



Artist-Blacksmith's Association of North America, Inc.  
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To: All ABANA Affiliate Presidents

Subject: Future Direction of the Association

Fellow Presidents, the Artist Blacksmith's Association of North America, Inc. has some 83 Affiliate groups in North America and several foreign countries as an international presence.

As most of you are aware, the Association has struggled forward over the last several years.

Beginning with the Anvil Shooting controversy, then the Seattle Conference that did not go as expected, then the canceled 2008 New York Conference, the Association has struggled to maintain membership numbers to support the mission.

Over the last couple of years there has been a complete turnover of the Board of Directors and those who stepped forward are part of the current makeup of the Association leadership that have endeavored to turn the tide towards a more favorable future for ABANA.

Here are just a few items I'd like to point out that exemplify the efforts of your ABANA Board of Directors since 2007:

- Sent boxes of past editions of the Anvil's Ring to Affiliates, saving hundreds \$ in storage costs.
- Created the "Members Only Discount Program, giving members discounts from Vendors.
- Introduced an affordable Health Insurance Program for members to choose coverage needed.
- Reduced the membership dues for two year membership, saving money out of your pocket.
- Consolidate the mailing of the Anvil's Ring with the Hammer's Blow to reduce costs
- Continued to make improvements to the publication content and added new articles.
- Planned & will Host with Affiliate support the 2010 ABANA Conference in Memphis June 2-5.
- Introduced bulk purchasing of memberships for the Affiliates to buy at a reduced fee & resell.
- Created a new class of membership for Educational Institutions, with several student benefits.
- Created the "ABANA Blacksmith Heritage Award" to recognize those who strive to increase the "Public Knowledge and Awareness of the Craft".
- Introduced 8 new Affiliate organizations to the ABANA family network of groups.
- Revised the ABANA Bylaws, adding term limits, clarified articles and general improvements.
- Created, analyzed, and compiled results of the first ever ABANA Membership Survey.
- Began to revitalize the Journeyman Program with the goal of creating a complete and comprehensive educational program for Blacksmiths of all interest levels.
- Contracted with a "Professional Management" firm to oversee operations of Central Office.
- Instituted a new "Official" membership mass communication tool called Constant Contact.

This is just the short list of accomplishments your ABANA Board of Directors have completed for the benefit of the membership. There have been several additional areas where regular time and effort have been spent, such as “regular” Affiliate messages from your Board of Directors. The Association website has been maintained on a more regular basis, calendar items get posted, announcements for the benefit of the membership get posted, emails to the Board of Directors get answered and the level of service from your Central Office staff has been improved.

So, where do we go from here? This is my personal request to you for input for the future direction of the Association. Here are just a few questions I’m asking of the Affiliate Presidents:

- What can the Association do to better serve the needs of the Affiliate group?
- What is the role that the Affiliate group would like to see ABANA fill?
- What “Educational Programming” does the Affiliate group want ABANA to develop?
- How can we accomplish our “common goals” working together to benefit all Blacksmiths?

These are my four “Big” questions, but I’m sure that you too will have some ideas of your own and I’d like to hear any suggestions, solutions to problems, advice, comments, general criticisms, rants, raves, pet peeves.....etc.

In closing, please be on the lookout for an Affiliate Survey, soon to be completed by Peyton Anderson the 2010 Affiliate Relations Committee Chair. Your input for this survey will help your Association leadership identify important baseline information about your Affiliate group. If you or a representative of your Affiliate group will be attending the 2010 Conference in Memphis, we will be hosting a round table discussion with the ABANA Board & the Affiliates Leadership. Please consider attending this event

Feel free to call me at any time, email or write to me.

Sincerely,



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