

## The Adventurous Silversmith Blog History Blogging for those who aspire to be a silversmith

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## Taking the Challenge

by LAURIE JANE KERN on JANUARY 2, 2010

Over at [Hammermarks](#) (opens in a new window), Wendy has thrown down the gauntlet and challenged us (her readers) join her in making a super bowl, on or for Super-Bowl Sunday [That would be February 7, 2010].

I think this is a great idea, and I have decided to join in on the fun.

Now I have to think of something that challenges ME!

Should I :

Make Tear Drop 2: - I think that might be cheating; but to see if I could make another in a smaller size would be a challenge.

Sink a simple bowl: - I have done these in various sizes starting from a 1" disk to a 5" disk, should I go for a larger size?

Raise a bowl: I have done one simple bowl and then I did a tray (which Deb says is truly wonderful job) - maybe I could add a curve to the body mid-height

Raise a Pint: Actually I think raising a copper pint, along the lines of a [traditional glass pint](#), would be appropriate, then I could drink a beer or other wonderful libation out of it. Hmmm, would I or even, could I get it certified as a true Imperial Pint???

## And Around and Around She Goes...

by LAURIE JANE KERN on JANUARY 9, 2010

Last weekend I started another repousse project using a bowl I made.

There was some emotion in doing this - I made the bowl but what if I screwed up the chasing and repousse?

We all must take the plunge sometime.

I started with a small sketch pad of paper and drew some swirls in a circle. This was while the bowl was in the pickle pot, because I had to anneal it. After cleaning up the bowl from the pickle, using a black marker I traced out the swirls from the center bottom. It took several tries but I got the shape I wanted.

Next I had to pack the bowl with pitch so I could trace the outside of the bowl. This was a bit messy and **HOT** but I had laid down paper and finally on/in the pitch bowl (see picture below). Now, a week later I have finished the lining; I have removed the pitch from the inside; cleaned it up; and sunk the bowl into the pitch for working from the inside; and completed 4 rounds of work on all three swirls.

NMC was correct - "Slow is FAST" - I have been working very slowly, some nights only working on one arm of the swirl. I don't want to mess it up and the best way to do that is to think about what I am doing and GOING SLOW!!

Today (well right now) I have removed the bowl from the pitch, so I anneal the bowl again and by tonight I should have the swirls done and the bowl back on top of the pitch so I can finish the undercutting and planishing - tomorrow.

Here is the first picture, and if you go to [Kernology](#), (opens in a new window) I currently have 14 pictures in a slide show, and you can see the progress so far. You can also click on the picture



Off to do some research on the dimensions of a pint glass. Get that beer cold and ready!

{ 4 comments... }

**Beth Wicker** 01.10.10 at 5:47 am

So you don't remove and reheat the pitch, and anneal the bowl as you go? I find that mine gets hard (pitch and metal), and must be redone much more often than that.... It would be great not to have to do that! How are you managing it?

Thanks for posting - I love repousse'!

**Laurie Jane Kern** 01.10.10 at 9:11 am

Beth,

I do have to remove the bowl, re-anneal the bowl and heat the pitch.

Over night it got too cold in the house and my pitch cracked with my first hammer strike - so heat the pitch, sink the bowl and then wait for cooling again.

Gosh, I wish there was a way to avoid this!!!

**Kerry Palumbo** 01.11.10 at 9:14 am

Laurie you are such an inspiration. As a beginner myself who loves chasing and repousse, I totally empathised with your fears and don't know if I would have had the courage to make that first hammer strike. I am still working on small scale items, but my goal for 2010 is to do a copper platter in the Northern Italian style. This will mean buying a lot more pitch. Please keep posting your adventures in repousse. It is a pleasure to feel I am not alone in my quest to learn this amazing technique.

Happy Hammering!

Kerry

**Laurie Jane Kern** 01.11.10 at 6:16 pm

Kerry, and where can we see pictures of YOUR chasing/repousse eh??

## Getting Dizzy!

*by LAURIE JANE KERN on JANUARY 10, 2010*

I spent more time yesterday and today working on my swirls bowl. Keeping track of which swirl I was on was hard so I resorted to using marking pens to indicate which one I had just finished. Then I would clean the ink off when I had done all three and just before I started the next round.

I did complete the repousse from the inside and most of the outside planishing and undercutting.

My quandary is what to do with the inside surface.

The bowl is a wee little thing - about 2.5 to no more than 3" in diameter and not even 2" in height. When you look at it, you are looking *in to* the interior of the bowl, the outside surface is really an after thought when looking at it.

I decided to add texture to the outside surface that was NOT the swirls to make the them stand out. I am now pondering doing the same on the inside. This will take a day or two to percolate through my brain..

Go over to [Kernology](#) to see more pictures, there are over 20 now posted, and tell me what you would do with the inside. [Please]



{ 3 comments... }

**arianargent** 01.11.10 at 12:01 pm

Don't do anything. Think of it as an upside-down bowl and make a mount for it.

Alternatively, you could enamel it, but that's a whole new ball game.

**Laurie Jane Kern** 01.11.10 at 6:13 pm

Oh don't get me started on enamel! I love the look and that might be next on the list but I think I should master raising/sinking and chasing/repousse first!

**Wendy Edsall-Kerwin** 01.25.10 at 10:38 am

Hah! I was thinking enamel too! I like the texture on the outside, but I think that the inside looks nice as is. You could always enamel it later ;^)

## Swirl-O-Rama IS Done!!!

by LAURIE JANE KERN on JANUARY 17, 2010

The swirl bowl is done, I took it out of the vibra-ora-tori-um this morning. ***It is amazing!***

I did send (another) email to NMC asking about how to finish the inside surface. I thought I would texture it similar to the outside, and she responded that it would be a good idea. BUT once I sat down to do it, I changed my mind. You see, while I was working on the bowl, I came to the realization I that I am intrigued by positive and negative space and I figured the texture on the inside - on the actual bowl surface, not the swirl, would complement the outside which I had textured.

I did decide to planish the bowl surface but not planish the swirl. This, I hoped, would make the bowl surface shinny on the inside, but 'matt' on the outside (since it had been textured). Then the swirl on the outside, having been planished

would also be shinny - thus illustrating the positive and negative space. (i should have textured the swirl on the inside but did not.)

I am now going to let the bowl develop a natural patina, which will take time and while this happens I am hoping to keep the outside swirl and the bowl surface on the inside shinny to emphasize the positive and negative space

In linear time, it took three weeks to do this - Of course there was the day job, sleeping, eating, and the actual repousse in there as well, it just illustrates that doing repousse takes time.

As for actual time here I estimate that I put in almost 30 hours of 'tapping time'. This does not include the 3 hours it took to make the bowl nor does it include the time for the pitch to cool and it does not include the time the bowl was in the pickle pot.

Below is a picture of the swirl bowl, all polished and pretty. Once again head over to [Kernology](#) to see the final pictures.

For reference, the bowl is 2.25" in diameter and 1" deep and it is in a 4" square tile, on our kitchen counter - so you can see how small the bowl is!



{ 2 comments... }

**richardcarew** 01.18.10 at 1:15 am

Very cool, I would love to see it with the patina on it.

Richard Carew AZopals.com

**Tamra** 01.18.10 at 5:14 am

LOVE it!!! Excellent work!

## Ode to a Work Bench

*by LAURIE JANE KERN on JANUARY 23, 2010*

Oh, workbench -

Oh, workbench!

My new love and joy

Thats all I have so far and my \*new\* workbench is still un-assembled, in its box, in the living room (which does not have any furniture but that is another story).

I have been pondering for months about what type of workbench to get. As I [wrote in April](#), I am using my sewing table as a work bench. It has its limitations - It is deep but not long; the table surface gives since it is not thick and heavy; I have a hole, covered with a board, where my sewing machine would go; and more.

Which is why I have been pondering getting a real workbench.

Of course we all lust after that [double wide oak workbench from Otto Frei](#) and then there is Valerie Heck who got a special [handmade workbench from her grandfather](#) (yes, we are all jealous of you Valerie, and if you go away, when you get home, that bench may be gone!)

We have a small workbench out in the garage that I have been using for my silversmithing - sinking, raising and annealing mostly, but with it being so cold I have not done anything all week out there. My husband even said I could get a basic bench when they are on sale and since I have used a workbench at some studios where I take classes I knew what size I might want but I honestly felt that the classic jewelers workbench I could afford was not big enough - and I mean big as in LONG.

I want a bench where I can have my stake holder at one end and a good vise at the other. In between I need a catch tray under the table top and some drawers. On top I want room for my pickle pot and room for the soldering and more so I am not always setting up and breaking down.

A few weeks ago I was at the Woodworking store in San Diego, I was buying some wooden balls for bouging. They had a great [workbench](#) there and it was long - a full 72" in length and 24" deep and the top was thick. I was in

love! Unfortunately it was over \$500 - even more than I would pay for a basic jewelers workbench. I almost bought it but did not, my quest would continue.

THEN last week I was at Harbor Freight in Escondido and saw this [workbench](#) - It was very similar to the one at the Woodworking store. Yes, I know, it is a knock off from China but it had big dimensions - 60" long by 20" deep with 4 drawers (which the other one did not have). This one was just under \$200. I went home, signed up for the sale coupons by email [they have a sale almost every week - trust me]. I was waiting for a 15% off any non-sale item.

That coupon appeared in my email in-box yesterday! And where do you think we went today? And this is why I have an unassembled workbench in the living room.

I am now making space in my office/workspace for it. I hope to do the assembly next weekend - I will post pictures then.

OH - WORKBENCH!!!!!!

{ 5 comments... }

**[Wendy Edsall-Kerwin](#)** 01.25.10 at 10:35 am

Your workbench is the most important part of your studio (for some) and I'm glad that you've found one that fits you! I ended up making my own to save money and to fit my requirements, and then I ended up making two more a year later! That one looks really nice. Happy metalsmithing :^)

**Jerry Fowler** 01.25.10 at 10:54 am

Your going to wait till next weekend! Your are much more patient than me, I couldn't wait that long. Congrats on the new bench and have fun with it.

**Laurie Jane Kern** 01.25.10 at 6:45 pm

I have to wait for next weekend as on Sunday (yesterday actually) I was already committed to an event and during the week “THE DAY JOB” takes over. But, like right now, I am spending the evenings cleaning and rearranging the office so the workbench will fit and the area is cleared for where it will go.

Thanks everyone!

**Naomi Catalano** 01.26.10 at 10:31 am

I so identify with the long search for a bench. I’ve been making do with a variety of odd tables, etc. Wendy — a question — I’ve been drawing up plans for a very basic work table, but do I need to use hardwood? I know a hard wood would be better, but can I get away with pine, or is that just too soft? What kind of wood did you use on your tables?

Congrats on the new table. Perhaps soon I will be writing an ode to my new workbench. Happy bench/happy, happy bench.

**Valerie Heck** 02.10.10 at 6:16 pm

Congrats on the new bench, I can’t wait to see what you create. Thanks for mentioning me! I haven’t started using the bench yet, my wonderful grandfather is going to help me set up a soldering station with ventilation and then the fun will begin!

## Back to Work (new workbench part 2)

by LAURIE JANE KERN on JANUARY 31, 2010

It took a week but I am back up and running.

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During the week I broke down the sewing table and just piled everything on the floor. I was able to then fold up the sewing table and roll it over to another wall. I then had to clean the floor as it had not been done in a while.

Here is a picture before... and yes I made all those mini-quilts hanging on the walls (there is a page of some of my quilts over on [Kernology](#) - I have made lots more but have not posted those pictures yet)



oh and I thought you would like to see how I am using a canvas shoe hanger for storing my hammers.



And while this what going on, my sweetie was assembling the workbench ....



Then we took it upstairs in sections and did the final assembly. We had some issues with the drawers when we first put them in but now they glide very smoothly.

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Here is the final set up. Notice the folded up sewing table on the right.



{ 4 comments... }

**[Beth Wicker](#)** 02.01.10 at 7:29 am

Love the shoe hanger idea... very neat. Interesting how many metal artists also were/are into fiber arts.... I also quilt! I know lots of folks who were/are knitters, or weavers, or sewers. Wonder if it is all about the textures and patterns? Love your little quilts too!

**[hansmeevis](#)** 02.01.10 at 7:47 am

Very nice. Some good work is going to come out of there, of that I am quite certain!

**[Laurie Jane Kern](#)** 02.01.10 at 10:09 am

Thanks to you both

Beth - I also knit AND weave and sew clothing in addition to the quilts as well as crewel/embroidery, some painting and Japanese Temari and Sashinko.

Hans - I just finished another repousse piece yesterday, so the good project are starting to flow! Pictures to be posted soon.

**Larry E. Whittington** 02.01.10 at 10:56 pm

My Mom has made many of these types of small quilts. Some were put into a museum at the University of Nebr. She is 92 and is still busy when she feels like it. I am not sure of what we will do with all the material she has that she will not get to finish using.

## The Wanton Wonton Cup

by LAURIE JANE KERN on FEBRUARY 3, 2010

On Saturday night I felt that I had to get back into the garage and raise some more copper. I could not do this in my office/studio as I still had some stuff on the floor. But since the forecast for Sunday was going to be warm, I could open the garage door and enjoy the weather too.

Sunday morning I pulled out a sheet of 18 gauge copper and on one edge there was a odd rectangle sticking out as a result of cutting off some copper from each other end. The piece was about 3" wide by 4" long and maybe two of the corners were close to 90 degrees and one end was a tad wider than the other. I was about to saw out a circle and decided not to. I was going to work with it odd square that it was.

From my studio I grabbed my newest T-stake, the thinner raising hammer, the planishing hammer and the copper and into the garage I went.

Anneal, clean, hammer, Round one done  
Anneal, clean, hammer, round two done  
Anneal, clean, hammer, round three done

Start planishing - wait, I think I want to do a wee bit more raising  
Anneal, clean, hammer, round 4 done  
NOW start the planishing.

Ohhhh! I like the hammer marks. Stop - don't use the planishing hammer just use the raising hammer gently. Hmm what to do on the inside?? Take the raising hammer and make some marks there too.

Now I am done!!

I filed the edges and did some polishing and on Monday night I saw Deb. She was very surprised and then stated that working with smaller vessels is hard. Hard? Difficult? I didn't think so. So we had a good laugh that boiled down to - IF you don't tell me these things how would I know; and then how would I know it should be hard.

I guess next time I should make sure I have a difficult time ;=) and of course over at [kernology](#) there are more pictures.



{ 6 comments... }

**Cliff Manthey** 02.04.10 at 4:16 am

Laurie,

Thank you so much for showing your Wonton Cup and your link to Kernology.

I will be reading more of your blogs your in my favorites.

Cliff

**arianargent** 02.04.10 at 8:41 am

Woodturners make shapes like that 😊

[http://okwoodturners.net/Images/2008/March/IMG\\_0099small.jpg](http://okwoodturners.net/Images/2008/March/IMG_0099small.jpg)

**Laurie Jane Kern** 02.04.10 at 1:40 pm

Arianagent:

What a pretty wood bowl - did you make it?

Cliff - Thanks and where can we see pictures of your work???

**Jerry Fowler** 02.04.10 at 2:19 pm

I like reading your excursions into metalsmithing, your right up there with Shelbyvision. Nice bowl.

**arianargent** 02.05.10 at 4:24 am

@LJK: No. I'd seen similar shapes in woodturners' galleries, so I went looking with Google Image Search.

**Jane Walker** 02.05.10 at 11:26 pm

how true the comment that if you don't KNOW something is supposed to be hard to do ... you find a way to do it and it isn't so hard after all!

