



Balcones Forge Dispatch

President's Corner

February 2012



Greetings!

Hope everybody enjoyed the recent rains. I know it's not a drought buster, but we'll take anything we can get. The Farmer's Almanac says we're in for a "Mild & Wet winter", so far- so good.

While I laid awake in the wee hours listening to the thunder, I remembered my dear old Aunt Elta many years ago, walking over to the Heild Brothers Feed Store calendar and making note of a January thunder storm. She then stated "Thunder in January – Frost in May", and her prediction was right. The late frost did in a lot of spring tomatoes, well, except for Aunt Elta's, because she hadn't planted hers yet. I now feel obligated to pass this information along to those of you who do not know of such things.

At every Balcones meeting I attend these days, I look around to see who is there that was around when I attended my first meeting in January of '96. I remember watching and wondering how there could be so much talent and knowledge under one roof at one time and would I be expected to know as much as them and be able to move hot steel with a hammer and bend it like clay? Would I really have to do what they did at the anvil? Frankly, yes, and they made sure of it. There was no lack of instruction or shortage of feedback. A few of those folks are still around, there seems to less every year.

Now I see why the "old-timers" were so intent on doing it right. They were doing dandiest to pass on their knowledge of blacksmithing as it was taught to them. I have seen apprentices turn into journeymen and journeymen into almost masters (we'll talk more about master smiths at another time).

Continued on page 2.

Meeting Date is Feb 18



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President's Message continued.

Now the kicker is, this plan is useless without new blood. Sure, we learned a lot and made some cool things and a little bit of money, but that's not the real point. Without new people to pass this info on to, it all dies on the anvil.

I don't know when I became an "old-timer", or for that matter, when I became my dear ole Aunt Elta, but I know I have my work cut out for me and knowledge to pass on.

As a member of Balcones Forge, you too have the same responsibility. Learn and teach. Pass on to someone else the same knowledge someone was kind enough to pass on to you. You are now part of the plan and the plan is to keep the art of blacksmithing alive.

Hope to see everybody at Steephollow Forge.

Jerry Achterberg
Balcones Forge President

TEXAS MONTHLY

In the January issue of Texas Monthly are some of my lights in the ad on page 155. The track is 20 feet by 8 ft on the left side is a cantilevered light and on the right is a wall sconce. Thanks for looking!

Bob Pheil
Llano, Texas

Bob's work always looks great. Be sure to check it out. Editor.

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

THE DATES ARE SET

The Bluebonnet Demo for 2012 will feature Elizabeth Brim. Check out the ABANA website for a gallery entry showing off her award winning talent. **The dates are May 5 & 6, 2012.**

More details to come soon.

LET'S DISCUSS IT

Do you have a question or some good news you would like to share with the group? In the past, it has been somewhat difficult -- or nonexistent -- to be able to do so. Good news! There are two ways to get info to the group besides our newsletter.

You can email to all members at members@balconesforge.org but you must do it from your Balcones Forge email -- not your personal email. Just login to your BF email account -- you can get there from the www.BalconesForge.org home page near the bottom. Reply to posts you receive like any other email and the discussion begins. If you have forgotten your username and/or password, send a note to Rudy@BalconesForge.org.

The second method is to use the Balcones Forge Facebook page. Of course, you'll need to login to your Facebook account, then search for "Balcones Forge." Feel free to post on the BF wall and let us hear from you.

Either one is easy. Don't worry -- this group is not overly chatty, so you won't be bombarded by a bunch of emails. So let us know what is on your mind. Post away!

Rudy Billings, Webmaster

**FRANCIS WHITAKER
BLACKSMITHING SCHOLARSHIP
AT JOHN C. CAMPBELL FOLK
SCHOOL**

Two \$600 scholarships will be awarded for the Traditional Joinery Projects Class taught by Clay Spencer, April 8-14, 2012

Check class description on the school's website.

Traditional Joinery Class - Clay Spencer

Students must be intermediate to advanced skill level and will be responsible for any expenses not covered by the scholarship such as meals, lodging/camping, materials and fuel fee.

