

February 2026

CLINKER



BREAKER

Florida Artist Blacksmith Association

Established May 18, 1985

Save The Date! Gainesville, Oct 16-18

FABACon 2026 is coming! We're returning to the Best Western Gateway Grand in Gainesville on Oct. 16-18. Mark your calendars and stay tuned in the coming months for information on schedule, pricing and hotel reservations.



Regional Challenge

Balance and Motion
(as in, literal motion)



Exchange Item

Something that whirls, twirls or spins

More Upcoming Events



Induction Forge Workshop & Seminar
March 21-22, Info, Page 5

2026 Bearded Brotherhood Ball



**February 27
- March 1**
More info,
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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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A little shop buffoonery

It was the end of the day, I had just taken off my safety glasses, about to walk out and call it quits for the day. The air compressor is right by the exit door. Although I was tired, I realized that we had not drained water out of the air compressor for over a week. Water building up inside of the air compressor vessel is a common problem with our high humidity here in Florida.

Since we do drain the tank on a regular basis, we have a hose attached to the drain plug. Taking hold of this hose and throwing the free end outside, I then laid down on the ground so I could crack open the valve to let the water out.

I should probably mention that the pressure inside of our tank is normally 150 psi. I should also mention that although we attached a hose, we never really secured it.

Wise to the above facts, I only cracked the valve open the littlest bit, and the water started running out without any trouble. As I got to the point where it was almost nothing coming out of the tank, I got impatient and I opened the valve up just a little bit more ... that's when the problems started.



David Sandlin
FABA President

With the increased air pressure of the hose popped off and blasted both water and dust into my face. Even though I was blinded, I quickly closed the valve. My son helped me stand up and find my way back to the bathroom. I mentioned several years ago in one of my columns that we had previously installed an eyewash station on the sink in the bathroom and today was the day I got to use it.

These eyewash stations are available on Amazon for around \$40. You simply unscrew the screen off the bottom of a faucet, screw this device on and then reattach the screen at the bottom of the device. With the lever in one position, you can wash your hands and with the lever in the other position the water flows upward toward your face. Safety gear like this is priceless on the day you need it.

Fortunately, I was only stunned and did not suffer any real injury. However, as John Switzer of Blackbear Forge, says at the end of every video “always wear your safety glasses.” In my case, I won't take them off until I get in the truck to go home.

Sometimes the biggest danger in the shop is not your forge, but you're supporting equipment. Keep that in mind and be safe! May your anvil always ring true.

— David Sandlin, FABA President



Central NE Meeting, Feb. 7th

For the month of January we had a small meeting with open forges.

Our next meeting will be held at Barberville Pioneer Settlement on February 7th from 9am until 4pm. We will be discussing forge welding and go over different techniques. Lunch will be provided.

Hope to see you there!

Please check the FABA NE Facebook page for more info at [facebook.com/groups/381431599058683/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/381431599058683/), or contact William Thornton at knifegsx@yahoo.com.

— **William Thornton, Central NE Coordinator**

SW Region Schedule

Please keep an eye on our Facebook page for the February meeting: www.facebook.com/groups/228279738123674, or contact antony.fenn@gmail.com.

— **Tony Fenn, SW Region Coordinator**

Orlando Meeting, Feb. 14th

The Greater Orlando region had a good meeting now that we are back from our break. In February since we are meeting on Valentine's Day (Saturday Feb 14th), we will have a special session sponsored by UnderGround Metal Works where we will be assembling plasma cut rose blanks. We'll do some texturing of the petals and plug weld a pencil rod as a stem. This is a relatively straightforward project and would be a great couples activity. As usual I will be providing sandwich stuff for lunch, feel free to bring something to share if you are able.

Meeting date: February 14, 9AM-1PM

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 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

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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.

Upcoming Events



Induction Forge Workshop and Seminar

**March 21-22, 8am to 5pm Sat & Sun
Fever Metal Art Center (Leslie Tharp shop)**

Gainesville, FL

www.blacksmithing.org/regions/2026-spring-workshop

This event will be hosted as a collaboration between Fever Metal Art Center and the Florida Artist Blacksmith Association (FABA) NE Regions, featuring special guests Scott Kretschmer and Evan Blackstock from the Rocky Mountain Smiths.

The visiting smiths will lead two workshops and afternoon seminars focused on the benefits of Induction Forging technology. They will demonstrate the use of induction forging technology and lead two morning workshops focused on setting up and modifying the equipment for safety and coil building. There will be hands-on opportunities for registrants in the afternoon as space and equipment availability allows.

