

June 2023

CLINKER



BREAKER

Florida Artist Blacksmith Association

Established May 18, 1985



The Crowley Museum Crew

FABA Southwest Region members take a break during their April meeting at the Crowley Museum and Nature Center east of Sarasota. Page 6



Talking About Tongs

John Butler and John Pfund, at right, and FABA's Northwest Region had a meeting at Aunt Louise's Farm to prepare for the SBA Conference in Madison, GA, where they offered a free tong-making class. Page 7



Regional Events & Information

FABA now has seven regions, and regular meetings are held in each region on the following Saturdays of each month: 1st Saturday—NE, 2nd Saturday—NW, 3rd Saturday—SE, 4th Saturday—Far West & SW. The NNE meetings will be the 2nd or 3rd Saturdays (depending on the month) in 2023, and the first Gainesville Regional Meeting will be Feb. 18, 2023.

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:

Gainesville Region	Jordan Borstelmann	352-727-8260	crookedpathforge@gmail.com
Central Northeast Region	Heinrich Hole	386-848-6982	heinrich.faba@gmail.com
North Northeast Region	Doug Hayes	910-330-7601	djhayes29@hotmail.com
Northwest Region	John Pfund	850-528-3280	johnwpfung@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.

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Metal skills, lost and found

By the time you get this copy of the Clinker Breaker in the post, the SBA conference will have come and gone. I'm looking forward to that event, with two interesting headline demonstrators and a demonstrator from each of the southeastern groups supporting the conference. I'm also looking forward to our own Jordan Borstelmann demonstrating gate hinges; especially since I didn't get to see that done at our own conference last fall.

SBA was the first Blacksmith conference I ever attended. It's always interesting, and this year promises more of the same. SBA really shines with their tailgate and vendor sales, so I'll be asking vendors if they'd be willing to visit us in October.

Look for a lessons learned recap in the next issue of the Clinker Breaker. However, and I may be a bit biased, I believe our FABA CON will be an even better conference. Heinrich and Erin have been working tirelessly behind the scenes to arrange all the details to deliver us yet another superb event that will take iron to the edge.

Yes, I did mention you should be getting a copy of this Clinker Breaker in the post. If you didn't, well I'm doubling as the membership secretary and of our current membership (approximately 225 families). We have 71 families without a physical address. Maybe you like getting the color copy of the Clinker Breaker via email and have no need for a physical, black and white copy. For that I thank you as you are saving our organization money. But if you are looking for the physical copy to hit your mail box and not getting it, then please contact our membership secretary at president@blacksmithing.org. Oh yea, that's me; until someone volunteers to help with the membership task. And I could really use the help.

I've been delving into the history of blacksmithing. I thought it appropriate to share a few tidbits I found since our mission is "to teach – to preserve" and part of preservation is knowing our roots.

Tubal-cain is known for being the first human blacksmith. In Genesis 4:22 he is mentioned in the Bible as the "forger of all instruments of bronze and iron." Tubal-cain is the sixth-generation descendant of Cain (yes, the one who killed Able) so it didn't take humanity too long to figure out forging. Seems all of the knowledge about iron forging was lost in Noah's flood because we had to go through the copper and bronze ages before getting back to iron.

The ancient Romans discovered how to turn plain iron

into steel to produce higher quality, durable weapons and armor. They reheated iron between layers of charcoal, which contains carbon and makes steel when mixed with the iron. They probably learned this secret from civilizations in India, but it was lost when the Roman Empire fell. Europeans wouldn't discover how to make steel again for nearly a thousand years.

Scandinavian blacksmiths commonly used bog iron for their projects, which was impure, soft, and resulted in poor quality final products. Vikings believed that adding the bones of the ancestors and powerful animals to their forges would help strengthen the iron through spiritual means. And they were right, although it was science, not magic, that made the iron stronger. By adding bones to the forge, a Viking blacksmith also added carbon, which creates steel when introduced to iron. There was one Viking blacksmith who produced around 170 legendary Ulfberht swords made of crucible steel, but that knowledge was taken to the grave with him.

