

New Jersey Blacksmith Association

Newsletter

Volume 1, Number 1

July 1996

Bruce Freeman, editor

A New ABANA Chapter in the New Jersey Area

On May 19 a dozen blacksmiths assembled outside the Blacksmith Shop at Historic Allaire Village (Monmouth Co., NJ) and agreed to form this organization, the New Jersey Blacksmith Association. A board of five directors was elected, but already these five have increased their number by two. It was this editor's privilege to chair that first meeting, and to assume the duties of chairman, treasurer and secretary until the first board meeting on June 14, but, at that meeting most of those responsibilities were passed along to other directors.

What's going on? A *coup d'etat*? No, just normal operations as planned for the NJBA. This seeming instability will actually be a major strength of this organization. Unlike most organizations, no one individual is responsible for the duties of Chairman or Treasurer or even Welcome Committee. Instead, all responsibilities are shared by all the directors. The preamble to the bylaws, later in this newsletter, provides an explanation. Please read it and think about what it means: Any person interested enough to become active in NJBA can do so quickly and with few encumbrances.

Membership Meeting & Picnic Saturday, July 20, at Allaire State Park

11 am ...	Board of Directors' Meeting
12 pm...	Picnic Begins
1 pm ...	Brief Membership Meeting

The first NJBA membership meeting will be a picnic. Please bring your own comestibles to the Allaire State Park picnic ground south of the main parking lot. (Remember that the state charges a \$3 parking fee per car.)

The picnic will be preceded by a meeting of the board of directors. Interested members are encouraged to attend the board meeting, but there is no obligation to do so.

The board meeting will begin at 11:00. The picnic will begin at 12:00, and continue until everybody goes home or the park closes, whichever comes first. At 1:00, there will be a brief business meeting, between bites. (There will be an agenda, and we plan to stick to it.)

The picnic is "bring your own everything." This includes chips, utensils, beverages, etc. NJBA will provide charcoal for those who want to grill. Remember that alcoholic beverages are not permitted in New Jersey State Parks, so plan to get drunk instead on the *camaraderie*.

Non-members (spouses, friends and prospective members) are welcome to this first meeting. (Please take advantage of this: Attendance at future meetings may have to be limited to members.) If anyone attending the picnic is *not* familiar with Historic Allaire Village and would like a tour, we will provide informal tours of the village and smithy. (We will need volunteers to lead these tours, and possibly staff the forge for short shifts so that the volunteers can enjoy the party.) Attendees are encouraged to "show off" any blacksmithing work they are proud of. It is *not* necessary to respond in order to attend. Just show up. However, if you want further information, contact Pete Engle or Bruce Freeman.

Logo Competition

We are seeking a logo for NJBA. Members may submit their ideas or suggestions to any director.

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The ABANA Conference in Alfred, NY

by Pete Engle

Your roving reporter/chapter chairman just got in from ABANA '96 at Alfred and can't wait to tell everyone about it. Anyone who wasn't there missed out on a truly unique and educational experience. OK, so this was my first conference. It was fabulous anyhow. Wish you were there.

First and foremost, WE ARE OFFICIAL! The ABANA board voted to make the New Jersey Blacksmith Association the 53rd chapter of ABANA worldwide. Congratulations and thanks to everyone who made this possible.

The conference started out with a bang with a keynote address from Nol Putnam. Aside from being one of the foremost Artist/Blacksmiths alive, Nol is an extraordinary speaker. His deeply moving address provided a firm grounding of the historical importance of the blacksmith in every society, and suggestions as to how this tradition may be continued through outreach & education and a firm commitment to reach out to and include people of every race, religion, and nationality to build strength in our ranks through the diverse backgrounds these groups.

The conference really began for this reporter when Francis Whitaker & his assistant James Honig provided an impromptu demonstration of the correct usage of and manufacture of bending forks. Who would have thought that such a simple tool was so complex? The Francis Whitaker Screen Project was an ongoing demonstration throughout the show to illustrate the steps involved in the manufacture of a traditional scrollwork screen with a quatrefoil motif. As expected, it was a work of art. Rubbing elbows with the current patriarch of blacksmithing in America was only the beginning, and his was not the only art being created at the show.

From the forged iron chest of Tom Latane & co. to the sculpture of Tom Joyce, the Tischlers, and others, the Art of Blacksmithing was well represented. The iron chest was a work worthy of any old time masters. Who says that blacksmithing is a lost art? Look for photos in the Anvil's Ring and the ABANA website and be prepared to be overwhelmed.

