

Forge Review

PAST NEWS

The "Anvil's Ring" featured the article, put together by George Holliday and Roy Bellows on Francis Whitaker Workshop last October. With such a nice publication, I will not continue that article in this newsletter. Those who are not ABANA members and would like the rest of this article please contact me and I will have the remainder printed.

UPCOMING

Make plans now for the SECOND ANNUAL INGRAM HAMMERFEST. It will be held Saturday, August, 27th. Forty-five professional and novice Smith's attended last year. To register contact:

Rick Ross, Guadalupe Forge
Box 816
Ingram, Texas 78025
(512) 367-4433

SPECIAL REPORT

By Perry Cann - Red Lion Forge 910 Sagebrush, Austin, Texas 78758

The purpose of this article is to emphasise the importance of taking full responsibility for the type of ironwork you might be commissioned to do. Recently I had an opportunity to see all too clearly what happens when the builder of an architectural piece "passes the buck" - luckily it wasn't me.

The conflict happened between the owner, the architect, and the builder of a spiral stairway. The owner commissioned me to do several guard rails and a stairway handrail in the remodel of an old house in downtown Austin, Texas. He asked me if I could also build a small spiral stairway, but time didn't permit me to do all the work. I recommended another firm in town and who specialized in these types of stairways. The architect provided an opening in the floor from the basement to the 1st floor and the welder took measurements. All is fine so far. A concrete landing was poured at the bottom and the stairway brought in. However, it didn't fit well. The compromise to make it work was to make the top step 2½" taller than all the rest. A dubious solution at best if the responsibility of safety is of any concern. A week later, in walks the city building inspector and he took one look and said, "the stairway wouldn't pass any safety inspection." No mention of the high step but the stairway width was 2½" too narrow to meet the city building codes. Compromises were discussed but in the end a \$3000.00 stairway was cut

up and carted away and a new one planned - this time by the architect.

The owner was furious, the architect felt betrayed and the welding shop was \$3000.00 richer. What happened and who was at fault for creating these harmful feelings? Some would blame the architect - "Should have known the codes and monitored the job" to see that this didn't happen. But, at what point does the architect rely on the professionalism of the stairway builder? It could be agreed that the welding shop was errant in providing a stairway that wouldn't work in Austin.

In the end, the owner was the loser - he spent his money, didn't get what he needed and no one took any of the responsibility. I maintain the fault was on the welding shop. If you are going to build a stairway, you owe it to yourself, the profession of ironwork, the owner, the architect, and the building inspector to provide them with something that works. If the specifics of what you are asked to do are not workable, then it is on you to bring it to the attention of the appropriate person. It not only increases your understanding of the job, but they will respect you for it and in the long run, they will trust your judgement in future projects. Thus the essence of establishing good working relationships.

It is these people who will support the use of architectural ironwork. They are the ones who are in the position to give us these commissions - very important people indeed. As Blacksmiths it is our responsibility to meet their needs and thus gain their trust and respect. Without it we cannot grow thru our work and good reputation.

Perry Cann

TAKE NOTE

Jim Wallace has offered to return to this area to give a slide show, Lecture and Demonstrations if there is interest among Texas Blacksmiths.

Jim is a professional smith who has been instrumental in the revival of blacksmithing in this country. He is director of the Memphis National Ornamental Metal Museum, served as President of ABANA for two years and is on the Board of the American Crafts Council. His presentation would trace the revival of contemporary ironwork in this country and abroad, give directions that the movement seems to be going and give insight into the people and work that has made that movement.

Cost would reflect air fare from and to Memphis and associated travel expenses. Jim has offered to charge no per diem. The date can be arranged.

If interested, let me know,

Jim Penoski

P. O. Box 84

Salado, Texas 76571

(817) 947-5740 (shop)

(817) 947-5389 (home) (before 9:00 am please)

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FOR SALE

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Lonnie Joe Edwards
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A Word of Wisdom

"A friendly discussion is as stimulating as the sparks that fly when iron strikes iron.

Proverbs 27:17

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