

HM HOUSTON AG METAL ARTS GUILD

GOLD PAGES NEWSLETTER

Fall 2014

Edited by Alita Buck



This year's Gathering of the Guilds was a smash hit! We helped folks in the community forge copper wire into bracelets, pendants, and rings. It was a lovely turn out, and we'd like to thank everyone who volunteered and visited our table!

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Letter From the President

By Jeff McGee

Hello HMAG Members!

Is it just me, or does time seem to pass by us faster and faster? Maybe what really happens is that as time goes on we accumulate more and more things to do, people to see, meetings to attend, etc. Your Friendly Neighborhood Metal Arts Guild is no different, and your Board of Directors is hard at work making sure the T's are crossed and I's are dotted. We are in full throttle heading into the beginning of the school season with new and recurring events, programs, workshops, shows, and initiatives.

Before I get into specifics, I'd like to say a big, giant THANK YOU to exiting Board members from the previous year: Corey Ackelmire in Education, Mary Davenport and Mary Jarvis in Special Projects, Nathan Dube in Membership, and Chris Magisano our outgoing Secretary. The service you have provided to our organization is greatly appreciated and your efforts to ensure a smooth transition for your replacements has already begun to pay dividends!



Thanks Cory, Mary Davenport, Mary Jarvis, Nathan, and Chris!

Speaking of incoming Board members, I'd like to welcome Priscilla Frake, Jessica Jacobi, and Patty Scott in Membership, Education, and Special Projects respectively. Priscilla and Patty have served on the HMAG Board in the past in different positions, and Jessica is new to the Guild's governance. Thank you all for stepping up and volunteering your time and efforts. I'm happy to be working with you!

Returning from last year's Board lineup: Alita Buck in Communications (and now Newsletter Editor), Terry Fromm in Workshops, Sissy O'Malley our Librarian, Jo Preston as Treasurer, Cathy Prieto-Smith in Programs, and Chuck Schwarz as Vice President. If you're counting, you may have noticed a drop from 12 Board members in the past to our current 10. A smaller group, and an increase in activity means those volunteering their time have more on their plate. You know what's coming next... We need YOU!!!

I have a request of you, the membership of this great organization. Please think about ways that HMAG has benefited your life; professional, personal, or otherwise and ask yourself “What can I do to give back?” As you are well aware, your membership dues and workshop fees help support the happenings and initiatives of the Guild, but your time and effort are needed to sustain HMAG as a healthy, growing, and relevant organization moving forward. It does not take as much as you may think to make a difference.

As a hypothetical analogy, imagine the small things you may do to help the environment, or support a charitable cause. You do not do those things because they benefit you immediately or make a world-changing impact, you do them in order to add one more brick to the growing infrastructure that is the ultimate charitable goal. Turning off the water when you brush your teeth may not stop Global Warming in its tracks, but is sure won't speed it up either.

What aspect of HMAG's programming attracts you the most? If you are interested in becoming more involved with the Board's many endeavors please email the appropriate Board member listed on page 21 and ask them how you can help support their efforts towards a thriving, ever-evolving HMAG. Throughout the pages of this Newsletter, you will find proof of this evolution. From a wide variety of workshop offerings, to group trips in and around the Houston area, community outreach events like Gathering of the Guilds, infrastructure upgrades like our new website, educational information and opportunities, plus many more, the Board strives to bring you quality enterprises, worthy of your talents, interests, and ideas. We have also begun to compile a new Member Survey which will be sent out before the end of 2014. Please consider spending a few minutes providing the Board with your opinions and comments, they are more valuable than you can know! I thank you in advance for any contribution you can provide!

I'll complete this soapbox diatribe by tell you all what a pleasure it is for me to serve for this organization. Your enthusiasm for programming and willingness to participate justifies the work volunteered by your representatives. If no one ever showed up, we wouldn't have a guild at all. Onward and upward!

Hope to see you at a future event!

