

May 2026

CLINKER

Florida Artist Blacksmith Association



BREAKER

Established May 18, 1985



Far West FABA Meeting

The Far West is planning a meeting at Timber Creek Distillery in May. Members are encouraged to bring pieces to sell at the event. See page 7 for more information

FABACon Demonstrators

Two demonstrators have been announced for FABA Con 2026:

- Will Manning of Heartwood Forge
 - Joe Davis of Old School Crafts
- See page 5 for more information



FABACon Hotel Reservations Are Open!

FABACon 2026 is returning to the Best Western Gateway Grand in Gainesville on Oct. 16-18. Hotel reservations are open now. Use this link to book now at the discounted rate of \$129 a night.

https://www.bestwestern.com/en_US/book/hotel-rooms.10281.html?groupId=X95RX3D5

Rooms are currently booking on Expedia at \$200 a night for this property on those dates, so FABA's rate is a significant discount. Don't delay! Book your hotel room now.

Regional Challenge

Balance and Motion (with literal motion)

Exchange Item

Something that whirls, twirls or spins

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.

Contributions to FABA are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law. FABA publishes the Florida Clinker Breaker monthly and FABA membership includes a subscription. We solicit correspondence and unpaid articles on any subjects related to FABA's purposes. Send to editor@blacksmithing.org. Materials submitted must be your own work, and citations of others must be clearly identified. By submitting materials, you are allowing FABA to edit, print and post them to FABA's website. ABANA Chapter newsletters may reprint non-copyrighted material, if it is credited to the author and this newsletter. You need the publisher's permission to reprint copyrighted material unless otherwise noted.

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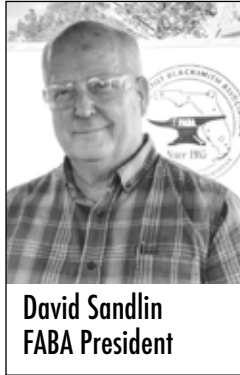
Table of Contents

2	Regional Information
3-4	President's Message
6	SW Region Report
7	Central NE Region Report
7	Far West Region Report
8-9	North NE Region Report
10	NW Region Report
11	SE Region Report
12	FABA Announcements
13	AACB Conference Invite
14	FABA Scholarships
15	FABA Officers/Membership

Volunteers Needed!

Volunteers are the people who make this organization great. Starting with your local regional coordinator who puts together your monthly activities. Then moving up to your trustee who coordinates larger events. Finally, to your executive board that runs the day-to-day “business” and organizes our annual conference. But, let us never forget the dozens of folks who volunteer at the conference doing everything from teaching classes to taking out the trash. Everyone on your team is a volunteer.

However, some of our volunteers have been supporting the efforts of the Florida Artist Blacksmith Association for a long time; a very long time. And, we need some relief! I’m still a “youngster”, even though I celebrated my 70th birthday last month I’ve only been supporting FABA since 2019, first as regional coordinator then as your president. Other members of the board have track records covering decades of service in various capacities. Our long-suffering Vice President, Lisa Ann, has served on the board, off and on, for 20 years and has been doing double duty as the VP and the Program Chair now on three occasions.



David Sandlin
FABA President

We really need someone (I’m talking to you) to step up and take over the Program Chair position. This conference is your perfect opportunity to learn from the best. The team is in place, demonstrators are being contracted, classes are being set up and now is a great time to learn the job before elections in October.

Speaking of Elections in October, this cycle, in addition to electing a Program Chair, we will be electing Treasurer, Newsletter Editor, SE Trustee and NE Trustee. So far everyone else has indicated they are willing to stay on for another 2-year cycle. However, if you are thinking about joining the leadership team Lisa Ann says she would also like someone to step up as VP so she can step back and enjoy her next conference in 2027 as a plain old average guy (AKA a “POAG”).

The VP position is actually quite important as they are the person who can fill in for any officer if that officer is not available.

So, consider your capabilities, time and talents. If not stepping up to take a specific position please consider becoming an understudy so you learn the ropes. Or volunteer during our next conference – because many hands make a light load.

My search for a fork & how a syllabus is developed

As I’m working through the process to make a cutlery set in time to teach this project at our conference, I’m having to work with some real constraints. For example, I’m without a forge for the next six weeks. I’ll have plenty of time to catch up and practice my skills before the conference, but an unplanned trip has put me a bit behind.

However, the biggest constraint in building a course is coming up with a design that will allow all participants to make the three items in four hours. Although class participants are supposed to have had our Blacksmithing 101/102, or an equivalent level of experience, we know that skills can vary wildly; especially if their experience is non-current or dated. A person that practices the trade only once a month simply cannot keep up with a person that has daily access to a forge. Therefore,

in course design, I try to develop class materials that I can personally accomplish in half the allotted time. With that in mind I embarked on crafting a fork.



