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# THE FORGE FIRE

**The Newsletter of the Indiana Blacksmithing Association, Inc.  
An Affiliate Of The Artists-Blacksmiths' Association of North  
America, Inc.**

IBA is a Not For Profit Indiana Corporation recognized by the IRS under section 501(c)(3)

9:30 AM is the regular meeting time for IBA Hammer-Ins  
with beginner training available at 9:00 AM.  
**PLEASE MAKE SURE TO ASK FOR HELP!**

**If you would like an IBA membership application form,  
please contact Rob Hough, Membership Secretary  
(317) 517-0427.**

BULK LOTS ARE AVAILABLE TO DEMONSTRATORS,  
SHOPS, SHOWS AND OTHERS WILLING TO MAKE THEM AVAILABLE.  
WE APPRECIATE YOUR HELP.

The Indiana Blacksmithing Association, Inc., its staff, officers, directors, members, and hosts and the *Forge Fire*, specifically disclaim any responsibility or liability for damages or injuries as a result of any construction, design, use, manufacture or other activity undertaken as a result of the use, or application of, information contained in any articles in the *Forge Fire*. The Indiana Blacksmithing Association, Inc. And the *Forge Fire* assumes no responsibility or liability for the accuracy, fitness, proper design, safety, or safe use of any information contained in the *Forge Fire*.

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**More nearby resources and organizations for blacksmiths:**  
**Rural Smiths of Mid-America:**  
Meetings are on the first Saturday of each month  
Call Ron Gill  
317-374-8323 for details

IBA MEETING SCHEDULE	
Check the latest <i>Forge Fire</i> for monthly IBA revisions.	
<b>Nov 18 2023</b>	<b>NO MEETING</b>
<b>Dec 9 2023</b>	<b>DON REITZEL SHOP STILESVILLE, IN</b>
<b>Jan 20 2024</b>	<b>STEVE KING SHOP PAOLI</b>
<b>Feb 17 2024</b>	<b>TBD</b>



## Editors Message

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### **Dates to Remember**

December 9 ham-  
mer in and board  
meeting at Don  
Reitzel's

January 20  
Hammer in at Ste-  
ve King's

The IBA will have a December hammer in and board meeting at Don Reitzel's shop in Stilesville. As usual the December hammer in will be held on the second Saturday to avoid conflicts with Christmas holiday festivities. The January hammer in will be hosted by Steve King in Paoli.

Previously I had posted that Coal Iron Works would be hosting a new satellite group. I failed to follow up with details. Coal Iron Works located at 516 Meridian St, Anderson, IN 46016 will be hosting hammer ins on the last Saturday of each month, except December. The next hammer in will be held on November 25, followed by January 27. The full schedule for 2024 can be found here: [Indiana Blacksmithing Association Meetings – Coal Iron Works](#) .

I have known about Coal Iron's forging presses. I was surprised to see they also offer self contained power hammers and induction forges. They also carry materials such as A33 Flutagon, H13 and Aluminum Bronze that you may not find at your steel supplier. Check out their website.

The book publisher Artisan Ideas asked me to review the new second edition *A Blacksmith Primer* by Randy McDaniel. The book is an easy read, which makes it a good choice for beginning smiths. The review is on page 5. The book is available at multiple online sites, including long time IBA supporter Blue Moon Press ([Blue Moon Press - Home Page](#)).

This month's edition is focused on Christmas decorations. Hopefully you will find a project you like.

Previously I posted that I have new phone number and email. Some time in December I will loose access to my old phone and email. If you want to reach me, please phone or text to 812-569-1209 or email at [cmikendrick@gmail.com](mailto:cmikendrick@gmail.com).