HMAG President
Jeffrey R. McGee

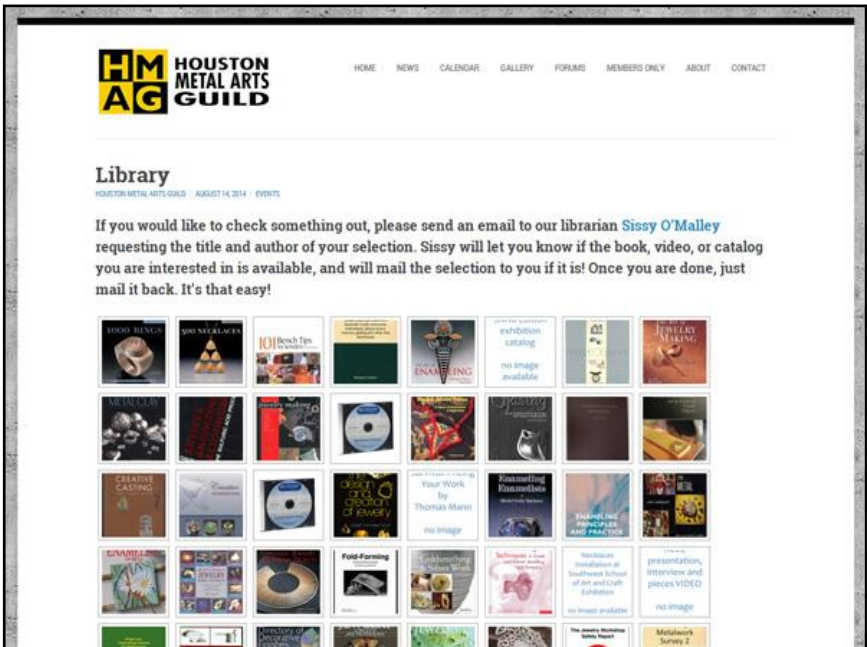


Jeff McGee is a Professor of Art at San Jacinto College South Campus where he heads the Metals and Sculpture area. He received his MFA from the University of Kansas in 2009. His award winning metal work has been exhibited nationally and internationally.

HMAG Library Report

HMAG is proud to announce a brand new area of the site dedicated to the library!

Now you can browse through our collection of over 60 items with ease. Click a thumbnail in the gallery to view cover images as well as brief descriptions of each book, catalog, or cd, and use the arrows to scroll. Just log in on the **Members Only** page to begin!



When you find what you're looking for, just use the convenient link at the top to email our wonderful Librarian, **Sissy O'Malley**. She will send your selection by mail, and when you are finished, just mail it back!

We are constantly trying to improve every facet of our website's user interface. If you have any comments or suggestions for the library, a book you'd like us to try and acquire, even a book you'd like to donate, don't hesitate to email us!

Alita at hmagcomm@gmail.com
Sissy at hmaglibr@gmail.com

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Thank you! Liz Guild, Owner EGGM

The ads you see in this newsletter come to you courtesy of our Corporate Members. A Corporate Membership includes a free 1/2 page ad in our Biannual Newsletter. For more information about membership benefits contact our Membership Director Priscilla Frake at HMAGMembr@gmail.com.

Summer Program Highlights

MFAH Hirsch Library Tour



Show your Metal II Member Exhibition



1st: Jan Harrell
"Personal Trimmers"

2nd: Terry Fromm
"Bud Vase"

3rd: Alita Buck
"Mask for the Paranoid"

Gathering of the Guilds 2014



Our recent tour of the MFAH's beautiful Hirsch Library was very informative! It was such a treat to get an in-depth look at the collection. We also had a wonderful turnout at the Show Your Metal II Member Exhibition reception. Congrats to Jan Harrell, Terry Fromm, and Alita Buck for winning first, second and third place respectively! And finally, we always have a great time sharing our craft with local Houstonites at Gathering of the Guilds. Cheers to HCCC for this seasonal event!

