

The Kramer Letter

News and information for the friends of Kramer's Best

Issue Number One
FALL, 2007



JOHN



MARIAN

Welcome...

all of you "Kramerizers" out there, to this first issue of our "Kramer Letter".

For those of you we have not met in person we thought photos might be the best first step in getting acquainted. The above were taken at a July 4 (very warm) family picnic, so please excuse the 'frazzled' look—what you see is the real 'us'.

It will be one of us that you talk to when you phone in an order or call to ask a question.

Yes, there really is a John Kramer, and he is, of course, the one who formulated and developed *Kramer's Best Antique Improver* and other *Kramer's Best* products, and who oversees manufacture,

(continued next page)

SINCE 1987

Twenty Years of Customer Success Stories

Yes, it is hard to believe, but *Kramer's Best Antique Improver* is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. It was in March of 1987 that John Kramer bottled the first two cases of his all-natural concoction and sold a case to each of two antique shops on The Square in his home town, Independence, Missouri. And the rest, as they say, is history.

We wish we had a count, like McDonald's, so we could say how many bottles have been sold, but we are proud that from that start of two local dealers we have grown to over 500 dealers in 47 states. And, of course, the number of retail sales from shows, mall booths, mail order, phone calls and via the Internet, is a number we have no way to cipher.

Orders have been shipped to every one of these United States, plus Canada, and before 9/11 we shipped frequently to England, as well as some other countries. (Overseas shipments are no longer allowed due to flammable liquid restrictions — we hope someday a foreign distributor will be willing to purchase quantities sufficient to make commercial shipping feasible.)

Since, due to the cost of ingredients we use, our profit margin does not allow us to fund million-dollar ad campaigns, our best advertisement has always been word-of-mouth from our very satisfied customers. We want each of you to know how grateful we are for your support. We look forward to many more years of providing the finest products and service possible.

The 'Turpentine Crisis'—a year later

We are pleased to report that our Turpentine supply seems to be stable. There was a price increase a short time into the arrangement, which was not unexpected, but at least so far, the supply is dependable.

For those who might be unaware, we were notified the first of last year that there is no more Turpentine in this country — no gum being harvested, nor distilled. Since Turpentine is one of our very important ingredients, it was a very scary time and we were unsure if we would even be able to stay in business. However, we did locate an alternate supply and are now bringing the Turpentine we need in from Brazil.

[To read the complete story, go to "The Turpentine Story" Page on our Web Site, which is where, during that time of "crisis", we kept our customers informed. (It is done in "Blog" format, so start at the end to read forward.) On that page you can also read an article that appeared in *The Collectors Journal* about John and about the Turpentine situation.]

Others also are beginning to feel the loss of this very important product. We have gotten calls from folks looking for special types such as "medicinal" turpentine or "rectified" turpentine. There are many uses for which there is no substitute. Information is included on the Web Page about the many ways Turpentine has long been a vital commodity in this country.

We're proud of this message received during the "Turpentine Crisis":

I am restoring some antique furniture that was submerged in the floodwaters in New Orleans for 3 weeks. The dirty water wreaked havoc on the old oak furniture that belonged to my great-great grandmother. Yesterday I unwrapped an ornate carved oak mirror that is my favorite piece of the collection. It had water marks about half way up its four foot by three foot frame. Yesterday I disassembled it...the mirror glass is more than 3/8th of an inch thick! I then reglued it and today I went out with the Kramer's. As the sooty black gunk came out of the crevices the original oak color started to come back. I am thrilled to report that not only does the damaged part look good... it looks as good as the dry section...that from Kramer's alone...Please keep making Kramer's. Tell me how and I will make the turpentine for you. I need your product. — LF

shipping, and the “business” end of the company.

Marian has been with John, and the company, for 18 years and handles sales and marketing. You may see her at our booth at an antique show or servicing one of our mall displays.

We are a small home-based business, with offices next to our home. That’s why you can most times reach us at any hour, even on weekends.

This business is our life and over the years our customers and dealers have become our friends.