Application Requirements:

1. Describe your blacksmithing training/experience: any classes, demonstrations, jobs, commissions, craft shows, how much you work at your forge, etc.
2. Several photos of your work.
3. Drawing of the project you propose to do in class. It should be to scale showing stock size and joinery, no MIG or arc welding in project. Include list of material with sizes and lengths.
4. Goals for your blacksmithing, briefly.
5. Why you need scholarship help, briefly.

Your application will be graded against others received.

Send to Clay Spencer at:

email: clay@otelco.net

or

73 Penniston Pvt. Drive
Somerville, AL 35670

You may call 256-558-3658 or e-mail with any questions. Application must be received by March 1, 2012.

MARCH MEETING

Matt Czsonek checked with Pioneer Museum in Fredericksburg and they are okay with us having our meeting there on Saturday, March 17, 2012.

Matt is going to put out a request for volunteers so that we are still represented at the Garden Fest at Zilker Park.

**VOLUNTEERS STILL NEEDED AT
PIONEER MUSEUM**

First a big thank you to Jerry A., Jerry W., Jim Schmidt, and David Walden for being the first ones to step up. We are now covered for Friday March 16th, and have one slot open for Monday March 12th. Hurry before all the spaces are taken. The dates are March 10, 12-17 and the hours are 10am to 5pm, we will have coal and stock for all to use. This is a perfect opportunity for new smiths/members to come out and play, we will pair you up with a more experienced person so no worries.

Also, I could use a few people for Garden Fest at Zilker Park Botanical Gardens. The dates are March 31 and April 1, I don't know the hours yet but it's usually something like 10am to 5pm as well. It would be nice to have about 4-5 people each day and you don't have to stay for the full day. This is another great event for new people.

All you need is safety glasses, most of us have extra hammers to share. So new smiths, if you want to come out to either event and don't have something let me know, I'll make sure that what you need is provided (including safety glasses).

Please contact me at mattczosnek@gmail.com

Matt Czsonek

FORGING ON THE RIVER

The 2012 Forging on the River Conference will be held on the grounds of The Metal Museum, March 30 – April 1st, 2012.

This year's conference features Alfred Bullermann of Freisothe, Germany (<http://www.bullermann.de>) as well as Haley Woodward (<http://haleywoodward.com>) and Colby Brinkman of The Austin Metal Authority (<http://www.austinmetalauthority.com>).

Alfred will be building an amazing bench to be permanently installed at The Metal Museum. Haley and Colby will amaze you with their tricks of the trade.

In addition to the chance to learn from a Master Blacksmith, Forging on the River provides metal-smiths and enthusiasts the opportunity to network with others who share their passion for the craft, exchange work and ideas and work collaboratively on projects, while enjoying the Metal Museum exhibitions and grounds. We have all kinds of exciting and inspiring activities planned for the weekend, so this event is a definitely a "Must Attend"!

Conference registration features a deep discount for students at \$80.00 for the three days. Non-Student Registration is \$100 before March 1, 2011; \$135 after Feb. 28, 2011. One \$80 companion ticket may be purchased with each full registration. ALL MEALS ARE INCLUDED in the conference fee, so this is a huge bargain. You may enroll online at <http://www.metalmuseum.org/store/c/14-Forging-on-the-River.aspx>

Please help us make this year's Forging on the River Conference the best ever by passing this email message on to your friends and fellow smiths.

Also, you may want to consider donating to the Saturday night live auction, which will be attended by some of the biggest collectors in the mid-south. The proceeds of the auction will go to support The Metal Museum and its unique programming, including the 2013 Forging on the River Conference.

To learn more visit <http://www.metalmuseum.org/FOTR> or email me: holly@metalmuseum.org

Holly Fisher
Project Coordinator
National Ornamental Metal Museum
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Memphis, TN 38106

901.774.6380 ext. 207

YEAR 2012 (AND FINAL) BLACKSMITH CALENDAR

The 2012 calendar contains 20 images of old blacksmith activity. For a number of reasons, this calendar will be the last in the series. I'm not going to want to remain burdened for long with all the accumulated unsold material, so now would be a good time to fill in any gaps if you're interested in having the complete set while it's still available.