Registration to the 8-5 Sat/ Sun event:

* Registration payments will be taken on site during the event (cash/card options will be available).

Advance RSVP is required. Please use this link <https://www.blacksmithing.org/regions/2026-spring-workshop>

FABA Members - \$15

Nonmembers - \$20

Workshops - \$25 each day (\$45 to attend both days)

* workshops are limited to 8 participants

Schedule

Saturday, March 21:

8-12pm - WORKSHOP 1 - Scott Kretschmer and Evan Blackstock from the Rocky Mountain Smiths will lead a coil building workshop (materials provided with registration fee)

Noon - Lunch Break

1-3pm - SEMINAR & DISCUSSION - Scott Kretschmer and Evan Blackstock from the Rocky Mountain Smiths will discuss benefits of the induction forge will go over setting up and modifying the equipment for safety.

3-5pm - DEMO / Hands On Opportunities - FABA member demo, or group build project using induction forges

Sunday, March 22:

8-12pm - WORKSHOP 2 - Scott Kretschmer and Evan Blackstock from the Rocky Mountain Smiths will lead a coil building workshop (materials provided with registration fee)

Noon - Lunch Break

1-3pm - SEMINAR & DISCUSSION - Scott Kretschmer and Evan Blackstock from the Rocky Mountain Smiths will continue the discussion on the benefits of the induction forge will go over setting up and modifying the equipment for safety.

3-5pm - DEMO / Hands On Opportunities - FABA member demo, or group build project using induction forges

2026 Bearded Brotherhood Ball

Feb 27-March 1, 9AM till we get too tired to stand

Address: 12701 NE 135 ST, Fort McCoy FL 32134

The Bearded Brotherhood is holding their annual ball, and all FABA Members are invited, should they dare.

The 2026 Bearded Brotherhood Ball is coming, and this year we're stripping it down, firing it up, and taking it Back to Basics.

We're heading to Justin Miller's place for the last weekend of February.

This year isn't about big classes, big crowds, or big production. It's about what started this whole damn Brotherhood in the first place: Open forges. Good steel. Good people. Learning by doing. Smiting hot shite with your friends.

There's no registration fee, no set class schedule. We'll have cans (or hats if we forget the cans) out for donations. Pay what you can or what you believe you should. Those funds help cover materials, the cost of getting this circus together, and whatever's left will go right into the Brotherhood pot to help our own when life kicks them in the teeth.

We'll have experienced smiths manning the open forges, ready to help you make whatever your heart desires: blades, hooks, bottle openers, questionable art... whatever. If you want to learn, someone will be there to teach.

We'll have a group project made up of smaller parts. Folks will be divided up into groups to each work on their own part. Nothing brings the Brotherhood together like standing around the anvil and building something as a team.



Food is bring-your-own-damn-food. Drinks too, but do drink plenty of beer. We may have issues with water access, so there's a good chance you'll need to help piss the fire out!

This Ball isn't about going big. It's about going home. Back to the roots, back to the forge, back to the Brotherhood.

Camping available, bring your own gear!



NW Region Report

Hello everyone and greetings from the Northwest region. Our first meeting of the year was a great one! 51 people signed in at Bettinger's welding shop. We had a demonstration of tong making, and open forges for making EZ tongs. I think about 8 or 9 people were making tongs for their first time. Thanks to Daniel Schul for the demo and welding up some extra tong blanks to keep the open forges supplied. The meal was delicious, the grilling crew performed their usual magic and lots of sides and desserts. Ken Weldon gathered a supply of tongs for Jim Labolito's Monday night open forges and everyone who wanted one, got a pair of tongs to take home. We had a dozen or so new faces at the meeting and a lot of them were taking advantage of the open forges and making their first tongs! I hope they come back!

— **John Pfund, NW Region Coordinator**

NW Region Meeting, Feb. 14

Our February meeting will be held on Feb. 14th at the home of Mark and Shelley Mason in Grand Ridge. The address is 2181 El Bethel Church Rd. Grand Ridge, Florida. 32442. Grand Ridge is right next to Sneads. For this meeting we're going to continue with the EZ tongs and open forges. Come planning to make a pair. I'll have a new supply of blanks prepared and there will be plenty for everyone. Mark is going to do a Low Country Boil for our meal, we can bring sides and desserts to go along with it. Mark's phone number is 912-614-2973 in case anyone wants to check on what to bring. It's going to be Valentine's Day, so I'm requesting Heart shaped designs for your Iron in the Hat raffle donations. It's gonna be great! I hope to see you there!.