We hear wonderful stories about ways folks discovered our products, how they have used them, and introduced them to others. In this newsletter we hope to pass on some of these stories. We think you will enjoy them and you might get some ideas.

We also intend to share information about the company. We hope there will not again be news such as that of the “Turpentine Crisis” of early 2006, and that in the future it will be all *good* news.

Some time in the future we hope to be able to list a schedule of shows where we will exhibit once the 1979 Avion travel trailer we are restoring is ready to go.

Of course, we want your stories to share also. And,

What would you like to read about? please, your suggestions about

what you would like to see included in future issues of this Letter are very important. We look forward to hearing from you.

— John & Marian

Q&A Have you checked the “Question & Answers” page on our Web Site lately? We have made some additions in the past few months and plan to continue updating. Send us any questions you would like to see covered in that section.

Blemish Clarifier — do you need it?

Some of our customers use as much *Blemish Clarifier* as they do *Antique Improver*. Others may have never used it, or even know of its existence since some of our dealers carry only the *Antique Improver*. *Clarifier* is the one that is a clear liquid — not the fluffy yellow of the *Antique Improver*. It is a powerful natural cleaner. Most times you don’t need it, but if you are faced with a severe cleaning problem it could be very useful. Tool and gun collectors find it indispensable in cleaning the deep ground-in dirt and grease from wood handles and stocks. Though heavy soil or build-up on furniture, cupboard doors, railings, etc., most often only needs *Antique Improver* — extreme cases may require pre-cleaning with *Blemish Clarifier*.



Spots and stains can often be reduced. Stains in wood are of two types. Pigmented stains — a presence of foreign material that is *in* the wood — can most times be flushed out with the natural ingredients of the *Blemish Clarifier*. It penetrates deeply into the wood, helping to gently displace foreign materials, and bring them to the surface. Severe cases may take multiple applications with time between, to see full improvement — be patient. Dye-based stains or discoloration from a material that has caused chemical change in the wood fiber, may be there to stay. Examples of this type of stain are the black rings from flower pots, black marks from metal in contact with the wood, (such as around nails and screws), dye-based ink in an old desk drawer, &c. [Note: printer’s ink in those old type trays is pigment-based and usually yields to the *Clarifier*.] You may not know what type of stain you are dealing with until you do some testing.

Blemish Clarifier also does a good job on metal — guns, tools, galvanized pieces, etc., as well as many other materials. Usually you will want to follow up with application of *Antique Improver*, however, there are exceptions — a touch of *Clarifier* works great to remove that “sticky” residue from tape or price tags on glass — you wouldn’t need to follow with the *Improver* on that one. And, of course, read about its use in the Book of Instructions (on the last 2 pages), and *always test first*.

Kramer’s Best Blemish Clarifier — you may never need it, but keep it in mind. You might want to have a small bottle on hand — just in case?

...and what’s that funny word, “oyl”?



It’s pronounced OIL — *Kramer’s Best Wood Food Oyl*. O-y-l is an olde spelling. As with *Kramer’s Best* products and other treasures of the past, John likes to hang onto those old things that appeal to him, whenever possible. You may have noticed others . . . &c (etc.), complet (old spelling of complete), and more.

And, if you are not familiar with it, *Kramer’s Best Wood Food Oyl* is the very best choice in maintaining your wooden food service items — butcher blocks, cutting boards, &c. Just the purest, safest, most effective ingredients — no vegetable oils that turn rancid, or mineral oil that gets “gummy”. You will see the difference!

Customer Satisfaction — We want happy customers! Whether you purchase directly from us, or from one of our dealers, if you have any questions or concerns, CONTACT US. If you need advice about a project or use of the products, CONTACT US. We want you to use our products SUCCESSFULLY!

THE CLIPPING BELOW is from the May 26, 2007 issue of *The Independence Examiner* (Missouri). It is self-explanatory.

So far no sign of any reward.

Global warming? Start planting lots of trees

John T. Kramer
Independence

To the editor:

Sir Richard Branson, with Al Gore, is calling for a team of research scientists to scavenge 1 billion tons of CO₂ a year from the sky. His reward is to be \$25 million. I have submitted my solution:

Dear Sir Richard Branson,

I would appreciate you forwarding my \$25 million prize for coming up with a way to scrub 1 billion metric tons of CO₂ from the atmosphere per year.