Summer Workshop Highlights

Build - A - Bench with Jo Preston



Connect(ed) with Demi Thomlouis



Sculptural Forming in Sheet Metal with Jeff McGee



We had some amazing workshops this summer! Jo helped us construct our very own collapsible DIY jeweler's bench. Demi brought her expertise with kinetic devices, and helped us refine our jewelry connections. Jeff hammered out all the details of forming, forging, raising, and sinking and taught us to get the most out of our sheet metal. Thanks instructors for sharing your wisdom, and thank you HMAGers for making it fun!

Member Achievements

- **Sandie Zilker** was recognized as the 2014 Texas Master in HCCC's Texas Master Series. Her work is featured in a solo exhibition, and she will serve as one of three jurors for the Craft Texas 2016 biennial exhibition at HCCC. Her exhibition closes September 7, so hurry and don't miss



it!

- **Anke Bohmer's** latest piece "21st Century Cornucopia necklace" was accepted in the 18 Hands show Contemporary Jewelry: An Everyday Luxury. Congrats!



- **John Barber** just completed two huge Dorado sculptures, each approx. 5' long! They are steel sheet metal, chased and repoussed, and colored with automotive paints. Nice work!



- **Terry Fromm** has been accepted on commission in two galleries. Check out her work at The Gallery at Round Top and Asher Gallery at HCCC. Woot!



- **Cathy Prieto-Smith** is making great headway on the completion of her all-in-one metals community facility complete with artist space, and classrooms and meeting rooms out in the Heights area. Can't wait, Cathy!

- **Ginger Siemans** work and technique was published in Belle Armoire jewelry summer issue "*Waxing Cloisonne*". Good job!



- **Diane Falkenhagen** was featured in the "Multiple Exposures: Jewelry and Photography" curated exhibition catalog from the Museum of Art and Design, N.Y. The exhibition was curated by Ursula Ilse-Neuman. Fantastic, Diane!



- **Nichole Dittman** has two collections that are currently in a curated exhibit at Silver Street Studios. The exhibit is up till mid October, will come down for a Fotofest show then we will have another show up through the holidays. Way to go!



- **Jan Harrell** has just completed a successful restoration commission for St Philips Church! 14 hydraulically pressed 50-year-old enamel-on-copper panels needed to be sandblasted, color-matched, remounted on brass, and more in order to be fully restored, and Jan did a bang-up job! Go see these historic pieces hanging proudly at St Philips!



Opinion: My First SNAG

By Alita Buck

This past April, I attended the Society of North American Goldsmiths 43rd Annual Conference. I had no expectations, but many questions about this world I was hoping to infiltrate. I was positive I would find someone who would let me in, give me the secret passcode, and explain to me how to go about being an artist. This was a place full of my people. I would meet them with zeal and earnestness, and make them my friends. And that is exactly what I did.

When I first arrived, I was daunted by how many people were there, and quickly discovered the gathering represented approximately half of the usual attendance. But as the conference went on, I began to understand how remarkably small and interconnected our community actually is. And I began to think of it as *our* community, not theirs. This was a pivotal moment in my own slow process of self-identification. Never before had I felt such an immediate sense of belonging. Uncertainty, yes. Shyness, definitely. But I also felt an awareness that there was a spot for me and that I could go take my place in it whenever I was ready.

This awareness was the sum of all the individual connections I experienced, as well as the familial connections I saw all around me. Everyone knew everyone. Friends who only saw each other once in a handful of years were embracing. Proud professors were bragging about their students, excited for the day they would become colleagues. Students were trading 3-AM-in-the-studio war stories, and generally couldn't wait to see where their work would take them. There was a vitality to this group. It was exciting.

I knew after the first night that I would accomplish the goals I had set for myself before coming to the conference: I would grow my understanding of the academic system, I would narrow down my grad school choices, and I would get the feedback I needed to determine if grad school was even attainable at my current caliber. Because I wanted that MFA, and I still do. I reckoned out of all the people I had met and would meet, it was likely one of them would be my future professor. I was thrilled.



