience with Blacksmithing, this was a big help.

Mr. Mallet brought his classic rock tunes and a truck leaf spring. His attitude was go BIG or go home. He spent the afternoon moving a lot of metal in both the jukebox and at the forge. We all got a big surprise when about two hours into the competition his leaf spring failed and dropped a piece of yellow hot steel onto the concrete. Guess there was the reason they took that spring off the truck? Still, he prevailed, and managed to finish a 2ft long 15-pound pizza rocker with a nice, curved handle on one end and a short rolled over handle on the other. Janet's comment was, "It's so heavy cuts the pizza by itself." Even though it was not in the top three Lady Mallet has voiced her approval!

Piper and her friend were both brand new to the forge but they decided to compete anyway. As usual the other members of FABA Far West were more than willing to coach them through to make a nice little personal pan rocker. Piper's pizza rocker did not win the competition, but it did earn her $30. One of the spectators wanted to buy it and use it for chopping salsa. Way to go!

Sarah came over from Robertsdale Alabama and using a gas forge she showed us how to make a nice little S shaped







one-handed pizza rocker suitable for a personal pan pizza.

Angie is a very eager new blacksmith, and is now apprenticing at Traditions Workshop whenever her military schedule allows. Even though she is new to the forge, with around one year of off-and-on experience, she too entered the competition making a traditional rocker for a personal pan sized pizza. You probably met Angie at FABACON 2025, she took 5 classes during that event. Her pizza rocker was also in the running for spectator purchase, but she kept her work for herself.

Shad worked with both of David and Jack out of the same forge, even sharing an anvil with David. Consequently, Shad had lots of coaching and was well on his way to making a large pan pizza rocker, but had to leave at 2 o'clock

to pick up his wife from a craft fair event. He has vowed to finish his project at the next open forge. That is also when he plans to pick up his gift exchange item – an open mind, He entered the gift exchange at FABACON even though he couldn't attend.

Christopher and Jessica Sandlin were on a roll. Quite literally. They made roller style pizza wheels with wood handles. Christopher even took the time to etch his wheel with ouroboros, the snake that is eating its own tail. He also brought some red dye from home to fill in the etching and made it even bolder. Jessica was generous about helping others and consequently took her project right down to the wire, finishing it in the last few seconds when time was called at 3 PM. Janet's comment was that these were nice but a little too classic in design.

Dawn Fortenberry probably had the most innovative rocker design of anybody. Starting with a 1/2" by 1/2"piece of square stock she drew the rocker blade out between the two parts that we're going to become her handles. For this part of her effort, she was very grateful that we brought a power hammer. She shaped one handle with a twist and very tight scroll, and then on the other end, she made her first ever dragon head by copying the Dragon rake forge tool that we have hanging on the side of the forge. The result looks very much like a Viking ship. She had the cool factor, and Janet placed that one in third.

Jack Fortenberry bought a couple of railroad spikes and a piece of 2 x ¼" bar. He twisted each of the spikes in opposite directions and then stamped faces into the railroad spike heads. They were then riveted to the cutting bar with brass rivets. He was definitely trying to get in good with the judge because he stamped his finished product with the letters "Timber Creek" and the second line read "Janet." He even gave his work to our judge at the end of the event. Despite all that buttering up, it was only enough to earn him second place.



David Sandlin went very non-traditional, or perhaps very traditional for a blacksmith. Working from a piece of 16" x 2" x 1/4" flat bar, he hammered out a bent shape that was best described as a very dangerous-looking boomerang. He also made a collar of ¼" x 2" which he then riveted onto the cutting edge.

Next, using an old hammer handle, he added that piece of wood as a way to hold onto this deadly looking battle axe – erm, pizza cutter. He even brought some rope from home and used it to create a para cord wrap around the handle.

Did it cut pizza? A little too well! And was it cool? With flame colored steel, and elder futhark runes punched into the blade, the total package met the cool factor in spades, winning him first place, bragging rights for the year and a bottle of Single Malt Whiskey.

Even though this was a competition, there was a great spirit of cooperation between all the members. Everyone had a good time plus some great stone-oven wood-fired pizza.

Would you like to join us? We will do this again November 2026 at Timber Creek. Cam and Aaron will once again decide what our project will be, and they'll put yet another bottle of whiskey on the table for the winner.