Nice wee bowl!

## Super Bowl Challenge 2010 @ Halftime the Quarterback is Hurt

by LAURIE JANE KERN on FEBRUARY 6, 2010

For the past week or more I have been pondering my Super Bowl Challenge 2010 designed. While taking a breather from do analysis at work or while driving home, the ideas have been running through the brain.

One night this week, while watching the TV, I found my self playing with paper. I am folding, curving, cutting and I came up with a design that fits into my current thread of learning - what happens with different shapes of copper when you raise them.

I took my folded paper into my husbands office and asked him what the thought. We both saw a flower or a origami crane depending on how you looked at it. I was happy with it and now had my design idea.

I was going to raise a triangular piece of copper. I would use an equilateral triangle. This type of triangle is one where each angle is 60 degrees; as all the angles in a triangle always add up to 180 degrees. Trust me on this if you don't remember your geometry lessons. Using an equilateral triangle also meant that all sides would be the same length. I had not decided if I would have a flat or a rounded bottom. That would happen as I was working with the copper.

This morning I was up at 8 am and tracing my triangle on the copper. Because of the size of my copper sheet I had to first cut it down to size. The length of each side of the triangle was about 6.25 inches. Several saw blades later, it was cut out.

Time to set up the T-stake, get the hammers and anneal the copper. It was now around noon and I was presented with a dish of scrambled eggs for lunch! (He is such a sweetie!)

I traced a small circle in the middle and took out my sinking hammer and sandbag and sunk the center. The bottom would be round. Over the next two hours I was able to do two sets of raising and annealing.

Before I started the third set of raising, I felt the bottom needed some bouging. I took out a 2.5" diameter wood ball I have and.....

WHAM - the blood was everywhere. I had hit my right thumb and it did not hurt YET. I have no idea where my mind had gone cause I was certain that my fingers were not on the top of the copper. But some how that leather mallet with a lead insert came down, right on the edge of the nail and it pinched the skin at the tip of the finger. HELP!!.. HELP!! As I wrapped my thumb in a paper towel and went in to the kitchen. Out came the hydrogen peroxide, Band-Aids, Neosporin, and soap. Even washing it hurt ;=(((

So at half time the Quarterback is out with injuries and is sitting on the bench with a large dram of Scotch [It does have medicinal qualities]. I think tomorrow I will be able to finish it and then I will post my pictures.

## Super Bowl Challenge 2010 - Forfeiting the Game

by LAURIE JANE KERN on FEBRUARY 7, 2010

I was all set to work on my bowl this morning when over our coffee I was told "Take A Day OFF!!

I goofed off a bit of the morning but at around noon I went back to the copper and stakes but holding the copper with my right hand (with the hurt thumb) was hard. So I gave up.

Sorry folks -the Quarterback in on the injured list and the game has been forfeited. I

Even though I am not posting the pictures of the bowl I started yesterday, there are some great bowls over on the [flicker group](#) put up by Wendy at [Hammermarks](#)

My wonton cup and my mini-tear drop are my quarter-final entries.

L.

## Yin and Yang

by LAURIE JANE KERN on FEBRUARY 14, 2010

I don't know how I missed it but I never posted this. I think that when I smashed my thumb my brain went numb too!

But here it is now.

This is my Yin-Yang Medal. I decided to do this at the beginning of January as a good project for repousse. This is part of what I call my positive/negative space series - the other and only piece so far is the swirl bowl.



This was a good exercise as I had to use clay to make impressions of each side so I could make sure they were the same depth and shape.

There are just a few more pictures in the [Kernology Metals 2010](#) gallery

{ 3 comments... }

**arianargent** 02.21.10 at 3:24 am

What size is it?

**Laurie Jane Kern** 02.21.10 at 8:31 am

It is THREE inches in diameter

[Liza Nechamkin Glasser](#) 04.04.10 at 6:39 pm

Hi Laurie,

I was surfing around and found the nice comment you left on your blog about my tools. I am very happy that you were pleasantly surprised. Use them well.

All The Best,

Liza Nechamkin Glasser

## Arts & Crafts Style Trinket Tray

*by* LAURIE JANE KERN *on* FEBRUARY 20, 2010

Actually I think it might be more Art Nouveau but I will let you decided.

This tray was requested by Elisa of Scotland a few weeks ago. She wanted another tray to put her bling in, when she is washing dishes. Personally I don't think a person of her lineage should be doing dishes but maybe times are tough for her highness too.

Hmm, could this be why I have not gotten my Royal Warrant yet either? Maybe she let the calligrapher go?

The tray was "raised" about 4 weeks ago and then I was trying to finish the shape when I smashed my thumb - and thus all work stopped on this. The thumb is all healed now and even though the tray is not symmetrical and one wall is more vertical than the other, I got started on the chasing & repousse last week.

It took four attempts to get the curly-q's to the point where I was happy. I then thickened the lines, lined the design and then flipped the tray so I could start the repousse from the back. The tray is longer than the diameter of my pitch bowl and thus I had to fill the tray and build a platform of pitch to place the tray on.

[I have just bought a 8" diam shallow pitch pot]

Today I finish the tray, trimmed the walls, filed out the rough spots and it is now being cleaned. I will probably mail it to Elisa sometime next week. Maybe I will send some home grown lemons too (so they don't get scurvy this winter)



I am very happy with the results and I am thinking that “trinket trays” might be a product line - yes I am almost to the point where I want to make things to sell!

For more pictures visit the Metals 2010 page over at [Kernology](#).

{ 4 comments... }

**arianargent** 02.21.10 at 11:33 am

I suspect nobody who says “gotten” has a Rotal Warrant 😊

**arianargent** 02.21.10 at 11:34 am

Oops. s/Rotal/Royal

**Laurie Jane Kern** 02.21.10 at 11:47 am

hmmm? I spelled it correctly (even before you sent me these comments)

Maybe your browser has issues ;=)))

**arianargent** 02.22.10 at 10:55 am

Sorry. I wasn't commenting on your spelling.

The Rotal typo was of course mine.

I was trying to suggest, lightly, that those responsible for awarding Royal Warrants would think that "gotten" was an Americanism. I think "got" is the British equivalent, and even that is/was deprecated as a vulgarism.

I've gotten rich.

I got rich.

I became rich.

My browser (well, the website really) is forever complaining that I'm using NoScript.

## ONE Year!

*by* LAURIE JANE KERN *on* FEBRUARY 21, 2010

OMG!

My husband has reminded me that it was one year ago that I took my first silver class. Actually the first class was in January of 2009. This class was learning to solder and we made a simple bracelet with o-rings that we formed into hearts.

**BUT** it was in February that I took the class where I learned to make a silver mounted cab in a pendant. And from there it was no looking back.

I have saved most of the receipts from my purchases of silver, tools, equipment, classes, and such though I have not added them up and right now I don't want to know how much I have spent. One day when I am famous (ha!) and I need to insure the building I own with my studio and gallery, then I shall add it up.

In the mean time [today] I started to build my new website - yes I am going to start selling on-line.

## Helpful People

by LAURIE JANE KERN on MARCH 2, 2010

My journey continues and along the way I am finding some very helpful people.

Deb continues to answer my many emails with advice and feedback on my progress. I have connected with other metal smiths - I read their blogs, only to find out they read mine too!

Then, after my NMC chasing and repousse class, I worked on the swirl bowl. I had [blogged](#) about working on bowl that I had actually made. NMC then wrote back and located a source of spun copper bowls for me; this was so I could practice and no worry about making a mistake on form I had spent hours making [that's reserved for when you are more confident].

I did nothing with this information, for several weeks - almost a month to be exact.

Today I called Joan Schlaifer as [Schlaifer's Enameling Supplies](#), she was sooo helpful. I ordered some copper circles, ovals, a few low height trays and I asked about some forms that she did not have listed but I knew existed from a wholesaler. Joan told me that she could get them but it would take a few week. Hey, a few weeks I can live with vs. not getting them at all.

So this is a sort of "Pay it Forward" post - If you need some copper blanks, shapes or (spun/stamped) copper surfaces at a great price; OR you do enameling PLEASE Call JOAN!!!

## On the Event Horizon

*by LAURIE JANE KERN on MARCH 16, 2010*

I has been over a week or two since I last posted - sorry about that - too all of you who follow my adventures.

If you know what an 'Event Horizon' is - then I commend you; if you don't, well most people don't so you should not feel bad. In either case, a real event horizon is that point where.. well you can read about it [here](#)

But for me, it is a tipping point between too much work and not enough play; too many things to do and then accomplishing nothing; sanity and madness. There is so much going on at the day job at the moment that I spend most of weekends just de-stressing and catching up on the things that are not getting done during the week. I have so many metal projects I want to work on that I can decide which to do and thus I seem to get nothing done.

**BUT DO NOT FEAR** - I have had some time to finish a necklace and a raised vessel which I hope to post pictures of soon.

{ 2 comments... }

**Jerry Fowler** 03.17.10 at 2:10 pm

Please don't get pulled into a Black Hole, one has a very difficult time recovering from such an event. I do so enjoy reading your adventures in metalsmithing.

**Laurie Jane Kern** 03.17.10 at 5:05 pm

Jerry - thanks.

You know it takes "forever" to get out of a black hole ;=)))

## Sweet nothings and (more) presents on my doorstep

by LAURIE JANE KERN on MARCH 18, 2010

Two or Three weeks go, my husband came into the bedroom to wake me up for work (he gets up earlier and makes the coffee). He then whispered into my ear.....

"I bought you some chasing tools from Otto Frei".....

My reaction: Well I was instantly awake but then I groaned: "Nooooooooooooooooo!, I have a set of tools from [Mettleworks](#) and I am taking that tool class, you know - Metals Week in Idyllwild. I don't need any more tools without looking at them first"

His response - "But these look really good, nice soft edges... and they were on special and had only six sets."

Me: "OK, what ever, I will look at them once I get to work" The order was placed, what could I do?

So, off to work I went and at around 9 am I got onto the Otto-Frei website and went looking for these special tools. And what did you think I found? Not the Grobet set, not the budget set from India but the new [Nechamkin Chasing Tools Set](#). And at this point there were only TWO sets left and by 10 am, I checked, they were all gone!

And they looked GORGEOUS. I had to call and thank my sweetie. I have been using them since they arrived.

Then this Monday, once again my sweetie came in to wake me up and whispered into my ear: “The rolling mills are on sale at Otto Frei.”

I was awake, instantly - “Oh really, can we get me one???” I was bouncing around like a little puppy. I would love the [Durston D4-158 Stacked](#) rolling mill, who wouldn't; but reason and dollar signs took over and shoved lust out of the way. I settled on mill that does just sheet so I can get a full 6 inches of width, as buying sheet has a large manufacturing/processing cost that wire does not have. And since I can recast my scrap, making sheet seemed the best buy. So I asked for the [Pepe Platinum F130 mm](#)

Today it arrived. YIPPEEEEE. but it is still in it's box, by the front door. That sucker is heavy.

We are going to set it up over the weekend and come up with a name for it.

And no we can't wait to make pasta on it ;=)

{ 3 comments... }

**Jerry Fowler** 03.19.10 at 4:41 pm

How nice to be loved! I have been saving for Pepe <http://www.ottofrei.com/store/product.php?productid=8952&cat=1821&page=1> from the boys at Otto Frei for some time but something always comes up to take my savings away. Have fun with the new toys.

**John Dyer** 03.21.10 at 8:51 am

Sounds like that husband of yours is a real keeper!

**Jewelry Making Tools** 03.29.10 at 1:20 pm

How sweet! I hope it works wonderfully for you.

## Recent Projects

by LAURIE JANE KERN on MARCH 19, 2010

I just posted a few pictures of three things I have recently finished.

Go have a look at the [Metals 2010 page](#).

Project 1) The necklace was made using scrap silver that I cast into an ingot, then rolled out and roller printed. I then had to saw, file and drill each square so I could mount them on the chain I had made. I made a set of earrings and a bracelet at the end of 2009 that are of the same style but I never got around to doing anything with the rest of the silver. Mary N help me come up with the design of hanging the squares off of the chain. I was a great idea cause this looks really good when worn with a turtle neck sweater.

Project 2) This is a repousse sample I made as a test to see how the designs would look. I plan to use these in some of the trinket trays I make (coming soon to my yet to be finished *other* website)

Project 3) Glider - this started as triangle of flat copper. I had some problems because I did not have the right size stake when I started. A new one was acquired and then it came into shape really easy. I did not plan on it looking like a Glider or a gull wing; I just go where the metal takes me and this is what I ended up with.

It is similar to my [Wanton-Wonton](#) cup, yes I know.

Currently, I am also raising what started as a 6" diameter disk - I have a good base and the sides are at a pretty vertical angle but I want to get the sides to come in more. I am taking this one slow and hope to have it finished in another week or two.

[P.S. - my project ran through testing today and it looks like it will get pushed to the production servers next week. I have been able to fire my after burners and avoid getting sucked into that black hole!]

{ 2 comments... }

**Diane** 03.25.10 at 10:39 am

Looks like you are having so much fun. I was amused by this comment: "I just go where the metal takes me..." I think many artists would agree that the media often tells you what it needs to be. The marriage of the engineer and artist in you is interesting.

**Laurie Jane Kern** 03.31.10 at 11:53 am

Diane, it's not a marriage - it is a weird genetic anomaly

## Quick Post

by LAURIE JANE KERN on MARCH 31, 2010

First - I have not set up the rolling mill - YET!

Between work, class on monday nights, a class at Farrin O' last saturday and a raising class this saturday with deb. Not much else gets done.

Well this is what happens.

The rolling mill just sits there looking rather forlorn, still in the plastic wrapper, in the hall way, quietly cooing: "Ohh, I know you want to turn my gears!"

Actually it says: "Here I am are you going to ignore me for-EVER!" as I stub my toe on it!

So I have to:

1. Post pictures from the cuttle bone casting class (last weekend)
2. Post pictures of my new forged pin and earrings - I'm thinking of calling it **Glacier**
3. Post pictures of the item I am raising and will be working on with deb - this saturday
4. Get the rolling mill set up [still no name has come to me]

## The Apple of My Eye

by LAURIE JANE KERN on APRIL 4, 2010

Yesterday I had busy plans for my self. I was going to anneal a bunch of copper and get it in the pickle; work on my large vessel; put up pictures of the cuttle casting class last week; and more.

Why?

I was also waiting for my iPad to arrive. [yes I am an "apple fanboy" - if a girl can be one]. I am a geek, tech head, and so much more. I even write software for fun! So when they went on sale I did pre-order one the first day.

All week I have been tracking the package via UPS [they gave very few updates] and yesterday morning it was listed as being in Ontario California where UPS lands their planes for the region. This is 60+ miles from where I live. The iPad was going to arrive **sometime** during the day - YIPEEEEE. And thus the various little tasks I was going to do to keep myself occupied.

The door bell rang at 10:30 am while I was having my first cuppa coffee and thus nothing else got done for the remainder of the day. IT was iPad all day and until 1:00 am this morning.

IT IS GORGEOUS.

I am now off to do the annealing I did not do yesterday and I will hopefully get a post up this week on the cuttle casting class.

## Earthquake!

*by LAURIE JANE KERN on APRIL 4, 2010*

OH - MY- GOSH! WEeeeeeee - a real roller, I felt like I was on a boat!

We just had a big earthquake and it shook for a long time!

It was a 6.9 down in Baja - That's 150 miles from here but you could tell by the duration of the rolling and shaking that this was no small event. There was a

gradual lead in where you just felt things vibrate, then the rolling and movement but no hard shaking and finally another long drawn out vibration.