After the initial wave of giddiness, I calmed down enough to open my ears a bit to what the conference actually had to say. Themes began to emerge as I listened: sustainability, identity, our legacy, our future. Our community was worried. Yes, they were happy to see each other, still working and productive, still passionate, but there was a current of unease that grew stronger as I attended more lectures and spoke to more people. I saw more than one flash of anxiety in discussions of technology and new media, our relationships to it, and its influence on traditional definitions of “hand-made.” I saw tension in conversations about artist representation, continuing issues of sexism, and the art of dissent. I saw an awful lot of people feeling like they needed to justify what and why they make.

It was overwhelming. I could not process all of it, and I had a dim understanding that I’d need to be active in the field for many more years before I could. However, some of these anxieties were directly relevant to me and have remained immovably in the front of my mind since the conference closed—mainly, the subject of sustainability.

I remember when a young woman took to the mic on the first night during a Q&A period after a lecture. Sharon Church had just closed a three-person panel examination of three stages of a career in development, along with two younger women named April Wood and Rachel Timmins. Church represented the third stage, that of an established artist just after retirement and was awestruck at the rate of change in the field. I don’t remember exactly what the young woman at the mic asked Church, but I remember she looked concerned and a little desperate. I’ll paraphrase her question: How can we in good conscience send kids into this field? It’s collapsing on itself. We can’t sustain it. Their only legitimate choice is to become a professor, who will teach more kids to be artists, who will necessarily become professors, who will teach more kids... and no one will be left to be artists.

The academic cycle. It came up many more times in various other discourses. I remember Church looked sad, and basically said that something needed to be done and that our efforts would be well spent deciding exactly what that would be, but that she herself did not have the answer. A driving mantra began to circulate in my head: grad school may not be the only way. Academic art made in an academic environment for other academics may not be the only way to learn. Discussions of alternative educational spaces, ways to support the arts at various levels, and a call for political action in one’s community rounded out the night.

I eavesdropped my way through the rest of the conference, and attempted to pull together the disparate questions roiling in my head. Do art jewelers only make jewelry for other art jewelers? Can one live off Etsy alone? Is there really no economic or societal support outside of our little community? In this age of

Continued on next page

instant connection, why does it feel so insular? Why does it feel separate from the rest of the world? At this I remembered an old pang from undergrad, where I first encountered that strange schism between Art and Craft and the prejudices therein.

And suddenly, in the midst of my burgeoning existential crisis, it was time for my portfolio review and my visit to the Education Resource Room from which I would select my top three schools from a veritable buffet of choices. I thought, “oh yeah, that’s why I came here.”

When I went to peruse the endless line of tables littered with academic literature, I had a brand new attitude and had long since abandoned what I thought I needed. I entered my review with a whole new set of questions, and a very different expectation for my future. I was lucky enough to have three people review me, and all of them asked if I wanted to teach. Everyone I met was exceptionally friendly, bright, and kind.



Goofing off with new friends at the Solid Gold Dance Party

While I did in fact narrow down my grad school choices, I’m no closer to deciding my life trajectory. If anything, SNAG complicated my previously naïve perception. For this, I’m immeasurably grateful for the opportunity to attend the conference. I’m so glad I did. I met so many brilliant people, had years of conversations smashed into one weekend, and saw some incredible art.

I’m resolved to make things, no matter what. There will eventually be many paths to achieve this goal, and I am also resolved to help create them. What I’ve decided to believe for now, after having a few months to digest all I learned, is that the key to Art Metals’ future success lies in our ability to connect to the culture that surrounds us. As artists, our duty is to the world. We must meet the people who don’t understand why our handmade original is more precious, essential, and alive than the \$5 facsimile and invite them into our world. We must meet them with zeal and earnestness, and make them our friends.



Alita Buck received her BA in Studio Art and Art History from [Trinity University](#) in San Antonio, TX. Now living and working in Houston as an artist, she works predominantly with metal and natural materials. She draws inspiration from art history, myth, and her childhood.

18 Hands Member Show

Save the Date!
April 4-26, 2015

HMAG has once again partnered with 18 Hands Gallery to host a member gallery show. The details for the show are being finalized as this newsletter goes to press.

The prospectus should be available via HMAG.org by the end of September and members will be notified by email when it is ready.