Southampton dig sites reveal that Anglo-Saxon blacksmiths were highly skilled at producing quality steel. According to experts, their work rivals that of a smith in the 1800s. Anglo-Saxon smiths reheated their metal to reach the carbon levels required to produce high-quality steel. Their process would not be implemented again with such exceptional results until the 19th century!

With the industrial revolution, the trade of the blacksmith all but died out. If it were not for Francis Whitaker, the resurgence of the art of blacksmithing might have never happened. He began his career at the Yellin Ironworks but left there to go into business for himself. Despite the hard times of the 1930s, he managed to prosper by securing commissions around the country. When he considered retirement about 1970, he looked around and realized he was "the last man standing." From that realization until his death in 1999, he toured the country promoting and teaching blacksmithing to generations who knew little of the art.

Seems to me that the skill of forging iron and steel is but a thin veneer in society, well-known and understood by only a few sturdy individuals in each generation. At anytime in history, and even today, the knowledge of how to create hand crafted metal work has been and could easily be lost. I'm proud to be in an organization that makes it our mission "To Teach – To Preserve." Let's keep the fires burning.

Hope and pray your anvil rings true.

— David Sandlin, President



David Sandlin
FABA President

Central NE Meeting Report

Progress is never a straight line and neither is regional planning. In May we were forced to take a mild turn off the intended plan of hammer making and instead worked on hammer making tongs. For once the dropped ball bounced back ready to play again and it worked out. We had quite the successful meeting with attendance in the mid 20's. Several people after the demo tried their hand at making the tongs and are now one step closer to being ready to make their own hammer heads. On a personal note, it felt really good to get back on the forge side of the rope for the demo again. It's been way too long. Next month we will do the make up meeting and get those hammers done. Thanks to everyone who came out and contributed to the meeting. It's a blessing to have so many of you.

— **Heinrich Hole, Central NE Coordinator**

Central NE Meeting, June 3

June 3rd starting at 9am
Barberville Pioneer Settlement

It's that time again. That's right, it's hammer time. Now I'll give you a sec to let that song play in your head n then we'll move on.

Mmk, so this meeting is going to be special. It's going to be unique in that I can only allow full fledged FABA members to participate in the making of the hammers. Something something bigger metal, more risk, paperwork stuff. Membership is easy to attain at blacksmithing.org for just \$30 a year. Also, this project is a bit more costly than most so there will be a \$15 buy in to make your own hammer head. I would like to set up 2-3 teams to work on the hammers after the demo so we'll be needing more sledge hammers than the region currently owns. Also, while we could get away with working in phases and sharing the punches and drifts, it would be much better if those of you that already own this equipment could bring it for the meeting. If you know for sure that you'd like to make a hammer head for yourself then please contact me no later than 2 weeks before the meeting to guarantee your place. I plan to buy no less than 4 blanks but to go beyond that count I'll need some kind of verification that the expenses will be recovered.

I hope to see you all there :)

Learn more about the region on its Facebook page at facebook.com/groups/www.faba.org.

— **Heinrich Hole, Central NE Coordinator**

Gainesville Meeting, June 17

June's Gainesville Meeting will be held by at Stephen Bloom's Shop. Below is the information:

Date: 3rd Saturday, June 17, starting at 9AM

Location: Ironflower Forge, 13350 NE 100 St., Williston, FL

Demonstrators: Steve Bloom & Nicole Horenstein

Topic: The Jig is Up - Evolution of a napkin holder
Tips and techniques for handling knife guards and pommels

Lunch: First-Love chili

There will be No Iron in the Hat.

