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March 2017

# 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 Farrel Wells, Membership Secretary  
(765) 768-6235.**

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

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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 *Forge Fire* for monthly **IBA** revisions.

**Mar 18 2017** **ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING KELLEY FARM**

**Apr 15 2017** **WHITEWATER VALLEY**

**May 20 2017** **TBD**

**June 2-4 2017** **IBA CONFERENCE TIPTON FAIRGROUNDS**

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- PG 7 CIRCULAR
- BOLSTER PLATE
- PGS 8-10 FREDDY'S ELEPHANT
- PG11 STATIONARY PUNCHES

**Dates to Remember**

- March 18 Annual Business Meeting at Kelley Farms
- May 31/June 1 Hammer & Tong Class at Conner Prairie
- June 2-4 IBA Conference

**Editors Message**

The February hammer-in was hosted by Ken Dettmer. We had a big turn out as usual. Michael Wollowski started by demonstrating a piece by German blacksmith Fritz Kuhn. The demonstration involved slitting and forging to create a fish image. The finished piece had good balance and matched the photograph of the original. After Michael's demonstration some new members got hands on training while Ken formed some finials using spring swages in the 100 lb hammer. Next month our hammer-in will be hosted by the White-water Valley Blacksmiths at Joyce Roell's Big Cedar Forge.

This month will be our annual business meeting at Kelley Farm. If you have not already done so, be sure to send your Board of Directors ballots soon. Steve King needs to receive them by March 15. If you plan on attending the business meeting, you can hand deliver your ballots at that time.

Get Rookie and Blacksmith of the Year nominations to Charlie Helton.

The IBA Conference is just around the corner. Our feature demonstrators are Robert Taylor and Gordon Williams. Robert is a renowned master in copper work. Gordon demonstrates and teaches a wide variety of blacksmithing techniques. I have seen Gordon demonstrate at Pontiac. He will hold your interest. Other demonstrators, classes and contests will be going on. The theme of this year's group contest is "free standing coat rack". A number of groups have been working hard on their project. The complete line up and conference brochure will be coming out shortly.

Most of you know that Jim Johnston started a tradition of organizing a special blacksmithing class prior to the IBA Conference. This year's class subject is hammer and tong making, with Nathan Allen instructing. The class dates are May 31 and June at Conner Prairie. Participants should expect to bring home a hammer and several pair of tongs. To register contact the Conner Prairie Guest Services Department at 317-776-6000.

I received a notice from the Tillers International about a number of upcoming classes at their facility. Tillers is located between Kalamazoo and Battle Creek, Michigan. Some specific classes mentioned are:

Gothic Chest with Clay Spencer, April 26-30 (Wed-Sun)  
Hewing Hatchet with Socketed Eye with Tom Latane, June 26-29 (Mon-Thurs)

The following four classes are taught by Tillers' Jim Slining:

Tools for the Garden, March 24-25  
Cooking Utensils: Forks, Spatulas, and Spoons, May 19-20  
Hardware for the Farm, July 14-15  
Augers and Center Bits, October 20-21

For more information check: <http://tillersinternational.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/newCatalog2017-for-website2.pdf>.

**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  
 Dennis Todd (574) 542-4886

### **3) Wabash Valley Blacksmith Shop**

Meet: 2nd Saturday at 9 AM  
 Contacts: Doug Moreland (217) 284-3457  
 Max Hoopengarner (812) 249-8303

### **5) Maumee Valley Blacksmiths**

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

### **7) Rocky Forge Blacksmith Guild**

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

### **9) Whitewater Valley Blacksmiths**

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

### **11) Bunkum Valley Metalsmiths**

Meet: 1st Saturday  
 Contacts: Jim Malone (812) 725-3311  
 Terry Byers (812) 275-7150  
 Kathy Malone (812) 725-3310

### **13) Satellite 13**

Meet: 4th Saturday  
 Contact: Bill Newman (317) 690-2455

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

Meet: 2nd Saturday at 9 AM  
 Contact: Ray Sease (812) 522-7722

### **4) Fall Creek Blacksmith Shop**

Meet: 4th Saturday at 9 AM  
 Contacts: Gary Phillips (260) 251-4670  
 Dave Kline (765) 620-9351