**IBA website:** [www.indianablacksmithing.org](http://www.indianablacksmithing.org) **IBA Facebook page:** [www.facebook.com/groups/IndianaBlacksmithingAssociation/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/IndianaBlacksmithingAssociation/)

## IBA Satellite Groups and News

**1) Sutton-Terock Memorial Blacksmith Shop**

Meet: 2nd Saturday at 9 AM  
 Contacts: Fred Oden (574) 223-3508  
 Tim Pearson (574) 298-8595

**2) Jennings County Historical Society Blacksmith Shop**

Meet: 2nd Saturday at 9 AM  
 Contact: Paul Bray (812) 521-7177

**3) Wabash Valley Blacksmith Shop**

Meet: 3rd Saturday at 9 AM  
 Contacts: Bill Cochran (812) 241-8447  
 Max Hoopengartner (812) 249-8303

**4) Fall Creek Blacksmith Shop**

Meet: 4th Saturday at 9 AM  
 Contacts: Gary Phillips (260) 251-4670

**5) Maumee Valley Blacksmiths**

Meet: 2nd Saturday  
 Contacts: Clint Casey (260) 627-6270  
 Mark Thomas (260) 758 2332

**6) St. Joe Valley Forgers**

Meet: 4th Saturday at 9 AM  
 Contacts: Bill Conyers (574) 277-8729  
 John Latowski (574) 344-1730

**7) Rocky Forge Blacksmith Guild**

Meet: 2nd Saturday at 9 AM  
 Contacts: Ted Stout (765) 572-2467

**8) Meteorite Mashers**

Contacts: Mike Mills (812) 633-4273  
 Steve King (812) 797-0059  
 Jeff Reinhardt 812-949-7163

**9) Whitewater Valley Blacksmiths**

Meet: 2nd Saturday  
 Contact: Keith Hicks (765) 914-6584

**10) Bunkum Valley Metalsmiths**

Meet: 1st Saturday  
 Contacts: Jim Malone (812) 725-3311  
 Terry Byers (812) 275-7150  
 Carol Baker (317) 809-0314

**11) Covered Bridge Blacksmith Guild**

Meet: 1st Saturday  
 Contact: John Bennett (812) 877-7274

**12) Snake Road Forge**

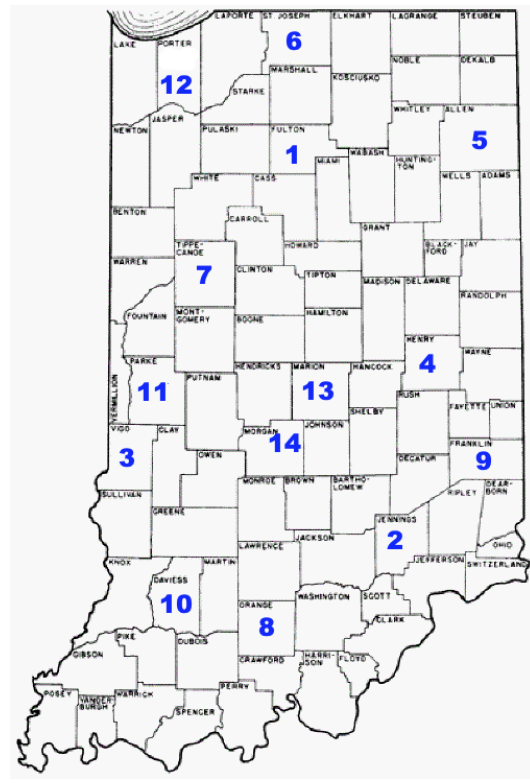
Meet: 1st Saturday  
 Contact: Rod Marvel (219) 241-0628

**13) Satellite 13**

Meet: 4th Saturday  
 Contact: Darrin Burch (317) 607-3170  
 Doug Wilson (317) 439-7684

**14) Old Town Waverly Blacksmiths**

Meet: 2nd Saturday  
 Contacts: Mike Lyvers (317-728-5771),  
 Kenny Hale (765-318-3390),  
 Mike Jackson (317-509-9115).



**Jennings County Historical Society Blacksmith Shop**

Kenny Dettmer brought a big slide hammer and drilled a hole in the key on the newly acquired 50. He made an adapter for the for the slide at home. they tried to pull the key. but it didn't work. the small end of the key was mushroomed . He finally used a striking hammer and got it to move a little. He drove it back in and used a chisel to trim it up. The puller still didn't work. He reworked a punch he found and used the sledge and finally got it out. The dovetail was in really good shape. They cleaned it up ,dressed the old key and shimmed it up, put it all back together by 12:30.

November meeting is at Kevin Welsh, 25619 Gill Rd. Nabb,IN.  
 December at John Cummins, 14473 Chesterville Rd. Moores Hill, IN.  
 January at Dave Good, 603 S Chestnut St. Seymour.  
 Feb. at Kenny Dettmer's forge,15721 S 250W Columbus IN.