— **Jordan Borstelmann,
Gainesville Region Coordinator**

Support our FABA business members

DAMASCUS SPONSORS

David Sandlin - Traditions Workshop - Fort Walton Beach, FL

STEEL SPONSORS

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John Elliot - Blacksmith Supply - Chester, VA

Michael Oliver - Turn and Burn Metalworks - Lakeland, FL

Doug Hayes - Iron Osprey Forge - St. Augustine, FL

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Scott Brown - Medieval Smith - Land O' Lakes, FL

Jordan Borstelmann - Crooked Path Forge - Gainesville, FL

Rick Smith - Gainesville, FL

Nicole Horenstein - High Springs, FL

Mark Fillmore - Naples, FL

Interested in being a FABA sponsor or expanding your sponsor listing? Please contact FABA treasurer Doug Hayes at djhayes29@hotmail.com and include your business name, tag line, and point of contact information for use in the Clinker Breaker and online.

North NE Region Report

Due to a last-minute change, our May meeting was May 13 at Iron Osprey Forge in St. Augustine. We had several folks signed up to make a set of Kens Quick tongs at the forges. We dressed an anvil, which led to dressing and customizing several hammers and handles. We also discussed using a torch for local heating for twists, modifying and extending twists, and upsetting in the middle of a bar and for adjusting tongs. Several sets of tongs were made and adjusted and we had lots of good discussion.

North NE Meeting, June 10

Our June meeting will be back at Iron Osprey Forge, 102 Marshall Circle in St. Augustine, FL, on June 10, starting at 9 AM. We will work on decorative scrolls and making leaves.

In July, the NNE will join the NW region at Stephen Foster State Park for a combined meeting with John Pfund.

— **Doug Hayes, NNE Region Coordinator**



SW Region Report

We met out at Crowley Museum and Nature Center just east of Sarasota and lit up the forge in the restored museum blacksmiths shop in April.

What a special meeting! We now have a regular crew of people turning up, some old faces and some new.

Trez Cole taught us all about types of steel and heat treatment and then demoed a scarf weld, and then James Hawse had a go. (You nearly had it mate. I'm sure with some practice at your own shop you will nail it).

We had a unique visitor this month - Myakka the rescued baby wild pig. She stuck close to Dixie, the Manager for Crowley Museum, and adopted Mum; but she let us feed her treats from our shared lunch.

I had a great time. I think you guys did too. See you at the next one.

— **Tony Fenn, SW Region Coordinator**



The forge at Crowley Museum, above, and Myakka the baby pig, left

SW Region Meeting, May 20

The SW May meeting will be a week earlier than usual to avoid all of our commitments on the Memorial Day weekend. The meeting will also start early as we are planning a very busy forging time and want to avoid the heat of the day. We will start at 8am on Saturday 20th of May at my workshop – FishnChips Forge.

We will work collaboratively on forging a sculpture for the Southwest's entry for the 'Flora and Fauna' category at this year's FABA Conference in October. This will be a seahorse sculpture. We will also make some seaweed to mount the seahorse on and also a base.

Trez Cole and I will direct the effort, and we want to get as many as you as possible to be hands on.

You are welcome to just come along and watch as there will be plenty of techniques to learn.

Many of our Journeyman skills will be used including:

- Forge welding a large billet

- Fullering, punching, bending and scrolling
- Tapering with sledge hammers and using the tire hammer
- Using an oxy/acetylene torch
- Plasma cutting
- Grinding
- Mig welding

FishnChips Forge is located at 5415 Ashton Ct. Sarasota FL 34233. Please dress appropriately and bring something to share for lunch.

Please check our FABA SW Facebook page at www.facebook.com/groups/228279738123674 for more information, or contact me at antony.fenn@gmail.com.

— **Tony Fenn, SW Region Coordinator**

NW Region Meeting Report

The May meeting for the NW Region was held at Aunt Louise's Farm. We made tongs again in preparation for the SBA Conference in Madison, GA, where we offered a free tong-making class.

In July, the NNE will join the NW region at Stephen Foster State Park for a combined FABA meeting.

— John Pfund, NW Region Coordinator



Far West Region Report

We had a great April meeting at Saint Michaels Brewery where we were showing people how to make and decorate a bottle opener.

Despite the sudden onset of rain, which forced us into the cramped confines of the tent, we had a wonderful time. Thank you to our great hosts for having us and we hope to make this a recurring event now.