1-5 Year 2012 Calendars: \$17.00 each (will be \$20 on eBay due to excessive fees)

CD with over 8000 Blacksmith & Anvil images

Contains a wide (very wide) variety of images collected from many sources over a period of years.

(For Windows 2000 and later, not for Macs.)

1-5 CDs: \$15.00 per CD

over 5 CDs: \$10.00 per CD

Set of 25 Blacksmith Postcards

Note: This is not a new set of postcards. Only one set of 25 postcards has been produced.

Postcards: \$6.00 per set

(limited quantity remaining)

Year 2011 calendars are available for \$12.00 each.

Year 2001 through 2010 calendars are available for \$6.00 each.

The prices shown above include the cost of shipping to a U.S. or Canadian address. Insurance is extra if desired. If interested, please send a check or money order to:

Gill Fahrenwald, P. O. Box 2323, Olympia, WA 98507
or PayPal to anvilman@orcalink.com

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

Please join us March 16-18, 2012 for our annual Little Giant Rebuilding Seminar!

This class was first taught by our good friend Fred Caylor of Zionsville, Indiana. We carry on his tradition of teaching how to make Little Giants run well and hit hard.

This 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, owner of Little Giant, will share all his knowledge and experience gained from working with Fred and from 20+ 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 our 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 students have ranged from age 15 to 90, and from all walks of life. 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 the class to 25 participants. The class starts at 9 AM sharp on Friday, and usually ends 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).

2012 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 402.873.6603 or lgiant@windstream.net

Little Giant is located at 420 4th Corso, Nebraska City, NE 68410.

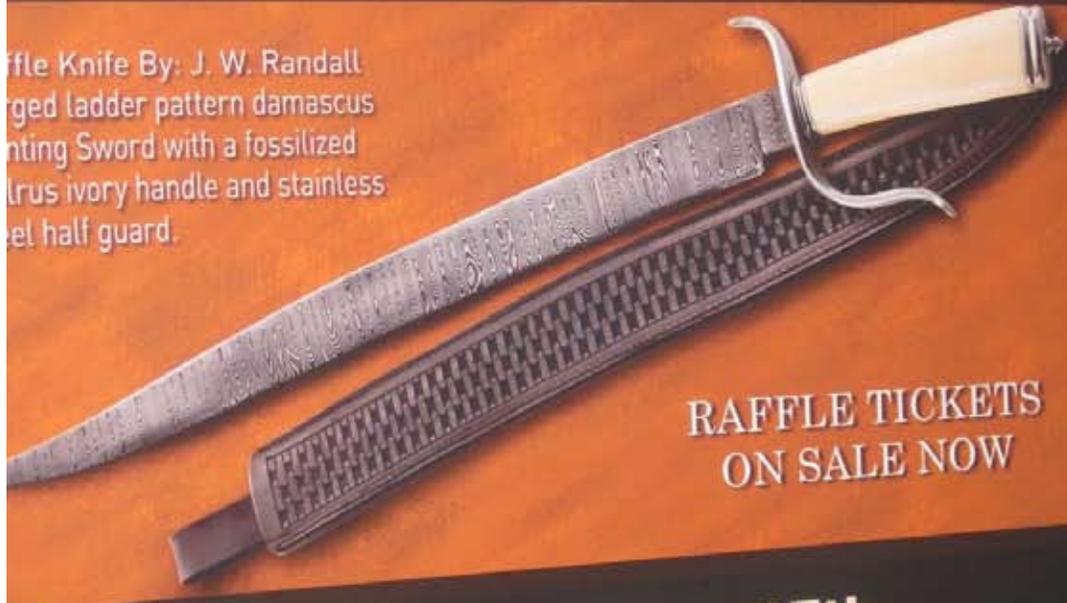
THE 2012 Knife Exposition

American Bladesmith Society

FREE ADMISSION
WITH MILITARY ID

Featuring all-forged blades by ABS Master and Journeyman Smiths

Raffle Knife By: J. W. Randall
Forged ladder pattern damascus
cutting sword with a fossilized
mammoth ivory handle and stainless
steel half guard.