### **6) St. Joe Valley Forgers**

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

### **8) Meteorite Mashers**

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

### **10) One-Armed Blacksmith Shop**

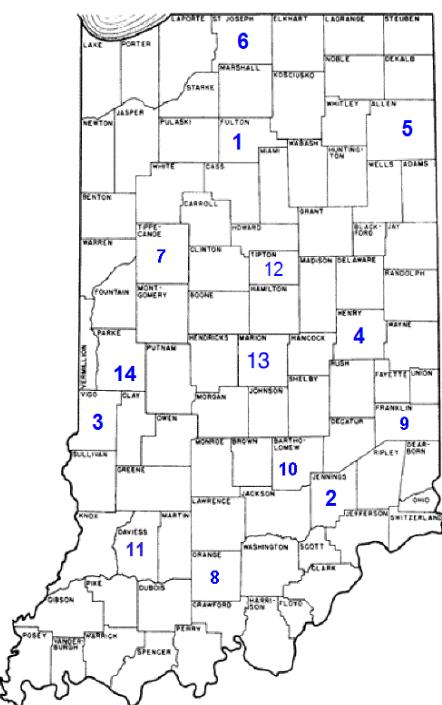
Meet: 1st Saturday  
 Contact: Tim Metz (812) 447-2606

### **12) "Doc" Ramseyer Blacksmith Shop**

Location: 6032W 550N, Sharpsville, IN 46060  
 Meet: 3rd Sunday at 2 PM  
 Contact: Charles Gruell (765) 513-5390

### **14) Covered Bridge Blacksmith Guild**

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



### **Rocky Forge Blacksmith Guild**

On February 11, the rocky forge blacksmithing guild celebrated its 15th anniversary. At our anniversary meeting Ted Stout (see photograph) gave a presentation about swage blocks as old as 200 years. Thirty-four members attended.



## IBA Satellite Groups and News (continued)

### Bunkum Valley Metalsmiths



The Bunkum Valley Metal Smiths had a great meeting on a beautiful day. We had a visitor, Steve King, from the Southern Meteorite Smashers. We appreciated his insights and donation to Iron in the Hat and the raffle. Next month we will convene at the White River Valley Antique Association's Swap Meet in Elnora Indiana. Everyone is welcome to attend the meet on Saturday April 1 between 8am -2pm.

The pictures are from our February and March meetings.



### Blacksmithing Class: Forge Tongs & Hammer

Conner Prairie

May 31 & June 1      9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

**Cost:** \$250/\$240 members  
**Participants:** Min. 5, Max. 8  
**Instructor:** Nathan Allen

Using tools that you've crafted yourself is a feeling hard to beat. This class will give students an opportunity to hand forge their own small (apx. 1 1/2 lbs.) blacksmith hammer and several sets of blacksmith tongs. The morning of day 1 will be spent forging the hammer. The remainder of the forge time will be concentrated on forging several styles of forge tongs: flat bit, bolt, box jaw and scroll pliers.

Registration: Contact Conner Prairie Guest Services Department at 317-776-6000

## IBA Satellite Groups and News (continued)

### Meteorite Mashers

This month's meeting was held at Jason and Andrea Hardin's shop near Beck's Mill. Several business items were accomplished early.

First it was proposed that the Meteorite Mashers donate the iron in the hat money from this meeting, and match from club funds in an equal amount to the summer camp that Terry Hammond supported prior to her very recent passing. Butch Sparks one of our members was Terry's Brother, and the family had requested donations to the summer camp in Lieu of flowers. The proposal was resounding passed, and between Iron in the hat, straight donations and the club match \$250 was raised to donate.

You may have noticed that we are referring to our satellite group as the Meteorite Mashers. This is a tribute to our first Forge Master Billy Merrit. We have officially now removed the Southern Indiana part from the name.

We had several beginners this month with several nice S hooks made. With the cold weather outside forging was not practical so we all stayed inside, enjoyed the shop warmth, the good food, and great friendship. As usual Andrea and Jason did a great job hosting.

The next meeting will be at Jeff Reinhardt's shop, 2810 West Riley Road, Floyds Knobs Indiana.

### Fall Creek Blacksmith Shop

13 smiths signed in. two visitors and one new member joining. we worked on Conference project and Wes and JJ worked on a pry bar for Wes's dad. No iron-in-the hat. We had a productive day, and I think we will be done with the project and not have to paint it at the conference.



## IBA Satellite Groups and News (continued)



### St. Joe Valley Forgers

The St. Joe Valley Forgers had a great turnout again this month. John Lawtowski worked on finishing pattern welded bracelets. Brett Onnink, Bill Conyers and Walt Eger worked on Brett's grinding/polishing machine. Mark



Hohulin worked with three young lady blacksmiths to help them make heart shaped rings made from horseshoe nails.

On March 18th and 19th the St. Joe Valley Forgers will be demonstrating blacksmithing at Sugar Camp Days at Bendix Woods County Park. If you're in the area please stop by.

Mark Hohulin reporting.



