

10 Questions

for **ROBERT CONING** by *Shirley Belcher*

When and how did you come to be a blacksmith?

I started blacksmithing in 1979 after joining the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA). I started basic work and armoring with a master metal worker, Andrew Holly.

What training is involved in blacksmithing?

I spent several years learning forging, forging welding, metal identification, armoring, and tool making.

Tell me about the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA) and your involvement.

The SCA is an educational organization that teaches, studies, and relives The Middle Ages from 400 to 1600 AD. I'm a Lord within the Society and teach metal work (illumination and decorative scrolls) and Norse history.

What kind of items do you make or repair?

I make everything but horse-shoes; from wrought-iron items like colonial candlestick holders to fencing to hammers to armor.

What is the most challenging item you have created?

A complete set of German Gothic plate armor. It took 4 months of work!



Robert "Willy" Coning boasts several passions: blacksmithing and raising chickens. In addition, Willy participates regularly in "Painting with Purpose" classes on Wednesday mornings at Central Connections.

Are there many blacksmiths in the United States today (or regionally)?

Surprisingly, blacksmithing is becoming a very big hobby. There are dozens of blacksmiths in this area.

You live on a farm. What breed of chickens do you raise?

My wife, Janet, and I live on a small farm and we raise about

48 chickens. Eighteen of them are Icelandic chickens, an endangered breed that we are trying to help save (see photo below). The rest of the chickens are Red Comets. They all lay brown eggs.



Who is family to you?

Family to me are folks who you can trust and who help you no matter what.

What do you like about Painting with Purpose classes at Central Connection?

The class is great! I enjoy the projects, and more so, the folks in the class. Good times!

What is it that you enjoy the most in your life?

I enjoy sharing life with everyone, that is what I enjoy about living. 🌱

To suggest a member to profile for "10 Questions," contact Director of Operations Lisa Biedenbach, 513.217.4915, or lbiedenbach@centralconnections.org.