RAFFLE TICKETS
ON SALE NOW

Friday, January 27th

Seminars 9am-1pm

The Baker and Mahncke Conference Rooms

VIP Preview 1pm-2pm

Public Sales 2pm-6pm

Saturday, January 28th

Public Sales 10am-5pm

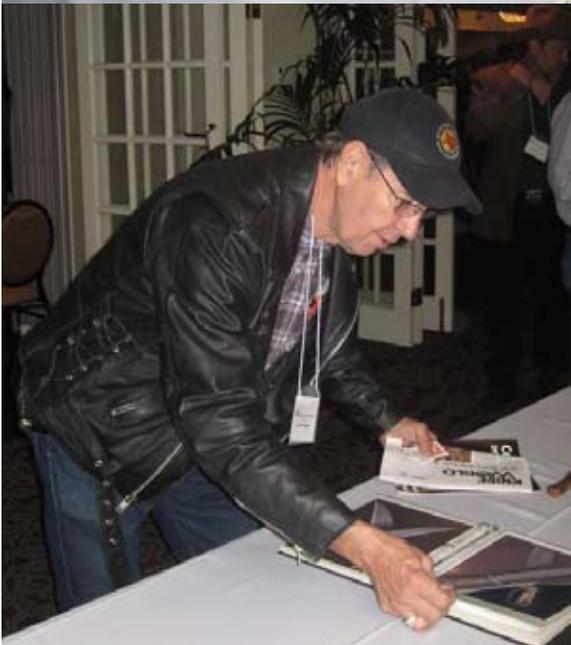
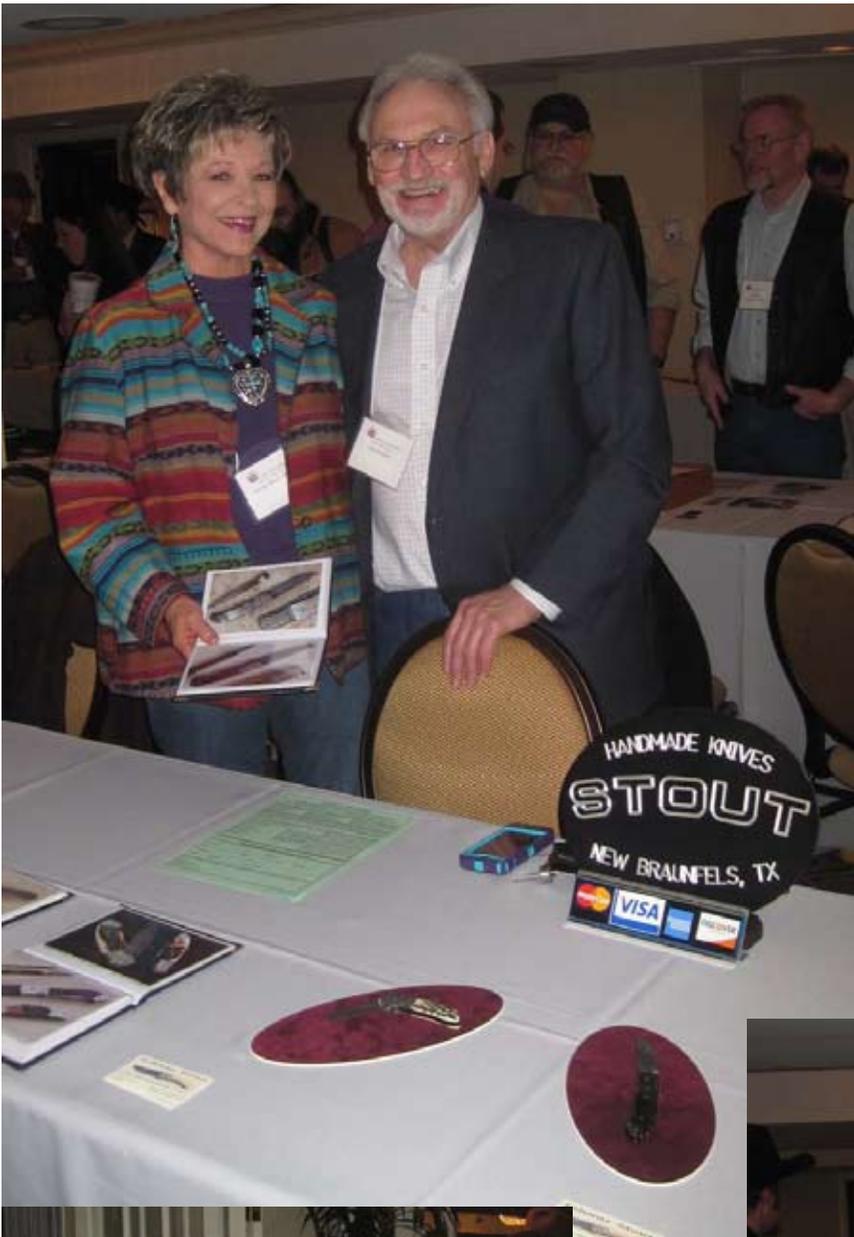
Sunday, January 29th