The high point of the show for me was seeing the synergy that occurs when creative people get together. Charles Lewton-Brain of Calgary, Canada is a master goldsmith and was demonstrating a fabrication technique that he has developed called "fold forming." Description can't do the technique justice, but suffice it to say that there was quite a buzz about this technique. If I can make it work, there may be some samples available at the picnic. One of the attendees at Charles' demo was none other than Tom Joyce, a master artist smith in his own right. Anyhow, Tom uses folding and drawing techniques in his own work, so near the end of his demo, he teamed up with Charles Lewton-Brain to perform fold forming in steel for the very first time anywhere. As expected with the talents of this impromptu team, the results were outstanding, and the electricity generated through the audience was incredible. Look for this technique to become a staple for many artist-smiths very soon. Many thanks to both artists for making this technique available to the world.

The craft and history of blacksmithing were well represented also with the Williamsburg smiths, led by Peter Ross creating a period weathervane, and a number of other smiths demonstrating techniques from basic hammering to advanced power hammering, forging tubing, nonferrous metals, and everything else in between. Laminated metals were prominently displayed by master knifsmith Keith Kilby's Damascus demos & Stephen Walker's demonstration of Mokume-gane, or pattern welded non-ferrous metals.

Other demonstrations, equally impressive, rushed by and there simply isn't space to pack a week's worth of input into this column. Suffice it to say that I'm beat, and simply saturated with new ideas and information. I can't wait to get to the forge and try them out, so I'll be signing off.

My heartfelt thanks to everyone at Alfred who made the event possible, and I hope to see all of you in Asheville in '98. Don't even think of missing it.

Networking and Publicity

As mentioned elsewhere, Bruce Freeman is heading up an effort to publicize NJBA and to network with other groups with related interests, such as living history museums and historical societies. You can help publicize NJBA by passing the word, or copies of this newsletter. If you would like to do more, contact Bruce.

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Editorial

by Pete Engle

As reported in my article from Alfred, Nol Putnam presented a deeply moving keynote address focusing attention on the lack of diversity in ABANA membership, and the benefits that diverse backgrounds, races, religions, etc., would bring to our organization. His point was well taken. ABANA's membership is very white; and while women have been welcome from the start, they still represent a small minority of our members. People with different backgrounds would provide tremendous benefits to our chapter by adding their own backgrounds, histories, and talents to our group. The art, craft, and history of blacksmithing is not just Europe & North America, but worldwide.

The ability to shape steel with your bare hands evokes awe in the uninitiated today as it has in the past. From the blacksmith-healers of European lore to the blacksmith-priests of the orient, to the blacksmith-shaman of Africa, blacksmiths have held a revered position in the histories and legends of all races. As individuals and as an organization, we should strive to capture as much of this diverse experience as we can by actively recruiting people from backgrounds different than our own. When we do public demonstrations, when we do lectures & demonstrations, as we go about our lives, we have numerous opportunities to contact and reach out to new members.

As a chapter in its infancy, one of our first tasks is to recruit new members so that we can grow into a healthy, vital organization. Since we live in a state with a very diverse population, we have the opportunity to reach out to people of many backgrounds. Let us strive to make our membership reflect the diversity available in our society, and celebrate the different backgrounds, histories and legends that people of different cultures will provide to us.

Through our shared experiences we can become strong.

Highlights of the First Board Meeting

Six of the seven directors attended the first NJBA board meeting on June 14. Bruce presided. The elections of new directors Andy and Joe, which had been accomplished between meetings largely by email, were confirmed in writing. It was agreed that such votes were important to the operation of the NJBA, but that important votes should be confirmed in writing, and bylaws amendments required a meeting, as per the bylaws.

The old business finished, the responsibilities board were redivided between the directors. Pete assumed chairmanship; Bill, treasurer; Kevin, secretary; and Bruce, membership and newsletter editor. As chairman, Pete would be representing NJBA at the ABANA board meeting in Alfred. Election of additional directors was tabled until after the ABANA conference to be held in Alfred, NY June 25-28, 1996

Pete presided over the remainder of the agenda. Saturday July 20, was selected for a combination board meeting, membership meeting and picnic, to be held at Allaire State Park. The board reexamined the question of the territory of the NJBA, and decided that the language in the bylaws was acceptable, and would not need amendment. Ideas for a logo for NJBA were discussed. The board agreed to request ideas from the membership.