## IBA Satellite Groups and News (continued)

### Bunkum Valley Metalsmiths

This month the Bunkum Valley Metalsmiths had a beautiful weather day to meet. We had 20 something attendees which included 4 new people wanting to learn and a visitor or two. See if you can spot our visitor it was great to see him and catch up! Everyone said they enjoyed themselves and we are always glad to help.

Next month we are asking everyone to create a Christmas ornament. The ornaments are raffled off like iron in the hat. We have had some very creative designs in the past. Everyone is welcome to come and participate.

Happy Thanksgiving! Enjoy the pictures!



## IBA Satellite Groups and News (continued)

### Meteorite Mashers

We met at Jason Bowman's very nice shop. The weather was drizzly outside but inside the shop all was good. Had a new couple who were beginners and they had an excellent start from Mike Mills. They won a very nice hand forged hammer from Tanner Tuell, a nicely sized 1.75# hammer. Great way to start. Had a small crowd this month, who enjoyed the chili the Bowman's provided as well as the tortilla soup Mike Mills brought.

Next month's meeting is the now infamous "Smoked Turkey Hammer-in" at Jeff Reinhardt's shop in Floyds Knobs. It will be the traditional Saturday after Thanksgiving, November 25th. Jeff will smoke at least 2 turkeys for sandwiches, the iron in the hat is the best of any monthly meeting in the IBA (Jeff is still moving "Treasures" on from his vast collection.) So put it on you calendar and bring something nice for the lunch and for iron in the hat.

### Book Review A Blacksmith Primer By Randy McDaniel

Artisan Ideas ([Online bookstore for artisans, craftsmen and hobbyists \(artisanideas.com\)](http://www.artisanideas.com)) asked me to review the second edition release of Randy McDaniel's *A Blacksmith Primer*. The first edition was released in 1998.

The book remains true to its form. The target audience is beginner and novice level smiths looking to advance into the intermediate level.

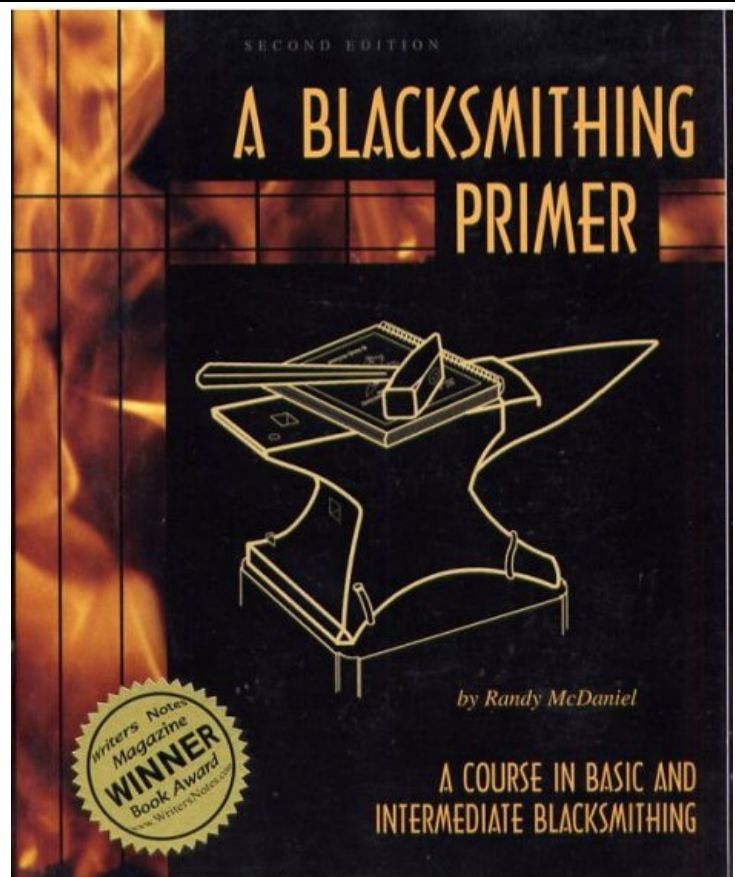
The book is well written for beginners. It starts with a brief overview on tools, shop design and basic hammer blows and fire management.