— David, Christopher and Jessica Sandlin

Far West Meetings

We will not be holding a December meeting. We will return to meet at Traditions Workshop the fourth Saturday of January (Jan. 24th) and the third Saturday of February (Feb. 21st). Both meetings will start at 9 AM. We will be focusing on FABA Journeyman standards or parts of the ABANA National Curriculum as the year progresses.

— David Sandlin





Central NE Meeting, Dec. 6

We did not have a meeting for the month of November. Our next meeting is on December 6. It will be held at Barberville Pioneer Settlement, 1776 Lightfoot Lane in Barberville, from 9 AM until 3 PM. We will have open forges and make plans for next year. As always, lunch will be provided. Hope to see you there!

Please check the FABA NE Facebook page for more info at facebook.com/groups/381431599058683/, or contact William Thornton at knifegsx@yahoo.com.

— William Thornton,
Central NE Region Coordinator

Greater Orlando Meeting, Dec. 13

The Greater Orlando Chapter will be moving the monthly meeting to the SECOND Saturday of the month to help with scheduling during the holiday season. Our next meeting will be December 13th and will continue on the second Saturday of each month.

Meeting date: December 13th, 9AM

Location: Underground MetalWorks, 660 W Kennedy Blvd., Suite A, Orlando, FL 32810

For information, contact John Hare at 802-373-1190 or legacy.john.hare@gmail.com.

— John Hare, Orlando Region Coordinator

NW Region Meeting, Dec. 13

The North West region will be having our December meeting on the 13th, at the home of Marcia and Craig Hines. The address is 6340 Maddox Rd. Occalocknee, GA 31773. Marcia is going to make a turkey for us and we should bring sides and desserts to go along with it. Craig will give us a demo in the morning and there will be a chance for open forges after lunch. Please bring something for the raffle and anything you want to show and tell. Christmas dinner at the Hines home is a tradition, I hope to see you there!

— John Pfund, NW Region Coordinator

SW Region Meeting, Nov. 22

We will start our SW meeting at 10 am Saturday Nov 22, at Wade Chappell's new workshop at: 6419 Hawkins Rd, Sarasota.

This will be a great meeting for people new to forging or members who want to learn a new technique. We will set up two coal forges from the FABA trailer and also have Wade's gas forge. Experienced members will be on hand to guide you or maybe you have something you want to bring along to work on. Some basic stock material will be available for you to play with.

The location is just east of I75 and Clark Road. Please bring an an item for the Iron in the Hat raffle. Please also dress appropriately and bring something to share for lunch.

No December meeting is scheduled yet. Please check our FABA SW Facebook page at www.facebook.com/groups/228279738123674, or contact antony.fenn@gmail.com. Thank you!

— Tony Fenn, SW Region Coordinator

SE Region Meeting Schedule

The SE Region meets every third Saturday of the month at The Farm, 1566 S. Military Trail, West Palm Beach, FL. Just turn off Military at the pole painted red, white and blue, and follow your GPS or Google maps.

Get more info on the FABA SE Facebook page: www.facebook.com/groups/603288803747002



Treadle Hammer For Sale

$1500. For more information, please contact Mr. Harris, 352-718-3438.

Gainesville Region Report



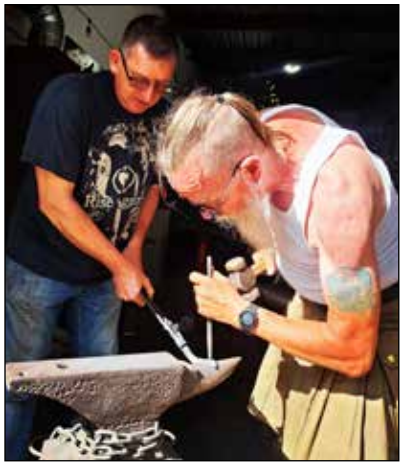
Gainesville Region welcomes back its lost and wayward brother: Chris Maybury has moved back to Florida! To celebrate the return of our prodigal son, Chris and I headed south to demonstrate at the Sarasota Medieval Faire. We spent two weekends forging with Robert, Eric, Kaitlyn and Tony Fenn, all thanks to our gracious host, Thomas Litrell.

We visited the shops of Wade Chappell and Jan Much. We swung hammers with them as well. Much fun was had, much steel was smote!

