



Balcones Forge Dispatch

President's Corner

December 2015



Greetings!

First I would like to welcome our new Balcones board members, Laura Armstrong and Rick Dawdy. We are very excited to have you join us and help bring Balcones Forge into the coming year. Rick is in his last year of teaching welding and small engine

repair in the Judson school District in San Antonio and served as treasurer on the board some years ago and helped to support Balcones Forge for almost 20 years. Laura has been a loyal Balcones member for a few years now. She is a very talented artist and was instrumental in putting on the Bluebonnet demo this year. I think her web site says it best. Check it out at: www.turtleontherockstuido.com.

I would also like to thank the members coming off the board that have served us so well in the past years. The time and effort you have so generously donated has helped to make Balcones Forge one of the greatest blacksmithing groups around today. We hope that you will be with us for many more years to come. Thank you John Crouchet, Rudy Billings, Alan and Jeff Lee!

The Lee brothers have taken on a rather large production project that will keep them more than busy for a least a year. Rudy and Joyce need some kickback time on their new ranch (with new Longhorn cattle) and John and Carolyn need to get their retirement plans up and running. If you haven't seen John's You Tube video, The Fly Press with John Crouchet, you probably need to watch it. I think it is the only fly press instructional video out there and is also available on DVD.

President's message continued on page 2.

Meeting Date is December 19



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President's message continued.

I also want to thank William Bastas for the great demo at the Morgan smithy and a big thank you to the Morgan family for hosting. The auction was a huge success thanks to all the great help from Vince, Rudy, Daniel, Ruth and all the folks that helped to organize all those items. I hear it brought in almost \$10,00.

Next meeting: December 19th at Jerry Whitley's Rustyk Forge in Devine. This is the annual memorial dinner and demo with a big auction to boot. Jerry has lined up some demonstrators, built a new shop and he and Marsha are still working on the meals. Don't miss this one.

Competition trade item is a branding iron. Your choice, mini, steak, historic and you get to take it back home. Prizes for the best.

See ya'll there.

Jerry Achterberg
President Balcones Forge

THE BALCONES FORGE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jerry Achterberg, President
Jerry Whitley, Vice President
Daniel Harrington, Treasurer
Tim Tellander, Secretary

Laura Armstrong
Rick Dawdy
Jim Elliot
Vince Herod, Editor



SECRETARY'S REPORT

The November meeting for Balcones Forge took place November 21 in Austin, Texas at the blacksmith shop of the late Donald Morgan. Don's wife Natalie graciously opened the shop doors for Balcones Forge blacksmiths for an auction of the equipment, tools, as well as numerous artifacts. William Bastas served as host for this event and all in attendance honored Mr. Morgan with ringing of the anvil and this proved to be a solemn and emotional moment for the family as well those showing respect for a fellow blacksmith.

This auction was unique in that Donald and Emily Morgan's intent about dispersing the tools and equipment, was donating it all to Austin Community College. This generous donation appeared to me to be Donald's way of continuing a tradition he so truly loved by making the equipment available to as many people as possible. William Bastas therefore went to the Don's shop and selected the appropriate equipment and tools that ACC could use. However, due to the quantity of items available and limited space at ACC, William and Emily agreed to an auction that would benefit Balcones Forge members as well, and the turnout was exceptional.

William began the day by forge welding horseshoe pieces together to form an oak leaf. Apparently, there was a forged oak leaf lying on the side of

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the forge, and several horse shoe pieces in the old coal, evidently pieces for a second oak leaf that Don had been working on. William thought it appropriate to complete the project out of respect for Mr. Morgan. Paying careful attention to the fire, William passed on many tricks of the trade in the utilization of a coal forge. He, of course, used Donald's coal fire forge and a most significant anvil. As with most of us, the anvil is the particular centerpiece that all blacksmiths love. This particular anvil, as William explained, formerly belonged to an African-American named Mr. Nunn who was a 3rd generation blacksmith. Evidently, Mr. Nunn was quite the expert in his field and his bust is on display at the Carver Museum in Austin. Mr. Morgan visited many of the blacksmith shops in the area to observe and learn traditional blacksmithing techniques.

After the brilliant demo by William, the auction began. It would be impossible to identify and list the numerous items the crowd bid on; probably because I didn't know what a lot of them were or what they could be used for. An example of this was when Vince and other members could not identify a particular tool, but Daniel Harrington solved the dilemma by indicating the piece was very rare, and that comment only added to the bidding war. I was fortunate enough to come away with functional tongs, hammers, wooden wagon wheel spokes (good for hammer handles), and a dozen 2 inch steel cannon balls from the cannon of La Bahia located near Goliad, Texas. These steel balls were in a flower pot display for silent auction, but were labeled only as steel balls. When I was paying for them, one of Natalie's daughters told me what they were; the cannon balls were given to Donald by the committee that contracted Donald to construct 2 wheels for the cannon. You know I was elated to acquire this unique piece of history, because I went to high school in Goliad, Texas and certainly treasure reading and learning all I can about the sacrifices of men and women in that era.