## Blacksmithing Opportunities:

1. I am backing out of a lot of my retail sales and will concentrate on my main wholesale customer. Is there any blacksmiths who want to get referrals from me to potential customers who contact me? Mark Thomas 260-758-2332 or [mark@mtforge.com](mailto:mark@mtforge.com)
2. West Boggs Park in Loogootee, IN is excited to host our first Civil War Reenactment! The event will be on July 22-23 this summer. The park has already started taking reservations for this event, so we are expecting a high occupancy! Contact: Elaine Taylor, Program Director, ph: 812-295-3421 email: [elaine@westboggs.com](mailto:elaine@westboggs.com)

## Fred Hoffmeister's Circular Indexed Bolster Plate



The circular bolster was made to rapidly up-size increasingly larger bolster holes and minimize the rag at the bottom in drifting slot punched holes through rectangular stock the 'hard way'.

I had made bolster plates for this identical operation and was frustrated in constantly looking for them. I didn't want to repeat the frustration of finding more lost bolster plates and figured it



would be easier to have an index of 21 different sized bolster holes on one large tool ---- and only one large tool to find vs 21 different bolsters!

I had the luxury of having two pritchel holes on my European double horned anvil 2-3/4" distant from each other so I could easily place 21 holes 3/32" to 1/2" around a 6 5/8" disk.

The larger pritchel hole accepted a 1" shaft that was chosen to center all holes smaller than 1/2" over the smaller pritchel hole on my anvil. This could also be reversed and used in the 1/2" pritchel to center the bolster holes up to 1" above the larger hole. On a smaller or traditional American pattern anvil the same could be done using the pritchel and hardie holes but may require more disks for room to place that many bolster holes.

This works very well for me! I use a piece of machinist chalk to identify and rapidly place the ideal hole over the pritchel when using different sized drifts with very little movement. (so far without confusion or error)!

The shock of hammering quickly broke the weld between the plate and the perpendicular 1" shaft that allowed the disk to sit flat on the anvil. This was quickly solved by turning the center hole into a mild taper and head upsetting the shaft to roughly fit the tapered machined hole allowing the disk to flex on the shaft and made smaller space required to stow the tool, a win/win situation! (So far neither the shaft or the bolster plate have been lost.)

The 3/16" to 1/2" bolster plate is 3/8" of an inch thick... It may be more tactile than anything else - it just feels good in your hands.

Now to make the large bolster plate that would contain holes 9/16" to 1" inch to fit over the 1" pritchel and revolve around the 1/2" pin in the smaller pritchel hole on my anvil I would suggest a larger 1/2" plate. (but I have not made this sized bolster yet)

Thinking of a bolster plate for a 1" inch hole ... it may be prudent to go with at least a 3/4" plate. Time involved in cutting, turning, tapering and drilling an index plate in holes by 1/8" or 1/16" steps is intense... steel is cheap!

Reprinted with permission from the Fall 2016 issue of Forge Facts, the newsletter of the Rocky Mountain Smiths.

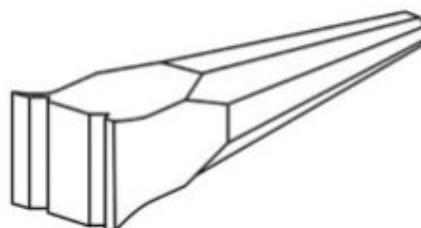
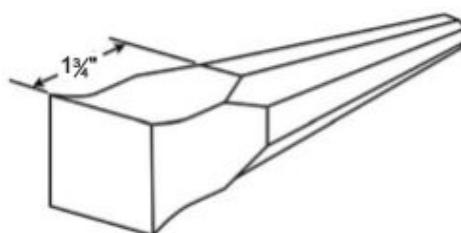
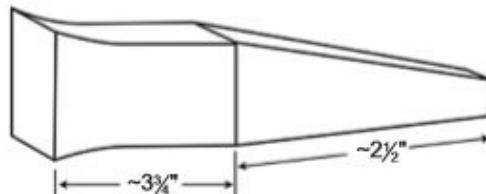
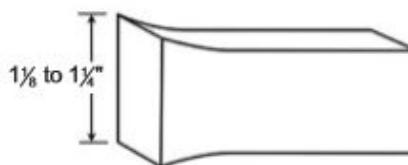
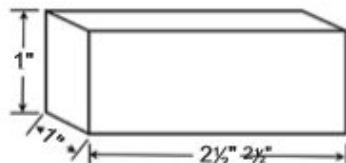


