



Balcones Forge Dispatch

President's Corner

May 2016



Greetings!

And the rain continues! What a year. Just when you think the flooding, high winds and hail are over, here it comes again. This is just an observation, not a complaint.

Many thanks to Mary Jo for hosting the April meeting, and for sharing her vast knowledge of welding with us. Some of us were rather overwhelmed by all technical information presented as she covered each type of machine and the problems we may encounter with each, but I believe the safety issues that Mary Jo and Rick Dawdy covered really topped it all. We all left her shop with a greater respect for our welding equipment. Well done!

Our May meeting, which will be held on June 4th, will be hosted by Patrick Watson just outside of Hye, TX on the 4B Ranch. Patrick is putting on a founders day celebration and has asked Balcones Forge to be a part of it. He has lined up some top notch entertainment for the afternoon which includes some antique cars, wagon rides by Dennis Moore of the Buggy Barn in Blanco, some wine tasting and added a dance pavilion. We are hoping this will be the first of many more years to celebrate his heritage.

<https://www.facebook.com/hyefestival/>

The trade item will be a item that has been demonstrated by Bill Epps. Bill has lots of videos and books out there with many easy to make pieces that are explained in detail. He has also posted many times on "I Forge Iron".

We are also going to need a few forges and anvils for this event. Please bring your equipment if you can.

Meeting Date is June 4

President's message continued on page 2.



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President's message continued.

The folks at the Texas Folklife Festival in San Antonio at the Institute of Texan Cultures have also invited us back to participate the 45th annual festival. This event will run from June 10th to the 12th. We will have a special memorial tribute to Willie Calhoun on Saturday evening at 7pm. Please email or give me a call if you would like to demo.

www.texasfolklifestival.org

And if all that isn't enough, Mary Jo has volunteered to host the June meeting at her shop on the 18th of June to continue her welding demo. She said we have the talking part done and you are now welcome to bring you welders and hoods for some hands on instruction. This is your chance to learn to use your machine from a master. Don't miss it.

Start times for all meetings is 9:30am unless otherwise posted.

Hope to see you all in Hye.

Jerry Achterberg,
President Balcones Forge



SECRETARY'S REPORT

I remember the first time I met Mary Jo Emerick. I was part of a work party at The Sycamore Ranch preparing for a fast approaching demonstration. I was assigned to

cut metal brackets on a chop saw by Jim Elliott and when I finished I was suppose to weld them

together at specific angles. I knew full well that everyone in the shop would be able to see how much improvement I needed in welding, so I asked John Crouchet to weld them while I held them in place. He said he was busy and pointed over to this lady and said ask her to do it. Well, I had never known a lady that welded, but when I approached her, she instinctively knew what needed to be done. Her warm smile simply melted all my doubts when I asked her if she could weld these brackets together and she replied you bet your butt I can weld'em! Sure enough, she was finished very quickly and to my amazement, the welds didn't even need grinding which is something mine always needs. She pushed them across the steel table and said there you go sir and they'll last forever - and that's how friendships are formed. Someone giving something and asking for nothing in return, be it pleasure in social gatherings, helpfulness in getting a job done, or the virtue of mutual admiration.

The meeting today was at Mary Jo's shop beside her lovely home outside Georgetown. Easy to tell it was a newly built shop because it wasn't packed full of blacksmith goodies like the ones most of us have. Mary Jo welcomed us and began with a few safety facts about acetylene safety. A bottle of acty must be in an upright position for 1 to 4 hours before using it. Acetylene is mixed with acetone and there is also a vertical tube inside the bottle to allow for gas mixture so it should never be used at less than a 45 degree angle.

Another important set of safety factors were explained about cutting torch gauges. 1) Never use oil on them because when oil and oxygen are combined it will explode. 2)To light torch, cut acty on first and when job completed cut oxygen off first to avoid O ring damage. 3) Stand to the side (not in front of) when turning on the oxy/acty gauges because the diaphragm might explode. 4) Set pressure for acty at 5 - 7 psi and oxy at 20 psi for a torch heat of 4500 - 5500 degrees. 5) Open oxy valve all the way and open acty one turn so that if

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a hose is accidentally damaged the resulting fire can be controlled more quickly.

There are propane and acetylene tips available as well as different gauges and regulators. Never mix acetylene with propane, always change out the regulators and hoses.

Mary Jo then went on to describe some welding terminology and techniques, but will go into further detail in a class she will host at her shop June 18.

The competition item for today was a box and first place went to Jerry Whitley and he was awarded a nail header for his distinguished work. Our next meeting is June 4 in Hye, Texas and "something Bill Epps" is the forging project for this meeting.

Special thanks to Mary Jo Emerick for hosting this event. We all look forward to visiting again soon.

Tim Tellander
Balcones Forge Secretary



WEB PAGE UPDATE

Hello Balcones Forge members. The website now has many new aspects to it. As some of you know you can now fill out membership applications online under the membership page. Also the member gallery needs an update so please send some pictures of your work along with a short biography as to how you became a blacksmith. Please email this to Shane Tilton at:

flex201214@gmail.com

On another note many of our members offer teaching or other blacksmithing related services. If you are one of these individuals please email Shane the title of your service, prices or a price range and method of contact for the service. I look forward to your submissions and emails.

