



Balcones Forge Dispatch

President's Corner

December 2012

Balcones Forge



Thanksgiving has come and gone and I hope you all had a good one. I know that I have so much to be thankful for.

We all had a good time in Hunt, Texas at the shop of Gary Hilton. The drive up was beautiful and the weather could not have been better. Several items were

discussed at the meeting. First was the introduction of the current board. These have been listed in our newsletter. Contact information can be found on our website (balconesforge.org). Please contact us by phone or email for any and all complaints, ideas or suggestions.

Second, were future meetings. Our December meeting will be on Saturday, the 15th at the shop of William Bastas (used to be Larry Crawford's) in Marble Falls. William will be forging an anvil of approximately 10 lbs. We are asked to forge an anvil but, they will not be traded. Please bring them for show and tell. We also had the following suggestions for places and demonstrations:

Steel Mill Tour –	Seguin
Finishes -	?
Heat Treating & Finishing -?	
Longhorn Caverns Tour -	
See ACC's work – would be a great hot weather meeting	
Iron Pour -	Dave Koenig - HABA
Tool Building Workshops -	Guillotine Fuller, Chisels, Punches, Tongs.....

This is your organization. Please tell us what you want, so we can make it all that you would like it to be.

Meeting Date is Dec 15

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President's message continued

Marsha and I enjoyed hosting the October meeting. It sounds like everyone had a good time and we are planning to do it again next October. We learned a lot hosting the event, and feel that we can make the next one even better. We will keep you posted as the date draws near.

Matt Czosnek will be setting up the volunteer schedule for Pioneer Museum in Fredericksburg the week of Spring Break (March 11-17).

Don't forget, our next competition item will be Spurs. This will be at our February 16th meeting at Steephollow Forge in Bryan, Texas. This is at the shop of Alan and Jeff Lee. We have had a joint meeting with HABA there the last two years. This year the North Texas Blacksmith Association will be joining us. We will be there before you know it, so you better get to work on those spurs.

I would like to thank Gary and Sue Hilton for their hospitality. Gary put on several demonstrations for us. First, he showed us his forge. He explained that he prefers to use coke over coal because it is much cleaner. He purchases his coke from Centaur Forge in New Braunfels. Next, he used a Smithin Magician tenon tool to fuller some tubing to make cat tails. Then he forged the long slender leaves to go with them. From there he put a scroll jig in the vise and showed us how to make a snub end scroll. He finished off by showing us how he makes his cowboy hats.

Several of us had taken a sack lunch and took a tour of the grounds around Gary's shop and home. He has some amazing metal sculptures around the property. From ants, to armadillos, to buffalo and an indian, to the barmaid, to the..... You really have to see them, they are amazing. Thank you Gary, we had a great time.

Now it is time to prepare for the holidays. Where

does the time go? Watch out for all of the crazies out on the road.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year,

Jerry Whitley
President, Balcones Forge

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Here is the current list of Balcones Board Members.

Jerry Achterberg
Rudy Billings, Treasurer
Matt Czosnek, Vice President
John Crouchet
Jim Elliot
George Graham
Vince Herod, Editor
Tom Lupton
Jerry Whitley, President
Laurie Wicker, Secretary

DECEMBER 2012 MEETING

December 15 -- 9:30

The Forge of William Bastas

If you have never seen William Bastas demo, you are in for an outstanding event. If you have been lucky enough to attend one of his classes at Austin Community College, then you already know. You won't want to miss this one as William forges an anvil.

2401 Commerce St, Marble Falls, TX
Trade Item.....An Anvil

Try your hand at forging an anvil and see how you compare to how William creates his. Give it a shot. Yep, it can be a small one.

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Photos by Gerald Pollard

NOVEMBER MEETING REPORT

For our November meeting of Balcones Forge we met on a chilly morning at Gary Hiltons shop in Hunt, Texas. Hunt is in the heart of the Texas Hill Country formed eons ago by the Edwards Uplift. It was quite a change geologically from last months meeting in Devine on the edge of the rolling Gulf Costal Plains.