Vince, Daniel, and Rudy were very busy keeping up with the bids and did a remarkable job for the Morgan family and Balcones blacksmiths. The auction netted the family \$9,931 dollars. Special

thanks to all the participants that helped make this auction a success and I am happy to report, there were no fights - only an occasional bidding war. Also, a much warranted thank you to William Bastas for the organization of this event.

A Balcones Forge board meeting was called to order by president Jerry Achterberg to announce board member changes. John Crouchet, Rudy Billings, Jeff Lee and Alan Lee have withdrawn as board members. Laura Armstrong and Rick Dawdy have stepped forward to become our newest members.

Also, Daniel Miller will be the next demonstrator for the Blue Bonnet Demo in 2016.

Submitted by
Tim Tellander
Balcones Forge, Secretary



photo by Gerald Pollard



4th Annual Rusty Forge - Demo & Memorial

Saturday, December 19, 2015

General Membership Meeting & Memorial and “Ringing of the Anvil” – 10:45

Dinner – 11:00

Barbeque Brisket, Sausage, and all the fixins’

We will have iced tea and bottled water to drink. If you prefer an adult beverage feel free to bring it.

Auction

Please bring your donated items as well as your nickels to support the auction.

Demonstrations 12:00 -5:00

Competition Trade Item – Branding Iron

There will be a prize for the best one.

Followed by “Open Forge” for Balcones Forge Members

Feel free to come early and stay late. Plenty of room for self-contained RVs, Campers and Tents

Featured Artists:

Alan Lee

-

George Graham – Lag Bolt Scorpion

-

Matt Pohorelsky -



Bring your lawn chair and don’t wear your good shoes. You will be out on the farm and you never know what you might step in.

NOVEMBER MEETING INFORMATION

4th Annual Rustyk Forge Memorial & Demo

I spent a couple of days emptying the barn and I have a new layer of gravel down to help keep everything a little cleaner. Now it is time to start putting everything back in. Still have a little bit of work to do on the side draft chimney that was newly installed. We are really looking forward to the 19th, rain or shine it will be a good day.

We will be starting off a little later than usual. We will begin the meeting at 10:15 followed by the Memorial and ringing of the anvil. We are looking to serve dinner at 11:00. Once we are done, we will fire up the forges for Alan Lee, George Graham and Matt Pohorel-sky to demonstrate for us. We will have an open forge for Balcones Forge members when the demonstrations are complete, bring your anvil and tools.

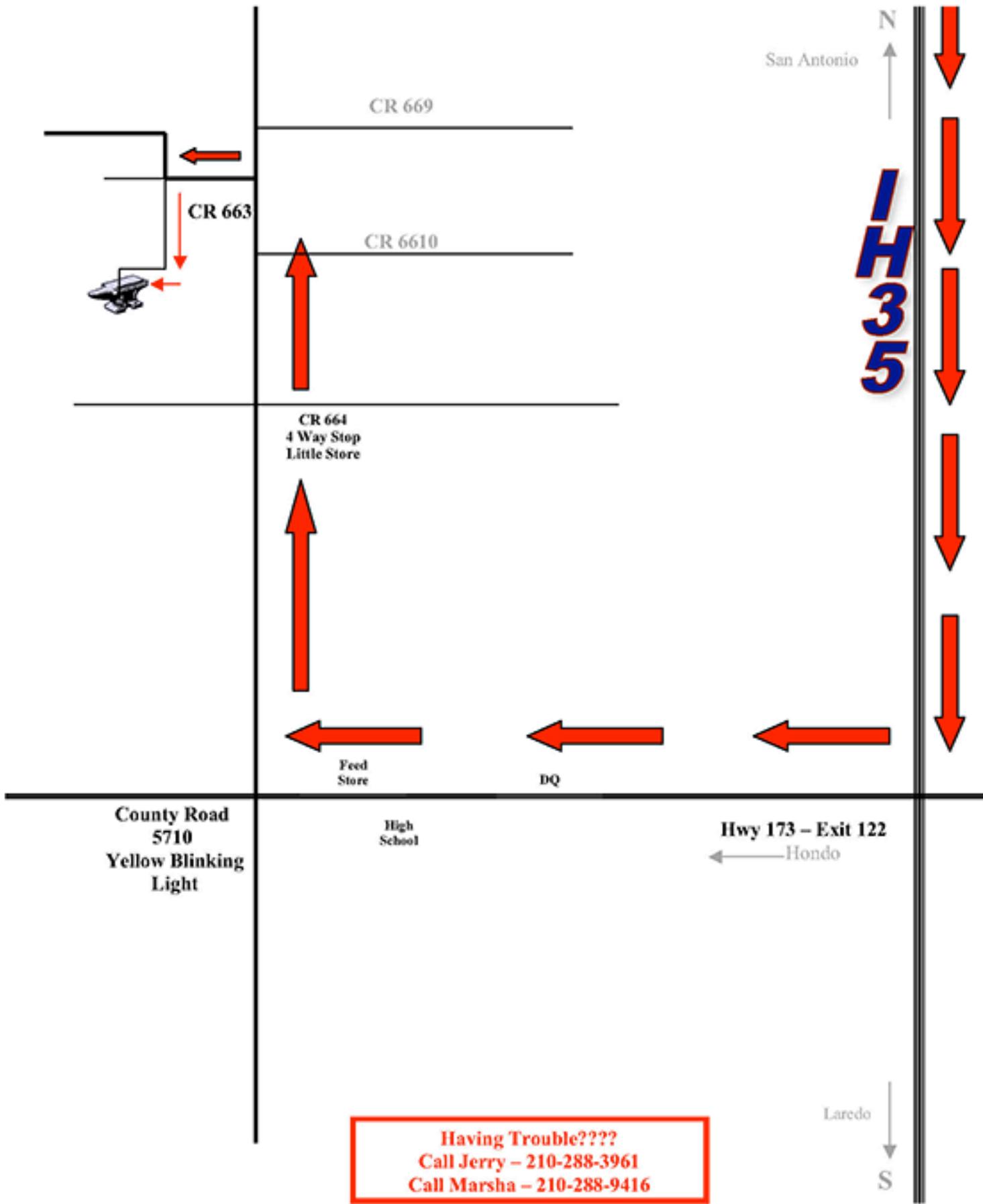
If you have someone that you would like to be remembered at our Memorial, please send me the names and I will add them to the list.