The board authorized Bruce to contact groups with related or overlapping interests, such as historic sites, cultural institutions, etc., in the name of NJBA. Further discussions of future activities and projects of NJBA were tabled until official chapter status is given by ABANA and the membership increases.

Finally, NJBA finances were discussed. Dues and dues categories were discussed, and annual dues were set at \$15, with newsletter subscription (only) set at \$5. Bruce transferred the petty cash fund to Bill.

NJBA Board Sets Annual Dues

The NJBA board of directors has voted to set membership dues at \$15 per year. These dues are in line with those of other ABANA chapters. Please remember that these dues are for NJBA only, and do not include ABANA membership. Founding members who paid initial dues of \$5 will be requested to submit the additional \$10. Please use the attached membership application to do so. (Those who choose not to pay the additional assessment will not receive membership privileges, but will continue to receive our newsletter.)

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The Suburban Smithy

by Bruce Freeman

I recently got a call from a new blacksmith in south Jersey who was interested in installing a forge in a shed in his suburban property. Since I was in the process of doing essentially the same thing, I shared my experiences with him, and now pass these along.

I'd been eager to have my own forge for some time, so I wouldn't have to rely on Allaire Village whenever I wanted to work. I bought a forge and put a hood on it. While on various vacations, I bought many tongs, hammers and other tools, and even a post drill. I toyed with the idea smoke precipitation, but finally decided to simply minimize the smoke I make and vent what I do make through a normal flue. At this point it was time to get serious about installing the forge.

I was fully aware that installing a flue pipe would require city approval. On a past project, namely the installation of a basement bathroom (below the sewer pipe), I had found the city inspector to be no obstacle, but rather a tremendous aid to the project. He had set me straight on how best to do the work, and provided helpful suggestions. Therefore I decided to assume I'd have a similar experience with this project.

I made a quick sketch of my forge and how I planned to install it in my garage, then visited City Hall. I had a productive discussion with the township fire official. He told me what information he'd need, and how to apply for a permit. Since this was a garage, he pointed out that it must remain possible to park a car there. Since he had no specific guidelines how what to require of the installation of a forge, we agreed that the general guidelines for a coal stove would be applicable. Accordingly he was concerned with the minimum distance between the fire pot and the floor (in case of gasoline vapors at floor level), and he required a "lolly column." (This was his term for a cement-filled pipe sunk in the ground, to serve as protection for the forge from being struck by a car.) Although some of these requirements are not necessary to assure the safety of a forge, I went along with them because they would be easy to meet.

I picked up the forms and went home, where I started in drawing up the installation. I planned to run a double-walled insulated through the roof, with single-wall pipe above and below it, to maintain a minimum clearance of 2" between double-walled pipe and wood, and of 6" between double-walled pipe and wood. (I later learned that for wood and coal stove use, the manufacturer of the double-wall pipe recommends a clearance of 18" between single-wall pipe and wood. Of course, this means that you buy more of his very expensive pipe. But perhaps for a stove it is really important.) I filled out the paperwork as best as I could manage (it seemed to be designed for installing a subdivision!) and mailed it in.

Two weeks later I checked on it and found I needed only to pay \$66 to pick up the permit. I put the day-glow sign into my living room window, and set to work.

Next I had to run around a bit to find the flue hardware. Ultimately I used a 30" piece of double-wall insulated flue pipe. I had to mount this using a clamp-mounting device made by the manufacturer of the pipe, and protect the hole in the roof using a conical shield topped with a 2" wide screen (for venting hot air from the outside of the flue), which, in turn, had to be protected by a small conical shield piece. (These pieces all have names, but I don't remember them, and they probably wouldn't mean anything to anyone but a heater man.) The joints had to be sealed from the rain using a special putty, which looked suspiciously like glazing compound. This all set me back well over \$100.

Finally I had to deal with the wooden sill in the floor of the garage, so I tiled over it with red quarry tile. A week later, I had the city fire officer come by to inspect it. He had a few questions and wanted one minor fix (I'd failed to connect the sections of flue pipe with screws), but approved the installation.

You'll notice that I haven't gone into the technical details of this installation. That's because I'm having less than perfect luck with the draft. I'm now helping it along with an inducer, but I will be working on it further as time permits. When I come up with a good working system, I'll report on it.

How to Get a Copy of the NJBA Bylaws

Send a self-addressed stamped 9" x 12" envelope to Bruce Freeman, with your request. Please allow three weeks for delivery.