**Stock.** 1" x 1" x 2½".

## FREDDY'S ELEPHANT

### OKTOBERFEST 2013

**FREDDY RODRIGUEZ TOOK US THROUGH THE STEPS TO CREATE HIS MARVELOUS ELEPHANT'S HEAD. THIS PROVIDES A GUIDE FOR YOU TO MODIFY AND SIZE TO SUIT YOUR INTERESTS.**



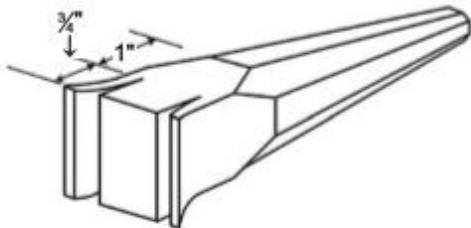
1. Upset the end to about 1½ to 1¾ square. This end will be the ears and back of the head.
2. Taper the opposite end down. This end will become the trunk and tusks. Go to ¾" to 1" square at first, and then take the taper down to about ¾" square. Knock the corners off.

*For clarity, the drawings do not show the corners taken off; however, that will be needed throughout the process.*

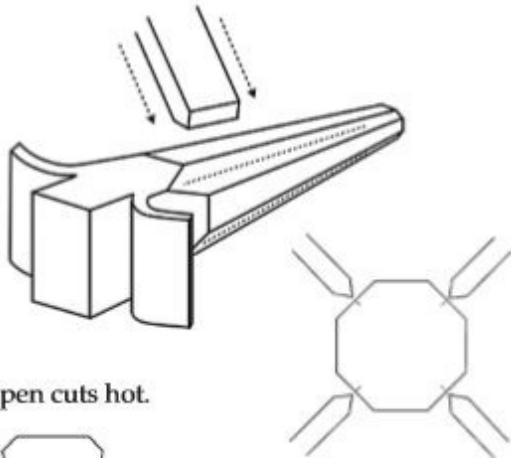
3. Make the tapered section octagonal. This starts to form the elephant's nose.
4. Switch ends. Groove the ends in about ¾" to ½". These grooves will become the ears.

**ELEPHANT**

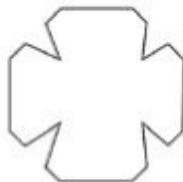
5. Continue the split, about  $\frac{3}{4}$ " down. Split away on each side. Bend out with fuller or side set if needed.



6. Mark for tusks. Go onto the octagonal flats, and mark four sides with cold chisel. Marks go all way back to the parent dimension and down about two-thirds the length of the taper.



7. Deepen cuts hot.

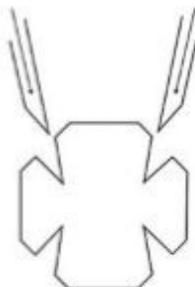


8. Mark for mouth with a cold chisel.

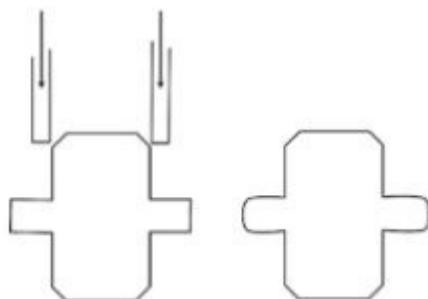
Marks also go back to the parent dimension.



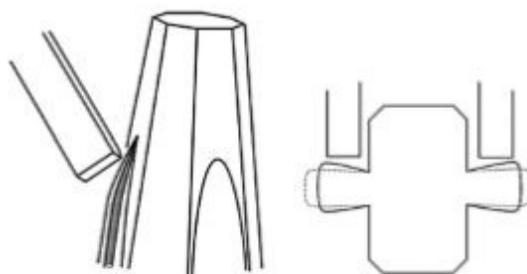
9. Chisel into sort of a Maltese cross.



