NEWSLETTER

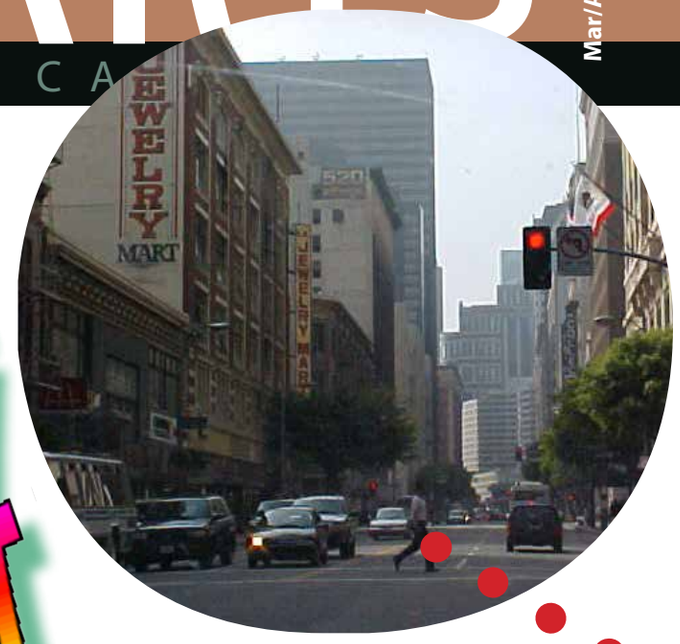
METAL ARTS
SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN CA

Mar/Apr 2015

Join us as we de-mystify the downtown LA Jewelry District. SMACK-DAB in the middle of the week on a Wednesday we will see the district in it's most natural state. BUSY.

Downtown LA
Jewelry District Tour
April 22, 2015
10:00 am - 3:00 pm

THE DOWNTOWN LA JEWELRY DISTRICT TOUR!!!



We will be sharing information you can't find online or anywhere else. You'll learn who to **visit** for **your Tools**, Casting, Mold making, Plating, Findings, Laser welding, Mold making, Laser engraving, Diamond/stone vendors and more! AND **because** it's a Wednesday **we** will **enjoy** many different lunch options at the weekly **farmers** Market in Pershing Square.

The best part:
THIS EVENT IS FREE AND OPEN TO EVERYBODY
We will be meeting in the heart of the district at a place to be **disclosed** after you RSVP to

ketarah@earthlink.net RSVP

MASSC will send out very helpful directions on the meeting time/place **and parking** to those that RSVP.

TOO FAR TO TRAVEL?
Folks coming from out of the area can connect to the **purple/red** line into Los Angeles and exit **onto** Pershing Square Station.
We encourage you to use the Metro Trip Planner to help plan **your trip!**
http://socaltransport.org/tm_pub_start.php?place0=&place1=&timecrit0=AR&day0=MON&hour0=+11&min0=+03&ampm0=A&fare=RG&evaluateButton=+Plan+My+Trip

President's Message

from Diane Weimer

THE JEWELRY CHALLENGE 2015 IS NOW CLOSED! One hundred and thirty-two (132) people have signed up . Truly, I am so pleased with the response and I believe it is partially due to the outpouring of positive comments from the 2014 challenge.

The box contains:

16ga- 1" X 4" sterling silver sheet
18ga -4" X 4" NuGold sheet
20ga- 36" sterling silver round wire
18ga- 36" brass square wire
10ga- 4" sterling silver round wire
2" of square brass tubing
5 pieces of sea glass
3 pieces copper gears
Copper mesh
Wildcard is permitted

In the finished piece, we must use 5 of the items in the box. The artist will do all work. For example, if you choose to plate your piece as your wildcard, you must do the actual plating. You MAY NOT send it to another person to plate it for you. That decision would disqualify you.

Send your completed piece to MASSC Jewelry Challenge, ATTN: Ketarah Shaffer, 30262 Crown Valley Parkway, #B325, Laguna Niguel, CA 92677 to be received by the May 1 deadline. DO NOT MARK IT AS JEWELRY IF YOU HAVE IT INSURED.