Advertisement

Tips and Tricks

By Priscilla Frake

To make your own texturing hammers:

Carve or drill into old hammers. Remember to keep the hammer face from overheating or it will lose its temper.

From Charles Lewton-Brain

Some cautions on caring for amber:

- Do not expose amber to high heat and humidity, such as in a kitchen.
- Don't use alcohol to clean amber.
- Do not put amber in an ultrasonic cleaner.
- Store amber in a cool ventilated place where it won't be handled.
- Do not immerse amber in water. To clean, you may wash it quickly in tepid mild soapy water, rinse with pure water, dry, and rub with olive oil.
- Do not smoke while wearing amber- it may turn the stones or beads cloudy.
- Amber can be carved care using steel tools, but it is brittle.

from: Jewelry Arts Lapidary Journal February 2000

Carving:

Anthracite, argillite, alabaster, coral, ivory, and soapstone are the easiest materials to carve without power tools.

from: Jewelry Arts Lapidary Journal January 2000



One way to create torch texture in silver:

- Use a sharp, rather than bushy flame.
- Heat the whole piece to a dull-red.
- Bring the blue part of the flame to one corner of the piece and hold the torch sideways, so the flame is horizontal.
- As the corner starts to bead up and melt, move the flame along the side, pushing the bead ahead of the flame.
- If the metal gets too molten, back the flame off a bit and let the piece cool. Pickle, then start again.
- It's best to work on smaller areas at a time, cooling, pickling, and brass brushing between each heating. This will allow the fine silver to build up during subsequent heatings.

from: John Kearney in Jewelry Arts Lapidary Journal January 2000

Shop Safety Shout Out

A lot of the materials, tools and processes used by metalsmiths are potentially dangerous. This just might be a big part of my attraction to this medium. Controlling fire to manifest things is definitely cool. Truth is, complacency in working safely with these things can be an unforgiving error in judgment.

“Your work just takes my breath away!”

- Good ventilation is critical to maintaining a healthy workspace.
- Fumes when soldering contain flux chemicals and molten metal compounds.
- Vapor from pickle pots is unhealthy.
- All glue and adhesives release gas chemicals when used and during curing.
- Paints, coatings and solvents all release chemicals as well.
- Abrasives and polishing compounds release particulates that become airborne, whether from a buffing machine, handheld flex-shaft tool or hand sanding.
- Etching acids should always be treated with great regard due to their extreme potential health danger.



The negative effects of breathing some of these toxins can be accumulative and go unnoticed for years, while a real good whiff of nitric acid can do the trick right now. Other goodies like xylene, benzene or acetone not only can make you forget your name but can get your new cell reproduction all confused down the road. Wearing a mask, protective gloves or eye and ear protection, when needed, can definitely seem like a bother. But a small inconvenience now is worth it to protect your future.

Change filters in buffing machines when needed. Cleaning up regularly after working can cut down on hazardous dust. Store and use hazardous materials properly. Placement of small inexpensive fans and opening windows can seriously help move fumes out of your way.

If you have questions about the chemicals or products you are using, there are HAZMAT information sheets online or ask for them at the time of purchase. Working safely is a choice!

From: Chuck Schwarz



Priscilla Frake began making jewelry in the late 1990s after taking courses at the Revere Academy in San Francisco. She is now engaged in making silver/mixed metal/enamel jewelry and sculpture based on images of the Cosmos.

Upcoming Events

Cultured Cocktails

Enjoy a night out with your HMAG buddies at
Boheme Café & Wine Bar!

A portion of all drink proceeds will benefit HMAG, and we'll have a beautiful slideshow of all the work featured in our member profiles. It's a good time to do some networking while you're at it, so bring some business cards!

When:

Thursday September 25, 2014 from 5:00 - 7:00 pm

Where:

Boheme Café Wine Bar, 307 Fairview
Houston, TX 77006

"Forming Forerunners" with Jeff McGee

Come spend an evening with us and enjoy Jeff McGee's lecture
*"Forming Forerunners: An Overview of Contemporary Sculptural
Metal Objects and Their Historical Antecedents"*

When it comes to forming objects, Jeff can drop knowledge like its hot.
Don't miss it!