10. Push the two tusk sections out with a flat chisel. Round the outer corners a bit.



11. Deepen the cuts. Work chisel at 45° from vertical. Flatten the sides with a flat-ended chisel.

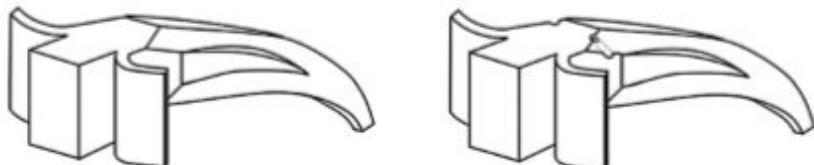


12. Cut the mouth. Chisel, and then bend out.

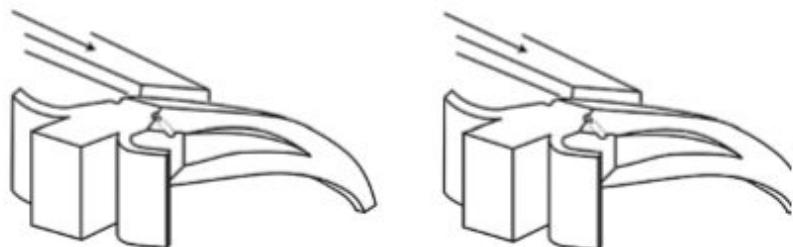


**ELEPHANT**

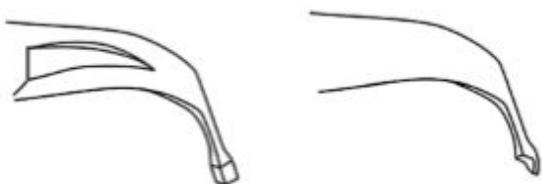
13. Bend the nose section over, and then fuller and punch for eyes.



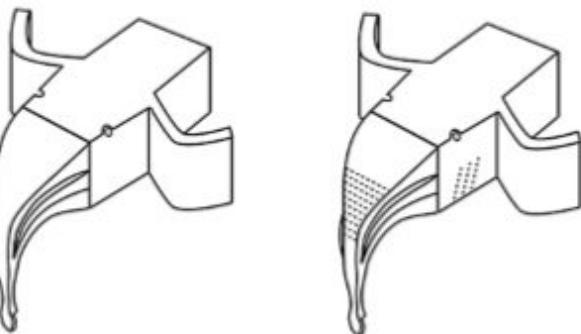
14. Move nose material over and up to create a bit of a swelled-up section. This will take several heats.



15. Continue to work the nose with a fullering chisel. Add definition with a flat chisel. Isolate (fuller) the end of the nose section to form the nostril area. Bend the nose section past 90°.



16. Make wrinkles on nose. Use a fuller chisel to define nose and cheeks behind tusks.



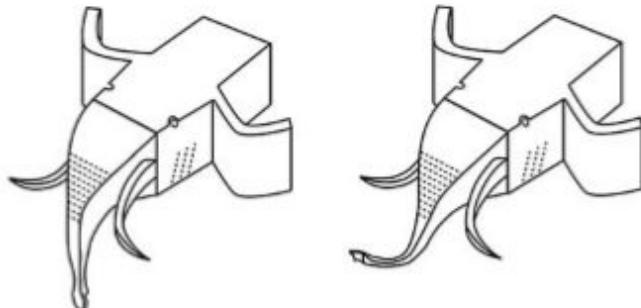
17. Cut tusks, starting at the tip end. Taper the tusks to a point. Curve out.

18. Round the ears by drawing out with a rounding hammer or rounding punch. Add character.

19. Clean up and enjoy! ♣



**THIS ELEPHANT  
WAS COMPLETED  
BY FREDDY IN HIS  
OKTOBERFEST  
DEMONSTRATION.**



## STATIONARY PUNCHES

by: Tommy Ward

Here's another "third hand" idea I saw Bob Patrick use - simple punch type tools held in position by the anvil's pritchel hole. Why not eliminate the frustration of juggling a punch, hammer, and odd-sized work piece by making up a few of these stationary punches that allow you to hammer from "behind" the piece; controlling the work in one hand and hammering with the other. An added benefit, particularly on thin sections, is that the work remains hotter longer when not in direct contact with the cold mass of the anvil.

These things are simple to construct, making them attractive for "one time" projects. Most pritchel holes seem to be in the neighborhood of around 1/2", so any stock that's slightly larger can be used. No limit on the design; most any configuration of hand punch that you would use for repoussé or detailing could work. Metallurgy, refinement of design, degree of finish, etc., will be your choice based on application.



Reprinted from the January 2017 issue of  
The Upset, the newsletter of the Mississippi Forge Council.



**The FORGE FIRE**  
Newsletter of the  
Indiana Blacksmithing Association, Inc.

**Farrel Wells** *Membership Secretary*  
8235 E 499 S  
Dunkirk, IN 47336-8807

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sender

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## **March 18 Annual Business Meeting**

### **Kelly Farms / Doc Ramseyer**

6032 W 550 N Sharpsville, IN 46060

Located just west of US-31. Approximately 6 miles north of SR-28 (Tipton) or 3 miles south of SR-26 (Kokomo).

Please bring a dish to share

### **April 15 Hammer In Whitewater Valley Blacksmiths Big Cedar Forge, the residence of Joyce Roell**

East of Brookville on SR 252.  
For more info call Keith Hicks at 765-647-0019.