I selected $\frac{3}{4}$ " x $\frac{1}{4}$ " as my starting material for the fork, this size will mean less time required for crafting the tines but more drawing out for the handle. I then tried isolating the area that was to become the tines three different ways. First was on the edge of the anvil with a cross pean. This works but requires accuracy and can be unforgiving.

Instead of the edge of the anvil, I found a bottom fuller inserted in the hardy hole gave more consistent results, but then I’d need to make bottom fullers for all the anvils that will be used in the class. I also tried using a spring fuller with the assistance of a striker. Good results but we’d need to make the spring fullers. At least making spring fullers would require only half as many tools at bottom fullers and those can be made quickly using a power hammer.



President's Message (continued)



Using my “smithing magician” (AKA Guillotine tool) worked the best but I only have one of those and making more is a major project. The smithing magician gave me the single person equivalent of having a top and bottom fuller with a striker. Making top fullers is not too difficult if you have a couple of Harbor Freight hammers to sacrifice and a power hammer to forge with but preparation time is a factor. So, we’ll be making four spring fullers for this class.

Next was the prospect of using a chisel to cut the tines. I want to be traditional but class time is a factor as we will also have to make the spoon and a simple knife in 4 hours. Jeff Badarak modified my VEVOR band saw with a ¼ “ steel plate and a couple of pieces of angle iron, turning it into a table band saw that clamps in a post vice (thank you Jeff!).

I don’t think using an electric band saw is too far away from most folk’s home capabilities as you could always use a hacksaw. Craig Hines can teach you how to make



a beautiful hacksaw, maybe you can catch him at the AACB Blacksmith Conference, Cannonsburgh Village, Murfreesboro, TN on May 14-16. (Yep, that is a shameless plug for one of our many great instructors.)

After cutting the tines they need to be heated and tapered. A couple of convenience bends are required and good fire management is a must in order to not burn the tines. Granted it would be easier to use a gas forge at this point but gas forges are a premium at our conference. Besides fire management is always a great skill to work on.

To finish the fork we need to draw out the remaining material for the handle side of the fork. I got fancy and made a small leaf. You do need the length/weight at the end to make the utensil feel balanced in your hand. After doing this I’ve decided the leaf ornamentation was not a good decision. Not only does it take multiple heats, and time, but it gets in the way when using the fork. I now have a simpler design in mind.

So, there’s progress in building a syllabus. I will practice this project again, with some variation. Then when I have developed the process for each of the table implements I will use the membership of FABA Far West as guinea pigs to be sure we have the timing right for the real class at FABA conference, Best Western Gateway Grand, Gainesville, FL; October 16-18. Hope to see you there.

Until then, I hope and pray your anvil rings true and your hammer delivers many a fine project.

— David Sandlin, President



Demonstrators join FABACon26

Fire Danger!

Yes, I do have some fun things to talk about; however, as you all are well aware, Florida is in various levels of Extreme Drought!

When was the last time you tested your smoke detectors? Are your fire extinguishers charged up, and in date? All it takes is one errant spark... Everything is just super dry and crispy. Tree debris on your roof, or in your gutters, can catch and smolder; and even parking your recently driven vehicle on tall grasses can lead to disaster.

Please be vigilant, and safe!

With great kudos to Kirk Sullens, who was able to make personal contact with and follow up with both of our demonstrators while I was on the road, I am thrilled to announce that the FABA Homecoming continues.

Will Manning of Heartwood Forge will demonstrate his knife blade techniques. (For a sneak peek, Will just got a great article in *Garden & Gun*: <https://gardenandgun.com/after-a-tragic-accident-blacksmith-will-manning-forges-ahead/>)

In addition, Joe Davis of Old School Crafts will be demonstrating his sculptural techniques. (Check out all Joe is into on his Instagram pages at <https://www.instagram.com/oldschoolcrafts/>)

Watch for your next issue of the *Clinker Breaker*, where we will be announcing so much more! I am especially excited to announce that we will have more artisans and craft persons demonstrating this year than in years past: everything from engraving and armor making to fiber arts.

Your conference team is always looking for more teachers, especially for those classes involving brazing, and other “blacksmith adjacent” skills. Please consider sharing your talents!

I am heading to Murfreesboro, TN, to join our Appalachian Blacksmiths brethren at their May 14–16 conference.

As is often the case, I’ll be traveling 12 hours to get to spend some time with another FABA member: Craig Hines is teaching!