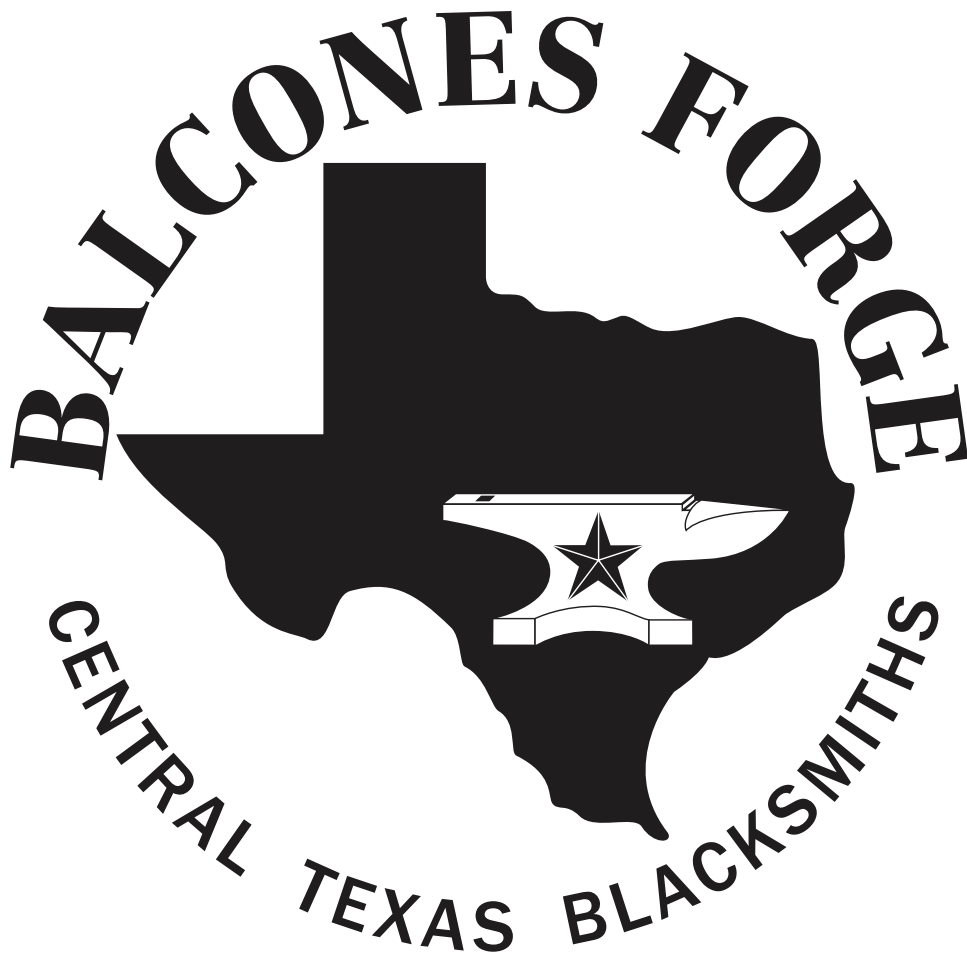
Strike while the irons hot.

Thank you,
Shane Tilton

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Proud supporters of the 2016 ABANA Conference

**Mark your calendars for the
17TH ANNUAL
BALCONES FORGE BLUEBONNET DEMO
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featuring Lyle Wynn, Dorothy Stiegler, and Dana Flanders

Marble Falls, TEXAS (Austin-area)

*Hands-on classes/instruction: March 29 - 31
All-day demo, dinner, and live auction: April 1*

www.BalconesForge.org

BALCONES FORGE 2016

June 4 (May meeting) Hye, TX See Presidents corner for details. www.hyefestival.com
"Trade Item" – Something demoed by Bill Epps

June 18 (June meeting) Mary Jo Emrick – Welding techniques – Georgetown, Texas
This part 2 of the welding info sessions hosted by Mary Jo.

July & August-These two months are usually too hot to forge in Central and South Texas. We are again looking into a "Field Trip" type of meeting. This time we are hoping to get a guided tour of the Institute of Texas Cultures. Remember, it is air conditioned (YEAH!)



President Achterberg keeps a close eye on Mary Jo as she addresses the April meeting.

Photos by Jerry Whitley

ARTICLE BY LAURA ARMSTRONG

My recent experience with a live online presentation: 'Forged Metal Dovetail Joinery' by Monica Coyne

I recently registered for an online presentation by Monica Coyne, a name most of you will recognize from our recent Bluebonnet Demo.

In the 90-minute live presentation from her home and studio in Northern California, Monica explained step-by-step **how to forge metal dovetail joinery**.

Monica generously detailed the step-by-step process of forging metal dovetail joinery, a technique she has spent years perfecting. I found the pictures and pre-recorded videos accompanying Monica's live explanations to be helpful in understanding her approach and technique. Particularly helpful was a detailed review and explanation of the tools needed to forge the dovetail joinery.

The presentation was broken down into modules such as 'Introduction,' 'Tooling,' and 'Anatomy of a Joint.' There was a question-and-answer session at the end of each module which several of us participants took advantage of to clarify a couple of points.