For more info on Gainesville region meetings, shoot me an email at crookedpathforge@gmail.com.

— Jordan Borstelmann, Coordinator



















North NE Meeting Report

The North Northeast Region had a great day at Iron Osprey Forge in St. Augustine. We covered tapering, flaring, upsetting, dishing and more with bells as the theme.

Doug demonstrated how square tube and round pipe behave somewhat differently when you try to neck a portion down with whatever method you are attempting to use. He demonstrated 4 ways of creating a neck and discussed the pros and cons of each while working with various gauges of steel pipe and square tube.

Ben Thompson demonstrated various ways to create a clapper for an open bell, showing several ways to isolate and upset metal. They showed how to measure the length of the clapper and connection to the stem/handle, along with how to flare the edge of pipe and square tube.

The second demonstration focused on sleigh/jingle bells with pre-cut blanks. Ben had a comprehensive demonstration covering dishing and shaping and presented a number of tools and jigs he has created to help that process.

The attendees had a range of experience: One had hit metal for the first time at FABACON 2025, another had her first lesson with Doug 4 days before, and then we had folks with a few years up to several decades of hitting metal. The questions ranged from basic info for the new folks to specific details and twists on technique from the more experienced hands, and everyone was active and engaged.

We had a nice lunch, and the Iron in the Hat saw some vigorous action. Folks made some nice scores, whether new to the craft or an experienced smith finding a special item.

After lunch, a few folks had to leave but were able to take some bell blanks and tubing to work on at home, while the others went back to the anvil to fashion their jingles. During the day, a few passers-by stuck their heads in and were given a quick tour and introduction to FABA, regional meetings and smithing in general. LeRoi Price let us know that besides crafting very nice knives, he also can hammer out a pretty good instructional video. He coaxed Ben into repeating the jingle bell creation. Sadly, we could not convince Ben to add the Jingle Bell song to his demonstration.

All in all, it was a fun and busy day at the shop, and we look forward to another great meeting in December.











North NE Region Meeting, Dec. 13

The next NNE meeting will be Dec 13th at Iron Osprey Forge (102 Marshall Circle, St. Augustine). There will also be a FABA Thursday night open forge on Dec. 11 (4-9 pm).

The topic is to be determined, but Doug is leaning toward a Christmas cookie competition in addition to the usual activities. Yes! Really! Let's see what kind of holiday sugar spirit we can bring to the forge.

For the New Year, several topics are in discussion. At some point, there will be a foundry and casting workshop with Blaise Morrell demonstrating his skill and with folks having a chance to cast something (that is still in discussion). Also in the future, we'll visit Nathan's forge (or he'll visit us) and we'll look at some of his art. A joint greater NE and G'ville workshop for induction forges is also coming early in the year. So, hammer on, one and all.

Please check our FABA NE Facebook page for more info at facebook.com/groups/381431599058683/ or contact djhayes29@hotmail.com. Thank you!

— Doug Hayes, NNE Region Coordinator

Jerry Grice Scholarship deadline: Dec. 31

This scholarship was established to honor the memory of Jerry Grice, one of our charter members. Its purpose is to further the craft of blacksmithing, and any FABA member who has been in good standing for at least one year qualifies to apply. The $1,000 award may be divided evenly amongst multiple winners. If a single winner, the award is limited to the actual cost or $1,000, whichever is lesser. It may be used for materials, tuition, lodging and transportation (paid at the rate of 43.2 cents per mile or the actual cost of public transportation, whichever is lesser).

A letter of application or a detailed email may be submitted provided the applicant answers the following questions:

1. What is your name, address and phone number?

2. How much experience in blacksmithing do you have?

3. How will this instruction help you with your blacksmithing craft?

4. What is the name of the school you wish to attend?

5. What is the name of the course and the name of the instructor teaching the class?

6. What costs will be incurred (tuition, lodging, transportation, etc.)?

Note: By accepting the Jerry Grice Scholarship, the applicant agrees to provide a demonstration of learned skills during a regular FABA meeting, and to write an article concerning the learning experience, including a "how-to" portion, for publication in the Clinker Breaker within 6 months of completing the class.

The next item is not required but strongly suggested: An item should be made with the new knowledge and offered for auction at the Annual Conference.