The chotchies of Wallace & Gromit on my desk did fall over ;=)

You can see the details from the USGS are [here](#) - at the bottom of the map is a big square representing the size. The color changes from Red (within the hour of the event) to blue and yellow as time passes.

And look there was a good sized one north of the bay area.

So if you click on the square, you can find out more about it, if you are into this sort of thing.

So, who else felt it??

[Updated at 10:00 pm : the quake has been upgraded to a 7.2 and there have been all sort of after shocks and associated earthquakes since then. It is almost as good as being at Disneyland]

## Cuttle (Fish) Bone Casting

*by LAURIE JANE KERN on APRIL 11, 2010*

This is a class that Mary and I took at Farrin O'Conner the weekend of March 24. The class was taught by Carl Stanly who also taught the Fold Forming Class I participated in [you can read about it here ].

Mary drove to my house and then I drove us to Pasadena. We arrived in time to do some browsing in the shop before class started.

We began the class with Carl showing us the sample ring he had made. Then we proceeded to go outside and prep and sand our cuttle fish bones.

Every step of the way, Carl gave detailed instructions and demo's - which was great since none of us had worked with cuttle bone before.

After cleaning up the bones, we designed our rings, carved the shape into the bone, and then moved onto melting and casting our rings. Mary and I both used scrap silver we had so we did not have to purchase any casting grain. There were only two stations set up for casting and most people had never done this before and so Carl did the casting for almost everyone.

As for me, I did my own pour but I wanted Carl to watch me in case I did anything wrong I have only cast ingots and so casting a ring in an cuttle bone, in my mind was a bit different. Guess what, it's not!

The ring came out great; but it is rather "BIG" - so I am still deciding if I want to recast it or finish it by mouting a cab and wearing it as a pendant.

After we finished casting, everyone else worked in their rings but no one really finished theirs as there was just too much to do.

I, instead, tried to cast some Shibuishi - I don't have an oxygen set up at home and Farrin does, so I thought I would use the opportunity to cast some ingots. In the end, got a reasonable sized ingot but I was having pour issues. The problem was that the torch was not large enough to keep the melt hot and the crucible was a bit too small for the amount being casted and this too added to the heat issue.

You can see the pictures from the class and their descriptions by following this link to my [kernology classes 2010 page](#) (link opens in a new window)



{ 1 comment... }

**Diane** 04.16.10 at 5:47 pm

Great video of your cuttle bone casting. What fun. I want to see the finished product.

Diane

## Metal Clay

by LAURIE JANE KERN on APRIL 21, 2010

I have a HATE - Love relationship with metal clay.

Probably 18 months ago I took a class at Sha-Sha Bead Spa (in San Diego) to learn about silver metal clay. At that time I was just starting to work with chains, silver, and making jewelry and I thought the class would add to my learning.

After this first class I bought some basic tools, a hand torch, a couple of books, some more clay and I went home to play and make silver things. I also spent time experimenting using my gas stove to sinter my pieces in lieu of a kiln or hand held torch.

I had such a wonderful time in the first class that I signed up for a second one which was an introduction to enameling with (silver) metal clay.

I really only made a few items - a few charms and some key fobs. I desired to make other items and all I found myself doing was making a mess of me and wasting the clay; which is not cheap by any means. I thought that I needed more instruction but at the time, I just put it all away and eventually moved on.

Now, in the SDCC class I take with Deb, she said the focus of the 2nd half of the Spring term, would be metal clay - copper and bronze [silver clay was just too expensive these days to start with].

I decided to give metal clay another try.

In each class Deb shows us how to work with the clay; how to shape and form it; how to fire it with a torch or in a kiln; make a mold to texture or copy a shape; how to make hollow forms; I find it interesting and not that complicated to comprehend

Now, after 4 weeks, I am giving up and admitting defeat. Why?

a) I find it a very frustrating material to work with .

b) I really don't want to make jewelry or components to be used in jewelry; though at some point I can see myself using metal clay to make components to be applied to my vessels - but not right now.

c) I am still making a mess and when it comes down to it

I "get" raising; sinking; chasing and repousee - I can see these things in my head. I don't have this connection with metal clay

**It is time to move on.**

{ 8 comments... }

**Jerry Fowler** 04.21.10 at 4:38 pm

Let me see if I got this right, you are a silversmith not a goldsmith. You don't make doodads to be held in the hand or at least objects no bigger than your fist that are to be for adornment of the human body. You are a maker of larger objects that form and define volume larger than the fist or at least give the allusion of that. I get it you like to hammer!

**Laurie Jane Kern** 04.21.10 at 5:32 pm

YUP!

It ties in with the name of the blog, don't you think? [Adventures of an Aspiring Silversmith] Some times it just takes a bit longer for some of us to acknowledge what we are and are not.

**[Helen Hill](#)** 04.22.10 at 2:32 am

I personally think you're way past the metal clay stage of metalworking Laurie. It seems to me to be a medium used in many cases by folks who are afraid of soldering (generally speaking). Obviously, there are some people out there doing wonderful work with metal clay and I'm not trying to put them down in any way. But you obviously have a love of working actual metal and a feeling for how it behaves. I think that for what you want to achieve, actual fabrication methods would be much more satisfactory. Just my personal opinion though.

**Laurie Jane Kern** 04.22.10 at 6:13 am

Helen,

I had not thought of it that way so ..

Thanks for putting it in those terms

**[Anne Bellissimo](#)** 04.22.10 at 6:59 am

Thanks for sorting it out so nicely. I love metal clay (haven't tried copper) and will always use it for narrative jewelry where texture and contrast are prime considerations. I am also picking up (trying hard) conventional (read classic) skills because nothing can replace the metalworking basics which can be used for many types of arts/crafts. Metal clay has its own discipline—more intuitive and less logical than sheet metal until it is fired. Thanks for your blog—it's one of the few I follow.

**Jerry Fowler** 04.22.10 at 1:39 pm

When one comes to jewelry through the back door so to speak by way of blacksmithing I found it difficult to play with the clay, I wanted to hit it. Like Helen has said there are great works being done by the clay artists but when you feel more at home with a hammer in your hand you are not one to trifle with clay between your finger tips.

LJK, I hope that your love affair with hammer, fire and metal continue for many years to come and they bury you with a hammer in your hand.

**[Helen Hill](#)** 04.25.10 at 2:45 am

I think it's all about taking the right road, and for some people, metal clay IS the right road, but considering what you do Laurie, and your obvious talent and feel for the hard stuff (metal), it may have been a brief wrong turning - but you seem to have found the right road (for you) now! 😊

Besides which, metal clay is more expensive to use than actual metal, and it's more a molding process, and as Jerry points out, you have a love affair with the hammer.

**Ellie Silk** 04.29.10 at 5:22 am

I have been a working silversmith for over 40 years, in the late 90's I was given the opportunity to work with PMC and didn't like it. Yes, it was new and exciting to try it out but it just didn't appeal to me. Several years pass by and a very good friend suggested I take a class in PMC and I "hemmed and hawed" and decided to give the new clay a try. It was if magic lived within the clay and 2 weeks later I was a certified artisan. Yes, I was hooked, I loved the ways I could texture my pieces and have the ability to quickly make duplicate copies. I set up a group from my enameling friends and taught them how to use the clay. We had a lot of fun and they used their pieces to enamel on them. I have not forgotten that I am a silversmith and I use my hammer more gently and still have a lot of fun. I look forward to using textured copper and bronze with my hammered pieces. I am a silversmith and a metal clay enthusiast.

## Ripples Vessel

by LAURIE JANE KERN on MAY 9, 2010

**Dimensions:**

**Height** - varies from 4" to 5"

**Diameter** - 2" at the base, 6" at the rim



**List of Materials:**

12" diameter 18 gauge copper disk

Pickle

quenching water

**List of Tools:**

2 T-Stakes

2 Raising hammers

1 Planishing hammer

Torch

Brass brush

2 buckets- at least 9" deep and 12" in diameter - one for the quenching water, one for the pickle

**Instructions:**

1) HAMMER

2) Anneal

3) Clean

4) repeat from item one as many times as required to get desired shape

5) Planish

6) File edges

7) Polish

**Estimated Time to Complete:**

Who knows - depends on what you are making.

**Actual time:**

18 hours of hammering over 8 weeks. This does not include the annealing and cleaning time. Oh and lets not forget the time asking Deb questions.

For more pictures follow this link to [Kernology](#) [the link will open a new window, as usual]

{ 2 comments... }

[Luba](#) 05.10.10 at 3:18 am

Thanks for sharing, sounds interesting.

**Jerry Fowler** 05.10.10 at 5:18 pm

Very nice work! I always enjoy reading your blog, so thanks for the adventures in fine metalsmithing.

## Call For STUDENTS [teachers are provided]

by LAURIE JANE KERN on MAY 11, 2010

This is a open call for students who still want to attend Metals Week at the Idyllwild Summer Arts Program in Idyllwild California.

Metals Week is from June 27 through July 1, 2010

**THERE ARE STILL SPACES AVAILABLE!!!.**

Background:

Deb, my metals mentor, organizes and is one of the instructors at this wonderful event. Last night, during class while she was reviewing my Ripples Vessel; Deb mentioned that there were still spaces available and would I be so kind as to give it a shout out on my blog.

So here we are!

I was going to write about all the advantages of taking not only a class but immersing yourself for an entire week BUT [Wendy at Hammermarks](#) has just written a post about the advantages and extra benefits of taking a class - use this [link](#) to read about it.

Now that you understand the benefits of taking a class, let me tell you about the classes and teachers for this year at Metals Week:

The Adventurous Silversmith Blog History Blogging for those who aspire to be a silversmith

- Etching - Deborah E. Love Jemmott
- Forging Neck Collars, Pendants & Slides - Fred Zweig
- Resin Inlay - Karen Christians
- Sculpted Bezels & Non-Traditional Stone Settings - Pauline Warg
- Trapping Found Objects - Joanna Gollberg
- Tool Making & Alterations - Val Link

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDE

- An exhibition of faculty work at the Parks Exhibition Center with an opening reception on Monday evening
- A Faculty slide show and lecture
- A potluck dinner where you can visit with the instructors and the other students enrolled in Metals Week
- An end-of-the-week student exhibition where all the work produced during the week will be displayed

Each day the schedule is as follows:

|             |                            |
|-------------|----------------------------|
| 9-Noon      | Workshop                   |
| Noon-1pm    | Lunch                      |
| 1-4 pm      | Workshop                   |
| 4:30-5:30pm | Inter-class Open Studios   |
| Evenings    | Lectures, Activities, Etc. |

As for where to stay and eat, you can either make arrangements to stay in a dorm room on campus or stay in town and lunch is provided each day as part of the tuition and you can also purchase a meal plan to cover breakfast and dinner if you don't want to fend for yourself.

Think of it - a week of classes, events and smoozing with some amazing teachers and fellow students will be there. I know for a fact that several other Southern

California metal artists (I use that term to encompass a wide variety of materials and methods) will be there.

Beside you would get to meet ME, this is my blog after all! [BTW, I will be in the tools class]

Use [this link to read all about it](#) at their website. You can also download the Adult Course Catalog and registration form from the site. **IF** you have questions you can call 951-659-2171 x2365 and speak to Diane Dennis who is the Registrar for the summer program.

**Hope to see you there!**

## Bzzzy, Bzzzy Bzzy as a beeeeeeeeeeee!

*by LAURIE JANE KERN on MAY 26, 2010*

I have been so busy at work for the past two weeks that I come home at night and have no desire to work on anything! It is: have a nice tot of scotch (single highland malt of course), watch some television and off to bed early.

I did start another trinket tray about 3 weeks ago - it is in the pitch pot, lined and the repousse has been started and now it must come out of the pitch pot, even though it is not to the point where it needs to be annealed.....

WHY??

Because this weekend I shall be attending a FOUR DAY workshop with Nancy Megan Corwin YIPEEEEEEE

My tools are assembled and I have some ideas in my book in case we are told to come up with a design. With four days, I can't imagine all the information and techniques we will learn; let alone make.

Several people from the class back in [December](#) will also be attending and my friend Mary will be taking it as a beginner, along with a few others.

It should be lots of fun and of course, I will post Lots o' pictures next week.

## Nancy Megan Corwin Workshop - The Sequel (Day 1)

*by LAURIE JANE KERN on JUNE 5, 2010*

Over the Memorial Day weekend, Nancy Megan Corwin returned to San Diego for another workshop. I attended the [first workshop back in December 2009](#) which was only 2 days and gave me a great start on my skills. This workshop was FOUR days and I was able to complete the project I had set for myself and then some but I was a very tired puppy Monday night when I got home.

Each of the four days, Megan gave demonstrations in the morning and the afternoon that lasted from 15 minutes to just under an hour and the remaining time during the day was spent working on the technique presented in the demo or on our personal project/goals. For example, we had demo's on tool making which I watched, but because I am in the tools class at Metals Week with Val Link, I only made a brass undercutting tool but I did not grind a tool nor did I hot forge a tool.

Besides me, two other students in this workshop (there was a total of 10) also attended the first workshop with Megan back in December - Michael from Chicago and Elizabeth from Oberlin. There was another student had previously

taken a workshop with Valentin Yotkov, my friend Mary and Terri who were beginners and the remaining students were at other skill levels so there was a wide range experience.

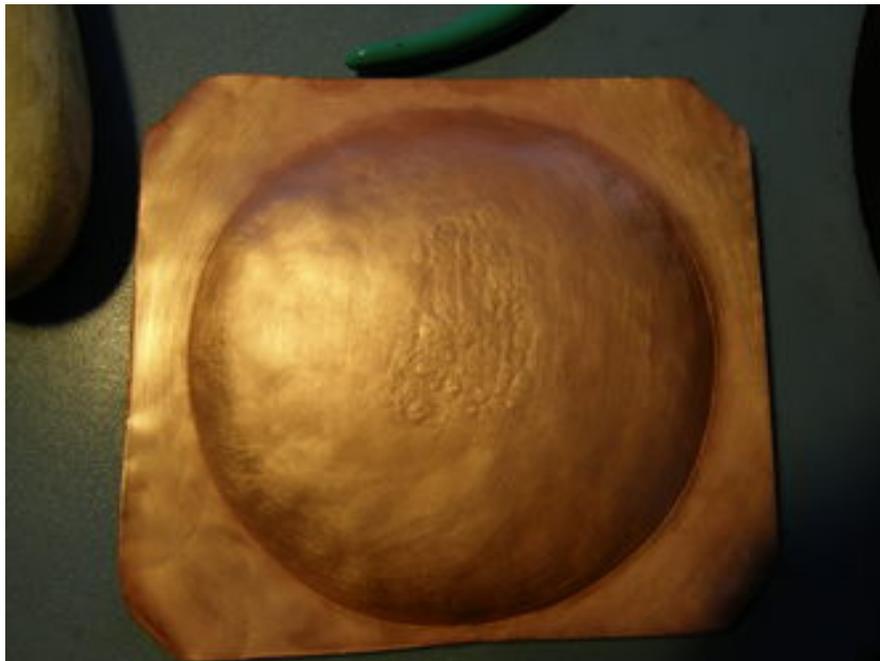
In the last workshop Megan had also brought along many pieces she has made or collected. Some of the items she made were completed or there were multiples of them all at various stages of the process so she could show us this progression. This time Megan also had a new piece - a small vessel by David Huang and we all lusted after it - literally and I think I spoke for everyone when I said that if she turned her back too long, it would be gone!