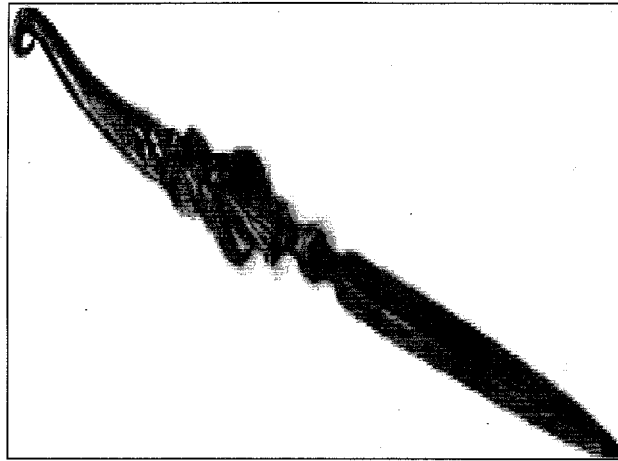
The course was hosted by Victoria Patti of BlacksmithHer.com. For a \$25 fee, BlacksmithHer offered this live course, including free access to the course inside my BlacksmithHer Academy account.

The upshot:

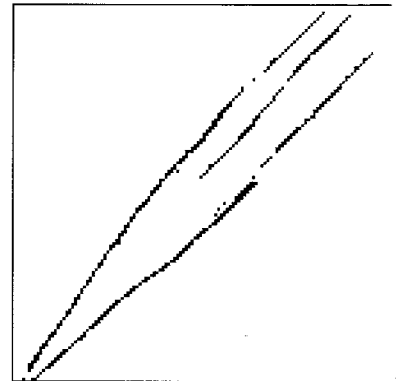
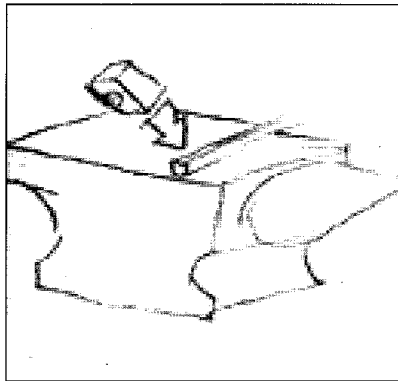
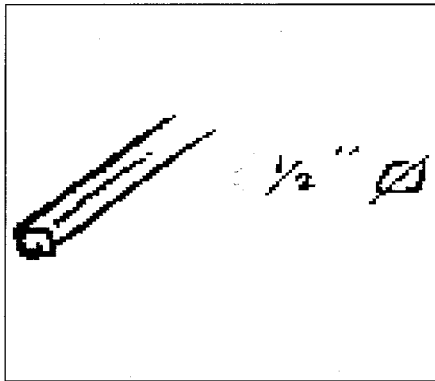
- Participants were provided a complete tool list needed to make the dovetail joints. A math workbook was also included as a take-away document because -- unfortunately for me -- Monica's technique involves a modicum of math.
- I'll have free access to Monica's dovetail joinery presentation forever. I can access the 6 modules, broken down into lessons. Each lesson is a 3- to 6-minute video that I can search in my BlacksmithHer Academy account, going right to the lesson I need to review. I'm sure this feature will come in handy once I decide to try my hand at this technique...

I'll sign up for more BlacksmithHer workshops that appeal to me. For example, I'm not necessarily interested in the 'Hammer Making' online workshop with Patrick Quinn that BlacksmithHer.com is hosting in September, but some of you folks might be, so I encourage you to check it out and see for yourselves.

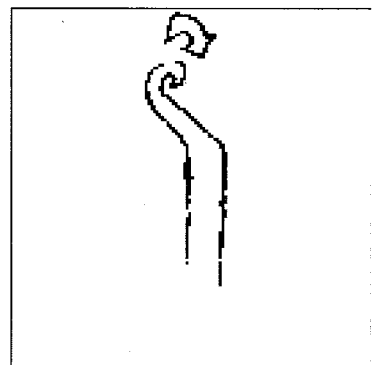
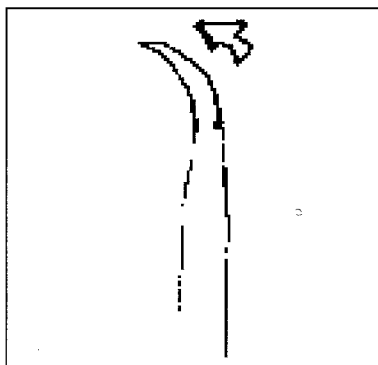
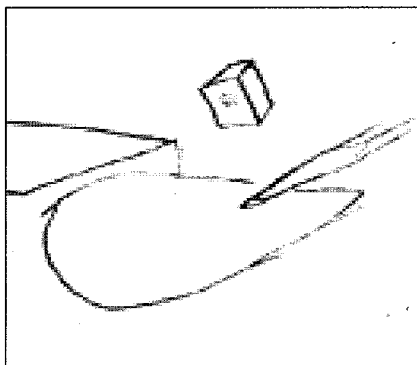
Monica will be demonstrating her dovetail joinery at the 2016 ABANA Conference this year in Salt Lake City, Utah. I, for one, am looking forward to seeing her again in July and watching her demo.