A single mature tree can scrub about 48 pounds of CO₂ per year. Forty-eight pounds equals 21.77 kilograms, and that

works out to about 46 trees per metric ton. To scrub 1 billion metric tons of CO₂ from the atmosphere each year, we only need to plant 46 billion trees and allow them to mature. More than that have been cut down. As a bonus we get a lot of oxygen and shady trees and, if managed wisely, wood products.

If we were to simply replant the equatorial forests, we would soon reverse any perceived problem with CO₂. It also helps, no matter where one lives, to plant all the trees they can.

Trees are lots cheaper than technology. Trees can also provide noble work for a great number of people whose lives can be hugely enriched planting lots and lots of trees.

My trees already make me carbon neutral. I don't need to buy phony credits.

Please send my prize money.

This is a simple idea that is well proven. No new science is needed. This solution can be immediately begun by everyone who cares. We don't have to wait for panels of environmentalists and politicians to make decisions and allocate our tax dollars. We can start now! And we can all begin to benefit now!

How many trees can you plant?



The Braeside Cabin Story

ESTES PARK, COLORADO
www.braesidecabin.com

We recently received a call from Patty Gillette who owns a rental cabin (Braeside Cabin) in Estes Park, Colorado. She called to place an order, and when we asked her (as we always try to do) where she first heard of the product, she told us one of those "wonderful" stories we mentioned earlier.

It seems a young couple from Minnesota travels to Colorado and stays in Braeside Cabin twice a year — Christmas and in the summer. On their trip this past Christmas, they stopped at an antique mall where they discovered *Antique Improver*. They were so thrilled with what the product could do and the potential of how it could enhance the knotty pine paneling of the cabin interior that they convinced Patty Gillette, and then struck a deal with her, to do all the work of treating the entire cabin interior with *Improver* in exchange for a week's lodging. When we called later to see how it was going and ask if we could share the story in our "Letter", Patty told us the job is now completed and the E-Mail we received from her describing the results follows:

Hi Marian! It was nice to talk with you and I just wanted to let you know that the entire cabin - floor to ceiling in all of the rooms - has been finished with your wonderful product and it looks absolutely fabulous.

As I told you, this is a "pet friendly" cabin and so has suffered some scratches near doors but they are now not at all noticeable and, in addition, my concerns about a strong permeating odor from the product were not necessary for, if anything it all just smells clean. I cannot tell you how happy I am that my guests found your product and brought my cabin back to its original beauty after 60 years in this arid climate. The kitchen cabinets are now beautiful with all of the inherent cooking build-up gone and the original luster back. I had feared, because pine is so soft, that we would have to strip and sand in the kitchen but none of that was necessary.

Finally, as I told you, I have my great grandmother's Baker breakfront. It has been from Ireland to England and then the US over all of these years and suffered from the sun, humidity and now an arid climate for 40 years, but never been damaged, in terms of the wood itself with breakage or scratches. The finish has been so dulled with age that I was terrified to try your product on this wonderful piece but at the insistence of my guests who worked on the cabin, I bit the bullet and did the front of the breakfront. It made me very, very teary for it is now, once again, transformed to being almost as beautiful as it must have originally been. I think with more applications to soak in it will be back to almost new again. I have taken photos of it before and will take "after" photos and send them to you for your file. You can look for the "after" photos in a few weeks when I have given this piece a few more treatments.

If you do have a newsletter I hope that you will include my comments for I am just thrilled with this product and you will hear from me in the fall when I order a few bottles to include with my sisters' Christmas gifts. They have beautiful and very old furniture and I know that they will be thrilled!!! once they see what this product can do for their antiques.

Thank you, again, for calling me and taking the time to speak with me about your product. I will tell every single person that I know and, particularly in this climate, this will be a huge help for everyone. Time for your product to be on the Antiques Road Show.

Patty Gillette at Braeside Cabin In Estes Park, Colorado.