I brought several of my completed pieces so I could get some feedback from Megan on my technique. This was important because just sending pictures to Megan only allows her to see what I have taken a picture of; by looking at the entire piece she could see and point out where areas were good and others still need work. I have to admit that several of the pieces I had not look at since "I finished them" - and as I handed them to Megan I looked and could see areas where I had missed under cutting, and in places the lining was not even. One of the pieces I asked Megan to look at with her critical eye was my [Swirl bowl](#). Yes, there were many little fixes to be done but despite these being pointed out, Megan said it was very good and that she liked it - she liked it so much she wanted it. Oh - gosh, now what do I do? Do I give it to her, ask for money - ask what she would like to buy it for; ask for a trade because having one of her pieces would be great but it would certainly be worth waaaaayyy more than my piece. I had to think and ponder, so I let it stew in my brain for another day or two.

As mentioned in a previous post, I have a set of the [Nechamkin tools](#) . On Lisa's website, she has a texture wheel that was made with the tools in this basic set. My goal for the workshop was to work on surface textures using these basic tools -

not texturing tools made specifically for texturing. I thought I would use Lisa's texture wheel as my inspiration and see what I could do. I spent most of Day 1 making a circular shallow dome, not a hemisphere, on which to do my textures. In the afternoon of the first day, Mary and I took a break and went to the [Chocolat](#) shop on the corner. You could stand there and try each and every flavor they had, all 16-20 of them. I settled on combo of the dark chocolate and pistachio - it was wonderful and some of the best I have ever had. YUMMY. After 4:00 pm, 8 of us took a side field trip to the [Taboo Studio](#) where I saw some amazing work; spoke to one of the owners; and she gave us post cards from prior shows. After visiting the gallery we went out to dinner and I did not get home until 10-ish and my husband wanted to hear all about the day and I was in bed and snoring an hour later.

Here is a picture of my sampler at the end of the day. And of course, go read the [next post about day two](#) and you can view all my pictures at [Kernology](#)



## Nancy Megan Corwin Workshop - The Sequel (Day 2)

by LAURIE JANE KERN on JUNE 5, 2010

This is the second post about the workshop. To read the prior posts use this link:  
[Day 1 post](#)

Day 2 - Saturday and we started again at 9:00 am everyone talked about the first day, how tired they were when they got home - there was such a high energy! We started the day with a demo and a show-N-tell where we all brought in pieces we had previously done. It was great to see other peoples work and even a few piece they had purchased. Then we got to work and I flipped my domed copper over, I scribed a small circle in the middle and then divided the larger circle into 8 segments. Each of the 8 segment and in each one, I would do a different technique. After doing the lining, I started my textures. The first three segments were all done from the front side: Arts & Crafts planish, Concrete and Fur. The fourth texture started on the front with lining, then I had to flip the copper over so I could do some repousse and then I flipped it over again so I could add the final textures - I called this wood but I think it looks more like sargasso seaweed. While working on my textures, there was a large amount of sharing between everyone: how did you make that, what tool did you use (Megan brought many of her tools which we could also use on our work, though I did my best to only use my tools when doing a texture); where did you get the inspiration for that; and much more! Of course in the afternoon there was another trip to the gelato store and after class I stayed again, to go to dinner with Mary, Terri and Elizabeth. I was home and a sleep around 10 pm.

At one point Megan talked about purchasing tools and mentioned the tool set made and [sold by Liza](#). I spoke up and told how my husband had bought me the set and that I had it with me. There were looks of envy all around the room and Megan who knows Liza had not even seen them! They were passed around the

room and Megan asked if she could try them to which I agreed. That night just before I went home, I put them on Megan's bench for her to use and the next morning she gave her seal of approval. Personally I think there should be one or two other tools included in the set such as an under cutter and a sheep foot planisher for working on side walls as this would make the set more complete as a starter.

Towards the end of the day, a friend of Megan's arrived so they could go to dinner, it was Helen Shirk!

We had done a show-N-Tell earlier in the day and some of my vessels were on the table still because some of the other students wanted to take pictures. Well, Helen arrived and I guess she asked Megan who's vessels they were and I was called over and I was introduced to Helen who then asked about them and where I had learned to do raising. I stated that I was still learning but I was taking private lessons from 'Deb Jemmott'. Helen said: "Oh, she was one of my students". Helen also said that I was doing very good work!

For more pictures, go to [Kernolgy](#) and you can see all the pictures I posted, which are more than I have shown here. Use this link to read about Day 3

Texture Wheel Day 2 from the inside



## Nancy Megan Corwin Workshop - The Sequel (Day 3)

*by* LAURIE JANE KERN *on* JUNE 5, 2010

This is the third post about the workshop. To read the prior posts use these links:

[Day 1](#), [Day 2](#) (all links will open in a new window)

Day 3 - Sunday and I was getting tired. I promised myself to NOT go out to dinner that get a good nights sleep.

I did make a brass under cutter tool after Megan demonstrated the process. I still have some work to do on the tool as it needs to have a shallower angle between the tip of the tool and the body but the basic shape is there.

I continued to work on my textures with most of these actually being started from the back. Textures 5, 6, and 7 are: Deep Curves, Waves, Long Lines.

By 4:00 pm I had ALMOST finished my piece and just before I went home, I went into my toolbox and pulled out my little swirl bowl. I had made the decision to give it to Megan. That's right - GIVE IT TO HER. Several factors weighed into this decision:

a) The bowl was small and even though it took me several days of on and off work to make (sinking and the chasing and repousse), it was not a huge piece that I had spent months working on, so I could make myself another one;

b) The bowl is one of my first pieces I made after the first class with Megan. I had emailed her a few times and she really helped me and continues to do so, thus as a show of thanks and appreciation it was the right thing to do!

c) Again the bowl was one of my first pieces and despite its faults as mentioned earlier, Megan said she liked it- she then mentioned that she likes small items.

So I walked over to her workbench and placed it before her and said she could have it - she was actually surprised that I had given it to her. When I got home, I told my husband and he agreed that it was the nice and right thing to do! [So you never know, you might be in one of Megan's workshops and she will hold up this little swirl bowl and tell you how a student of hers made it!]

Use this [link to read about Day 4](#) and You can view all my pictures at [Kernology](#).

Texture Wheel Day 3



## Nancy Megan Corwin Workshop - The Sequel (Day 4)

by LAURIE JANE KERN on JUNE 5, 2010

This is the fourth post about the workshop. To read the prior posts use these links:

[Day 1](#), [Day 2](#), [Day 3](#) (all links will open in a new window)

Day 4 - Monday and it was our last day. Megan started with a demo of HOT forging tools and she held up a large diameter piece of tool steel and said she was going to use it to make me a tool.

That's right folks, I was getting a tool, a big - fat - pusher made by Megan in return for giving her the swirl bowl. WOW! To say I was on cloud nine the rest of the day is an understatement. Megan has a BIG fat pusher that everyone was using and lusting after so here is a picture of it and I was getting a similar but

slightly smaller version of it (there are more pictures of this tool on Kernology from different angles).



While everyone was making hot forged tools, and there were some nice ones being made, I finished my texture wheel. And for texture 8 I ended with a moon scape. This last one was not I had in mind but I ended up cracking the copper and I then turned a mistake into a design element

Once that was done, I worked on making a custom bezel cup for a cab I had cut. This technique was discussed at the last workshop and is used as the starting point of the gypsy setting ring shown in Megan's book. I did not finish this - yet, but hope to this weekend. I spent the rest of the time taking pictures and in some ways relaxing. At the end of the workshop we all shared and displayed what the had worked on for the past few days, discussed where we want to go next, when was Megan going to come back. We also talked about starting a small group where we would meet maybe a few times a year and work and share and we tossed some names around like Talk & Tap, Bang & Banter and that maybe we would meet at Jay's studio. We hope to get this going in the fall.

And finally -

Lesson Learned: Go look at your “finished” piece a week later and use a critical eye; you will see the things you missed or need a tweak. THEN FIX THEM.

Lesson Learned: Gelato, every afternoon at 2:00 pm is a great way to take a break from your work.

Lesson Learned: If you really, really, really, really want to keep a piece - DON'T SHOW IT TO OTHERS cause they might make you an offer you can't refuse!

Lesson Learned: Be willing and open to share your work, you never know what you will get in return.

### My Finished Texture Wheel



{ 3 comments... }

**arian** 06.06.10 at 11:33 am

Oh well, I'd never heard of gelato before :).

Thanks for taking the time to tell us about the workshop.

**Wendy Edsall-Kerwin** 06.22.10 at 10:30 am

Oooo, I love your texture wheel and I want one of my own! Maybe I should take a day and just work on chasing textures, that could be fun. And gelato is always a nice break ;^)

**Laurie Jane Kern** 06.22.10 at 11:19 am

Wendy,

Thanks - IMHO one must eat Gelato while making a texture wheel or at least afterward.

## You know summer has arrived when.....

*by LAURIE JANE KERN on JUNE 11, 2010 ·*

The San Diego County Fair [called the Del Mar Fair by many] opens, which is tonight.

And the opening of the fair means that I will be working at the Volunteers For Mineral booth in the Hall of Gems & Minerals.

The Volunteers have teamed up with the Fallbrook Gem & Mineral Society again to sell: rocks, gems and fossil specimens; books; jewelry; grab bags; and other goodies to benefit the Fallbrook club.

In the past I have worked every Saturday but this year I am only working two Saturdays because I am heading off to Metals Week at the end of the month.

What days will I be working? I am in the booth Saturday June 12 & June 19 from 10:00 am to 4:30 pm. So if you are in the area, please stop by and say hi, I would love to meet you!

The fair runs through the 4th of July

## Getting Ready for Metals Week

*by* LAURIE JANE KERN *on* JUNE 22, 2010 ·

Saturday I am heading up to the mountains for Metals Week at the Idyllwild Summer Arts Program in Idyllwild California.

For me, it will only be a little over an hour to drive there and I am ready to go now.

The tool box is packed with all sorts of hack saws, hammers, sand paper, general tools, my camera and note book. I am taking the tools class with Val Link and we will be making tools for chasing and repousse and other textures. I sent an email to Val a week ago and asked if there would be time for me to attempt modifying an existing hammer and change the striking face to one I want. Val replied yes!

Why do I want to modify a hammer?

Every silversmith should know how to make their own tools - not just chasing and repousse tools but they should know how to make hammers and stakes.

I don't think I should tackle making stakes or even modifying one until I can make/modify hammers. We all have to start somewhere and now it is time for me to start learning this as well.

But the real reason is because there is this certain hammer that Deb has in her shop which I would like to have and after weeks of searching, I can not find it for

## The Adventurous Silversmith Blog History Blogging for those who aspire to be a silversmith

sale anywhere. The hammer does not have a makers name on it and Deb does not remember where or when she acquired it.

The hammer in question has a rectangular face but has a double curve on the striking face - the face is curved not only from the top to the bottom like a forging hammer but it also has a curve across the face. Here's the kicker, this hammer is not used for forging, it is used for sinking. This hammer will allow me to make a circular or oval flat bottomed tray with a side wall. By striking along a line which delineates the bottom from the wall, this hammer will sink and bend the wall upwards.

I also found out that there will be a silent auction that helps fund the program and we were asked to donate something. I have a silver chain bracelet and matching earring I will donate or a small bowl that I am currently working on - it all depends on me finishing it by Saturday.

So SIX days to go!

{ 2 comments... }

**[Fred Zweig](#)** 06.22.10 at 6:39 pm

Laurie Jane,

Please introduce yourself at Idyllwild. I look forward to meeting you.

Best,

Fred

**Laurie Jane Kern** 06.23.10 at 6:27 am

Fred,

I certainly will. I look forward to seeing the results of your class too!

## Day one is almost over

by LAURIE JANE KERN on JUNE 27, 2010

What a day so much information!

We made our forges and pounded on tool steel. Now we are about to see a slide show of the instructors work. Got to go more tomorrow and the full story and pictures to follow when I get home on Saturday

{ 1 comment... }

**Bentiron** 06.28.10 at 10:34 am

Moving right along with forging your own tools now, alright! You know that having a forge and anvil will lead to other things. Better watch out or you will become a blacksmith rather than a silversmith. Working hot steel is very addictive. Take a look at <http://www.iforgeiron.com>

Happy smithing no matter the metal!

## Day 2 done, starting Day 3

by LAURIE JANE KERN on JUNE 29, 2010

Yesterday I finished the first two tools - a straight liner and a curved liner. I had done the hot forging- that's hammering with a big 2 pound hammer and anvil, on Sunday.

And thanks to Elisa, I now have the "Anvil Chorus" running around in my head!

Monday was all about filing and sanding to the correct shapes. I completed all that work by 4pm. So the last hour before we shut down for the day was spent hardening and tempering.

Today we are making texture tools but I might actually rework some of the Grobet tools I have as they are too sharp and there is still the hammer I want to re-shape as well.

So, off to class I go!

{ 1 comment... }

**Bentiron** 06.29.10 at 11:03 am

I think that there was a mistake in the web address I gave you yesterday so here it is again: <http://www.iforgeiron.com> I hope that you are enjoying hot forging, one of the good things in life along with cold forging of nonferrous metals. If you ever go to the I Forge Iron web site take a look at the hot forging of nonferrous metal by Brian Brazeal.

## Day 3 done and into Day 4

by LAURIE JANE KERN on JUNE 30, 2010

Wow, I am learning so much in the tools class. Yesterday I did get my liners hardened, cleaned and tempered. Then Val gave a lecture on making texture tools and after lunch everyone set off to make theirs.

I on the other hand consulted with Val on modifying my hammer. I did not have to anneal it nor remove the handle - though I think next time I will, and I went at the first face with my files.

I have never done so much filing in my life and there is still more to be done. By yesterday afternoon I had finished filing and sanding one side of the hammer.

Today I polished the first side of the hammer and I am working on reshaping the other side. I am also working on a “hoof” style tool for my chasing and repousse.

Time to return to class.

More tomorrow and there will be pictures posted over the weekend.

## At home, Metals Week is Done :=((

*by LAURIE JANE KERN on JULY 3, 2010*

Metals week is now over. :=((

On Thursday afternoon we finished up our final tools and arranged them for display at the final reception where work from all of the classes would be shown. We had to put away all of our tools and return the workshop tools to the tool room. Everyone in our class traded names, addresses - email and home and even phone numbers so we could stay in touch as well.

Then at 4:00 pm the reception started and we could look at all the other work. There were many amazing pieces from the other classes - you just wanted one of everything the work was that amazing. At each classes display many of us asked how this or that was made and when you got around to your own display sure enough, some one asked you how you made your items! During this everyone was taking pictures of the work, and toward the end we were taking pictures of the people we took the class with and with your instructors.

After that it was back to the cabin, open a bottle of wine and chat about our time in class and what we plan to do next. Friday morning, Mary and I packed up our belongings, put them in the car and drove back down the mountain. I was home by lunch and then had to unpack and tell all to my sweetie.

Here is a picture of my modified hammer (which I am most proud of) and the tools I made. There are more pictures posted on [Kernology](#) - Click on a picture and a slide show with captions will open!



{ 3 comments... }

**Bentiron** 07.03.10 at 5:14 pm

Nice job on the hammer, now where is my joiner's hammer head, I found it a couple of years ago in an antique store's junk box for fifty cents, nice old head. That is a handy looking little forge for working on small bits of tool steel, much better than the big propane forge I have. Thanks for the pictures.

**Laurie Jane Kern** 07.03.10 at 5:25 pm

Thanks for the compliment.

Go find your hammer head, send it with a signed check that has the amount blank and lets see what we can work out ;=)))

**Mary** 07.09.10 at 1:01 pm

Hi Laurie,

Just wanted to drop in a comment to say what a great roomie you were....especially in making sure we had our whine time with wine after each day. Thankfully there was much more wine than whine. What a wonderful week it was. AND you thought I was living without Starbucks!