~ All MASSC members are welcome to join in the no host luncheon at Aliso Viejo Country Club to see the talents of our members and to vote for their favorites. There will be an email blast when it is time to sign up for the luncheon. ~ Cash prizes of $500 for 1st, $250 for 2nd, $100 for 3rd, and honorable mention will be awarded for entries receiving the most votes by the participants at that luncheon. It is in essence a People's Choice award

The timeline is as follows:

Jan.20-Feb. 20 - entry form and fee due
March 6 - kits mailed to participants
May 1 -All completed entries will be RECEIVED by MASSC Jewelry Challenge, ATTN: Ketarah Shaffer, 30262 Crown Valley Parkway, #B325, Laguna Niguel, CA 92677 to be received by the May 1 deadline.
Participants are required to pay postage for mailing entry to Ketarah by May 1.
Head shot, statement, description of piece is sent to diaweimer@verizon.net.
May 30, Sat.-Pieces displayed at luncheon and attendees vote. The location for the luncheon is Alisa Viejo Country Club. All participants are reminded that all pieces will be mailed back to them during the week following the event.

To all of you who entered, we look forward to your sharing your piece. The best of luck to you all!

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MASSC METAL ARTS SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

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MASSC web site: www.massconline.com
MASSC Newsgroup: MetalArtsSociety-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
MASSC on FaceBook: http://www.facebook.com/groups/134035216002/

MASSC serves the needs and interests of artists working in metals and provides an environment for the exchange of information, instructional workshops, demonstrations, lectures, and panel discussions. Annual dues Sept 1-Aug 31); Regular Member, $30; Family, $45; Full-time Student $20. Membership forms are available at www.MASSConline.com

Choosing a Chasing Hammer

A selection of chasing hammers. Ranging from high quality to low from left to right.

By Brian Meek.

Chasing hammers are odd ducks. Every other hammer is intended to contact the work directly, so the most important parts of it are the faces on the head. The handle's just there to help hold onto it. Chasing hammers on the other hand are intended simply to be the driving force behind the chasing punch that's doing the actual work. In that sense, the nature and shape of their heads is largely irrelevant to the work. Weirdly, the most important part of a chasing hammer is the handle.

The head on a chasing hammer has a very large, flat face. The reason for the big face is to make it easy to hit the back of a chasing punch without paying too much attention to it. When chasing, the jeweler's attention is focused on the working end of the chasing punch. It would detract from the work to have to spare part of the mind to worry about accurately hitting the back end of the punch, so the heads have very large faces to make it easy. They also tend to be very heavy in proportion to the thickness of the handle. The handles of good chasing hammers look positively spindly in comparison to the handle of any other type of hammer. The reason for this is simple: the handle's a spring.

Other kinds of hammer rely on a strong handle to channel the energy generated by the shoulders through the hand and out onto the head where it can be slammed into the metal. They need to be stiff and strong to survive that sort of treatment. In aid of this, they're usually made of hickory wood, which is very strong, and very rigid. Raising, forging, or other metalworking operations rely on a limited number of hammer blows driven by the full arm and shoulder of the worker. Heavier heads aid in delivering more energy per blow, but most of the energy is coming directly from the major muscles of the worker, in a series of slow, powerful blows. Chasing hammers work differently. Instead of relying on slow, powerful blows, chasing depends on a fast succession of light blows, sometimes as quickly as two per second, for minutes at a time. The full arm can't move that fast for more than a few cycles. The way chasing hammers are used is to hold them in the hand and flick them at the back of the chasing

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punch. The power comes from the hand and wrist muscles. These muscles aren't intended for that sort abuse, and won't take it for long at maximum output. What actually happens is that the hammer head is flicked at the back of the punch, and the weight of the head itself does most of the work. The springiness of the handle is critical in cutting down on the amount of energy required to keep the head jackhammering into the back of the punch. When the head hits the punch, the head stops, but the inertia of the hand keeps the hand moving forward, flexing the springy handle. The spring energy building up in the handle slows down the hand, and helps it reverse direction for the backstroke, saving the energy that would otherwise be required to get the hand stopped and moving backwards. At the end of the backstroke, the arm muscles stop the hand, and get it moving forward, but the momentum of the hammer head wants to keep going backwards. Again, the handle flexes, forming a spring. Once the head stops moving backwards and begins moving forwards, the energy that was just stored in the flex of the handle accelerates the head forwards faster than the motion of the holding hand. With a properly springy handle, the hammer head reaches maximum forward speed just as it slams into the back of the punch, moving more quickly than the hand that threw the blow, thanks to the stored energy from the flexible handle. The reason this matters is that impact energy is exponential with speed. (I=.5*MV2) So even a little bit of extra energy from a springy handle is enough to make a difference. Good chasing hammers also have fairly hard steel heads. This makes the heads springy as well. When the steel head slams into the back of the steel punch, there's an elastic rebound that helps throw the head backwards. With the material of the hammer manipulated to form a set of labor reducing springs, a good chasing hammer helps make chasing much easier than it would otherwise be.