When:

September 19, 2014

Meet-and-Greet Social at 6:30, Lecture from 7:00 – 9:00 pm

Where:

Glassell School of Art
Freed Auditorium

2014 Events

January

- Nisa Blackmon gave a great lecture on tab construction and folding techniques

February

- Sue Amendolara visited and lectured on her art practice and led a workshop on kuem-boo and die-forming

March

- TXRX demo'd some of their high-tech tools and introduced us to their organization

April

- Show Your Metal II Member Show opening reception was a hit!
- We made forged copper jewelry at the Gathering of the Guilds
- SNAG's 43rd Annual Conference was held in Minneapolis

May

- We had a fun day outdoors at the Roberts Elementary School Carnival
- Sculptural Forms in Sheet Metal Workshop Session I was a smashing success

June

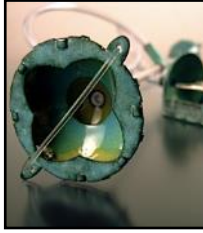
- Members built a fully collapsible, transportable DIY bench at this year's Build-A-Bench Workshop

July

- Demi Thomlouis shared her knowledge of kinetic devices and connections for use in jewelry design in her Connect(ed) Workshop
- Sculptural Forms in Sheet Metal Session II was as good as the first!

August

- We toured the MFAH's Hirsch Library and learned some art jewelry history



2014 Member Survey

WE WANT YOU



TO TAKE THE HMAG MEMBER SURVEY

Hey HMAGers!

As some of you may know, HMAG is 16 years old. Our guild has moved through many transitional eras, evolving from a small close-knit group of like-minded metalsmiths to a sprawling community of distinct artists with no less passion and dedication to the craft, and we are currently experiencing some growing pains.

It's times like these when the board needs to check in, and assess our ever-progressing membership and needs thereof. So! **We have written another survey to compile member feedback.** There are a lot of us now, and we can't have a nice one-on-one lunch with all of you. But that doesn't mean we don't desperately want to know how you feel and what you need.

All you have to do is tell us!

We are more involved in to the Houston craft community than ever before. Our membership is growing fast, and we have more opportunities to share in a wider field of colleagues. HMAG is widening it's scope, taking on more projects, and connecting in new ways. We will be announcing the survey soon, and will post it in the bulletins and on the HMAG website.

Please fill it out!

Doing so ensures this guild will continue to exist.

Thank you!

Educational Scholarship

This Fall, the **HMAG Educational Scholarship fund** will be offering a scholarship of \$500 to an area student for the purpose of enrolling in a semester-long Metalsmithing and Jewelry course at a greater Houston area college or university in the Spring 2014 semester.

In exchange for the scholarship, the recipient will make a presentation to the HMAG membership in the form of a brief live lecture or a short article for the HMAG newsletter following the experience.

The recipient will also receive a complimentary year-long membership to HMAG and will be featured in the HMAG newsletter as well as on the HMAG website. The first winner was HCC-Central student, Meredith Schaffer, who used her scholarship to take Jessica Jacobi's second level jewelry and metalsmithing course at HCC-Central.

The awardee will be chosen based on a combination of merit and need. Applicants need not be HMAG members but must reside in the Houston area – within a 60 mile radius of downtown Houston.

The submission deadline is **November 21, 2014**, for use during the 2015 academic school year. HMAG will coordinate with the student's chosen school to award the scholarship funds.

HMAG's Education Outreach Board Member, **Jessica Jacobi**, will host several workshops that offer guidance on the completion of the Scholarship Application. These meetings will cover how to go over the application and understand its requirements along with tips for taking documentation pictures of artwork. The workshops will take place in October-early November, with more specific information on locations and times to come shortly.

The application will be available on the HMAG website.

HMAG will also offer another scholarship in Spring 2015 for an **HMAG member to attend any educational opportunity of their choosing!** The winner will be awarded up to \$500 to take a class, workshop, or other educational opportunity in the metals field for the purpose of furthering their personal or professional metalsmithing goals.