Most of the book consists of hands-on projects that require progressively increasing skills. The first project is a simple drive hook with specific guidance on drawing, bending and cutting with a hardie. Later projects cover techniques such as slitting, punching, twisting, scrolls and collars, welding and heat treating. Projects include hinges, tongs, chain and animal heads.

The writing style is simple, which means the book is easy to read. Many educational books have a dry encyclopedic style that makes it tough to get through. *A Blacksmith Primer* is not one of those books. You can pick it up, understand it and keep reading.

I definitely recommend *A Blacksmith Primer* as a good resource for beginning blacksmiths. The book is available at a number of on-line sources, including directly from Artisan Ideas and from Blue Moon Press.

Artisan Ideas: [Online bookstore for artisans, craftsmen and hobbyists \(artisanideas.com\)](http://www.artisanideas.com)  
Blue Moon Press: [Blacksmithing Primer, A \(bluemoonpress.org\)](http://www.bluemoonpress.org)



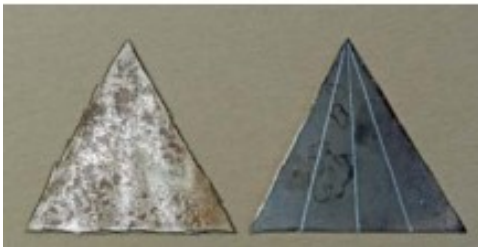


## Christmas Tree Ornament

By Steve Anderson, a MABA member  
Pictures & write-up by Steven Sporre

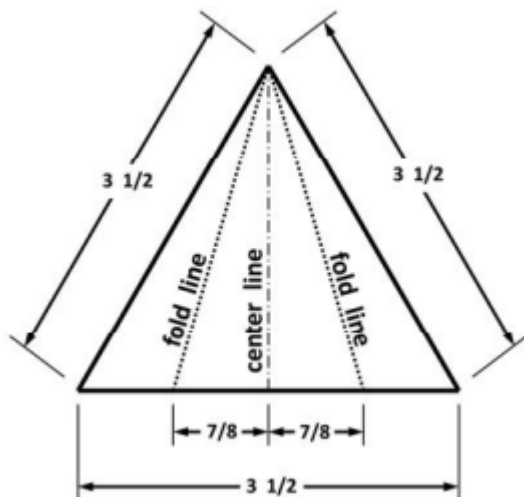


The decoration of the tree and starry sky was a fold forming exercise. The 1.8 ounce ornament on the right is lighter material and has the background removed to reduce its weight.



On a 3" strip of 16 gauge sheet steel, lay out an equilateral triangle with 3-1/2" sides. Chisel, saw or shear the triangle from the strip, then clean up and straighten the edges with a file.

To lay out the ornament, drop a centerline from the top point down to the center of the base. Make two marks on the base, 7/8" on either side of the centerline. Drawing lines from the top point to the two marks determines the fold lines.



Bend the two outer edges back along the fold lines, first to 90 degrees. The first bend can be done between the vise jaws. Using angle iron jaw inserts gets a crisp, straight bend. The first side can be bent all the way over at this point, but you may have issues with backing the entire length of the second bend. Getting a crisp, straight bend up by the point is difficult.



So, for the second bend use a wedge shaped spacer to get in close to the top point. The process is the same as bending a collar in the vise and using a spacer to bend the second leg.



Progressively hammer the sides down onto the back of the tree, using a wide flat chisel and the anvil's step to work against. Work the material to have a smooth transition at the point.

Flatten the tree on the face of the anvil. Using 16 gauge or thicker material allows deeper impressions to be made in the next step, and swell along the edges to look more like boughs.



Heating the ornament makes deeper impressions. Heat the tree and create the impression of boughs with a straight peened hammer on the front of the tree. Then decorate the tree by adding ornament impressions with a round eye punch, chiseling in garland swags, stars or twinkling candles. Wire brush clean, then highlight with a brass wire brush as it cools. Lastly, drill a small hole at the top for a wire ornament hook. Add a bead if you like.



