

Seller's Remorse

by April Witzke

I think I have it figured out. You and I, along with the vast majority of blacksmiths out there, are middle class folks. I don't know about you, but I don't mind being in the middle. It does create a problem for us though, because our customers in general, are not from the middle class.

A simple translation of this class discrepancy is that you and I would never dream of commissioning an artist to make a floor to sink height soap dish stand for our fourth bathroom. First off, we would never have a fourth bathroom. Secondly, the soap sits just fine on the edge of the sink. Unlike you and I, the client does have four bathrooms and wants the soap dish holder.

The dilemma becomes what should we charge for this little luxury? Time-wise a simple soap dish stand could probably be put together in three to four hours. What's that... \$200? There's no way the client would part with that kind of money. Or is there? My middle class mentality interferes with my ability to price our work for what it's worth. Too often, I have quoted a price for something and, using Peter Sevin's terminology, felt like I left money on the table. So, what is the answer? After all, it isn't like we can consult a Kelly Blue Book to see what comparable ironwork is selling for. Besides that, what are the chances of finding a custom, hand-made soap dish holder to compare to? Money magazine's April 2007 issue had an article on pricing. The foundational tenet of the article was, "Price is what a buyer and seller *agree* will be exchanged for a good or service."

We have to realize that it is not what we, a middle class person, would pay for the item, but what price the customer would pay. Someone once told me that if you aren't losing 30 to 40 percent of your bids, you aren't pricing your work right. Yes, it can be uncomfortable quoting a price that you think is outrageous, but with a little practice, it gets easier. Creating a piece of work that you are properly compensated for is worth the momentary discomfort and you'll be surprised what the upper class buyer will agree to spend on something they want.

When we are able to stop looking at our ironwork in terms of what we would pay and start looking at what it's worth, we will put an end to our seller's remorse.

Reed Carlock Memorial Auction

Turn Up The Heat

Bloop...square corners. Bloop...claw feet. They're like bubbles erupting from the bottom of a boiling pot. Bloop, bloop...double calipers. Bloop...penny scroll. Bloop-ooop...root killer patina. The great stuff you have been learning through AABA but haven't been able to put to practice. Don't let those techniques and tricks just boil away. Put them to use in a donation piece for AABA's Scholarship Auction!

That's right, its auction time again! This year's auction and luncheon banquet will be held on Saturday October 20th from 11am to 3pm. It will be at the Blacksmith Pavilion at Sahuaro Ranch in Glendale again. The registration form for the luncheon is loose in this newsletter. Be sure to register early, as there is considerable savings for doing so. This is an informal, fun event. We want everyone involved in AABA to come out, enjoy themselves and maybe go home with a new piece of art or tool or ?

This year's auction theme is "All Creatures Great and Small". A special prize will be awarded for the auction piece that best represents the theme. That's not the only way to win something though. Along with a ton of door prizes, we are again giving awards to the Peoples Choice pick in three separate categories beginner, intermediate and advanced.

So, turn up the heat and get your creativity popping! And remember, any donation, forged or otherwise, will help build the scholarship fund and be greatly appreciated.

April

Tools and fixtures, too

Did you know that the AABA auction features tools as well as forged pieces? Yes, tools of all kinds: from fixtures to forges will be on the auction block. So, come to out to Saguaro Ranch on October 20, enjoy the company, the food and a chance to win something great. And all for a good cause. Auction proceeds go to the Reed Carlock Memorial Scholarship fund. Go to www.AZ-blacksmiths.com and see some of the amazing works that have been offered at recent AABA auctions.

David Starr co-chair