I know that several of you have been on the road, teaching and demonstrating; please consider writing a column for the *Clinker Breaker* to let us know what you’ve been up to! (not-so-subtle hint)

— **Lisa Anne Connor, Program Coordinator**



Fireplace elements by Joe Davis of Old School Crafts

SW Region Meeting Report

We had our meeting at Scott Teele's shop, where he demonstrated using drawing dies to make a steak turner and a fork using railroad spikes. The meeting was attended by 10 members. Frank Teele brought swamp cabbage for lunch a Florida classic.

SW Region Meeting, May 2

The next Southwest meeting will be at Crowley Museum & Nature Center on 5/2/26 starting at 10:00 am. This will be Tony Fenn's last meeting before moving to NC.

Crowley Museum and Nature Center
www.crowleyfl.org, 941-322-1000

Address: 16405 Myakka Road, Sarasota, FL 34240

DIRECTIONS

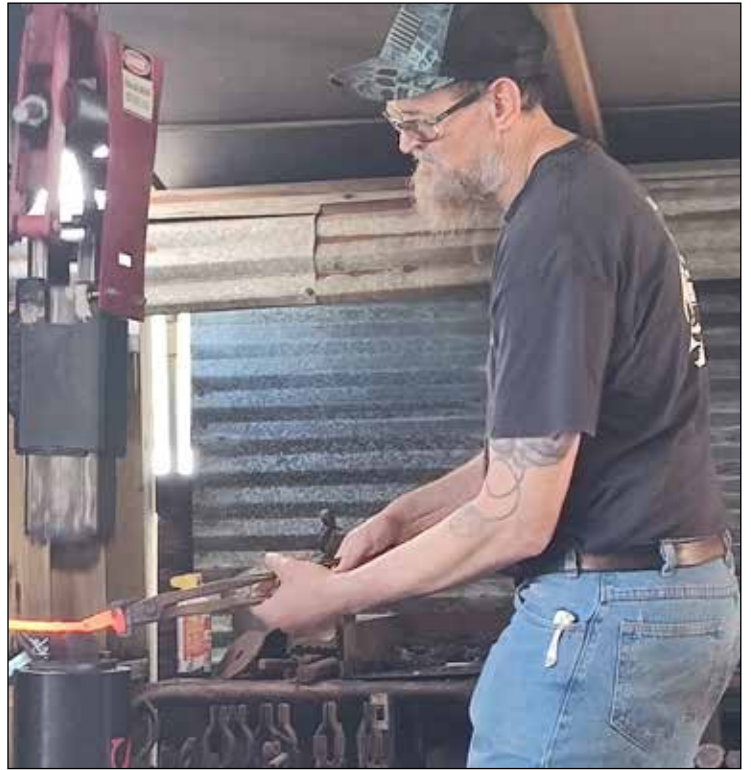
From the south or west: Take Fruitville Road (exit #210 off I-75) and drive 10 miles to the dead end. Turn right on Myakka Road. Go 3 miles, Crowley is on your left. If you travel over the bridge to the north entrance of Myakka State Park, you missed us by a mile.

From the north: Take I-75 to FL-70, exit #217B, travel to Verna Road. Turn right and travel south for about 6 miles to the Crowley entrance on your left.

From the east: Take FL-70 to Verna Road. Turn left. Travel about 6 miles to Crowley entrance on your left.

Please bring an item for the Iron and Hat raffle. Please also dress appropriately and bring something to share for lunch. Please check www.facebook.com/groups/228279738123674, or email treznokomisforge@gmail.com.

— Trez Cole, SW Region Trustee



Central NE Meeting, May 2

We had a great meeting in April. We had open forges and started discussing our regional project. Our next meeting will be held on Saturday, May 2nd, at Barberville Pioneer Settlement from 9 AM to 4 PM. We will have open forges and continue on our group project. As always, lunch will be provided. Hope to see you there.

Please check the FABA NE Facebook page for info: facebook.com/groups/381431599058683/ email William Thornton at knifegsx@yahoo.com.

— William Thornton, Central NE Coordinator

Far West Meeting Report

In March, the team assembled at John Butler's farm for our annual fundraising event. Each year we go to John's farm to hold this event because it is the closest venue we have that reaches the Pensacola market.

We had nine people sign up for the Viking Era Knife class and another 5 members who showed up to support teaching the class. After the initial safety briefing (and plug to get these new blacksmiths to join FABA) everyone got started on their knives.

After an overview using a story board, the teaching process was to demonstrate a step and then have the students accomplish that step while the current FABA members coached.