— **John Pfund, NW 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

— **Gary Becker, SE Region member**



Rocky Bayou Christian School visit

Each year Rocky Bayou Christian school sends their students out to a lot of different places as an opportunity to experience work in the real world before they go back to the classroom. They refer to this practice as “Jan term.”

I am lucky, Traditions Workshop gets 4 juniors/seniors to visit for the week. We have done this now for 7 years. This year I was working with Bryton, Brenley, Myles, and Amber. I also had an instructor from the school, Ms. Jackson, as their chaperone.

You are probably familiar with the concept for training an Apprentice. First, I show you, then you help me, then I help you accomplish the task, and finally you show me on your own and I critique/guide.

The Apprentice process dovetails nicely with the Scandinavian concept Sloyd, which is a system of handicraft-based teaching. It refers primarily to woodwork but can be applied to any type of kinesthetic learning; such as paper-folding, sewing, knitting and (yes) blacksmithing. Sloyd has been a Swedish school subject since the 1870s and a compulsory subject since 1955. It is credited with gifting students the ability to create and design products in different materials with the help of appropriate tools. It also gives them the ability to develop ideas, as well as choose their approach in keeping with the intention of the work. Finally, students learn the ability to reflect over processes and results, bearing in mind considerations of quality, expression and sustainability.

In other words, the subject of Slöjd aims to develop the student's practical knowledge, and their ability to solve practical problems through knowledge of different working processes, as well as how to evaluate the results of their own work during the production process by trying out different ways to handle specific tools or materials or by choosing alternative tools and materials.

Since my mid 20's I have always been an instructor. That skill was developed in earnest during my military training and progressed until I eventually became professor with the Community College of the Air Force. During those years I developed many syllabi, from flight training to computer applications, to strategy development. I found that students learn best when concepts can be taken out of textbooks and applied in hands-on situations. Therefore, I strongly support the Sloyd process of teaching as it connects the mind and the body.

With all that in my background the kids from Rocky Bayou did not know what they we getting into.

This week of “school” was nothing like they had ever had before. In 5 days, they accomplished 8 projects. We

started with the basics crafting nails and hooks the first day. These two tasks introduce the students to 6 of the 7 processes a blacksmith can apply to the steel; namely: drawing out, upsetting, punching, bending/folding, twisting and stretching/shrinking. (The hook I teach has a twist and requires drifting the punched hole). The only process they don't see on the first day is forge welding. They get that demonstration on the second day. These tasks also introduce hammer ergonomics so everyone starts with good habits.

The next day they move onto making leaves and sea horses; these projects reenforce the skills learned on the first day while making the student think about how they might apply the processes in different combinations to achieve unique results. Interspersed in these activities are stories from the lore of the blacksmith, starting with Tubal-Cain in the Bible (remember this is a Christian school) we discuss what it was like to be an apprentice through the ages and the trials of being a Journeyman on your way to becoming a master. Slip in some math – how much steel is required to produce a ½” diameter scroll (a.k.a. a pig's tail). And even add some basic physics ($f=mv^2$) and these students are already seeing what STEM really is when applied in the real world.

By the end of day 2 they are required to set up their own equipment, support each other as strikers and clean up at the end of the day. We also switch from gas forge to coal forges for the rest of the lessons. Keeping a clean fire is just part of the job.

Day 3 we make a BBQ forks. Now the element of self-guided discovery starts to take hold. When asked by my students “is this right” or “how does this look” I turn the question back to them so they learn to evaluate their own work. First up is demonstrating, then helping them, to split two inches at the end of the rod to make the tines. We also demonstrate various twists and encourage them to incorporate one or more into their fork project. As they incorporate what they have learned into their creations I make my own fork with a twist and then draw out about 15 inches on the handle end, flatten another 6 inches, punch two holes and then “thread the needle”. I have to thank Chris Cauthan for teaching me that trick! This is the day we delve deeply into finishing one's work. Bee's wax, linseed oil, pantinas, paints, bronzing with a brass brush, food safe oils, using cotton or soot to blacken the steel; we try to cover the whole waterfront. Students are now allowed to use a stationary wire wheel, buffing wheel and a 1x30” belt sander, with supervision!

We again slip in some geometry comparing a Fibonacci series with the Archimedean spiral and how to use

a straightedge with a compass to find right angles or use geometric constructions to create layouts for more advanced work. The book “by hound and eye” is a great reference for using geometric constructions for furniture (and forging) layouts.