I would call the event a great success! We had several people in attendance making bottle openers and even go to make a few hamster swords. In addition we added five new families to the FABA membership and are looking forward to seeing them at future meetings.

With the great focus of everyone on teaching there is not much else to report unfortunately, but I hope this will be a trend that continues.



lessons learned from the conference.

November 18th is when we will have our annual forging competition at Timber Creek.

Hope to see you at most if not all these events.

— **Christopher Sandlin, Far West Coordinator**

Far West Meeting Schedule

Our next meeting, May 27th, will be at the Timber Creek Distillery, 6451 Lake Ella Road, Crestview, Fl. We plan to initiate our project for the FABA conference that day.

On June 24th, we take a break from our travels and return to Traditions Workshop in Fort Walton Beach, Fl.

July and August locations are to be determined. We are open to suggestions, especially if you are willing to host at your location.

September 30th is at Traditions Workshop so we can prep the trailer for the pilgrimage to the annual FABA conference in Gainesville on October 20-22.

Our October 28 meeting will be back at Traditions Workshop so we can unpack the trailer and swap stories/



It is FABA Election Time!

We want YOU to join the FABA Board of Directors for 2024! (WOW, I can't believe I am saying that already!)

We are seeking officers for the following positions:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer (Single year term then regular election cycle for next elections)
- SW Trustee
- NW Trustee



If you would like to be a candidate in the upcoming election, please email me at secretary@blacksmithing.org with your intention to run and the office for which you wish to be considered for.

To give us adequate time to create ballots and get them sent out, we ask that you notify us of your intent to run for an office by JULY 7, 2023.

Thank you!

— **Tia Kitchen, Secretary**

Walt Anderson Scholarship 2023

This scholarship was established to honor the memory of Walt Anderson, one of our charter members.

Its purpose is to further the craft of blacksmithing and is available to any FABA member in good standing. 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 Walt Anderson Scholarship, the applicant agrees to provide a demonstration of skills learned at a regular FABA meeting, and write an article concerning the learning experience, including a “how-to” article for publication in the Clinker Breaker.

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 June 30, 2023. Three finalists will be recommended to the Board. The decision of the Board shall be final. The successful applicant will be notified.

Jerry Grice Scholarship 2023

This scholarship was established to honor the memory of Jerry Grice, one of our charter members.

Its terms, award and conditions match the Walt Anderson Scholarship. Deadline is December 31, 2023.

Save the date: Oct. 19-20 in Gainesville

FABA Con 2023

**Oct. 19-20, Best Western Gateway Grand Hotel,
4200 NW 97th Blvd, Gainesville, FL**

This year's conference is going to be special. We have an amazing demonstrator line up and some pretty awesome new things we're bringing in. Lets start with the main demonstrators:

1. Ellen Durkan: Wearable metals artist

This is wholly new to FABA genre and will bring in some serious diversity to what we think is possible with metal work. It's time to expand our horizons and learn to think in new ways.

2. Andrew Welton: Experimental archeologist

We've had iron smelting before but never like this. It's time now to see this process and hear about it from the perspective of a professional who has based their lives study on learning how smelting and item production was done in its infancy

3. Matt Stagmer: Specialty bladesmith & owner of That Works YouTube channel. Exotic shapes and precision grinds will be the name of this epic game.

Next on the list of new activities for this year is going to be a multi team, high level sculpture project. These teams will be headed up by Tony Fenn, Kirk Sullens, and David Ponsler. Seriously, I'm drooling in anticipation of what that particular team of guys can come up with. Best of all is the fact that the sculpture they produce will be made available in the conference auction. Get your bidding signs ready because this ones going to be unique.

Another new activity we're adding to the line up is an oxy/propane torch safety beginner class. Torch safety is a big deal and learning it is the key to opening up new doors in production that would otherwise be locked shut. Torches have always intimidated me and this class is the the best way to get past that very reasonable fear.