NOTE: The photos shown here were "picked up" from the Braeside Cabin Web Site. When we receive the mentioned before/after photos we will try to add them to our Web Site for all to see.



Braeside Cabin interior.

NEXT ISSUE:

Our question: "Where did you first hear of the products?" brings us many pleasant surprises.

As popularity of the Internet and Message Boards grows, we are hearing about *Kramer's* being discussed by many collector and restoration groups. Our "Links" page lists links to some of them — radio collectors, tool & gun collectors, sewing machine collectors, blacksmiths, and more. (The Woodcarver Magazine link takes you to an article, plus photos, about an amazing Pyrography collection — cared for with *Improver*, of course.)

Recently we have been hearing that *Antique Improver* is used widely in the restoration of old motorcycles. And now a customer has told us that she first heard of *Improver* when she saw an article featuring the product used in restoration of an antique tractor,

For the next issue we are going to gather more information about those "Kramerizers" who are using *Antique Improver* to restore painted metals. We know it's great for that purpose — and we're glad others are discovering it too!

THE KRAMER LETTER published "as possible" by

Kramer Products, Inc.
P.O. Box 8715
Sugar Creek, MO 64054
816-252-9512
Fax: 816-252-9121
www.kramerize.com

John Kramer
President/Founder
kramer@kramerize.com

Marian Blades
Sales/Marketing
marian@kramerize.com

Soon to be announced...

Many times when discussing a customer's project, a tool or material that John recommends is something that is not readily available. Over the years, as many of the old methods have been abandoned, sources for what was used in those techniques have disappeared.

For some time John has researched availability and been lining up suppliers for some of those hard-to-find items. Soon we will announce our new "**Professional Line**", to include such items as Flake Shellac, Hide Glue, Natural Dry Pigments, Bronze and Stainless Steel Wool, &c.

Since these are specialty items, they will only be sold retail directly from Kramer Products. Pricing and packaging are being worked out now, but it may take some time before the items are added to the Web Site and print materials. Contact John to discuss your needs.

Why isn't there a dealer in your area?

We receive a lot of inquiries from prospective customers looking for a dealer close by where they can purchase our products. We wish *Kramer's Best* was available in shops in all areas of the country. However, finding dealers who are willing to take a look at *Kramer's* with an open mind and give it a try so they can see the difference, can be a real challenge. Many times we hear: "I already carry (another product)". One customer who had called around her area shops looking for *Kramer's* had a local dealer tell her "Oh, I know it's the best product, that's what I use at home, but I carry (other product) in my shop." When the customer asked her "why?", she explained: "Well, everyone else carries (the other brand), so I do, too." Go figure!

Since expensive ad campaigns aren't an option for us, we rely heavily on word-of-mouth advertising. If you talk to a dealer or shop owner who expresses an interest, let us know. We will be glad to send them a packet of information about the products and about our dealer program. They will appreciate your efforts and so will we.

ONE OF OUR FIRST DEALERS (many years ago) shared with us that she had discovered that a small scrap of Lambswool makes a good applicator for *Antique Improver*. After some testing we agreed with her.

FREE STUFF!

With the new "Professional Line" we will be offering small Lambswool applicators, and as an introduction, during the month of September, we will include one of these applicators with each order at no charge.

Keep in mind that if you have cleaning to accomplish you will need an applicator with more texture — a piece of terrycloth, linen or waffle-weave toweling, &c. But the Lambswool works well when you just need to "wipe on" the *Improver* — especially on large areas.



Where are we?

We create some confusion about where we are located when we refer to "Independence" as home, or maybe answer "Kansas City area" when asked where we are, and yet the bottle labels list us as "Sugar Creek". What makes it confusing is that in our area, sometimes it depends on which side of the street you are on as to whether you are in Sugar Creek or Independence, and, in some places where the line "meanders" you really don't know. Our Post Office is in Sugar Creek while John's workshop and our home are in Independence. And, of course, both are part of the Greater Kansas City area. We do not have a retail establishment in any of the aforementioned, but do have dealers carrying the products. Contact us if you want to find one of them.