Top view of the hammer heads, showing the sockets. The cheap ones are on the left this time.

The problem is that good chasing hammers are getting harder and harder to find. Largely because the buying public doesn't know what to look for in a good hammer.

The most important element is the handle. Most hammer handles are made of Hickory, a very strong, stiff, tough wood. Chasing hammer handles are traditionally made of fruit woods such as apple or pear. These woods are neither strong nor stiff. What they are is springy, which is exactly what's needed in a chasing hammer handle. Good luck finding one of those short of making your own. However, it is possible to get chasing hammers with very thin handles made in a wood that I don't recognize (not being a woodsmith). It's not hickory, but neither is it apple. It looks almost like Ash, but I'm far from an expert. (The first three hammers on the left above are this wood, whatever it is.) The big issue with these (and applewood handles, should you ever see such a unicorn) is that they be thin. The thinner and whippier, the better, so long as they can survive being used. The leftmost hammer above is the only properly sized chasing hammer handle I've come across in the past 15 years that was for sale, and even that was as a replacement. Fortunately, I got a good head to go with it, and put together a very nice hammer. I scrounged the handle out of the back bins of a tool dealer in London's Hatton Garden. Lord only knows how long it'd been hiding back there. The second and third hammers from the left above are more typical of 'good' hammers today. The red-and-silver one is mine, the other one belongs to the Wake center. You'll notice that mine has a thinner handle. It arrived looking very much like the school's. I used files and sandpaper to shave down the handle to a thinner, snappier incarnation. There's no reason not to do that, and it seems to be the best way to get a decent handle these days. If you do that, be careful to transition gently from the reinforced section under the head, into the thinner 'spring' section, and back out at the bottom. If you create sharp transitions, they'll concentrate stress, and make that area more likely to break. Look at the transitions on my shaved-down handle.

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One final thing to note is that with handles this thin, chasing hammers cannot take being used like normal hammers. If you try to swing them with the full force of your arm, the handles will snap in seconds. They're intended to be used to flick the head into the back of a punch. The weight of the head does most of the work, not the hand pushing the handle. If you put too much energy into the handle, you'll snap it. Keep that in mind.

All of the hammers have what's known as 'pistol grip' handles. I prefer these, as the asymmetry makes it easy to keep track of the orientation of the hammer head by feel alone. There are symmetrical oval handles, but they make it harder to keep the head oriented without looking at it periodically. The handle of hammer #6 is almost an oval, to the extent that it's anything.

Having mentioned the good handles, it's time to talk about what you don't want. The three good handles above all came with either German or English hammers. The three on the right are from India, Pakistan and points unknown. I have seen some decent hammers come out of Asia, but equally, I've seen loads of crud. These are definitely in the latter category. I'm not sure what the wood is, but I've seen all sorts of Asian hammers with handles made out of it, whatever it is. It's very tough, but not especially springy. The biggest issue with the handles comes from the shaping. Notice the good English handle: it's got a long center section of equal thinness for a spring, and gentle transitions into and out of that section. Note the shaping of the cheaper handles: they're much thicker, even at their thinnest point, and it is a point, not a sustained thin section. So instead of the whole thin section flexing, these handles will flex only in that one thinnest spot if they flex at all. Note the sharp transition under the heads of the innermost two of the cheaper handles. This will concentrate stress at that point. In use, these handles are so stiff they're essentially clubs. There's no flex or snap to them at all, and chasing with them for any time is a chore.