By lunch time, Sonny's BBQ brought in by John Butler, everyone had drawn out their handle, given it a twist and a pig's tail, and cut it free from the bar. Granted there were a few students, even with close supervision, who succeeded in burning the handle off. However, we had anticipated that possibility and had pre-made some knife blanks that had handles drawn, ready to twist and curl.

After lunch blades were shaped and the edges beveled. Rough sharpening was accomplished on 1x30" sanders and 2x28" sander/grinders. We finished with a medieval style heat treat for these mild steel blades and everyone went home happy.

This event contributed \$805 to FABA, plus, we even added a few new members.

Our April meeting was held at Traditions Workshop on April 25.



Far West Meeting Schedule

Our event in May will occur at Timber Creek distillery. Set-up starts at 9 AM, and we will be focused on yet another one of the journeyman standards.

These are always a good meetings because Timber Creek distillery is a great host, and they have a fantastic pizza oven. They also encourage us to bring items that we wish to leave with them to sell for us.

This is the first meeting that we plan to seriously start construction on our competition project for FABACON 26.

June 27, we will return to Traditions Workshop to focus on our Group project. July 25th will find us under the cool of the pecan trees at John Butler's farm, a great time to work on your gift exchange project – something that twists and turns. August 22nd and September 26th will be at Traditions again so we can finalize our group project and pack the trailer for FABA CON 2026.

We do plan to have a meeting on October 24th so we can unpack the trailer and swap stories about the conference. Our last meeting of the year will be November 7th. Back to Timber Creek for our regional forging competition, project to be announced sometime this summer.

Hope to see you there and let's see who gets braggin' rights for another year.

— David Sandlin, FABA President

North NE Meeting Report

The North Northeast region had our April meeting at the shop of Hands on Metal with a great view of the San Sebastian river and marina and cool breezes off the water. Blaise Morrell has a terrific location for a shop as far as the view!

Blaise Morrell is a blacksmith, artist, and entrepreneur who works with steel, aluminum, brass and bronze (he has his own recipe) in St. Augustine and he graciously hosted our meeting and then led a casting workshop during the afternoon. His shop is at the end of a row of galleries and offices, and we had many folks drop by just to see what was going on, as well as several FABA regulars at the meeting. Blaise took us from the initial selection of casting sand and sand prep, through selecting the pattern (item to be molded and cast), setting that pattern into the sand and the packing and handling of the cope and drag. We learned about down sprues and pouring cups, vents and how to use a parting compound. He provided numerous tips for getting a clean casting and showed us his innovations for a casting furnace. After the demo we shared a sandwich lunch with almost a picnic feel to it while asking questions and taking in the view over the water.

The casting workshop had 6 participants, and everyone had a lot of fun and at least one successful casting per person, while the not-so-perfect attempts provided good teaching points.

Our May meeting will return to Iron Osprey Forge on May 9th. Doug will demonstrate some simple guillotine builds, how to make a monkey tool for cleaning the shoulders on tenons, and a discussion on the group project for conference.

North NE Meeting, May 9

In May, we will be meeting back at Iron Osprey Forge on the second Saturday, May 9th. Hope to see you all there.

— Doug Hayes, North NE Coordinator



Regional Reports



NW Region Report

The North West Region had our April meeting at Aunt Louise's Farm. Aunt Louise's postponed their opening for the spring season a week so we had the whole place to ourselves.

It was a nice cool morning, but we only had 15 people sign in. Lots of members were off doing other things, like the Worm Grunt in Sopchoppy.

We had a new member, Gene Singletary, who got to help make charcoal in Mr. Charcoal Maker Jr. and make a pair of EZ tongs and make a pair of tiny tongs soapstone holder. Brian Smelt also made a pair of tiny tongs.

ALF started their spring season on April 18th, and it will be open 10 AM to 6 PM on Saturdays and 2 PM to 6 PM on Sundays. We left the equipment set up, and someone from the group will probably be there working while they are open each weekend until they end the season on May 10th.

The time we spend at ALF is a special kind of "Open Forges" where we get an audience and special treatment from ALF in the form of free food and drinks! I'm going to be there every Saturday, at least, until May 9.

NW Region Meeting, May 9

Our May meeting will be at The Tallahassee Museum on May 9th. The address is 3945 Museum Rd. Tallahassee FL. 32310.

For our meeting at the museum, I'm going to demonstrate making tiny tongs soapstone holders and Mike Murphy is going to assist. We're probably not going to have a raffle. I base that decision on how many people attend and whether they bring things to donate. If we don't have a raffle, we just save the items for the next meeting. We didn't have enough people to have a raffle at the April meeting.