This 2 page article reprinted from the Nov-Dec 2023 edition of *The Upsetter*, the newsletter of the Michigan Artist Blacksmith Association





## Snowman Ornament

*By Steven Spoerre, a MABA member*

This snowman consists of two circles, the lower drifted to 1-1/4", and the upper drifted to 7/8".

Calculate the circumference of each circle by multiplying the drift diameter by 3.1416. Calculate the slit lengths by dividing the circumference by 2 and subtracting 1/8" from each. The length of the large slit is 1.84" (just under 1-7/8"), and the length of the small slit is 1.25" (1-1/4").

Divide the width of the stock by 2, to get the space between the slits.

For this snowman lay out the slit lines on both sides of a piece of 3/16 x 1/2 inch flat stock, starting 3/8" from the end.



Use a cold chisel to progressively cut through the two slits from both sides, stopping short of the very ends. When the chisel breaks through, open the slit just enough to get a hacksaw blade through.



Remove most of the chisel "rag" with the saw, and cut to the ends of each slit.

Partially open the slits cold over the hardie hole with a slitting chisel.



This 2 page article reprinted from the Nov-Dec 2023 edition of *The Upsetter*, the newsletter of the Michigan Artist Blacksmith Association



Heat the bar and drift the large hole first.



Round up the hole on the anvil's horn, or a cone mandrel. Taking as many heats as necessary.



Open the slit, then heat the bar and drift the second hole. Tweak the area between the two holes so they are aligned above each other.



Again, round up the hole on the anvil's horn, or a cone mandrel.

Flatten the snowman's body. File any sharp edges inside the circles and break any sharp corners around the outside.



Grind off the end tab so the bottom circle visually has a consistent wall thickness, then break those corners too.

Cut the snowman from the parent stock, leaving enough to have the impression of a top hat.

Add a circular hat brim that slips down to the top of the head. Cut a 1" diameter circle from 16



gauge sheet metal. Make the centered hole by drilling two 3/16" holes, chiseling out the bridge between them, then filing to fit over the hat shape.

Drill a 1/16" hole in the hat for the thread or hook to go through. As pictured the ornament weighs 1.7 ounces.

This article reprinted from The Blacksmiths' Guild of the Potomac, Inc. November/December 2012

# The Angle-Drop Christmas Tree

Robert Dixon Gumm

This is an easy project to accomplish. It can be a blacksmith project, using “unplugged” tools and forging techniques, or it can be a welding project, using stick or mig welding, a cutting wheel, and angle grinder. Obtaining angle drops shouldn't be too difficult — ask around your blacksmiths' guild, or a metal fabrication shop. You can also cut angle iron and bend the angle to obtain the desired shape.

## Materials:

Angle drops of any (identical) size  
 Steel pipe proportionate to angle drops  
 Steel nut  
 Blacksmith's glue gun (MIG) or glue stick (7018)

1. Line up your drops and determine which ones would look best.
2. Determine the height that you desire and use as many drops as you need. Then mark the cut-off points on the drops to match the preferred shape.
3. Cut a 1" or 2" cross section of steel pipe. I had access to a band-saw, and cut a 1.5" section at an angle.
4. Take the tree branches and shape them for the desired effect.
5. Line up the completed branches to form the tree figure. Leave a gap between each piece so that there will be enough room to get a weld that will penetrate between the branches.
6. Weld the completed tree to the steel ring. Then weld the nut to the top.

Depending upon the size that you choose, this can be a free-standing tree for mantle or table, or it can be a tree to hang from your Christmas tree. If you choose the latter, make sure that it is small enough not to bend the branch. If you have cats, dogs, or small children, consider hanging it near the floor and away from glass balls and lights.





# Fir Tree Hooks

Tips  
FOR  
YOUR  
Shop

5 inches of 1/4" x 1" Stock

Mark bar at 3 inches (for tree) and 5 inches (2 inches for hook)

**Photo A:** Forge a short point on bar for top of tree. Keep thickness of point at about 1/8" thick.

Fuller at 3 inch mark to about 1/4 inch wide.

**Photo B:** Cool bar and mark cuts to form branches. Note spacing of cut increases from top to bottom of tree. Also as show the cuts are symmetric and about 1/4 inch short of center line of bar. One tree in picture was forged with staggered cuts, for a different look.