Day 4 has one objective, punch a 1-inch hole through a 1-inch-wide bar of steel. We then encourage them to turn this construction into something useful, usually a bottle opener with ornamentation like a wizard head. We use clay to simulate how the steel will move using various punches. The kids get to decide their own design after they punch and drift the hole. Same training process; I show, they help me, then I help them and finally I cut them loose to make their project as I coach. Myles wants to make a dragon like one have fashioned on the end of my fire rake, so I make one too so he can follow along with the process. Bryton has been bugging me all week about making a sword, he uses the afternoon to make a sickle. I guess that is so he can harvest the hops before he opens a bottle. Amber punches the face of a ferret on the handle. Brenley is satisfied with stamping her initials. Everyone is taking initiative and loving it. There is another forge welding demonstration and a few more history of blacksmithing stories. I know they are “catching the fire” because Ms Jackson is asking about an apprentice program for Myles and Amber wants to start a blacksmith club at the school.

Day 5 and we finally get to making a knife (Bryton’s emphasis). We start with 1”x1/4” flat bar and make a Viking

Era Knife. You might also know it as the blacksmith’s knife or maybe by some other name. Draw out material to make the handle, then turn it around to make the blade. I tell them to put a soapstone mark on their anvils that is “two hands and two fingers” and they work efficiently as striker teams to draw out 12 to 14 inches of material depending on their hand size. Ecclesiastes 4:12 “two are better than one ...” comes to life in this process. At lunch break they get to do some hands-on electro etching with a 9v battery and salt water. After lunch a short demonstration of the CNC plasma then back to work on the knives. As they sharpen their blades with a file there are words of caution about bringing knives to school and Ms Jackson walks them through a process whereby they can show off their work and not get in trouble. Heat treating is demonstrated, the physics discussed and then practiced on their knives. Almost done and time for one more project. We make mini-swords for Bryton using 16p duplex nails. Amber is so excited by this little drill that when her dad arrives, she makes him get out of the car and make one too.

It has been a good week. Much was learned and more importantly applied. Ms Jackson and I discuss what might be done different for next year but not much will be changed in the syllabus. She and the rest of the kids planned to attend the Far West FABAs meeting on January 24th. Certainly not your typical week of school, but a week that will be remembered.

— **David Sandlin, President**

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

Far West Meeting Schedule

Our February meeting will be on Feb. 21st, again at Traditions Workshop. This is usually the coldest meeting for the year, so it's always nice to be able to go into the workshop and retreat from the temperatures.

We will explore mortise and tenon joints as a demonstration project. During this meeting, we also hope to sketch up our plan for the group competition project. Once again, meeting starts at 9 AM and goes until we're too tired to keep going. Traditions Workshop is located at 418 Green acres Rd., Fort Walton Beach FL

Our March meeting will be at John Butler's family farm, and this is our traditional fundraising event. We will have 12 slots for the Viking era knife class. We will need several members to volunteer their time as safety observers.

This event is often attended by non-FABA members and it is a great opportunity for us to encourage them to join the organization. Thank you again to John Butler for hosting this event.

Our April meeting will be on April 26th at a location to be announced. Usually, this is an event held out in the community, and we are looking for a local sponsor. Sponsorship entails nothing more than providing us a place to set up.

Remember that our gift exchange item this year something that spins. There will be a demonstration on how to

make a corkscrew, but I hope you have some other ideas on things that spin and you can make them during the session.

Our event on May 24 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 FABA-CON 26.

June 27 location is still to be determined, but this is the Saturday after Midsomer, so you can expect us to demonstrate a project inspired by that Scandinavian holiday. July 25 and August 22 are too far for us to give you a reasonable forecast.

September 26 will be at Traditions Workshop, and we will be packing the trailer in anticipation of the conference sometime in October. November will find us back at Timber Creek distillery for our annual competition once again. We don't have a hard date for this yet, but November 7th looks like a good candidate.

Sounds like Far West will have a great year at the Forge and a number of wonderful learning opportunities.

— David Sandlin, FABA President



Volunteer Blacksmiths Needed

Heritage Village in Largo, FL, is looking for volunteer artist blacksmiths to demonstrate blacksmithing in our Old Homestead Forge circa 1850s, using traditional tools and methods, no power tools. Our schedule runs the first three Saturdays of the month and the last Sunday.

We have several openings for February and March.

If you are interested, contact Jay Dugan at ramforgeworks@gmail.com or 727-480-5611.

THE FLORIDA CLINKER BREAKER

Florida Artist Blacksmith Association

David Sandlin, President
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Valparaiso, FL 32580



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February 2026

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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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