Metalsmithing / Jewelry Courses in the Houston Area

Alvin Community College

Diane Falkenhagen

diane@dianefalkenhagen.com

<http://www.alvincollege.edu>

Art League of Houston

Mary Rogers

maryrogers60@hotmail.com

<http://www.artleaguehouston.org/artclasses.html>

Glassell School, MFAH

Sandie Zilker

spzilker@sbcglobal.net

<http://www.mfah.org/visit/glassell-studio-school>

Houston Community College Central

Corey Ackelmire

corey.ackelmire@hccs.edu

<http://central.hccs.edu/portal/site/central>

Houston Community College Stafford

Martha Ferguson

mfergusonstudio@gmail.com

<http://southwest.hccs.edu/portal/site/southwest>

Lone Star College Montgomery

Melissa Walter

Melissa.K.Walter@lonestar.edu

<http://www.lonestar.edu/montgomery.htm>

San Jacinto College South

Jeff McGee

Jeffrey.McGee@sjcd.edu

<http://www.sanjac.edu>

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Terry Fromm

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Houston Metal Arts Guild (HMAG) exists to provide education and promote public awareness and interest in the metal arts by enriching the local community through activities relating to the fields of metalsmithing and jewelry. HMAG membership is open to anyone interested in supporting the metal arts. Membership benefits include discounted workshops, a free page in the HMAG.org Member Gallery, invitations to exhibit your work, and technical and business programs. Join HMAG today! In addition, HMAG communicates breaking news and artist opportunities via email. These communications are free and a great way to stay in touch with the Houston metal arts community.

HMAG Statement of Purpose

The Houston Metal Arts Guild, Inc. is a non-profit organization made up of people with varying interests and involvement in traditional and contemporary jewelry and metalsmithing. The Guild was founded to provide for the exchange of ideas and information, as well as offer affordable educational opportunities to its members and the public. Our activities include: a bi-annual newsletter, exhibitions and a series of aesthetic, technical and business workshops/lectures. The skills, energy and enthusiasm of the Houston Metals Arts Guild, Inc. members promote and sustain its successful programs. We welcome and encourage participation by everyone.

HMAG Membership Benefits

- Discounted workshops
- Invitations to exhibit your work
- Technical and business programs
- Visiting artist lectures and panel discussions
- Online gallery space at HMAG.org
- Full access to website including member directory
- Access to our comprehensive library
- Networking with local and visiting artists
- Exhibition openings
- Social events
- 10% discount at [Jemco](#) USA store



HOUSTON METAL ARTS GUILD

Membership is annual and runs from June 1st through May 31st

- New Membership \$30
- Family Membership \$50
- Corporate Membership \$100
- Renewing Membership \$30
- Full Time Student Membership \$15

Corporate members receive a 1/2 page color ad in an issue of our bi-annual newsletter.

Prorated memberships are available by check only. For more information please email membership@hmag.org.

Please enclose a check made payable to the Houston Metal Arts Guild, Inc. and return to: PO Box 270452, Houston, TX 77277-0452

You can also join online at www.hmag.org.

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As a non-profit organization managed by volunteers, we need assistance from our members with various HMAG functions.

- Whatever is needed
- Phoning Members
- Workshop Committee
- Communications Committee
- Program Committee
- Workshop assistant
- Write an article for the newsletter

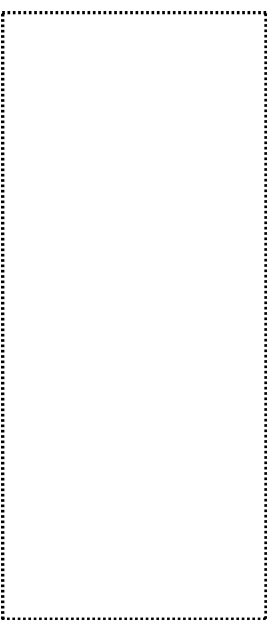
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