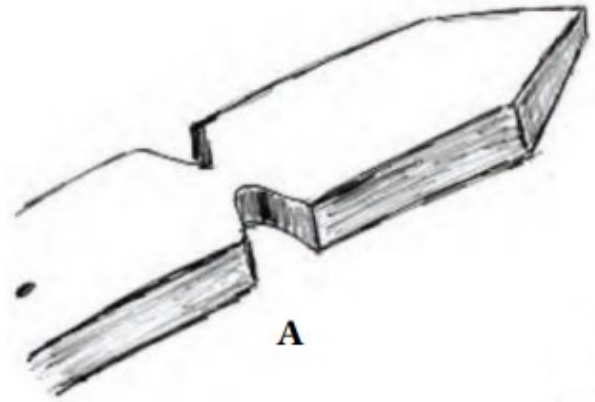
**Photo C:** Finish cuts working only from one side and using cutting plate to protect anvil face.

**Photo D:** Use small cross pein hammer to forge tree. Start by fullering down the center of tree to help separate the branches.

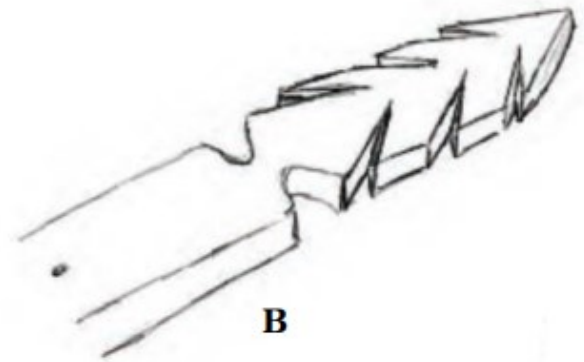
Use bull nose punch to make dimple and then punch mounting hole.

Cut bar at 5 inch mark and forge hook.

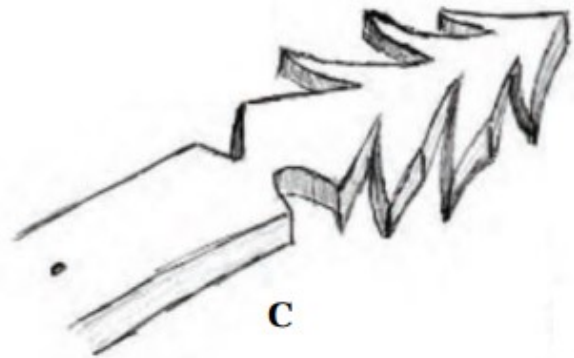
*Editor Note: Our grateful thanks to the New England Blacksmith Association for sharing content from their newsletter, 2015 Issue.*



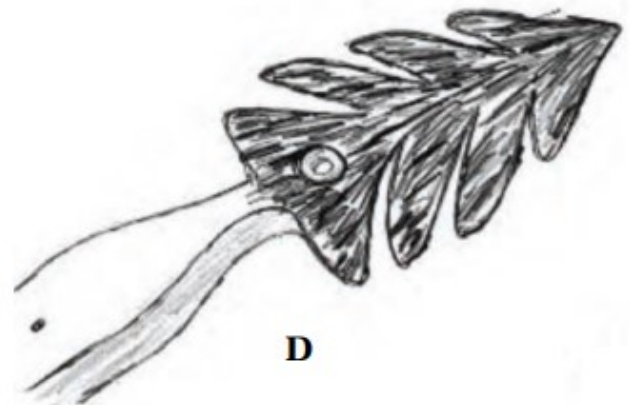
A



B



C



D





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**Rob Hough**  
Membership Secretary  
9790 N Sharp Bend Rd  
Albany, IN 47320

First Class Mail

Address Correction Requested  
If Undeliverable return to  
sender

## December 9 Hammer In & Board Meeting

(2nd Saturday)

**Don Reitzel's Shop**

**4113 W County Road 900 S, Stilesville, IN 46180**

Directions: Take I-70 west of Indianapolis to exit 59 (SR 39). North on SR 39 for 1 mile. Turn left on County Road 900. Shop is about 6 miles on left.

**January 20 Hammer In**

**Steve King's Shop**

**1155 S. Paoli Unionville Rd.**

**Paoli, IN 47454**