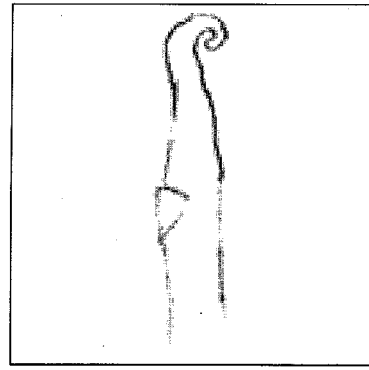
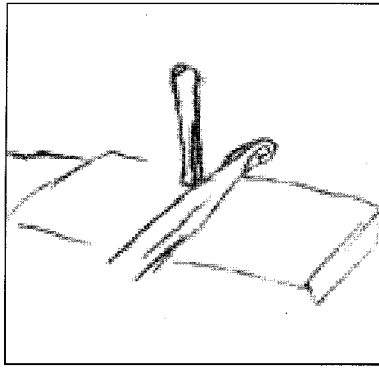
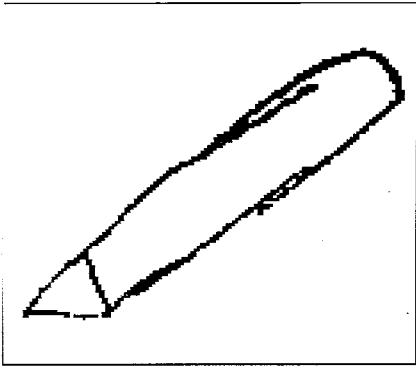
WIZARD LETTER OPENER



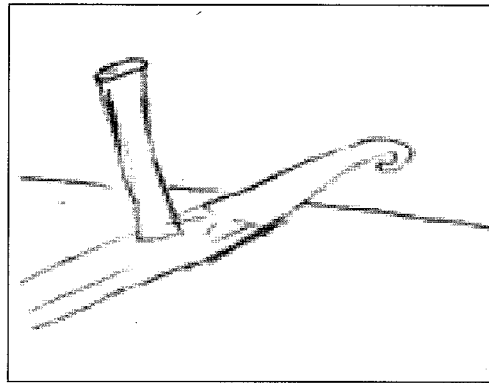
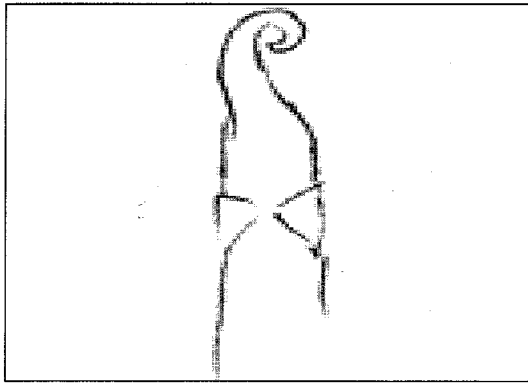
1. Start with a $\frac{1}{2}$ " Square Rod (1a) (It can be made from ANY size Rod). Draw a long taper on the end, hammering on two sides and working at the *Off Side* of the Anvil (1b).



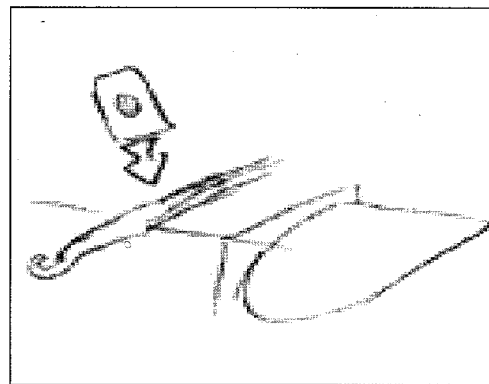
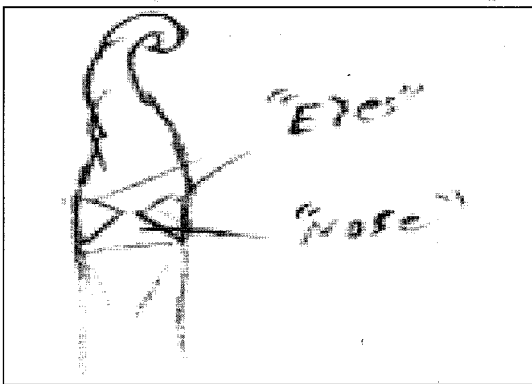
2. Curl the tapered end (2b), then make an offset with another curl (2c). This is going to make the Wizard's hat.