Our new president, Jerry Whitley, introduced the newly elected board to the 16 members present at the start of the meeting and passed out a schedule of coming events for us to peruse.

John Crouchet noted that there were no tool making events scheduled and a discussion ensued about the possibility of having such an event in the future. He reminded us of the success of past tool making meetings where everyone participated in the making of tongs at one, and smithing magicians at another. Jerry Whitley offered to host such a meeting in October of 2013 and it was generally agreed that it would be a good idea.

The December meeting will be early to avoid the rush of the Christmas holidays and will be at William Bastas's shop in Marble Falls. The date and location can be found in another section of this newsletter .The trade item will be a small anvil to weigh approximately two pounds.

The competition trade item for the meeting at Gary Hiltons shop was announced at the last meeting to be a gophering iron, apparently something we all have a serious need for, but didn't know it. No body found any gophers to iron, much to the delight of the elusive gophers, so we have to stick to the original intent of the item, which is to iron ruffles and lace for people 100's of years ago. The reason why escapes the application of all reason, fashion being what it is. Jerry Whitley, Jerry Achterberg and Tim Tellander made examples of the iron. Ed Malmgren and Gary Hilton were the competition judges. Jerry Whitley's entry won the prize which was the very nice Damascus bladed pen knife provided by Balcones Forge Treasurer Rudy Billings.

The next competition trade item will be a pair of spurs, so you should have plenty of time to make them before the meeting at the Lee's shop in Bryan. The time and location of the meeting can be found in another section of the newsletter. There was a discussion about whether or not to judge the spurs by their usefulness as well as by artistic representation.

Visiting HABA treasurer Ed Malmgren asked if we would be interested in doing an iron smelt in Oldenburg at one of HABA's (Houston Area Blacksmith Association) and a number of members thought it would be a good idea, but no date has been set.

Jerry Achterberg gave us an encouraging report about George Craig, it seems that his illness is not a dire as originally reported and his prospects for the future are much improved. We are all very glad to receive this news and wish George the best.

Gary Hilton's demonstration included cattails made of steel bar stock and thin wall pipe, he also made snub end scrolls, square bar decorative elements, a cowboy hat, and a pillow made from two pieces of sheet metal welded all around the edges and blown up with air from a compressor.

Some good advice from Gary is to use a jig to bend scrolls if you need to repeat a pattern more than once. Making a number of scrolls come out the same without using a jig is a very hard thing to do and takes a lot more time than bending each piece around a jig. He also advises us to not repeatedly hit a scroll in the same place when adjusting its size, but to move it on the anvil so it won't be distorted by the hammer blows. Use scrolling tongs to adjust the size of the scroll after it is bent around the jig. Gary uses multiple ball peen hammers to sink the crown of cowboy hats into a depression in one of his swage blocks and puts the creases in the crown with chisels.

It was a very interesting demonstration enjoyed by all and we thank Gary for all his hard work in his presentation.

We have heard a lot of opinions about the best

way to make an anvil stand using wood, concrete or steel. Gary puts an end to all of the arguments with anvil stands made of stacked up truck wheels, channel, angle, I beam, chain, and pieces of scrap. He has two anvils mounted in this way which weigh in excess of 400 pounds and they didn't move even a little bit when he was repeatedly hammering heavy bar stock with a 4 pound hammer. Gary's good advice is to get the job done, and to do it the way you want to and to finish it however you please and if you want to forge a big piece of steel, use a big hammer. Yeah, Gary, I'll buy that.