## Friends, Romans, Countrymen lend me your glass...

*by LAURIE JANE KERN on JULY 12, 2010 ·*

Over a year ago, I bought some roman glass to use in some jewelry. It has been sitting in my stash box waiting for inspiration.

On July 4th I worked at the San Diego Fair, again, but not for the Volunteers for Minerals. I worked for a friend who has a jewelry booth and he sells jewelry made with roman glass and small bags of roman glass shards. It is from him that I bought the glass oh so long ago.

[Read the rest over at Kernology..](#)

## Captured Roman Glass - COMPLETED

*by LAURIE JANE KERN on JULY 13, 2010*

Yah know, chasing Romans around the camp for their glass shards is hard work - all those swords, fires and smoke in your eyes, let alone hiding in the slaves tent is not what I would call a good time.

That being said, I have posted more pictures and you can read about it at [kernology!](#)

## A Day in the Convection Oven and Meeting another ORCHIDIAN..

by LAURIE JANE KERN on JULY 18, 2010

Summer has arrived full bore in Southern California. I call it convection oven factor verses wind chill factor because the temperature is over 100 F, the humidity is low and a wind is blowing. Not only do you cook but it sucks all moisture out of you!

That being said, my friend Jean and I went up to Riverside Metropolitan Museum to see two exhibitions: Adornment and Star Trek: The Exhibition Where Science Meets Science Fiction.

The [Adornment](#) exhibition was a interesting and even though it was free, I felt it was a bit of a waste of time. The items on display were not well organized nor was there any narrative to tie it all together. I had written a long review but I lost it and don't want to spend any more effort on it.

Then we went to see the [Star Trek exhibit](#). The exhibit was good, the costumes were great and there were lots of props like phasers, tricorders, weapons and panels from various decks and ships. One of the best things was on the back wall of the exhibit. It was a timeline showing how all the movies and TV shows intersect - it even showed the current time where there were Star Trek events that happen via going back in time. WAY COOL. Though I do have to say it did not illustrate "where science meets science fiction" except for a small comparison of mobile phones to the flip up communicator.

Do not take this wrong, I am a Trekkie. I even sewed my own costume years ago, wore it to a convention [real Spock ears and all] and won the costume competition. I watched the original Star Trek as a child, played with my mothers old cigarette case as a communicator and tricorder and just fell in love with it.

Most women my age, who watched it, say that it was Uhura who inspired them to go in to science; for me it as Spock and Scotty.

After that we went over to the Mission Inn to have a few margaritas, appetizers, relax and chat.

We then wandered outside on to the mall and as we exited the cupcake shop, there was [Mardon Jewelers](#)! So we wandered in and we met Jim and Kay. Actually someone was at the computer behind the counter and asked if he was the blogger. He responded no, that was Jim - who then appeared at the top of the stairs. He asked why? and I then introduced myself as another Orchidian - “the aspiring silversmith” to be exact. Then Kay came down as well, and we talked about silversmithing and jewelry. Jim was so nice - he started to pull some estate jewelry out of the case and show it to Jean and I and even talk about why they were so special - A full faced cameo carved in coral; A gold, mens, stick pin from the California gold rush.

After we left Mardon Jewelers we headed home! Jean was amazed that even though I did not know Jim and Kay; I just walked right in to their store, introduced myself and mentioned our connection and a new relationship was formed!

If you are in the Southern California area, are a fellow Orchidian and would like to meet up, let me know!

{ 3 comments... }

**Bentiron** 07.18.10 at 2:15 pm

Friends, Romans, Orchidians, ..... Isn't it nice to meet the folks that you read about on the world wide web? I do enjoy your little adventures as an aspiring silversmith.

**Laurie Jane Kern** 07.18.10 at 3:36 pm

Thanks!

Just wait till you see what I am working on next!

**Bentiron** 07.19.10 at 4:03 pm

I await with bated breath!

## What is your most valuable equipment?

*by LAURIE JANE KERN on JULY 21, 2010*

We all have our favorite tools be they are hammers, torches, anvils; then there are the expensive ones such as rolling mills, and the like but would you think is your most valuable?

How about your EYES?

Over the past two months I have been to the optometrist 4 times and a retinologist twice with the potential of dire news being delivered.

It all started when back in June when I realized three things were going on: I was having problems viewing my computer monitor at work, there were focus issues even between my two eyes whether I wore my reading glasses or not and I was getting head aches and back aches trying to get it all into focus no less; I had a really bad "floater" in my left eye; and my night vision was blurry too.

So off to the optometrist I went despite having had my eyes checked despite having bought new reading glasses only 8 months prior. The verdict was yes, my eyes had changed in both distance and close up so I would need new glasses (2 pair to be exact) but the issue of the floater, which was large, had to be investigated because it might be related to the sudden shift in my prescription.

Off to the retinologist I went. There were questions not only about the floaters but had I seen flashes of light and what activities I did i.e. sports or other activities. My eyes were dilated and given a local so the doctor could use a very bright light and a magnifier to poke and prod my eyes so he could see all of the inner surface. The floater was large - almost 5 mm and the doctor also said I had a “discolored spot” on the back wall of my other eye. After the exam the doctor told me I might be developing a detached retina which can lead to blindness if not addressed ASAP, and he was uncertain what the spot was.

What a scare! I was to come back in a month but IF anything got worse: fuzzy vision, more floaters, flashes of light, come in right away.

Then it was back to the optometrist for my 2 sets of glasses and when I went to pick them up, one set had to be sent back since they were made wrong.

Last week was my 1 month follow up. My eyes were dilated again and he went at it with the bright light, magnifier and the pushy/prode tool. Final result - The floater is going away, no bright flashes and thus my retina is not detaching, at the moment, and as for the spot he thinks it is just a darker area.

But to cover his butt - “IF ANYTHING CHANGES, COME IN RIGHT AWAY”

The scare as my husband said, was all for nothing - but it makes you think what you would do IF you lost your sight.

{ 2 comments... }

**Bentiron** 07.22.10 at 8:10 am

That is a frightening experience. Two years ago I went through something similar and sort of still is going through it to a degree. I have had a floater since high school, almost fifty plus years now, that is a real p.i.a. when it comes to reading but we get by with it. On my last eye exam a large dark spot on my retina was noticed on my right eye and like you it was let's watch it. It turned out to be just a normal darkening of the retina and not something worse, like cancer, but now I have been diagnosed with debates so I now need annual eye exams, no more of this every two year stuff. In all my years of metalsmithing I have only had one time where it was necessary to have an emergency trip to the doctor to have foreign material removed from my eye and that wasn't even my fault, but it was painful. I hope your eye problems are all resolved now. Always wear eye protection and always watch the person next to you because they may not be watching you!

**Laurie Jane Kern** 07.23.10 at 11:37 am

B-

I have several friends with diabetes and yes when one has diabetes your eyes and any wounds you get can be a major event!

How strange, the dark spot I have is in my right eye as well. Even though the doctor did not say the "C"-word, that did come to mind. I ask if it was some sort of mole and he gave me the strangest look - I think he knew what I was implying and then just said No.

Having spent two summers as a welder, I do wear safety glasses without fail!

## Learning Curve

by LAURIE JANE KERN on JULY 24, 2010

Back in May/June when I had a session with Deb we discussed my next learning task - curves. I admit that I still have a way to go with getting the sides of my vessels symmetrical but one can't just make vessels with straight sides for-ever. I think that in the OLD days, an apprentice would and probably not be allowed to move onto another skill until this was mastered but hey, I am not an apprentice nor living in the "OLD Days".

Even though Deb explained it to me and I have the big black silversmithing book by Finegold & Seitz, reading is not the same as doing.

So today I did - I tried it and probably made it more difficult for myself than it should have been.

I started with a 3" diameter disk of 22 gauge copper. Deb told me to make a drawing so I could cut a template to gauge where to start the curve and to help make my walls symmetrical. Did I? - *Nooooooo*, of course not as this girl wants to see what she can do on her own!

I sunk the copper first, then scribed and flattened the base. I then raised the walls. I marked where the curve was to begin and started to move the metal inward. I was almost there and was trying to get the metal to thicken as I was brining the wall in and I realized that I was stretching and thinning the copper.

I stopped! I was afraid I had ruined it. I took a break and came back with a critical eye. Was it a loss (no)? Could it be saved (yes)?

I decided that I could trim off the area that had thinned and still have some of the curve with a very small straight wall above it. I scribed the line, cut off the thin and cracked edge; then onto filing and sanding the rim. I then threw it into the vibratory tumbler for an hour and it was done.

What did I learn:

- 1) start bigger, Deb has said that working on a small scale was hard - now I believe her;
- 2) Use a heavier gauge so if the metal does thin it is not as critical;
- 3) Make that drawing and template!

So here is a final picture and of course there are more in-process pictures over at [kernology](#). [No pictures of the problems, if I don't have them I can deny it ever happend ;=)))]



{ **2** comments... }

**Bentiron** 07.26.10 at 11:15 am

Hey ! Is that lop sided or am I having trouble sitting up straight again? Gosh, I envy your advancement in skill, but as they say, and who are they you may ask, well you know, they're the ones behind every rock and tree, you just can't get better without practice. Nice work, even if it is small. Pretty soon you'll be showing your work along side the likes of David Huang.;o)

**Laurie Jane Kern** 07.27.10 at 2:30 pm

You are listing!

As for the David Huang reference - I can hope

## Hammer Hunt

*by LAURIE JANE KERN on AUGUST 7, 2010*

Right after my first session with Deb I asked for a basic list of hammers to purchase. The list was for a 400 g raising/forging hammer, a 200 g border/raising hammer, and a 100g , 200 g, and 400 g embossing/sinking hammer. These were my first 5 hammers, all by Peddinghaus. I have since added a 150 g bordering hammer and a 170 g planishing hammer that I picked up from ebay, plus 2 chasing hammers and several mallets. And of course there is the hammer I made for forming, up at metals week.

Last week I found that the 400 g raising hammer was MUCH to big for the item I was working on. The 200 g and 300 g bordering hammers were the right weights but the faces were too short in the height which then resulted in me doing a lot more hammering. [Pictures and details of what I am working on will be posted soon]

I needed a new hammer - oh, poor me! ;=) So the hunt began.

Do you know how hard it is to find the “right hammer” as no one supplier stocks all the brands AND everyone lists the weights and face sizes differently and the names can vary even though they are the same hammer!

For hammer makers you have: Peddinghaus, Picard, Grobet, Fretz and a few others. On one web site the weight is in ounces and size is inches, on another it has grams and millimeters and maybe just the face height and not the width. On the second web site they have 8 Peddinghaus and on the first site they have 14 and what is called a raising hammer can also be called a forging or chasing hammer (yes, you read that right, I saw it called a chasing hammer. It was on a blacksmithing site) and bordering hammer can also be called a tray hammer.

I knew I wanted a hammer that weighed less than 300 grams - 200 grams would be good. But the face had to be taller than the bordering hammer which was about 1/4” (per the Rio catalog).

So from website to website I went. I had to start taking notes on size, weight, price... and finally it came down to me getting the Fretz Silversmith hammers (yes, that is a plural). Both the wide and narrow raising hammers were in line with what I wanted but now for the best price.

Rio was a bit more expensive than Otto Frei on the individual hammer price but with Otto I have to pay sales tax and shipping. If I purchase via Rio, I don't have sales tax but a higher shipping cost. Then I saw that Otto not only had a great price on the Silversmith Hammer assortment which is 5 hammers at less than the individual price there was an additional 10% off and FREE SHIPPING - so with my sweeties agreement, I bought the Hammer assortment. Even with the sales tax it was less than if I had bought it from Rio, sorry guys!

My hammers arrived Thursday. I went right into my office to open them and guess what - ONE OF THE HAMMERS WAS MISSING!. I guess they pre-package the hammers because even though each hammer was in a sealed bag, the assortment was inside another sealed bag and there was only FOUR and the missing hammer was the narrow raising hammer, the one I wanted for my project.

It was now 7:00 pm and Otto was closed, so I sent them an email with my invoice number and explained the problem and that my husband would call in the morning to sort it out in case we had to send them all back. NOPE - sending them back was not required and by the time my husband called Friday morning they had already shipped the missing hammer and it would be here early next week.

So now, I am using the wide raising hammer, which works perfectly I might add.

THANK YOU OTTO FREI!!!

{ 2 comments... }

**Bentiron** 08.07.10 at 5:11 pm

It is hard to find the right hammer, I know, I have them all to prove it. Last year I was in Tucson and visited DAH Rock and while poking around in the back lot rock bins I found a slightly rusty Dixon bordering hammer head in one of the bins. It looked like it had never been used so I asked "How much?" and the answer was "Nothing, it's yours.", such nice folks there. I have found such nice old hammers at estate sales, yard sales, eBay, antique stores and used tool stores where a lot of times the seller didn't even know what it's intended use was or what it was worth. I just hate paying much for a hammer, there are so many out there needing homes and so many that can be modified with ease.

I bet those Fretz hammers are sweet to use. I really like to order from the folk at

Otto Frei and at Rio too, they are are always eager to serve you and strive to satisfy the customer.

**Anne Bellissimo** 08.09.10 at 5:55 am

Thanks for the very practical info. I'm definitely a little less confused than I was before your blog...

## Going Vertical

by LAURIE JANE KERN on AUGUST 9, 2010

A quick side-track:

I was looking at my kernology stats today and I see that someone entered a query about where to purchase roman glass. So here is where I bought mine... I have known Avi for almost 20 years, I have bought jewelry from him and I have assisted him in his booth at the San Diego County Fair.

Here is the link to the home page [Avi-Jewelry](#) . But to get directly to the [glass shards use this link](#). You can also buy antique (Roman, Byzantine, and more) coins, pottery, jewelry, vessels in this area.

*And now back to this post.*

After I made the skewed cup - remember it was not supposed to turn out skewed; I tried making something else and that was a complete disaster [and no pictures to show either]. I found myself wondering IF I had lost it; my raising skills. I thought - wow, I have not done any raising or sinking for almost 2 month - could I have *actually* forgotten how to raise properly. As my husband pointed out - this was really stupid to think! Could it possibly be that I was tired and not giving the task at hand my full focus? I set everything down for the night and walked away; I had a rather tall dram of scotch to make me feel better. (this was on a Saturday)

On Sunday morning I took the copper disk cum failure out of the scrap bin. I annealed it, cleaned it up and actually could flatten it with my lead filled rawhide mallet. I then set myself the task of “GOING VERTICAL”.

Yes, I was going to raise this 5 inch, 18 gauge disk into a vessel with almost vertical walls. If I started with a 1” diameter base I could have 2” tall sides and I was going to aim for a 1.5” diameter at the rim. I also had to take it slow - no mistakes allowed - no stretching, no skewed sections - this would prove I could take it all the way UP!

I spent about 4 hours on it that first Sunday (July 25). Then the next weekend I spent about 6 hours at it on Saturday (July 31) and that time includes the time in the pickle pot and me getting lost while browsing the web for workshops on raising hollow ware (that in its self is a whole ‘nudder post!). Somewhere in here I also ordered the new smaller hammers too. And finally this past weekend (August 7) I spent another 6 hours between raising, bouging, pickling, cleaning, planishing and filing the rim, plus adding a texture to the outside surface - YES I was able to finish it.

The walls are symmetrical, you can’t feel any ridges inside and I have also stopped grinding the edge of the stake into the bottom - that is nice an smooth too.

