

Well friends, we made it. After 4 years, ABANA held a conference and it was a very successful one. There are always things to learn; there are always things to do better. But it is now clear that we accomplished what we set out to do – hold a conference focused on education and the basic elements of the craft without a lot of fluff or unnecessary expenditure. We had over 900 folks at the conference including about 250 family members.

I am happy to report that we cleared over \$90K from the conference including the auction plus about \$10K from Iron in the Hat. Thanks to all who participated and particularly to those affiliate groups who helped us with seed money and the talented artists and craftsmen who donated items to the auction.

Of course the next question that naturally comes up is “what are you going to do with all that money?” Let me assure you that the Board will be very careful to use it wisely. And the first thing we will do is to save enough for seed money for the 2012 conference in Rapid City. Second, we plan to make selective upgrades to the equipment and tools we have to put on conferences. Other projects of a strategic nature are being defined.

The Iron in the Hat net proceeds will go exclusively toward our scholarships and grants programs. By the way, we are in the midst of re-working the Educational Trust governing documents to bring them into compliance with recent changes in the laws of Georgia that apply to such trusts. Once that is done we will look into updating the guidelines and limits for these programs.

In other news, we welcome Bill Clemens to the board. Bill was very helpful in the operation of the gallery at the conference. Bill is also a recipient of ABANA’s Joe Humble award for Affiliate Newsletter Editors. Bill will serve the remainder of Steve Williamson’s term. We also thank Steve for his service, specifically for coordinating the gallery submission process.

Elsewhere in this issue you will find lots of conference coverage including images of exciting new work. Some of these artists were not on the scene at all when we had our last conference. This is great because it demonstrates the continuing vitality of our craft.

Please participate in the election of members of the board that is included within the pages of this Anvil’s Ring. It is vitally important that the members take part in this important process. The Board sets the strategy for ABANA and carries out many of its programs. If you don’t vote you don’t get to complain.

Finally I have to urge you to renew your memberships and to urge your friends to join as well. The day-to-day operation of the organization depends on dues revenue not conference proceeds. The Board has held the line on the dues we charge but that can continue only if we can recruit more members. Please help spread the word.

Regards,  
Paul Boulay