Tom Lupton
Balcones Forge Board Member At Large



Photos by Jerry Whitley



Gary Hilton's anvil stand.
Photo by Tom Lupton





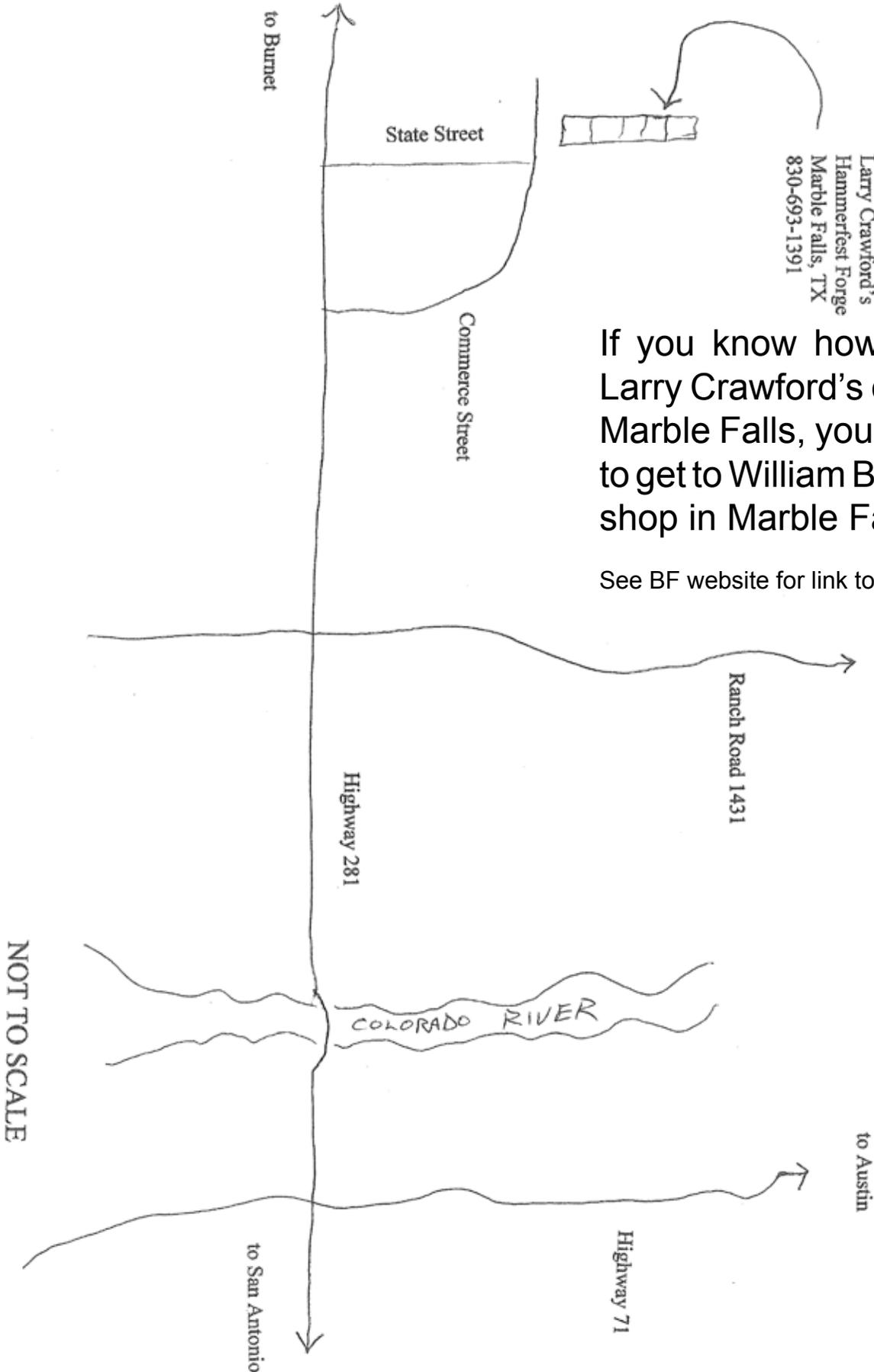
Trade Items from the November Meeting (above). *Photos by Jerry Whitley.*



Larry Crawford's
Hammerfest Forge
Marble Falls, TX
830-693-1391

If you know how to get to
Larry Crawford's old shop in
Marble Falls, you know how
to get to William Bastas' new
shop in Marble Falls!

See BF website for link to detailed map.





Nimba Titan anvil won by Rudy Billings at the 2102 ABANA conference. Rudy will be donating this anvil to the auction at the Bluebonnet Demo in the Spring of 2013. Start saving now, this will have a reserve! *photos by Vince Herod*

Return Service Requested

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