Here is my finished piece - I guess I have NOT lost my skills. I have posted THIRTY-SIX (yes folks that is 36) pictures over at [kernology](#) if you want to see the process of those sides coming up.

Total Hours: approximately 16 hours

Hammering Time: approximately 8-10 hours

Starting Dimensions: 5" diameter disk - 18 gauge

Finished Dimensions: 1" diameter base, 2" high sides and 1.6" diameter at the rim - 16-17 g at rim (17 gauge is loose so maybe 16.5 gauge), yes I measured it!



{ 3 comments... }

**Bentiron** 08.10.10 at 2:27 pm

That is a lovely little vessel! Very elegant in it's shape, well done.

**Linda** 08.10.10 at 6:09 pm

Laurie, That is a beautiful raised vessel! Will you be planishing it?

Linda

**Laurie Jane Kern** 08.11.10 at 12:22 pm

Linda,

I had planished it but thought it still looked rather plain so I went back and added a texture using gentle strokes with my thinnest bordering hammer. You can see

the texture better in the very last picture of the series over on my personal website (<http://www.kernology.com/metal-work-2010.html>)

## Prep(work) for a Workshop

by LAURIE JANE KERN on AUGUST 15, 2010

About three weeks ago I wrote to Deb about my frustration on finding workshops oriented toward hollowware. Here is what I wrote:

*“I am feeling a bit frustrated right now, I have been searching the web for “schools” where I can go on my vacation and do an intensive a 3-5 day workshop of nothing but hollow forms. I have looked at Penland, Appalachia Center for Crafts, John C. Campbell, Revere Academy and a few others. I found several metal/silver smithing classes but they really were about jewelry. The only thing I found that focused on Hollow forms was an 8 week session at The Penland School (oh wouldn’t that be nice). I can’t take 8 weeks off from work and the cost (tuition, travel and room & board) of going for 8 weeks is very prohibitive for me at this point (plus losing 8 weeks salary if I could take a temporary work leave). So would you be interested in workshop where I focus 100% for several days on hollow forms. I want the workshop so I can take my skills to another level.”*

Seriously folks, there is not much out there! On a side note I also contacted [Linda Weiss Dickenson](#) - she teaches in Northern California and does do some private classes as well; I found her name on the [SAS](#) website but right now due to no vacation time, I can’t travel up there - maybe over next summer.

So, after a bit of telephone tag, Deb and I selected Labor day weekend to do a two day workshop, and then I have Monday to rest before I have to go back to work. She gave me these tasks:

1. Come up with 2-4 designs and draw them full scale. Then send them to her to make sure they are do able!
2. Figure out what size sheet I would need (we would work with 20 gauge copper and it would thicken towards 18 gauge by the time we were done.
3. Cut the copper to size if need be
4. Pre-form the copper. That means do the initial raising so I don't spend that time during the workshop getting it to the point were we can start adding the curves. Thus when I arrive we can make any adjustments, if needed, and then get right to work on the stakes.

I spent all of last Sunday doing my drawings which I then scanned, pdf'd and emailed to Deb. One is very easy with one curve inward with an angled wall with a rim [to be known as the **Tapered Dish**]; the second is a bit harder it will have angled walls but a tight inward curved rim [to be known as the **Hearth Pot**]; the third is more like a creamer/sphere with a spout [to be known as the **Pouring Pot**, it's not just for cream]; and the last has outward and inward curves - more like a short fat vase with a neck [to be known as the **Southwest Vessel**]. I doubt we will get to all of them but IF I can get two completed I will be very happy. Deb emailed back that the drawings were good and no changes were needed.

For the first and third pieces I can use a 6" diameter disk and the second and fourth required about a 10" diameter disk. I had 6" x 12" 20 gauge copper so yesterday I cut out the 2 disks.[Correction - the Pouring Pot will use a 18 gauge copper] the 12" square copper was ordered last week but has not arrived yet, I will be cutting those circles next weekend. After cutting my 2 circles of course they were annealed, pickled and cleaned and this morning I have started the forming. While one is in the pickle pot I am working on the other. I am on my second and third rounds - the Pouring Pot has been sunk and I am starting the raising and inward compression to get a sphere shape - this in the pickle pot

currently. The Tapered Dish has the base set though it is a bit wonky if you ask me, but that can be corrected, and I am currently on my second round of raising.

During my breaks I have also cut templates out of manila folders so I can make sure the curves and angles are correct as I progress. For example, I have the base diameter cut out and just the straight tapered sides cut for the Tapered dish, this is the first template. For the second template I have the curve that will be set in the wall cut out and for the final template I have the rim as well. Obviously the final shape might be a bit different but hopefully close to the measurements I have recorded.

Sorry - NO pictures yet. I am taking them as I go along but I want to wait until it looks more like I designed. Next week I will start forming the other two so come on back to see what I have to say about it!

{ 6 comments... }

**Bentiron** 08.17.10 at 2:48 pm

I know you like hammers and today I was looking on that absolutley evil site eBay and found an auction that had this, [http://cgi.ebay.com/Vintage-Silversmiths-Gesswein-German-Embossing-Hammer-/230511070848?](http://cgi.ebay.com/Vintage-Silversmiths-Gesswein-German-Embossing-Hammer-/230511070848?pt=LH_DefaultDomain)

[pt=LH\\_DefaultDomain](#) o Now this vendor has several other hammers of note that I would love to have but they are all a bit out of my price range but I always like to dream just a little, however I thought you may want to take a look. To look at the other hammers just click on “see other items”. Have as much fun looking as I did.

**Laurie Jane Kern** 08.17.10 at 5:27 pm

Sending me to ebay was truly EVIL! But Otto Frei is having a sale on Peddiman/Peddihaus hammers so there may be few of them in my future!

**Bentiron** 08.19.10 at 5:41 pm

Yes it was but they looked pretty good compared to most of the fare you get on eBay. Did you bid on any? Have a great time at your workshop!

**Laurie Jane Kern** 08.19.10 at 6:04 pm

I just lost out on these - 23 hammers, who could want another after getting this lot ( please don't tell me you won them!) [http://cgi.ebay.com/ebaymotors/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&item=230511057690#ht\\_500wt\\_1143](http://cgi.ebay.com/ebaymotors/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&item=230511057690#ht_500wt_1143)

**Bentiron** 08.22.10 at 5:27 pm

I don't have that kind of money! WOW!!

I found these two little ones today [http://cgi.ebay.com/Vintage-Silversmith-Hammer-Tool-Lot-Chasing-Planishing-/380260951205?](http://cgi.ebay.com/Vintage-Silversmith-Hammer-Tool-Lot-Chasing-Planishing-/380260951205?pt=LH_DefaultDomain_0)

[pt=LH\\_DefaultDomain\\_0](http://cgi.ebay.com/Vintage-Silversmith-Hammer-Tool-Lot-Chasing-Planishing-/380260951205?pt=LH_DefaultDomain_0) and again thought of you. I already have two that are similar to them so have at 'em.

**Bentiron** 08.23.10 at 8:38 am

I was just looking at that gigantic set of hammers again and he has a smaller set of hammer up for auction also, a strange mix of hammers, but a couple of nice ones [http://cgi.ebay.com/ebaymotors/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?](http://cgi.ebay.com/ebaymotors/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&item=230513199477)

[ViewItem&item=230513199477](http://cgi.ebay.com/ebaymotors/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&item=230513199477) The reserve has been met and there are still a couple of days left to bid on it if you want to. Good luck if you do.

## An (email) Conversation with Kevin Potter - Or don't be afraid to ask.

by LAURIE JANE KERN on AUGUST 22, 2010

In *Silversmithing* by Feingold and Seitz (and a few other books on making holloware) they discuss raising using the "crimping" method. To do this you need a stake that has a groove or shallow long concave depression in it. You use this

groove to put linear depressions that radiate out from the base/center. This initial crimping results in the sides rising up. Then as you progress to raise the sides further, you hammer and distribute these crimps.

Finding a crimping stake is almost impossible these days. I have been doing a lot of googling for almost 2 months - yes I am a persistent searcher - hammers, books, stakes; anything to help me in my craft.

So after much searching, I decided to ask for one. So who in the USA is making stakes these days? Kevin Potter of [Potter USA](#). Kevin makes the “OttoTech” stakes for Otto Frei, other raising and planishing stakes, a hammer or two and a nice little hydraulic press and the dies to go with it. The first stake I bought is the OttoTech Combo Flat stake (11” long by 1.5” curve) and it is great.

Kevin makes stakes - so I figured I would ask about a crimping stake, I had nothing to loose, the worst he could say was NO, cause if you don’t ask you will never now if it could be made for you.

So what you are reading below is the email conversation that has transpired:

My email to Kevin titled “How about a...”

Crimping stake - No body makes them anymore!

How much for a one-off if you don’t want to add it to your product line?

Kevin’s Response to Email #1:

Hi Laurie,

I can definitely make that for you. I've been thinking of making some. You are the first person to ever request one, but lack of demand has never stopped me. Send me a picture of the style you want, if you have one available. I think Otto Frei has some pictures of some, I just want to make sure we are on the same page of what you are interested in. Do you have the book, Silversmithing, by Rupert Finegold or William Seitz? It has a lot of different stakes pictured in it. You could even send me a pencil sketch, I just want to be sure I make the right thing. It should cost about the same as my regular T-stakes listed on my website.

I look forward to hearing from you.

#### My Email #2:

Kevin,

Thanks for the response, Otto Frei does not have any pictures nor does every other place, on the web - trust me I've spent many days googling!

YES I do have the Finegold book - I but I do not see a crimping stake in it - just a diagram for a wood one. There is also a diagram for a wood one in the Holloware techniques book by Douglas Steakley. I don't know what size or shape would be best as I'm new to all of this - But if there is a shape in the Finegold that you want to recommend, then tell me what page and I will look at it. For reference, at the current time I work on a medium scale - nothing bigger than a 12" diameter disk of metal.

#### Kevin' Response to Email #2:

Hi Laurie,

Page 39 shows a wooden stake, I can definitely make you a steel one that would fit in my stake stand. It looks like a very easy thing to make.

On page 336 picture 38-7 is a crimping stake I'm familiar with. I can definitely make you one of those. I think it would be the most useful. I have seen antique stakes that have two crimping forms on them just like a T stake.

Do you have a means of supporting the stake? I was thinking I would put a tapered tang on it just like my T stakes so that it can be mounted on a bench or on a log. I was thinking of making these in the past but as you probably know, making holloware is not exactly a growth industry. But like I said before, that's never stopped me from making a tool. I want one for myself as well.

I can do the t-stake version for the same price as my other t-stakes.

Let me know if you are interested.

**My Email #3:**

Kevin

The stake shown on page 336/337 is it - I knew i had seen one in there somewhere, thanks for locating it. And Yes, I agree that a tapered tang would be best.

Currently I hold my stakes in my vise on my benc. No, I have not mounted the one stake holder i have as I am still uncertain as to where I want to put it. I have an office/studio upstairs in the house and another workbench down in the garage - I am considering a "stump" table that can be moved depending if I need the A/C during the heat of the summer.

But I digress ;=)

Having two different sized on each end of the stake would be a good idea. Even though I am doing some pieces that use 12" diameter metal; I am mostly now working with 6" diameter only because they take less time - but as I learn, there will be more 12" in my future.

Personally I think since nobody here in the USA is supplying them, that if you add it to your line, I bet you will sell more. SO YES PLEASE CAN YOU MAKE ME ONE. Hey, will even post about it on my blog, so maybe you can get some more orders.

And speaking of stakes.... I have 3 large stakes currently:

a otto - Drop Forged Bick Iron 8" by 1"

an otto tech combo flat 11" by 1.5" (I assume made by you?)

and a Grobet/Dixon Silversmith Cylinder Forming #116 which is 14" by 1"

Since i am making smaller holloware, I am also looking for a combo flat that is actually a bit smaller possibly more like the Grobet #3 on the Otto Frei site (but at a lower cost) Can you do this too????

**Kevin' Response to Email #3:**

Hi Laurie,

I am looking forward to making that new stake, I will start on it this weekend. I have a little bit of thinking to do about how I will go about it since I machine mine from solid bar - it's not cast. And you are right, Otto Tech stakes are made by me!

I can make you the Grobet #3. Those are neat. I've tended towards larger tools but I can see where something of that size would be useful. I would charge you the same price as the other t-stake, \$199.

I'll make it out of 1.25" bar instead of 1.5". Let me know if that would be okay.

I checked out your website. You make some cool stuff. I LOVE raising - even though it's alot of work. I've never tried crimping, but I'm gonna as soon as I make a tool - I'm making one for me too - I'll give you the first one off the mill. I'll keep the second. I was going to ask if you knew of David Haung, but you have a link on your webpage to him. He's a super cool guy. I bought one of his pieces from him at SNAG. I try not to spend hours fondling it.

anyway, give me about a week and I should have the crimping stake done for you.

#### My Email #4

Kevin

Thanks for the update and yes the 1.25" bar would be great and perfect for my smaller items.

As you can see from my website I am new at this - thus the desire for the crimping stake. I was reading both the Finegold and the Steakley books and saw it and thought that I should give it a try because the books say that it makes raising go faster.

No, unfortunately I DO NOT know David, and yes - I too have spent time caressing one of his pieces. I have taken repousse classes from Nancy Megan Corwin and she owns one of david's pieces and brought it to the class in May

(there is a picture of it on my web, near the bottom of the class pictures) - Some day when I stop buying tools and sell a few pieces maybe I can own one too

#### Kevin' Response to Email #4

Hi Laurie,

I checked out your site, you make cool stuff. I've never tried crimping before, only traditional raising. I can definitely understand wanting something that is a little faster. I figure my elbow has only so many hammer blows before it's shot. Have you ever tried using the plastic mallets instead of steel on steel? I've tried it and it works really well, but I like the sound and the feel and the markings of traditional hammers. I've got the material cut out for the crimping stake and I'm trying to think of the best way to go about it. I should have it done by late next week and I'll send it out.

So, if you do holloware and need a crimping stake - NOW IS THE TIME TO CONTACT KEVIN!

OR if you want a custom item then Kevin is your go to guy - as he will be mine from now on!

KEVIN YOU ROCK!

{ 2 comments... }

**Bentiron** 08.22.10 at 5:39 pm

Kevin has visited some of the other forums that I'm active on and he is always helpful and ready to offer kindly advice. His hydraulic presses are impressive devices also and he is not a prima donna in the least, a real down to earth fellow, ready to help. I'm glad he was able to help you in your time of need.

**[Jane Walker](#)** 08.25.10 at 12:44 am

I've never come across people more generous to each other, especially to 'newbies' with their time, knowledge and even their goods than those in the jewellery world. Enjoy your stake, Laurie, and your new friendship with a really nice guy!

## Birth of a Crimping Stake (by Potter USA)

by LAURIE JANE KERN on AUGUST 28, 2010

After my [last post](#) (about getting a crimping stake) Kevin Potter sent me some pictures of his lathe and how he started the machining of the crimping stake.

Yesterday, one week later he sent an email stating that the stake was done. He also sent along a few more picture of the completed stake. Kevin and Danielle said:

Sorry I didn't take anymore in progress pictures. I have these three photos of the finished stake though. And yes, it's sitting on an anvil that's in our living room. a friend helped me bring it in and he said, "No way is Danielle going to let you keep that in the living room." and I said, "Of course she will, it's too heavy, she can't move it." She is typing this email and it brought out a little smile.

I have made payment and he is shipping it Monday so I should have it by the weekend and my 2 day class with Deb. To see pictures of the stake, [use this link](#) (which of course takes you to my website.)