Public Sales 10am-2pm

located in the Magnolia Room

**SCENES FROM
THE JANUARY
MEETING.**

**PHOTOS
BY JERRY
WHITLEY**



KNIFEMAKING CLASSES

The 2012 Knifemaking classes at Pieh Tool Company have been scheduled! With only 6 available spots in each class, the knifemaking classes always fill up quickly. This year you will have two opportunities to take the class with our Spring or Fall class options. As a current Pieh Tool Customer, you have been invited before the schedule has even been announced to the general public so be sure to take advantage of this unique opportunity!

These classes were just announced on our website! Be sure to write which date you would like to take the class in the comments section during checkout for internet orders!

Spring Class: March 23, 24 & 25 Fall Class: September 14, 15, & 16

Knife Making Classes with Professional Knifemaker Ray Rybar!

Ray began forging blades in 1972 and joined the American Bladesmith Association in 1986. In 2001 he attained the coveted status of ABS Master. Ray works almost exclusively with patterned steel and enjoys crafting all types of knives. His favorites are long bladed and are frequently decorated with biblical passages. Ray is a contributor to Blade Magazine and a nationally known instructor. You can visit Ray's personal website at www.rybarknives.com.

Take this rare opportunity to learn from a true artist and master craftsman!

His course will emphasize the use of hand tools in the knife making process and will fit one handle, and if time permits, guards and ferrules. Each student will forge and finish at least one knife blade from a coil spring. His course covers proper fire procedures, blade forging of a stick and full tang and the integral bolster.

This is a hands-on course but there will be a lecture on the structure and composition of the blade material. Decorative etching, filework, mosaic and damascus will also be discussed.

We hope you can take advantage of this great opportunity to learn knifemaking skills with Ray. If you have any questions or comments please give us or call! To sign up, call 1-888-743-4866.

Sincerely,

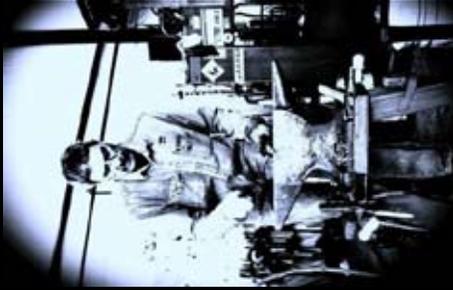
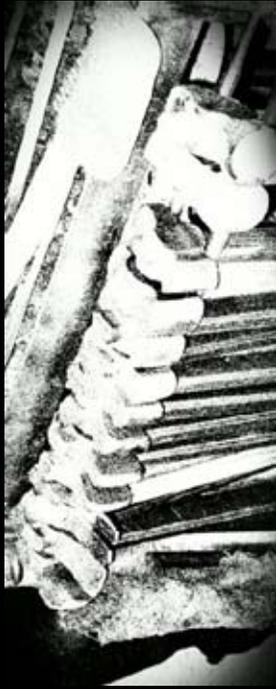
Pieh Tool Co.