As I said above, the handles are by far the most important part of a chasing hammer, but the head isn't totally irrelevant, especially the socket by which it hangs onto the handle. Good sockets are oval, to keep the head from spinning on the handle shaft. They also taper from top to bottom, to keep the head from flying off once wedged in place. Speaking of wedges, proper handles are fixed in place either with wooden or metal wedges. Sometimes both. Either way, it's critical that the hole in the head be an oval. In the image of the hammer heads above, the astute observer will note that the two cheaper hammers on the left have round holes. This means the heads are always spinning around on the handle shaft. Totally unacceptable. The leftmost hammer is one of those 'mystery hammers' that turn up from time to time any school shop. I'm not sure where it came from, but it appears to have been manufactured originally with those three brass nails in the head by way of an attempt at a wedge. There's no trace of a proper wedge, or the slot it would have left behind. It looks like it really was made that way. Needless to say, this hammer spends most of its time in the back of the junk drawer. On the second hammer from the right, that round ring wedge is a European style. They work very well, and are a good thing to see.

To wrap up, the most critical thing to look for in a chasing hammer is the handle. Ideally, it should have a long thin spring section, with smooth transitions. It should be of whatever that light blond wood is, rather than the unknown dark asian wood, which is too stiff. I prefer pistol gripped handles. If the handle arrives too thick, don't hesitate to shave it down. As far as heads go, a 1" diameter head or larger seems to be the right size for most things. 7/8" heads are surprisingly small and delicate. Most importantly, make sure the handle socket is properly oval, and the handle is well fitted. If at all possible, try to buy your chasing hammers in person, so that you can pick out the best of the litter.

 Read more from Brian at **http://www.alberic.net**

The Fantastic Ancient Animal Locks of Iran

Padlocks have been made in Iran since ancient times. The earliest existing padlocks are from the Sasanian period (224-ca. 651 CE). Figural locks in the form of animals and birds became popular. Nearly all animals, such as the horse, lion, goat, ram, camel, rabbit, and water buffalo, as well as fish and all kinds of birds, were fashioned in locks.

Enamel covered container made from copper, fine silver, and opaque enamels

Kay Yee

My experience as a teacher at Pasadena City College for 32 years affects the direction of my metalwork. My interest is in research, and teaching has often led to a development of new ideas in my work. For example, I enjoy enameling and I teach enameling in my Crafts classes. I work with students to explore new textures and graphic images with enamels and in that process inspire my studio work. While in my studio working, I become excited about a new process, I'll introduce it in my classroom to change up the assignments.

I prepare for my work by making small samples that sometimes can be useful as an element in a piece of jewelry. I explore the medium of enamels with "test samples" that I keep copious notes on: the steps, the color numbers, and technical process. I adhere these samples to a card and catalog the process for teaching and reference.

After I fabricate a hollow form, I will often return to my catalog of research samples to find an enamel technique to complete the surface of my project. The fun of the creative process is in the making of the samples, because it leads to the discovery of new effects with the medium.

Above: Fabricated pieces of hollow ware that await an enameled surface to be applied.

Making an actual piece is also a process, and it can be intimidating because I won't know the end result until it is finished. Sometimes the result is wonderful; other times… a learning experience. But making that nice piece every so often keeps me wanting to do more work.

I have never made my living as a metalworker, but rather I have had the privilege to work as an educator teaching jewelry, crafts, and foundation 3d design. I have always approached metalwork as a medium of personal expression. As I begin to move toward retirement, I am intrigued by the concept of having more productive studio time to produce work and I will begin the process of finding a place to exhibit and sell my metalwork.

Travel Opportunity
1 Week Metalsmithing Workshop
FLORENCE, ITALY

BY MONICA BRANSTROM

A Kernel, A Spark, an Idea in the Making...!!by Monica Branstrom!!!What images does your mind conjure up when you think of Florence, Italy? Maybe Brunelleschi's Dome, the famous sculpture of Michelangelo's David, the mouth-watering food? What about the surrounding rolling tuscan hills bursting with wine grapes getting ready to become Chianti? Yes, yes, yes, all of that and more! But do you ever think of metalsmithing?!!

I have been in love with Florence ever since I was seven years old and my mother returned from a trip to Italy with a coffee table book filled with all the art and captivating things about Florence. I was obsessed with this book and it now sits on my own coffee table. I know every page by heart. And now, for some reason, Florence is singing to my heart and I have this idea brewing...indulge me here...!!

So imagine this...I would like to gather a small group (6 to 8) of metalsmiths who would be interested in a week long workshop, with a local expert, focusing on one technique. We would stay in the neighborhood of the Oltrarno, which is where most of the local Florentine artisans live and work. This area is just on the other side of the Arno river from the center of town and is a very short walk to where many of the famous sites are.!!