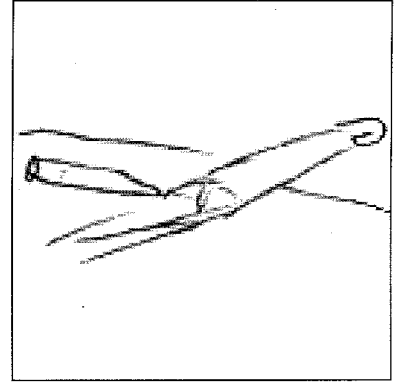
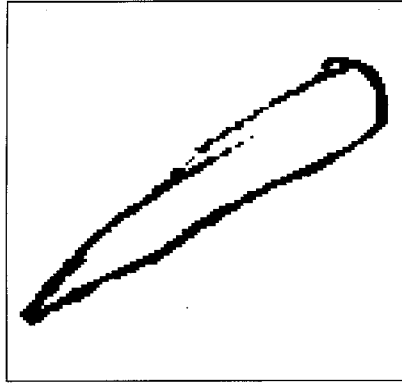
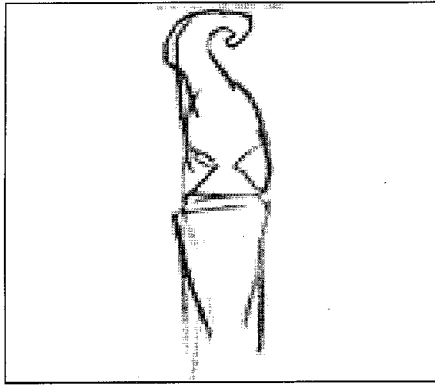
3. After you curl the hat and put the wave in it, use a 3-sided punch (3a) to make an impression starting in the center and tapering outward.(3b). This depression is where the eyes will end up going and also makes the side of the nose (3c).



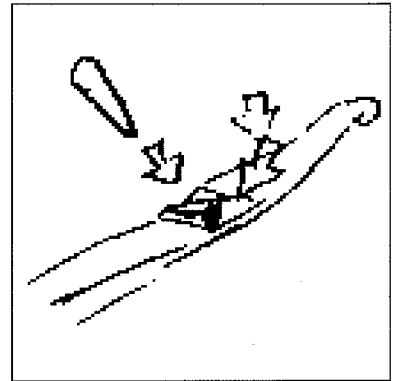
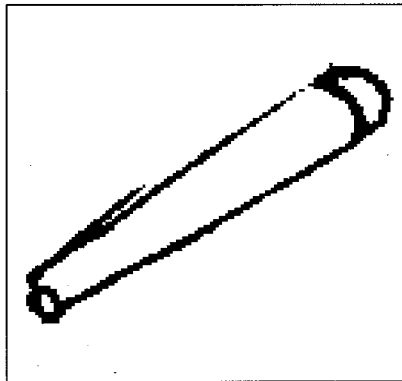
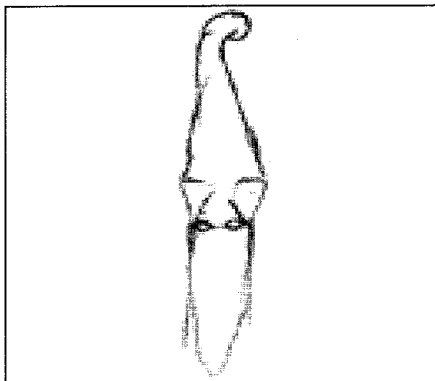
4. With the piece good and hot, using the 3-sided punch, make 2 impressions – one on the right and one on the left (4a), about 1/3 of the material thickness.



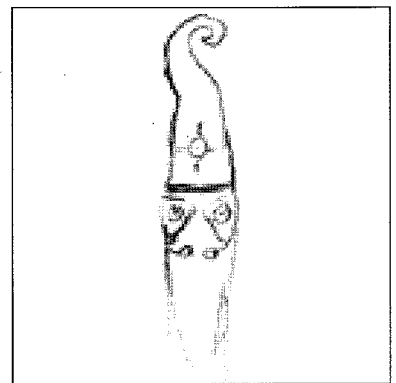
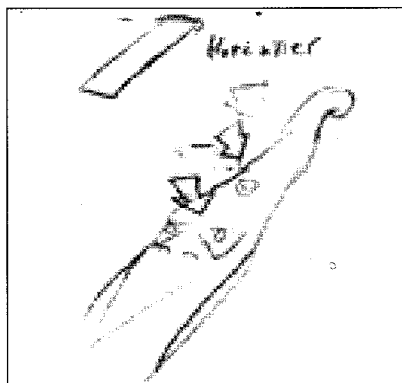
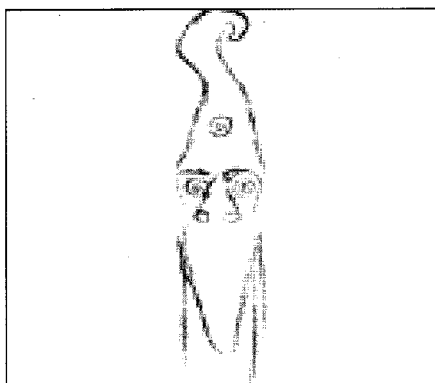
5. Now, using the straight side of the punch, set down the bottom of the nose. After you have a mark that can be felt, come to the sharp edge of the anvil and set it down using Half-Face Blow. This will raise the nose up.