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Preamble to the New Jersey Blacksmith Association Bylaws

The New Jersey Blacksmith Association (NJBA) is an independent forum and voice for blacksmiths in the State of New Jersey. Its founders have interests in diverse aspects of blacksmithing, including the art, the craft, and the history of blacksmiths and blacksmithing and related crafts. Among those interested in the artistic aspect are members of the Artist Blacksmiths Association of North America (ABANA). Among those interested in the historical aspect are people involved in historical interpretation and in historical research, usually in cooperation with historical sites in New Jersey. Among the founders are blacksmiths of considerable experience, as well as novices. It is the intention of the founders that NJBA bring together and represent the interests of all such people, and to increase their number and skills.

It is the specific intention of the founders that NJBA become the New Jersey chapter of ABANA, and it will be the initial goal of the board of NJBA to achieve such status. Incorporation and achieving tax-free status under the law are also early goals of NJBA. To achieve these goals it may be necessary to amend these bylaws, therefore, in addition to the usual amendment procedures, these bylaws include simplified amendment procedures to achieve these specific goals.

NJBA is structured to be a vital group in which the most active, interested persons rise quickly to positions of responsibility. Accordingly, there are no elected offices, but only elected directors who divide all responsibility between themselves at every board meeting. To rapidly involve new people in the activities of NJBA, the board is authorized to add to its own membership. To keep the board beholden to the membership, directors are reelected annually by the membership. To provide stability and continuity of the board, a board member may serve up to two years between reelection by the membership.

How to Contact the Directors

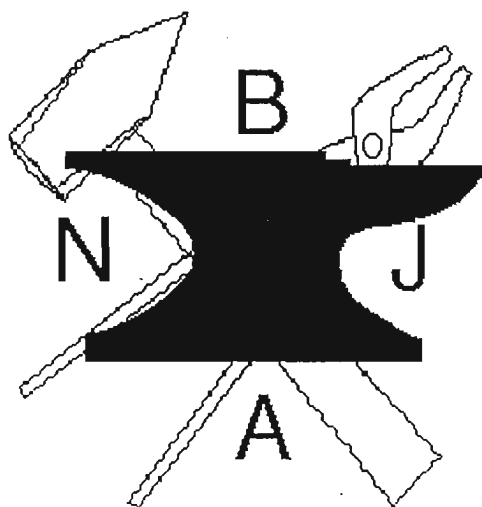
Name	Phone	FAX or Electronic Mail
Pete Engle	(908) 219-6560	pgengle@aol.com
Bruce Freeman	(908) 922-8408*	freeman@mail.superlink.net
222 Laurel Place, Neptune, NJ 07753		
Bill Gerhauser	(609) 394-1817	(609) 394-7283
Joe Lyons	(908) 238-9131	
David Macauley	(908) 206-1568	drm@anchor.ho.att.com
Kevin Orangers	(212) 769-5038	kevock@amnh.org
Andy Vida-Szucs	(908) 308-9039	osan@netlabs.net

*Answering machine does not give outgoing message.

A Nod from the Allaire Village Blacksmith Guild

In the latest edition of the Allaire Village Blacksmith Guild Newsletter, Guild Chairman, Bill Ker, reported on the formational meeting of the NJBA, and added, "This new involvement should surely expand the scope of blacksmithing for those wishing to actively pursue forge work. This movement toward national affiliation will in no way detract from the interpretive program which we carry on at Historic Allaire Village, but can only function to place our group as a focal point for fellow smiths in the central Jersey area. ABANA membership is in no way required for guild members and in no way changes our group's volunteer interpretive program except in the positive networking potential with similar historic sites and groups. Congratulations to those in attendance at the founding of the New Jersey Blacksmith Association...."

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How to Join the NJBA

NJBA dues are \$15 per year. Since the NJBA treasury is still too small to warrant opening a checking account, **please make out your check to William Gerhauser (NJBA Treasurer).** You may note on the "memo" line that the check is for NJBA dues. **Please mail checks to Bruce Freeman, 222 Laurel Place, Neptune, NJ 07753,** along with your completed membership form. You will receive a receipt for your membership dues within three weeks.

Required Information

(This information will be listed in a roster available to other members, unless you request otherwise.)

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Area Code and Phone _____

Optional Information

Please list below any of the following information that you would like included in the membership roster:

Other Phone Number(s), _____

FAX Number(s) _____

Electronic mail address(es) _____

Years of experience as a professional/amateur (circle one) blacksmith (not required for membership) _____

Your occupation and areas of knowledge and interest _____

What do you want to get from your membership in NJBA? _____