We're expanding open forges. This year the open forge tent is going to be run by John Pfund and his crew in the N.W region. You will still be able to use this area as always and make whatever tickles your fancy but now there will also be some prepared projects that you can chose to do. These projects will have the necessary materials ready on

hand so you need only bring your own hand tools and a desire to learn in order to participate. (Tooling in this tent is limited.)

Much more is still in the works so make sure to check out the website regularly for updates.

Regional Challenges:

Flora & Fauna is the regional challenge theme for this year as picked by last years winners!!! The rules are simple:

1. The item produced must be primarily blacksmithed. It is acceptable to use powered tools and welders but the work they do must not be the focus.

2. This is a regional project and so there must be a minimum of 3 people who contributed to the project. More is better.

3. Iron is the focus of this competition, however other materials may be incorporated into the project. Refer back to rule 1 line 1 to answer your question about percentages allowed.

4. Have fun. Don't be so serious. Make sure that new guys contribution makes it into the project too. The competitions focus is really in the process, the people collaborating together, and the learning that occurs as a result. These values will be heavily weighted during the judging process.

5. Bonus points will be awarded for a roster of all involved in the project and maybe a short description of skills learned or used to achieve their part. If challenges for the group were overcome then we want to know. One page should do for this bonus point opportunity.

Trade item:

Anything Musical. Lets see it, peeps. What can you dredge up from the depths of your creative minds related to music? To be included in the trade item activity, one must simply bring an item they blacksmithed that is related to music and turn it in at the gallery before auction night.

— Heinrich Hole, Program Chair

Building a Treadle Hammer From a Kit

At FAB CON 2022, Roy Adams talked me into purchasing one of his treadle hammers with air assist. I finally found some time and help this week to assemble the kit using a 16 lbs. sledge as my hammer (the kit does not include a sledge hammer).

Roy's concept was to make a tool that can be used in a small shop with a low budget (\$700 with the air assist option). It's not a powerful tire hammer, but it doesn't come with a big price tag either. There is no welding involved: the whole kit is a bolt together affair.

I like printed directions but Roy only provides you with a video link for assembly instructions. Guess I have to get with the times. But speed watching the video just didn't let me catch a few critical details, which required me to re-accomplish a couple of steps. Watch the video and take notes on which bolts go in which holes.

The system is designed to attach to an exposed 2x4 stud in a shop wall. My rented space doesn't have any exposed studs but does have a couple of 5" round concrete filled "door guardians." We elected to use a 1.5"x3" square tube as our substitute for a 2x4 and attach that to a door guard with a couple of pieces of 1 1/2" x 1/4" flat bar forged into rings that will hold our metal stud to the existing pipes. We cold-formed these retainer rings with a bending jig that didn't have the right size die and then sweated the bars to shape with several large "C" clamps.

In the end, I started the forge fire and did the "heat & beat" to get the rings to the final shape we wanted. In 20-20 hindsight, I think it would have been faster to just go directly to the forge to form the rings.

Once the rings were sized, Jack took over and welded everything up. He even drilled and tapped a couple of 1/2" bolt holes so we could use a bolt to generate a friction hold on the rig and keep it in place when in use.

The next day Christopher and I drilled holes in our steel "2x4" and started bolting everything together. These simple tasks always seem to take longer in my shop as we have customers, visitors and a slew of other projects demanding our attention. But with a few minutes here and there throughout the day, we got the job mostly done in a single afternoon.

At right is a picture of our new treadle hammer in its parked position. We have a 55 lbs. block of steel that we will use as our striking anvil for now.

Where do I expect this tool to be most useful? I've had a few students over the years that have had shoulder problems. I've also had a few people who were simply not big enough to swing a hammer with the power necessary to accomplish select tasks. Usually, Christopher or I will help those folks out as their striker. Recently I've found myself in situations where I cannot be a striker for several people in a class simultaneously. I'm hoping this tool will help fill that gap. More to be reported later as we gain experience with this new addition. For now, it looks promising.

— **David Sandlin, President**



THE FLORIDA CLINKER BREAKER

Florida Artist Blacksmith Association

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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 Square 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

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FAMILY MEMBERS _____

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