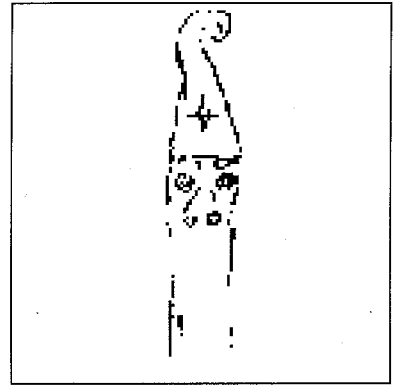
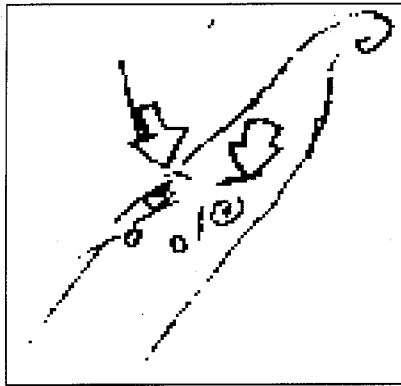
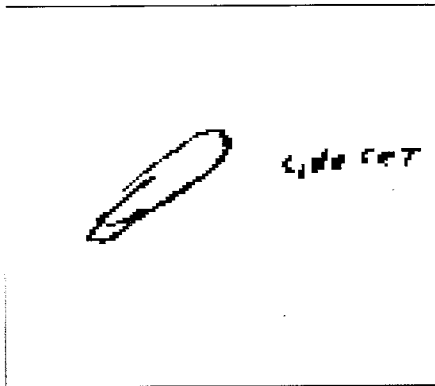
6. We get to start the face details. First thing we want to do is raise the nostrils (6a). Using just a regular center punch (6b), come in at about a 45 degree angle and punch the nostrils on each side of the nose (6c).



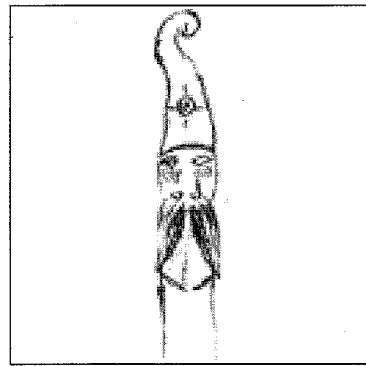
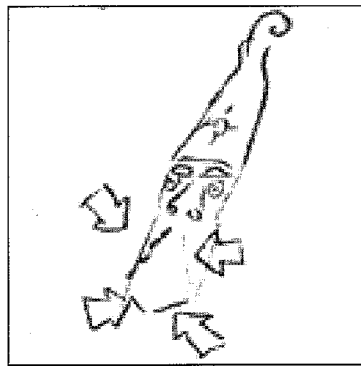
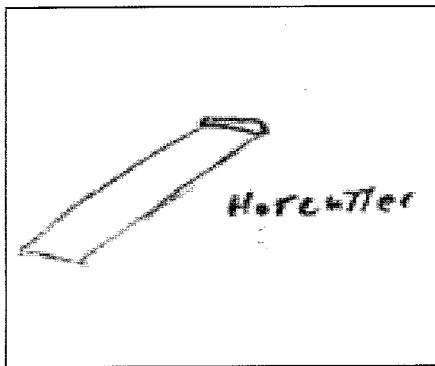
7. Once we have punched the nostrils (7a), we use an Eye Punch (7b) to punch the eyes (obviously one on each side 7c).



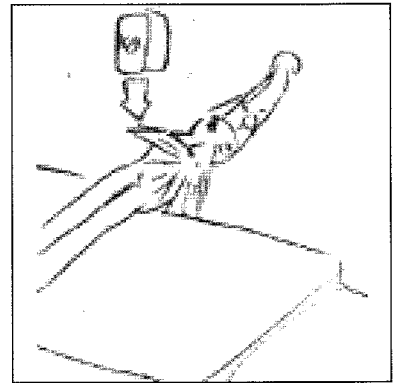
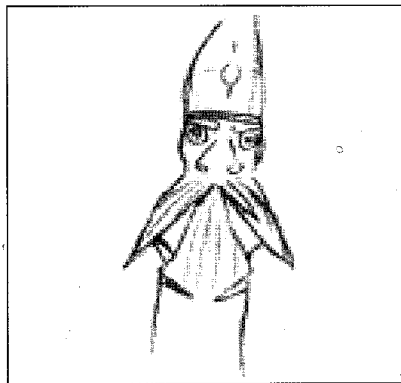
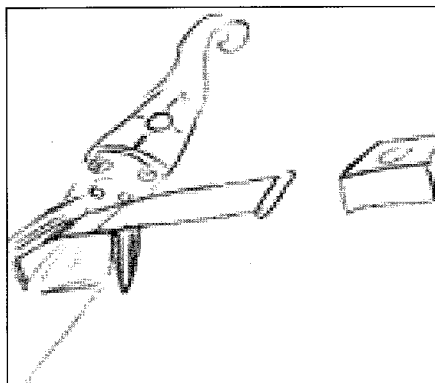
8. Using the Eye Punch, Put a little round mark in the center of the hat (8a). Then, use a hot cutter to put 4 lines criss-crossed to look like a star (8b and c).



9. Next are the eyebrows. Use a small Side Set Punch (9a) just above the eyes to make the eyebrows (9b). This is what it should resemble (9b).