Speaking of my 2 day-er with Deb - I have finished the prep-work for the Tapered Dish and the Pouring Pot. Today I am starting the raising on the Hearth Pot. And some where in there in all of this I also finished sinking 2 small bowls, one of

which I have also put a ring base on. The base will be put on the second one today while the Hearth Pot is in the pickle.

## 2-Day Workshop with Deb - Intro

*by* LAURIE JANE KERN *on* SEPTEMBER 9, 2010 ·

Over the Labor Day weekend I had my 2-day (Saturday and Sunday) workshop with Deb. Each day there was one other student there - Dawn on Saturday and Betty on Sunday who was working on their sinking technique.

I arrived with my in-process Tapered Dish, Pouring Pot, and Hearth Pot. The Southwest Vessel did not get started. I also arrived with 2 other pieces that were almost done - the smaller dish was there to discuss patina and the larger dish was there to discuss patina and a stand for it.

I also brought all four of my LARGE stakes, including the new crimping stake [for which I had also brought a 6" diameter 20 gauge disk to be crimped] and practically every hammer I had except the mallets. Oh, and I also brought my set of Fretz Miniature Forming Stakes (7 of them) and the stake holder.

It was a lot to carry!

In between every 2 rounds of raising, approximately every 2 hours we addressed the questions we had brought and also we took a long lunch to discuss life, the universe and everything else.

I will leave it here for now, I still have many pictures to post and some items are not completed - yet. So in my next post I will discuss each piece I worked on and get those pictures up for you to see.

## 2-Day Workshop - Patina Discussion

by LAURIE JANE KERN on SEPTEMBER 11, 2010 ·

Prior to this workshop, Deb had shown me how to use Liver of Sulfur [also known as "LOS"] on copper for application of a patina and since then I had not purchased any LOS or attempted it again.

Before I came to the workshop, while preparing my other hollow forms, I sunk a small dish and put a ring base on the bottom. I had purchased a can of it from Rio but before I used it, I wanted to go over it again with Deb.

During one of our longer breaks on the first day, Deb showed me how to clean up the few errant spots of silver that were the result of me soldering the ring on for the base at 11:00 pm on a Sunday night. [Note to self - Do not do this, you are tired and rushing and it just causes more work later on!]

I had been pondering how to get a avocado skin appearance using LOS so I explained what I wanted to Deb and then we went into the shop area with the sink where Deb explained how make and then apply LOS onto copper; we also discussed the differences between using LOS on copper vs. silver. Deb got me started and then I did the rest of the application. Also I dropped several hints about having a Patina class at metals week!

Here is a picture of my finished piece. And of course, here is a link to these pictures over on [Kernology](#), there are more pictures on how the bowl was sunk and the ring soldered on the base. As I blog about the other pieces I worked on during the 2-day workshop, they will be added to this page.



{ 2 comments... }

[Angela Hampton](#) 09.14.10 at 7:21 am

Beautiful!!! Will to to the link and check out the other pics!

**Bentiron** 09.14.10 at 4:41 pm

Patina, that sounds like fun. When I was casting bronze, let me think back, cupric nitrate for a nice green, ferric nitrate for a nice brown, bismuth for a white, didn't have a call for that to often as pigeons took care of white, ammonia would give a nice blue but very fragile. I mostly used the cupric and ferric nitrate to give a nice brown with green high lights on the bronzes. I'm guessing you could use the same ones for copper. Liver of Sulfur was to give a black or dark brown cast for shadows.

## 2-Day Workshop - Pouring Pot (sort of)

by LAURIE JANE KERN on SEPTEMBER 14, 2010

To Continue..

I mentioned in my earlier posts about the workshop, that one of the pieces I was raising was a pouring pot. This item was based upon a creamer I had seen in a book. I was planning on mine being slightly larger - starting with a 6" diameter disk of 18 gauge copper.

Per the book - first you sink the center of the disk so the vessel will have a spherical bottom; then raise the sides vertical; after that curve the walls in; then using the end of a cross-pien, hammer in a spout (we will come back to this); clean up the upper end; and then solder a ring on the base for a stand.

Before I went to Debs I had not only sunk my base but had almost perfect vertical walls above the equator of the spherical base. Then using this equator, I took 1/4" segments where I would move the wall inward all the way to the top. I did probably 4 or 5 complete rounds before the shape was done.

Everything went well up to this point. Next we took the edge of a nylon hammer and tried to hammer a spout. It was a bit of a disappointment, the shape got all wonky and you could not get the rim onto the "stake" so you could hammer the spout. At this point Deb and I looked at each other and said: "THIS IS NOT GOING TO WORK!" [We had already had a discussion about how the instructions in this particular book were lacking and incomplete let alone they did not match the pictures.]

I then took the vessel back to the curved stake I had been using and hammered out the spout, trued up the shape. I then air planished a small flat on the bottom and renamed the item as "The Pueblo Pot".

This past Saturday I put a wonderful patina on it - the interior has hues of blue and purple and in the right light they are present on the exterior too. And then I waxed it.

You can see all FOURTY-FIVE pictures over at [kernology](http://kernology). Here is one to get you started..



1, 2 - no change that to 3..uh.. wait maybe 4 things...

*by LAURIE JANE KERN on SEPTEMBER 19, 2010*

To start..

**THIS IS MY 100th POST!** So thanks to all who have been following me. I did my first post on 31 March 2009 so by my rough estimate that is 76 weeks or 18 months. This works out which works out to be about 1.3 posts per week or 5.5

posts per month. Not bad in my opinion because I had set out to do at least one post per week.

My next news is ....

This pertains to the 2-day workshop with Deb. I was working on two other items: The Hearth Pot and the Southwest Vessel. The Hearth Pot was partly completed but I am waiting to go back to Deb in October to finish it, so when that is done, I will post about it then. As for the Southwest Vessel, that I did not even start to raise it - that we will come back to at another time.

For the *Third* item..

The crimping stake that Kevin Potter made for me. I did take this to my 2-day workshop with Deb. On Sunday we used it to crimp a 6" 20 gauge sterling silver disc which I am currently raising. I will probably do a separate post about using a crimping stake when I am done, keep your eyes out for that.

The *Fourth* item pertains to...

I have opened my new website - [The Adventurous Silversmith](#). I have also added a link to it the site, here on the blog, it is to the right of this posting area by my blog roll.

For many months I have been pondering when I would open a website to sell my work. I am not happy with Etsy or ArtFire as it is so easy to get lost in there. I have no issues with building my own website - I do software development as my day job, so that was a no brainer and by going my own, I did not have to pay them to keep my work up for months at a time, nor would I pay them a commission. I

felt I was getting ready just about a month ago and at that point is was settling on a domain name and purchasing it; working out a theme: color and layout; and then building it - all of which I have done over the past three weekends. Now I have to decide if I want to add Facebook to this mix... Should I even join? If I do is it a personal page with a concentration on my work or do I set up my account as a business? If you have a suggestion about this or how it has or has not helped you I would love to know and thanks in advance if you do!

Right now only two items are there for purchase but over the next few weeks it will grow and hopefully you will like my work and even purchase something - the holidays are coming up real fast. [hint, hint...hint...]

{ 7 comments... }

**Bentiron** 09.19.10 at 3:17 pm

I took a look at you website and it looks very nice. You must do this for a living, I think I read that somewhere. Isn't it nice to be up and running? Congratulations!

**Laurie Jane Kern** 09.19.10 at 3:22 pm

Thanks and yes, the day job is software development and website building. I am soo glad I FINALLY opened up a site where I can put up my pieces even though there are only a few items so far. Give it time and it will be full eventually - I just hope I actually sell something before I am 100 years old (ha, by then it won't matter and my family will make the money because of something on the Antiques Road Show!)

**Wendy Edsall-Kerwin** 09.20.10 at 1:07 pm

I like the new site too! If you do decide to start Facebook, I suggest setting up a page for your business (they have an option for artists) and posting about your metalwork there. You could also set-up a personal profile and that could be used

more for friends and family and you could also direct people to your fan page from that. But definitely the fan page.

**Laurie Jane Kern** 09.20.10 at 2:03 pm

Wendy,

I took the plunge with FB yesterday. I set up a personal profile and then added a business page for The Adventurous Silversmith - I chose website not artist as I did not think any of those categories really fit. Hmm, I wonder if I can change that.

I did speak to a couple of other people I work with and they all gave me the same advice - Be careful who you accept invites from and EVERYTHING is public... I have read that colleges are looking at potential students FB pages - and not accepting some of them based upon what they see.

So knowing all of this, I have gone in with good advice.

**Bentiron** 09.22.10 at 10:27 am

I have found a website that you might be interested in, Sage Reynolds is a person of many talents but the one you will be interested in is his metal work, <http://newyorkamera.com/>, go back to the very beginning of his blog and go forward from there, it is worth the trip.

Enjoy!

**Laurie Jane Kern** 09.22.10 at 2:46 pm

Thanks for the tip, but I have been reading his blog for over a year now.

When I started learning to raise, I went looking for blogs with similar posts and the rest is reading history.

Have you seen his YouTube posts too???

**Bentiron** 09.30.10 at 3:36 pm

[http://cgi.ebay.com/VINTAGE-DOUBLE-FACED-SILVERSMITH-HAMMER-/290481869251?pt=LH\\_DefaultDomain\\_0&hash=item43a21191c3](http://cgi.ebay.com/VINTAGE-DOUBLE-FACED-SILVERSMITH-HAMMER-/290481869251?pt=LH_DefaultDomain_0&hash=item43a21191c3)

Found this hammer today, are you going after it?

## All the other stuff you have to learn

by LAURIE JANE KERN on OCTOBER 2, 2010

Choosing Silversmithing as my future (third) career by it's self requires you to learn quite a bit and I am not just talking about how to hammer the **\*\*damn\*\*** metal.

You have to learn and know:

- Math - which includes doing geometry; weight (grams, ounces and troy ounces); area (inches, metric and those pesky fraction and decimals after the whole numbers), and gauge conversions.
- Metallurgy - what are the different alloys and how the metal reacts and behaves when heating, quenching and the material is manipulated. Plus what metal to use for hammers and your tools.
- Chemistry - pickling and patinas all come down to how chemicals react with your metal. There is also plating, if you go down that road.
- Art/Drafting - drawing and rendering your idea with dimensions - there's that math again.

Most of these I can do because I had training as part of my engineering degree. Learning specifics particular to the craft will happen with time. It is after these basics, that there are many other skills which have to be learned, just to support your craft in this day and age of technology.

- Using the computer - with out this you can't do any of the following items

- Email - to correspond with your suppliers and speaking of suppliers... how do you find them?
- Googling/Web searches - how do you write a good query (that is what your text in the search box is called) and how to refine the query to find your materials and equipment - the best quality and/or the best price.
- Web Security - how not to get a computer virus and keep your personal information safe.
- eBay, On-line vendors, and On-Line Payments - 'cause you know 9 times out of 10 there is no one local that has the item you want. PLUS knowing when to purchase from out of state to save on sales tax but pay a higher shipping cost (again math!). Signing up for news letters for sales and coupons too.
- User Groups, Communities and Mailing lists - to get support from like minded people.
- Time Management - because you are now on line, you have balance the craft time with the computer time and knowing when to stop using the computer because your husband wants dinner and it is your turn to make it ;=)

I can do these things - easily but it is beyond learning your craft and making things when there comes a time when you want to sell your work which take you to a whole 'nudder area of learning:

- Naming your business - does it reflect you, what the business is, and what you sell. Will people know what you do from this name?
- Actually setting up the business - getting a business license or not.
- Logo and/or letter head - Colors and what font to use also reflects your business. You may not actually get stationary printed but having these is important so you can have business cards printed; put it on mailing and shipping labels; a banner for a street fair; tags which will go along with

your work for display and shipment; or use your logo with electronic correspondence and your on-line presence.

- Marketing - Will you have a physical store, get your work into galleries, have an on-line store or just a digital gallery/presence telling people where they can purchase your work. I
- On-Line Store or Gallery - Etsy, ArtFire, or other website to host your store or go it alone and set up your own. Each has its pro's and con's and costs (more math!)
- How to price your work - labor, material, and over head costs then determining your wholesale and retail pricing and what to do if there commissions.

Again, all of this I know how to do having been a business consultant. Though, having gotten this far, now you have to actually display and sell your work which requires these skills

- Web Design (if you have an online presence) - Yes you can use ArtFire or Etsy and let them do the User Interface (UI to a web designer) but you have to understand web page layout, color, flow and so much more. If you go it alone you have to know how to select a web designer and convey to them your vision and everything that goes along with a website PLUS what kind of shopping cart you want.
- Copy Writing - How to describe your work and appeal to the potential buyer so they DO purchase your work.
- Photography - You have to display some pictures! First getting a camera that will do what you need to take pictures. Then you have to learn how to use a digital camera beyond its AUTOMATIC settings; how to light the object and the aesthetics of layout.
- Image Processing - Learn Photoshop, Photoshop Elements or other image manipulation programs so you can cut, crop, straighten, correct blemishes, adjust image colors at a minimum, and what size and format to save your

pictures as which all depends on what you are going to do with them. Even going so far to learn Camera RAW so you can control everything about the image

With this last list, again I am not just knowledgeable but highly skilled in these tasks. If you don't want to learn these you can always farm them out to professionals - heck I am in someways I am *that* professional except for the photography. Yes, I can take digital photographs, look at all the images I take just to show you all the work it takes to raise a vessel. It is these advanced skills I do not have. So for me right now, in addition to learning the silversmithing stuff at the top of the list, I am learning all the features of my camera I did not know I had, plus how to take pictures with camera RAW. I also know the basics of image processing but with camera raw it is a whole different ball game which is why I just purchased a new version of Photoshop Elements and I shall be updating and expanding my knowledge here too. In a few weeks after I get all of this under my belt, I will have new, better, and more pictures to upload.

It is amazing just what skills you have to amass just to accomplish your goals. They all look quite simple and clear at the start, don't they! But as you progress, for every step you make in the right direction, you discover that there is more to the next step than you realised. And it is really the equivalent of several small steps (or not so small!!) but you didn't see those .... kind of like looking up a mountain and not seeing all the dips and ravines and diversions and sub-peaks along the way. So the final journey is many times more complex than what you first thought ;o)

But it is FUN isn't it.

{ 4 comments... }

**Bentiron** 10.03.10 at 3:04 pm

It used to be a lot more fun when you just went to scrap metal yard and bought a big ol' square of scrap copper for \$5, started to work and didn't need to worry

about a whole lot. Now you need a degree to make an object of art out of it, market it, collect the money and then dispose of the hazardous material it took to make it. What ever happened to simple?

**Terrie Masters** 10.03.10 at 7:29 pm

Laurie,

Clear, concise, honest. Come to think of it, that is just who you really are, and the Laurie I know.

What too few understand is, there are no shortcuts, until you learn the right way, then being clever, you may design your own.

Too many opt for the easy way out, and never bother to find out how good they can be.

Not our style.

It is a pleasure to know you.

Hugs,

Terrie

**Bentiron** 10.05.10 at 2:10 pm

“Too many opt for the easy way out, and never bother to find out how good they can be”

There is no easy way to create good art but there are decidedly pleasurable ways to do it and for me that was and is through hard work. We all have different styles of learning, some by pursuing education in institutes of higher education and some from books and some from watching and working with a master of the art we are desiring to learn. No matter the path it still takes hard work and dedication to accomplish our goals. You have done that and if by my previous

post I have sounded denigrating of your accomplishment I sincerely apologize for that. I meant no offense.