We're not planning a meal for the group at the May meeting. Individual members can bring a bag lunch, buy lunch from the cafe or go out to lunch on the way home from the meeting. The museum opens at 9 AM. Usually we come in the service gate, as it's close to the BS shop, but they will let us in the main entrance without paying admission if we tell them that we're there for the meeting. It's been awhile since we had a meeting at the Tallahassee Museum and I hope to see you there! In the meantime I'll be spending my weekends at Aunt Louise's Farm and I hope to see you there too!

— **John Pfund, NW Region Coordinator**

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

STEEL SPONSORS

Greg Hagen - Holland Anvils - Holland, MI
John Elliot - Blacksmith Supply - Chester, VA
Michael Oliver - Turn and Burn Metalworks - Lakeland, FL
Mission San Luis - Tallahassee, FL

IRON SPONSORS

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
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.

SE Region Meeting Report

Another great turnout today, working on the challenge project for the conference. People worked on journeymen requirements. New faces checked out what FABA is about. One project was completed and a few are waiting to be completed next month.

The next meeting for the Southeast Region is May 16 at The Farm, 1566 S. Military Trail, West Palm Beach, FL. Just turn off Military Trail 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

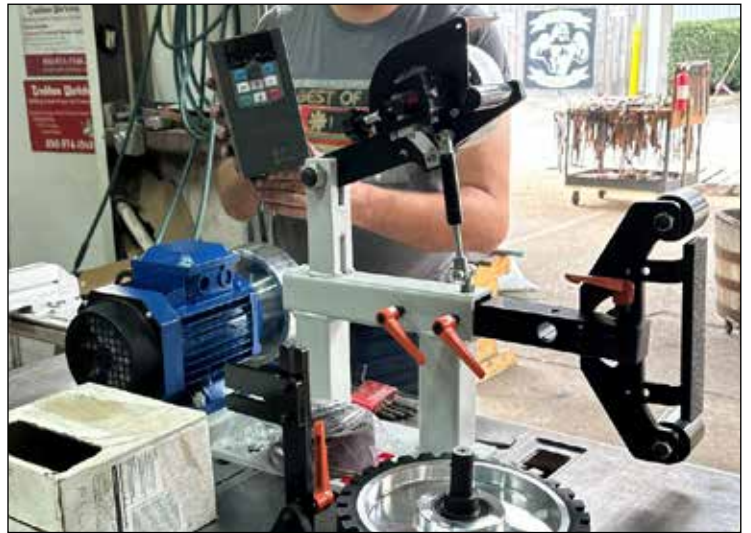
— Gary Becker, SE Region member



FABA equipment upgrade: SALE

During a Black Friday special, Home Depot had VEVOR brand 2x72" sanders for sale with all the accessories. The board decided to move on this opportunity, and I purchased them using my military discount (another 10% off).

We now have 3 fully functional 2x72 machines, making the 3 green 2x72 machines redundant. The green machines will be for sale at conference so you can "try before you buy." Prices will range from \$300 to \$500 depending on the quality of the machine.



The new sander has a variable & reversible speed system, and converts the 3-phase motor to 120v single phase using only 9 amps. When you see these at FABA CON 2026 they will be in their travel crates designed with hinges allowing you to use the machines while still in the crate.





AACB

BLACKSMITH CONFERENCE

Where sparks fly, skills grow, and blacksmiths connect.

Cannonsburgh Village
Murfreesboro TN

MAY 14-16, 2026

WWW.AACBLACKSMITHS.ORG

Walt Anderson Scholarship deadline June 30

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 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 Walt Anderson 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 June 30, 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

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). 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 \$100 upon completion of the course, whichever is less. (for example, if the course(s) cost \$135, 80% of that is \$108, so the awardee would receive \$100; if the course(s) cost is \$95 then the awardee would receive \$76). Formula for determining award: Registration fee(s) \$ _____ X 0.80 = _____ TOTAL (awardee would receive \$100 or less of total course registration costs).
3. 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.

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

THE FLORIDA CLINKER BREAKER

Florida Artist Blacksmith Association

David Sandlin, President
114 Choctaw Cove
Valparaiso, FL 32580



May 2026

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FABA Officers

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WebMaster	Jessica Sandlin	webmaster@blacksmithing.org

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 Fortenberry
1078A Four Forks Rd.
Elizabeth City, NC 27909

NAME _____

FAMILY MEMBERS _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ CELL _____ EMAIL _____

DATE _____ NEW _____ RENEWAL _____ I want B&W Newsletter by mail (quarterly) _____ OR Color Newsletter by Email _____