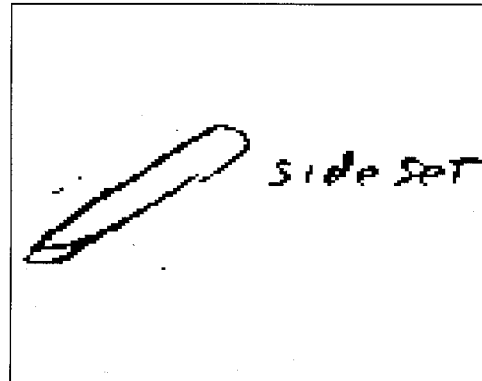


10. Also put a line above the eyebrows with the hot cutter to separate the hat from the forehead. Now, we are ready to make his mustache. Make a line with the Hot Cutter starting at the center of the nose and coming outward at an angle following the arrows in 10b. (This is where we will come back and cut it LATER). From the line outward, put some marks which will be the hair in the mustache (10c).

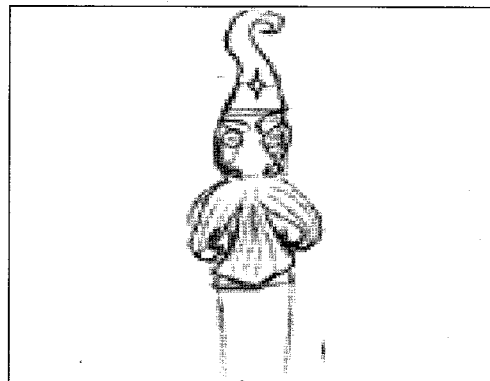


11. Take a good heat then with a sharp hot cutter, cut the mustache. Starting at the bottom outside and cutting inward at an angle (11a). After you do this on both sides, take the hot cutter and make two small cuts at the bottom of what will be his beard. Cut at an angle as shown

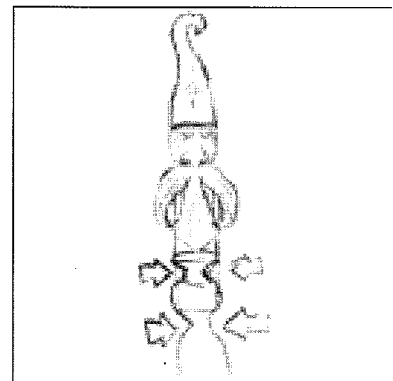
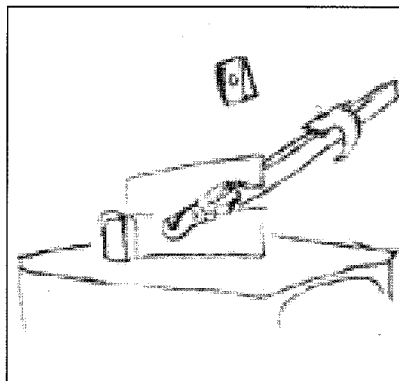
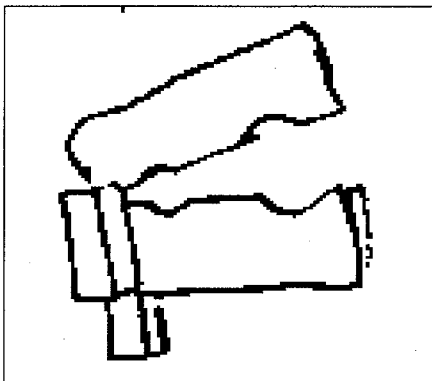
(11b). Then using the hot cutter, make some light lines to make hair on his beard.



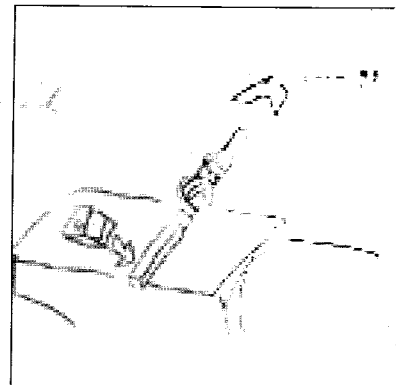
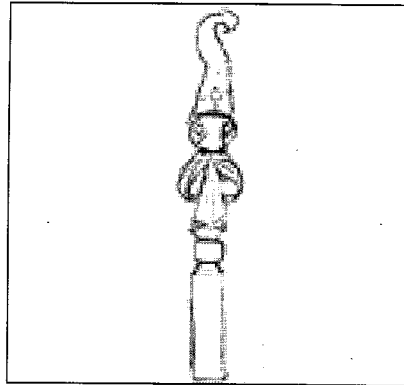
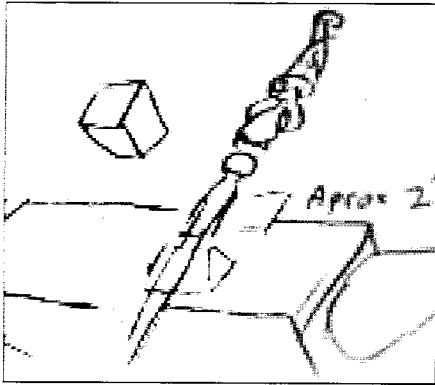
12. Once the mustache has been cut, heat up the area and turn the points inward so they won't cut anyone. This also gives the mustache the curled effect.



