

January 2011



President's Message: "Hard at work..."

I am honored to have been elected to serve as ABANA's newest President. I certainly have large shoes to fill left by Paul Boulay. I would like to extend a "thank you" to Paul for his service not only as ABANA President but as a board member as well! I will do my very best in this role to represent and serve the members of ABANA and the blacksmith community as a whole.

This past November, the annual board meeting provided an opportunity for the ABANA Board of Directors to meet with a professional facilitator who shared a number of tools and strategies that we will use to better establish and implement a strategic plan for the organization. It was also an opportunity for training and discussion regarding communication, cooperation, and consensus building. At the end of an almost twelve-hour session, we established a list of long-term goals for ABANA, discussed the re-affirmation of our original mission statement by Dimitri Gerakaris, and created a sense of cooperation necessary to achieve both objectives.

It is our duty and our privilege as your elected Board of Directors to keep ABANA moving ever-forward. You should know that your Board of Directors is hard at work solving issues and creating better opportunities for all of the ABANA membership. Here is a snapshot of some things that have been done, are being done, and what we are planning to do:

- I think we all know firsthand the adjustments we have been forced to make financially in our homes and businesses in this economic climate. ABANA is no different; however, we remain dedicated to keeping our publications in print, holding conferences, maintaining a smoothly-running website, awarding deserving scholarships, and much more that you, the membership, indicated as most important in our last survey.
- We are working to revise several aspects of our procedures to better serve your needs. For instance, we have revised the procedures for the use of our Constant Contact email tool to ensure you are being notified with relevant, blacksmith-related information that is approved by the Board and not politically motivated or controversial in nature. In addition, we are working to tweak election deadlines to better serve the membership. So, if you are thinking about running in the next election please contact a member of the board soon! This adjustment will also allow more time for the membership to vote!
- At the 2010 conference in Memphis, two roundtable discussions were held with affiliate representatives and affiliate editors. Their discussions yielded a number of ways in which ABANA may better work collectively with its affiliates in service for all of our members. A better sense of cooperation and recognition in the future will certainly increase membership numbers, satisfaction, and educational opportunities for both the affiliates and ABANA.
- The ABANA trust document has recently been updated to better meet current Georgia laws and regulations. Doing so will enable us to better serve the blacksmith community through grants and scholarships while maintaining the original intent of the document.
- Because of the hard work and dedication that Lance Davis and David Hutchison put into on making our 2010 conference in Memphis a success, we are in a better position in planning the 2012 conference in Rapid City, South Dakota. Jack Parks has been chairing the 2012 conference from the very beginning, and Lance Davis has returned to serve as co-chair. The 2012 conference will not only be a great experience for the blacksmith, but also the blacksmith's family! Keep an eye out on www.abana.org for updates and additions as they become available!

The Board has approved the first portion of an ABANA endorsed blacksmith curriculum. The curriculum has been a work in progress for over a year in our Educational Program Development Committee with direct involvement from our new *Hammer's Blow* editor, Mark Aspery. This is the first step in the creation of additional educational services for the affiliates, the members, and the blacksmithing community. Mark will also be using these "lessons" as content for the *Hammer's Blow* and YouTube video shorts to connect ABANA with the vast community of blacksmiths using the Internet.

Something to think about: If we all encourage someone new to join ABANA, then our numbers will double. This is obvious, I know, but it is a simple thing we can all do to help keep ABANA moving forward into the future! Remember—we are all in this together as we remain hard at work!

Yours in Service,
Peyton Anderson
ABANA President