**Laurie Jane Kern** 10.05.10 at 4:26 pm

I was not offended as a matter of fact I was trying to point out that things now are not as simple as they use to be! [Yes, what happened to simple and just setting up a booth at a craft fair and having fun]

## Rain Drops (Keep Falling From Your Ears)

by LAURIE JANE KERN on OCTOBER 8, 2010 ·

Rain Drops Earrings - These sterling silver disks are textured using a chasing technique so it has the appearance of falling rain. The silver tear drops have been added to attract the eye via their movement. [Click the image to be taken to The Adventurous Silversmith to view other pictures and purchase]



All items purchased from The Adventurous Silversmith come with a care card and a picture of the item during the creation process.

\$70.00 includes shipping and insurance.

## My Newest Stake

*by* LAURIE JANE KERN *on* OCTOBER 18, 2010

Yup, I got another made to order stake from Kevin Potter, owner and stake making God at Potter USA.

I have been working on the Hearth Pot on and off for over a month now. I raised the basic shape before I went to Deb's over Labor Day and while there we started to add the curve to the wall. While there I was using a Dixon #3 and a Dixon #10 stake. Both have a ball and straight end but are of different diameters. I decided that I wanted the ball end from each on ONE stake because currently I don't need the straight ends as I have those sizes already on other stakes.

I proceeded to call Kevin after I figured out what I wanted (Kevin admits he really does not do email) and we discussed my requirements. And I then proceeded to wait for my staked

The pot then sat at home until I returned to Deb's on the 9th (the second Saturday of October which was two weeks ago). We made progress on the pot but my new stake from Kevin had not arrived so Deb let me come home with her Dixon #10 so I could continue to work on my pot.

This first picture is of where I left it when I left Deb's ...



And this second one is of the pot as of yesterday (Sunday, October 17) evening when I finished for the night. See how I am bringing the neck in. Once it is in all the way, there will be a short straight up wall and I will solder a wire rim on it.



And today my new stake showed up! I can now give back to Deb her stake and use MINE!!!! This is just one view of the stake.



Over on [kernology](#) there are many more pictures of the pot being created - and there are more to come because as you can see, it is not done yet.

{ 4 comments... }

**[Tamra](#)** 10.20.10 at 6:45 pm

Hey Laurie!

Awesome work! [And that stake is totally drool-worthy...]

**Laurie Jane Kern** 10.21.10 at 9:51 am

Just wait - I have more on the way!

I have to buy the “capital equipment” now because I have a FT job - once I retire, I won’t have money to purchase the equipment I want.

**Bentiron** 10.29.10 at 11:52 am

Nice work on the pot and I’m sure Kevin is glad that you’re happy with the stake. Good tools make for good work. I really enjoy your blog.

[kevin potter](#) 12.07.10 at 5:57 pm

HI Laurie thanks for all the kind words I like your website, and your work is great. Hope the stakes work out for you.

## Suppliers and Mixups

by LAURIE JANE KERN on OCTOBER 22, 2010

Yesterday my stake holder arrived from Potter USA and even though it is 'just a stake holder' the stakes fit it perfectly. As I posted this past week - I have been working with Kevin Potter, owner and Stake Making God Extraordinaire of Potter USA, on some getting some custom stakes made. BTW, I will also mention *again* that he is maker of the Otto Tech stakes for Otto Frei but I am veering off topic again. Through out the entire process there was great communication, mostly with Danielle but Kevin and I did talk on the phone and I got the stakes, which were exactly what I asked for [and wanted] - which is a good thing.

Over time, as we acquire our "capital equipment" or gather our materials for our creative processes, we find there is a whole plethora of suppliers out there to use. Some provide just one item but you go back to them time and again due to ease of ordering and great prices. Other suppliers, like Potter USA can fill a custom need that you just can't find anywhere else. Some we use just for purchasing our silver; others because we got a coupon so we order a multitude of bits and bobs; and there are those you won't ever use again because of \_\_\_\_\_ [insert your pet peeve here].

And then there are times when you use a great supplier and it all goes haywire.....

A month ago I ordered a set of Fretz Hammers from Otto Frei. Why?

1. I needed some smaller faced raising hammers for the smaller scale hollow forms I was working on; which was being worked on my Fretz Miniature Stakes.
2. I ordered them from Otto since they were on sale, had free shipping, and with my discount code despite the California sales tax, was still less total money than purchasing else where.

The hammers arrived and guess what - two were exactly the same. There was a label mix up some where along the line so I called and a replacement was shipped out the next day and I had the hammer in my hands two days after that. Problem solved.

This week I ordered 3 additional miniature stakes. This time, I ordered the stakes from Rio and they arrived in the mail today. Guess what - I got two of the same stakes. [A girl could get paranoid if this keeps happening]. There was no issue identifying the tapered stake, then there should have been a flat raising and the other should be a rounded raising stake.

But nope, I had two rounded raising stakes. Oh, trust me, I checked and re-checked them. The first clue was the stakes were stamped with the same numbers on the tang. Then I checked with my calipers - yup the same size. Then, I checked the Rio stock numbers on the bags - no they were different and then I saw the original Fretz labels under the Rio tags and **THEY WERE THE SAME!** Whew, I am not losing my mind. For a moment I forgot I had gotten the hammers from Otto and was thinking they have a stocking issue, now I think both have some stock problems. It can't be Fretz that has the issue because everything has a Fretz label and they were correct for the items.

So now I have to call Rio on Monday and send the stake back and wait a bit more for the replacement.

Hmmmm... If only the mixup had happened when I ordered my Pepe Rolling Mill - maybe I could have ended up with a Durston? A girl can wish can't she?

{ 1 comment... }

**Bentiron** 10.29.10 at 11:48 am

Sometimes you just wonder who is sticking on these stocking labels and how much sleep they are working on or how loud they are playing their iPod. I have had the same problem with my last orders for items I have ordered on line too. Is this a sign of the end times?

## Put the hammer down and walk away... NOW!

by LAURIE JANE KERN on NOVEMBER 3, 2010 ·

I have been working on the hearth pot since September - there have been starts, stops, side trips and other projects along the way, but the pot and I were making progress. The pot was moving closer to completion and I was making strides in adding curves and necking the walls inward.

I did not do much work, on the pot, these past two weeks because I have been experiencing low energy, lack of focus, and there were other commitments. There was also the problem that I could not get the bowl onto the stake I had been using (a loaner from Deb). I needed a different stake to finish the final part of the curve and to create the final vertical neck. On Saturday I drove down to Deb's and I gave her back the stake she had lent me and she then gave me a Dixon #13 stake to use. Since I was making this trip down to the San Diego area, I ran other errands and thus I did not do any work on Saturday. Sunday morning, I woke up early (for me, on a weekend) around 8:00 am; started the coffee; read my email; and then brought Erich a cuppa and woke him up. I am nice and I won't start banging on metal if he is still asleep.

Somewhere around 10-ish I trimmed about a quarter inch off the “rim” - it was uneven and thinning and was adding to the issue of getting the pot on the stake at the correct angle. Why? - this was because the rim on the opposite side of the bowl was running up against the underside of the stake as well as the tang. Once the trimming was done, I decided to use my new stake as it was similar to the stake I had returned to Deb. The pot fit on my new stake - not just because I had trimmed the rim, but I realized that the new stake had straight t-joint between the underside and the tang. The Dixon stake(s) have a stepped tang, and that was preventing me from getting the bowl positioned the way I wanted. Having figured this out, I decided to do the next course of raising in my new stake and that I might not need the Dixon #13 until later. I also decided to change from my big raising hammer which has a head of 400 grams and is rather large to my newest ebay win - a 175gram head hammer. This new hammer has the same weight as another Peddihaus hammer I have but the new one has a broader face than the same weighted Peddihaus hammer - see picture below. There is no manufacturer’s name on the head but it was the perfect shape for bringing the walls in toward a neck.

I completed two rounds and then went back to planish more of the body because when I brought in and up the neck, I would not be able to get inside even with the other stake.

And that is when my problems started...

My new stake, even though modeled on the Dixion #3 and Dixion #10 stakes, was not the same size as either of those, which is what I had been using at Deb’s. I had requested that Kevin should make the two ends about 1/4” smaller than the dixions. And because of that size difference, the area I was going to planish, having been formed on that other stake, did not match the radius/curves and so I ended up re-shaping and eventually denting the body.

Did I stop then and there and think about it? Noooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

Did I put down the hammer and walk away? Noooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

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Was I mad at myself and feeling frustrated? **Yessssssssssssssss**

Did I think about what I did next? **Nooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo**

And then I lost it. I actually lost it (my mind) -

I picked up that big honk'n 400 gram hammer and smashed it.

Yup, you can go back and read it again but the result with be the same.

I SMASHED MY WORK,

I think I hit it 3 or 4 times.

I could go on for several more thousands of words explaining how I felt during this event and even how I felt for the next FIVE hours but I won't. Despite all of that, I know my skills have progressed so as opposed to trying to salvage the bowl, I will keep it on my workbench as a reminder - When you are feeling fuzzy brained and have an attack of the crazies.... Just remember - **Don't go near the hammers.**

BTW, I feel better now. You can see the just before and the after picture below.



Two Hammer Heads

And then we have.....

Just Before the Crazies Hit



AND...  
The Aftermath



{ 6 comments... }

**Bentiron** 11.03.10 at 2:41 pm

At least you kept the hammer in your hand and that is a very good thing! I usually throw the hammer and that is a very bad thing, others may become injured by heavy flying objects. Drywall doesn't stop large hammer very well. You may salvage that pot by filling it with wax and applying some repousee work to the

affected areas, a little adjustment to the rim, it could prove to be an interesting exercise.

**Laurie Jane Kern** 11.03.10 at 2:56 pm

I had the hammer in my hand when I sat down at my desk and my Mac was in front of me and I honestly thought about hitting it too - that I when I put the hammer down and went into another room.

**Bentiron** 11.04.10 at 10:00 am

Oh, I have often wanted to hit the computer! It is more of an aggravation than any piece of metal I have encountered in my life, I think different than all the programmers on the planet. I move metal, they type lines of code, somehow the two just don't mix.

**Laurie Jane Kern** 11.04.10 at 11:05 am

Hey, I resemble that statement! I WRITE CODE and I MOVE METAL... as we say at work - pick up your tool bar and beat the CODE into submission. [does that sound familiar?]

Coding is similar to knowing foreign language and moving metal is similar to ... cooking. Well, in the long run Yes, they are two very different things.

**Linda** 11.08.10 at 8:41 am

OOPS - typo - I think - Sorry, I think I made a mistake in my recent comment / suggestions - I used the word "perpendicular" when I meant to say "parallel" - I hope you can catch the mistake - if you need further clarification - contact me. Good luck as you move forward with your Silversmithing adventures.

**Kerri Duncan** 11.09.10 at 6:11 am

Laurie... novel idea- whacking your work... I truly hope you felt better- consider it “destructive testing” and enjoy its viewings daily... I would fill it with pewter, and use it has a hammer-stand- great reminder to see... Besides- in the end- your art IS an expression of your feeling... riiight? HA! The vase shows how you were feeling!

Keep on swinging- keep on creating... all in time- my best wishes for your new-vase! (I actually like it!)

Kerri

NOTE : AT THIS POINT THE BLOGS ARE ALL POSTED ON The Adventurous Silversmith but I was still allowing comments - so only those blog titles and the comments are below (only if there were comments).

## Getting my hammering mo-jo back

by LAURIE JANE KERN on NOVEMBER 25, 2010

{ 2 comments... }

**Bentiron** 11.26.10 at 10:15 am

A “wee dram of scotch” should help mellow out the stress somewhat don’t you think? It is sometimes hard to get started again after such an incident isn’t it? I took a look at your progress, looking good! It has been a challenge for me to once again to take hammer in hand and start raising a bowl. It has been oh so long since I have attempted to fully raise one. I have done just little bits of it in my jewelry the last twenty plus years but with the steep increase in silver prices I thought it would be nice to attempt it again. This is frustrating, so far no hammers have been thrown through the wall.

**Laurie Jane Kern** 11.26.10 at 10:28 am

After the smashing event, it took more than a wee dram to mellow me out. But last night, having one and watching some 'Punkin Chunkin' I was very mellow!

Glad to hear you are taking considering up the hammer again. Today I am working on the raising piece and starting to refinish some of the 17 hammers (one lot) I snagged on ebay. Pictures will be posted soon

Oh, sure let's beat on this subject some more..

## Hammers

by LAURIE JANE KERN on NOVEMBER 26, 2010

{ 2 comments... }

**Bentiron** 11.27.10 at 12:31 pm

I'm so pleased that you won those. A nicer person couldn't have won them. Now you that you have you need for hammers satisfied for a day or two you can spend some time polishing up the faces and fitting new handles to the heads. I, too, often wonder who it was that used the old tools that gather around me. Part of me tells me that there is no soul in them but still another part tells me that the tools rest happily on my bench and are happy to still be of some use again and not rusting away in a box. Every person and every tool has a job to do and that is good. Work is good for the soul.

**[shelbyvision](#)** 11.29.10 at 6:34 am

Wow, what an excellent find!

I have a Dixon small planishing hammer that I bought about 35 years ago, and it is by far the highest quality hammer I have.

## I Gots Ingots!

by LAURIE JANE KERN on DECEMBER 6, 2010

{ 3 comments... }

**Bentiron** 12.07.10 at 12:27 pm

A few years ago I was at a workshop on wire wrapping to see if it were something I would like to do. There was a lot of scrap generated in the form of cut off ends. During breaks and at the end of class I picked up several ounces of scrap off the floor and out of the trash. The instructor thought this somewhat humorous since silver “is so cheap”. I wonder if she is laughing now?

**Laurie Jane Kern** 12.08.10 at 3:11 pm

Isn't it amazing how some people don't put a value on certain things. I know a wire wrapper who has been saving her scrap for almost 5 years and now she is ready to send it in for refining. Back when I took a class from her two years ago she did spend time talking about saving those bits cause they do add up.

The odd thing is, I also save my copper scrap and people have asked me why! IMHO money is money so why toss it out!

**Bentiron** 12.09.10 at 12:56 pm

I was in trouble with my HOA for saving up my scrap steel from when I was doing blacksmithing, when I took it to the scrapper I had two tons of it, just shorts and such, but it was at the high price wise. It still wasn't a lot of money but I wasn't about to put it in the landfill. I save my copper, brass scrap and when the five gallon bucket gets full off I go to the scrapper. It does pay to save.

## Fascination with Fold Forming

by LAURIE JANE KERN on DECEMBER 27, 2010

{ 3 comments... }

**Bentiron** 12.27.10 at 1:48 pm

What's this? Fold forming? Corrugating? Oh boy, have I had a time on that path! It is just so hard staying on one path isn't it? Well I guess it's all one path if it's lined with metal isn't it? My poor wife gets so frustrated with me at times, just when she thinks I have finally settled into one method of metal working, there I go off on another tangent. Poor dear lady, now thinks she know where my children inherited their propensity for attention deficient disorder. She is always telling me if I would stick to one thing maybe they would too. Not a chance when it comes to metal, there is just much fun to be had!

**Laurie Jane Kern** 12.27.10 at 2:12 pm

Edison once said this when asked about the light bulb:

"I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work."

The same is when learning things; if you never try it how will you know if you like doing it OR what you don't like. Already I have ideas about incorporating some fold forming into partly raised vessels.

**Bentiron** 12.27.10 at 8:49 pm

Ha, ha, like the one you threw the hammer at! I know that was mean but I just love to try new things with metal. I think I'm approaching 10,000 ways taht don't work all that well in working with metal for jewelry making.