Now that is a big horse shoe

WWW.BALCONESFORGE.ORG



2nd Annual Combo-Demo Metal Art Exhibition and Demonstration

VISIT The 2nd Annual Combo-Demo hosted by Steephollow Forgeworks in Bryan, Texas. **THE** largest blacksmithing groups in Texas meet to learn and appreciate the art of forging metal.

Metal art will be on display for purchase or admiration.

BLACKSMITHING demonstrations will run all day.
ADMISSION is free and everyone is encouraged to visit. Doors open at 8am.
For more information visit the Steephollow Forgeworks Facebook page or call 979 776 2864.
Address: 7286 Mesco Drive Bryan, Texas



HERE IS HOW YOU GET TO THE FEBRUARY MEETING!

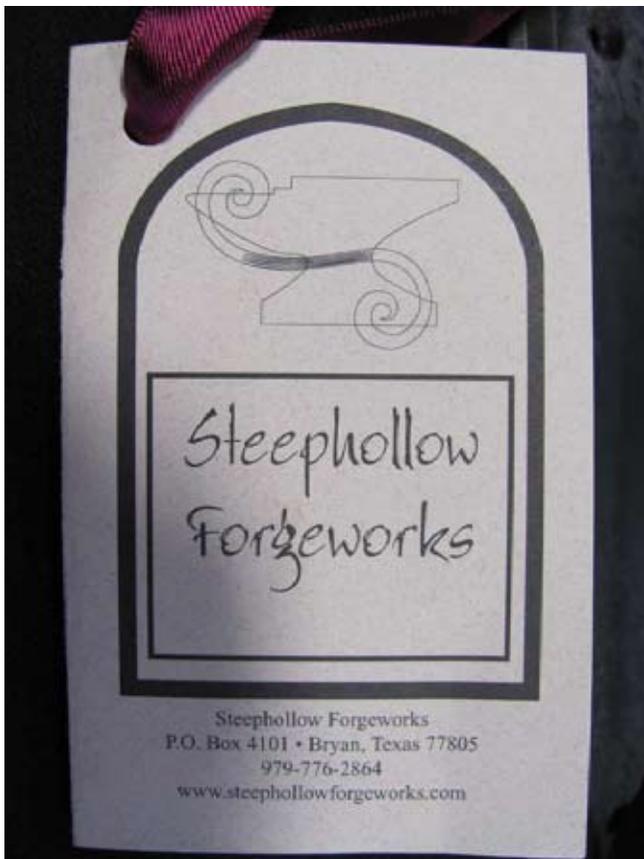
Directions from Houston:

Come into Bryan-College Station on Highway 6 North and exit at Briarcrest Drive. Turn right (Briarcrest Drive will become FM 1179). Continue straight through the next 2 stop-lights, Continue 2.25 miles to Mesco Drive which will be on your right, you will see a big green building that sits on the corner of Mesco Drive. It is the 5th building on the right.

Directions from Austin:

Take Highway 21/190 west into Bryan to Highway South (past Highway 6 Business). Go south on Highway 6 and exit William Joel Bryan Parkway, turn left. Go straight to FM 1179, turn left, Continue 2.25 miles to big green building on the right. This is Mesco Drive, turn right and it is the 5th building on the right.

Check out: www.steepphollowforgeworks.com





If hearts
need a-mending
Yours or Mine,
We'll visit Dan Cupid
He'll fix it
up fine.

I Greet thee

Dear **V**alentine



Return Service Requested

Vincent Herod
Spotted Dog Forge
166 Granite Road
Paige, TX 78659-4922

BALCONES FORGE
SPOTTED DOG FORGE
GENERAL TEXAS BLACKSMITHS