I am envisioning five mornings of instruction with several hours of studio time to implement what we learned in the demo time. After all this fun at the bench, we would have the option to cruise around town and visit amazing sites like the Duomo, the Uffizi Gallery, the Accademia Gallery(where David lives), the Silver Museum at the Pitti Palace, etc… and there is SO much more etcetera!!!But don't forget that Florence is wonderfully close to the Chianti wine region where we could take a half day tour of wine tasting!

But only after a day of metalsmithing for safety sake. Haha! And what about a fun vespa or bicycle tour? These are only a few ideas and is only the tip of the iceberg of options that I have bumping around in my head. But really, how fun would this be? Combining a vacation in Italy and a weeklong metalsmithing workshop learning from an Italian expert? A little bit of heaven I think. !!

I am intending to go on a research trip to Florence this summer to work out the details (I know, rough.). So if any of you are seriously interested in being a part of this creative adventure you can email me at: **monica7873@gmail.com** and I will add you to an interest list so when this idea has solid legs to stand on, you will be the first to know. !!

Ciao!!!!!!

I ROBOT!

by Pat Wierman

A 240 year old doll that can write; a clockwork creation by Pierre Jaquet-Droz. This would be difficult to make today, imagine what it took to build in 1770.

Watch the 4 minute video and be amazed.

http://www.chonday.com/Videos/the-writer-automaton

"Word-spiration"

Coalesce

co·a·lesce
verb

Come together and form one mass or whole.

Each issue the MASSC newsletter will feature the designs sent in by members inspired by the Word-spiration. Send submissions in the form of drawings/ photographs (300 ppi) to:
diaweimer@verizon.net
with the subject: "wordspiration"
along with a short description about how the word inspired the design.

Last Issue's Wordspiration:

Vinculum

Bracelet by Raminta Jautokas

MASSC Video Library
Now Available on DVD

The MASSC video library currently has 20 videos on DVD of past workshops that members can check out. These DVDs are direct videotapes of actual workshops and have not been edited. Watching a MASSC workshop video is akin to being there in person.

NEW **Elise Preiss - Enameling with Decals**
Pauline Warg- Carved Bezels
Jillian Moore - Resin in 3D
Sarah Doremus- Kinetic Jewelry
Charity Hall - The Brooch Approach
Demo Day 2011 - 5 demos
NC Black Micro-Shell Forming
Alison Antleman - Custom Clasps
Belle Brooke Barer - Sculptural Hollow Ring
Diane Falkenhagen - Mixed Media Techniques for Jewelry
Leslee Frumin - Classy Clasps
Mary Lee Hu - Weaving and Chains
Charles Lewton-Brain - Fold Forming
Betsy Manheimer - Fold Forming
Trish McAleer - Metal Corrugation
Bruce Metcalf - Jewelry Alternatives
Ben Neubauer - Wire Fabrication
Harold O' Connor - Surface Embellishments & Efficient Workshop Methods
Katherine Palochak - Tufa Casting
2Roses - Metal Patination
Carol Sivets - Metal Reticulation
Lisa Slovis Mandel - Hydraulic Press
Carl Stanley - Cuff Bracelet
Pauline Warg - Metal Beads
Wayne Werner - Stone Setting
Betty Helen Longhi - Forming Techniques
Jeanne Jerousek McAninch - Chain Making

A $20 donation is necessary to check out each DVD. This includes the use of the DVD plus 2-way shipping. There is no additional security deposit. Members can keep each DVD for up to 30 days. Videos can be checked out on the MASSC website at www.massconline.com. Click the "Video Library" link on the home page.

Upcoming Workshop Summer of 2015
"Mechanical Playthings"
with Gary Schott

Board Meetings:
March 8, Sunday, 10am-12pm
May 3, Sunday, 10am-12pm

Did you change your email? Don't miss your MASSC newsletter and workshop announcements. Send changes to Jan Reimer at rreimer@socal.rr.com

MASSC Vision Statement
Shaping the future by preserving metal art heritage, discovering new methods while sharing our knowledge and resources.

MASSC Mission Statement
To educate the Community, inspiring and challenging those who seek excellence in jewelry and metal arts, while providing educational, visual material and experiential connections.

Brass Door with Knocker, Morroco