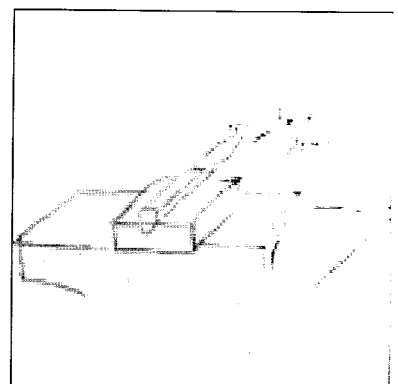
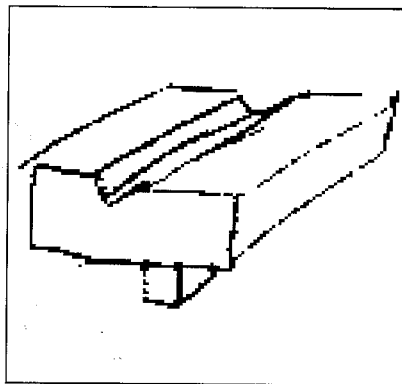
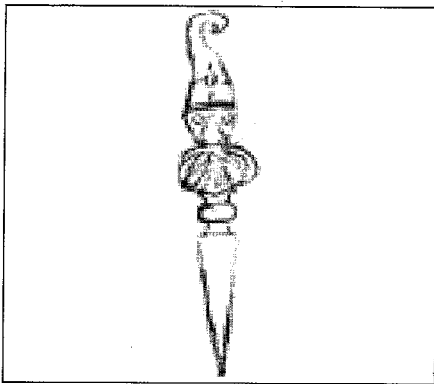
13. Using a Side Set punch, separate and define the bottom of the beard from the rest of the piece.



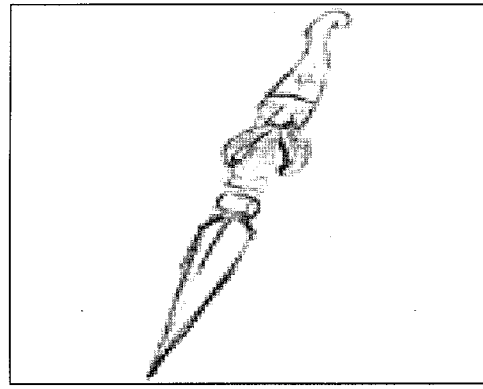
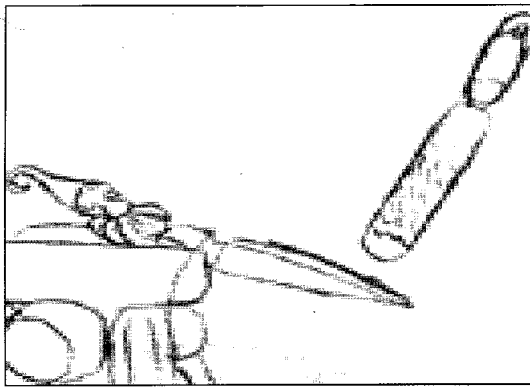
14. Now that we have the head finished, Use the Guillotine Fullering Tool (14a) to separate the head or handle from the blade in two places about $\frac{1}{2}$ " apart (14c).



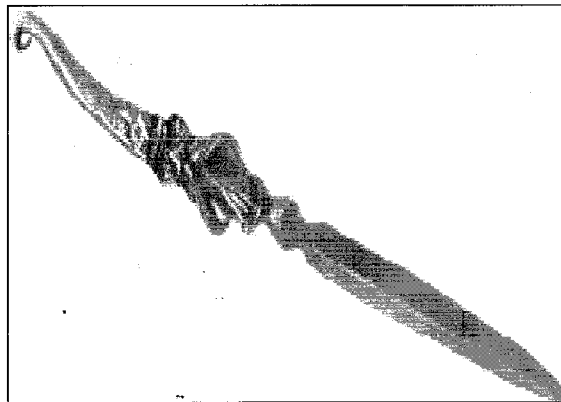
15. Next we will be starting the blade. First cut the stock off about 2" long. We taper it on two sides, leaving it 1/2" thick and the sides tapering down to nothing.



16. Once the blade is tapered-down (16a), place the blade in a "V" swedge (16b) and start shaping the blades into a "V". When doing this, you want to hammer it in the center, down in the swedge block, going from front to back, then work it from back to front (16c). By doing it this way, it keeps the blade straight.



17. Once you have reached this point, get a good heat and Hot rasp the finish shape to the blade. (A Makita grinder works real good for this). After you have the finished shape on the blade, put it back into the forge and heat the blade to get it colored. Once colored, apply bees wax and wire brush to get a nice sheen.



18. Your finished piece should look something like this.

Scanned from the book

Fun Forging II by Bill Epps

A series of four self published books.



Bill Epps demoing for Baclones Forge, July 2006

photo by Harry Cabluck



Congratulations to Rick Dawdy on his retirement from the Judson School District.

Now he has more time for blacksmithing!

photo from Jerry Achterberg



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