All are welcome to come early and stay late if they want or need to.

Don't forget to bring something for the auction.

It's going to be a good day!

Jerry Whitley
210 288 3961



LEARN HOW TO MAKE YOUR LITTLE GIANT POWER HAMMER WORK HARDER THAN EVER!

Please join us for the 23rd annual Little Giant Rebuilding Seminar! Although we did pass ownership of Little Giant to our machinist Roger Rice in 2013, Sid Suedmeier will continue teaching the rebuilding class at his shop at 420 4th Corso in Nebraska City.

We carry on the tradition of our good friend Fred Caylor of teaching how to make Little Giants run well and hit hard. The 2 ½ day class is a hands-on format. You will help transform a 25 LB Little Giant hammer from functional but sloppy condition into a well tuned, quiet, hard working hammer. Sid Suedmeier, former owner of Little Giant, will share all his knowledge and experience gained from working with Fred and from 24 years of repairing and rebuilding Little Giants.

An old style 25 LB Little Giant will be rebuilt during the class, and a new style machine will be on hand to demonstrate proper assembly and adjustment of both styles.

The class is held in Sid's shop in historical Nebraska City, Nebraska. The city has a wide variety of cafes, outlets (including Pendleton Woolen Mills), antique and gift shops, orchards, wineries and museums.

IF YOU HAVE A LITTLE GIANT, THIS CLASS IS FOR YOU!

No experience is required to attend this class. Past classes have been comprised of students, retirees, artists, welders, doctors, farriers ... anyone who wants to learn will benefit from this class. We approach the rebuilding process using tools that can be found in the average home workshop.

If you are in the market to buy a power hammer, this class will make you an educated shopper. If you already own a Little Giant, or any other brand of power hammer, this class will teach you how to get the best performance possible.

The class costs \$95, refundable up to 7 days prior to the class; advance registration is required. We limit each class to 25 participants. The classes start at 9 AM sharp on Friday, and usually end by Saturday evening. The schedule runs Sunday until noon in case we encounter any exceptional problems in rebuilding, and to answer remaining questions.

When we receive your registration, we will send you a city map, along with travel and hotel information. Airports are located in Omaha (45 miles north), Lincoln (50 miles west) and Kansas City (125 miles south).

March 11-13, 2016 REGISTRATION

Name: _____
 Business name: _____
 Address: _____
 Telephone: _____
 Email address: _____

PAYMENT

Check enclosed
 Visa
 MasterCard
 Discover
 American Express
 Number: _____
 Expiration Date: _____

POWER HAMMER INFO

Brand: _____
 Size: _____
 Serial Number: _____

Please call or email if you have any questions, or prefer to register by phone. You can reach us at 402.873.6605 or SidShop@windstream.net. Suedmeier Enterprises, 420 4th Corso, Nebraska City, NE 68410.

An added bonus this year will be a discounted price on the Little Giant Rebuilding DVD set that we had filmed several years ago. Regular price is \$95; it will be offered to class members for \$50. One set per class member.



William Bastas works the forge at Donald Morgan's shop.

Photo by Vince Herod

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