Completed letters of application or emails should be sent to John Butler, Chair, FABA Scholarship Committee, 777 Tyre Road, Havana, FL 32333 or jgbutler@sprintmail.com.

Deadline for receipt is Dec. 31, 2025. Three finalists will be recommended to the Board. The decision of the Board shall be final, and the successful applicant(s) will be notified after the vote. The scholarship amount of $1000 may be split evenly amongst multiple candidates if deemed so by the FABA Board of Directors.

FABA Veterans Scholarship Fund Application

The FABA Veterans' Scholarship Fund was established to help veterans to experience the world of blacksmithing. The intent is to assist veterans to get started in the craft with an experienced teacher to provide a guiding hand at the start of the journey, maximizing their learning experience. As such, it is not intended for those with intermediate or advanced skills to hone their craft – rather to assist beginners to learn the basics or to advance to some intermediate skills. First priority will be given to first-time students or early beginner level classes, and then to intermediate level courses.

1. Recipients must be veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces (Navy, Air Force, Army, Marines, Coast Guard, Space Force).
   a. Individuals must be able to provide proof of current service or honorable discharge with active duty ID or DD214.

2. Scholarship will reimburse 80% of a blacksmithing class/course(s) registration fee up to $150 upon completion of the course, whichever is less. The coursework must be considered to be directly related to blacksmithing (not welding/fabrication). The FABA Scholarship Committee reserves the right to determine which coursework is appropriate during the review process.

3. Awardees will be notified via email and USPS the status of their application approximately two weeks after the committee meets.

Get full scholarship and application information at www.blacksmithing.org/scholarships

News from ABANA

Artist-Blacksmith's Association of North America



Thanks to a book donation from Quick Thorn Books, we're giving away a copy of *Earth Fire Iron: Alan Evans and the New Iron Age*. The book explores Alan's legacy, particularly to the Hereford School of Arts blacksmithing BA and BABA.

Winner announced on Dec. 1, 2025

Membership not required.

Visit abana.org (scroll to bottom).





Join or renew today at abana.org/join.

The Artist-Blacksmith's Association of North America is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to preserving, promoting, and sharing technical skills and design excellence in the blacksmith community. We offer educational workshops, technical and art publications, grants, awards, conferences, and exhibitions honoring the metal and forging arts.

News from ABANA

Artist-Blacksmith's Association of North America

2026 ABANA Conference Demonstrator
Zeevik Gottlieb

Zeevik Gottlieb's sculptural work is focused on personal relationships, balance, and emotion as he draws on the world around him for inspiration. His work has been shown around the world, from galleries to public spaces.

For the conference, Zeevik will spend the three days forging a large piece (around 6-7 ft tall) that will be up for auction on the final day of the event.



More conference info ➡

ABANA National Curriculum

The ABANA National Curriculum offers certification for both blacksmiths and blacksmith instructors. Certification can help you hone your skills, be a resource for your local smithing group, or gain an advantage in finding a job or teaching gig. Visit abana.org.



Submit Your Work

What was your favorite project completed during 2025? Let's see it!

Submission Deadline: January 1, 2026

https://bit.ly/featuredforgings

This is an online exhibition, so you're just submitting photos.

The Artist-Blacksmith's Association of North America is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to preserving, promoting, and sharing technical skills and design excellence in the blacksmith community. We offer educational workshops, technical and art publications, grants, awards, conferences, and exhibitions honoring the metal and forging arts.

THE FLORIDA CLINKER BREAKER

Florida Artist Blacksmith Association
David Sandlin, President
114 Choctaw Cove
Valparaiso, FL 32580

December 2025

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FABA Membership Application: Membership begins when your application and $30 membership fee is received. Membership is per family and lasts one year. Use your credit card to join or renew your FABA Membership via WIX by going to www.blacksmithing.org and clicking the **JOIN FABA** button to access the Square payment system.
OR send the below application and your check to "FABA" for $30 to FABA's temporary Membership Secretary at:

FABA Membership Secretary,
C/O Sandlin
114 Choctaw Cove
Valparaiso, FL 32580

NAME _____

FAMILY MEMBERS _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ ZIP _____

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DATE _____ NEW____ RENEWAL____ I want B&W Newsletter by mail (quarterly) ___ OR Color Newsletter by Email ___