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Letters to the Editor

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Good Morning,

First of all let me say "Thank-you" for such a great e-zine. I've been 'playing' with polymer clay for quite a few years [self taught - trial & error] & I love all the new things I learn & try each month.

Now for my question. I thought I read one time where an artist [pc] recommended a specific toaster oven for 'curing' clay [of course I can't find that hint now]. My home oven is gas & is very difficult to maintain a consistent temp. My toaster oven is older than dirt & I have the same problems: over baked or under baked! Ughhhhhhhhhhhhh.

Please help. One brand or several that maintain a consistent temp & is fairly large to do some larger pieces. Please help, I just know with all the knowledgeable artist out there someone could advise me.

P.K. Ash

Dear P.K. Ash:

Funny you should ask this question. I myself just purchased a Welbilt convection oven at the suggestion of several polymer clay artists. I love my Welbilt. It heats evenly and cures very nicely.

It's also funny you should ask this question, because I received the following letter in the mailbox:

Dear Editor:

When I realized I was addicted to PC, I also realized I would need an oven dedicated to baking clay. Because I am disabled, I sent my husband on a "mission" to find the perfect toaster oven. He was far more successful than I ever dreamed! The oven is almost perfect.

It is a Toastmaster Model TTOB4. Even though it was not expensive, it has features that make me think it was made just for us (the PC addicts). You will need a good oven thermometer because the temperature gauge on the oven is a little off. But once you have it adjusted, the temperature is extremely consistent.

The best part, though, is that the toaster oven has a 30 minute timer. I can set it for 20 minutes and a bell rings to tell me it has preheated to the desired temperature. Then, when I bake, I can set it for as long as I need (up to 30 minutes) and it will turn itself off after that time. This is a great help to me, since sometimes my back strength and my baking times don't coincide. I can just leave my items in the oven until I am able to get up to get them.

I highly recommend this product to anyone who is thinking of purchasing a dedicated oven for clay.

By the way, I absolutely LOVE your website. Someday maybe I'll get up the courage to submit one of my creations. Please keep up the good work. There are a lot of us out here who have to join clay groups on the internet because we're homebound. The lessons and projects you give us every month are simply the BEST!

*Dottie Hobbs
Arlington, Texas*

Thank you Dottie, and I hope that helps answer your question, P.K.!

Deirdre



Dear Polyzine:

I, like the rest of the country, have been affected by the terrorist acts on September 11. I have 3 children in the Army stationed in Germany, and wanted to do something to support them and the US. I have made polyclay ribbons, flags, angels with flag dresses, anything to do something. I am selling them for \$5 each with half to go to supporting New York and the Red Cross, and the other half to pay for supplies.

The response has been overwhelming, and is keeping me busy, along with the rest of my family. I am an Occupational Therapist by day, and my staff and patients have appreciated gifts of these pins, especially the nurse who is Pakistani American and was afraid to go outside without

outward support of the flag.

You can be patriotic, help folks and pay for supplies all at the same time doing similar things. I have enjoyed your magazine, and like all the lessons you provide on line.

Thanks and God Bless our troops, and may they never have to fight!

Beckie Fox



Dear Editor:

Thank you again for a great magazine I just love all the stuff .. like meeting the artists, seeing new ideas. I do admit I get jealous when I see all the talented people...(not really) but it gives me ideas which I incorporate in my stuff....and someday I will submit something I like that I do....

Patzee

Dear Patzee:

Please do!

Deirdre



Dear Deirdre:

Where would I begin to convey the how amazingly WOW the October issue looks. I smiled right out loud at the home page. The pumpkins and orange text are so adorable, and it's good to see the "lights of freedom" still burning.

It would be impossible to pick a favorite article this month, but I especially enjoyed the Canada Clayamies. It's great to see such innovative, quality work being created in a "virtual" atmosphere that embodies the spirit of polymer clay -- "all ages and all skill levels."

I wonder if Sue Heaser would consider a similar article from her British Guild. You have given all of us something really special. This issue ranks a 10+ on my Tingle-o-meter!

Sincerely,
Jeannie

Dear Jeannie:

Thank you for that wonderful compliment! Tell your friends!

Deirdre



Hey Gang:

I work at Vision Service Plan. We have two sites: Sacramento, California, and Columbus, Ohio. Many of our employees in Columbus have friends and family struck by the events of September 11th. I asked permission from our HR office and brought in some polymer pins I made. Within 15 minutes they were sold out and I had voicemails and e-mails demanding more.

I charge 4.00 for them and on the clay that holds the pinback on I wrote the date 9-11-01. All the money from the pins is going to the Red Cross fund that we have set up. I am also setting up a silent auction for some other jewelry I have made.

My polymer guild's October meeting was originally set up as a Garage Sale/ Silent Auction so we could raise some money for ourselves. We voted to split the profits and send half the money to the Red Cross.

People are looking for ways to help, even if it's buying a pin for \$4.00. Several people have sold the pins off their shirts to people outside the company and brought the money back to our office to add to the fund. (I have this idea of one pin traveling the country being sold from hand to hand and raising a ton of cash!!!!!!).

The pins don't have to be complex. I have star cookie cutters and have cut out successive sizes of red, white, and blue and stacked them together. I made a striped red and white cane, cut out a small star shape and put it on a larger blue star background. I ran red, white and blue ribbon out of my clay gun and made ribbon pins shaped like those for breast cancer and AIDS. All of them sold.

Polymer people may not be rich, may not be able to travel to New York or Washington, but by golly we can make pins and sell the little suckers!!!

So I challenge you all!!!!!! What can you make? Are you a skilled cane maker? How about a flag? Or an Eagle? Pins are easy and quick but earrings are fast too. What ideas do you have in the back of your head that need to come to light?

Those of you with jobs check with your HR offices. I bet most of you would get a very enthusiastic response. Guild members could hold a pin making session at your next meeting and sell them. Those of you that work for JoAnn's or Michael's could organize a "make it and take it" class with a donation to the Red Cross. Friends could get together and canvas the neighborhood. Art teachers could teach school children to make the pins and the kids could sell them. Have a Silent Auction with a Patriotic Theme.

Working at home on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights making the pins just by myself I have raised almost \$500.00. I won't stop until my friends tell me to. How about you?

If you do decide to do something, write to Polyzine and let us know. You may inspire someone to start something wonderful!

Carissa Nichols

Carissa:

Your words are right on the money. In case you or anyone else doesn't know, the beadyeyedbrat Kim Kennedy aka Irish Red or The Helpful Clay Elf has a growing collection of pictures of projects people are making for various charities and donations. [Check it out!](#)

Deirdre



Hi!

I am so thrilled to have found your AWESOME and WONDERFUL online magazine! I just found it today and, so far, I have been reading for over an hour. I am totally engrossed. And I still have all of the back issues to check out! PLEASE add me to your mailing list.

I have only been working with polymer clay for less than a month and am already completely addicted. What a wonderful art form.

I also want you to know that I was very moved by your October editorial. So very well stated. The healing effects of the arts are just beginning to be recognized. Polymer clay is just one of the many ways for people to reach out and connect with others whom they may never have connected with otherwise. Keep up the good work!

Raine Phoenix
Polymer Clay Newbie from Massachusetts

Dear Raine:

Thank you very much! Are you hooked up with the Massachusetts polymer clay guild? Check out the [National Polymer Clay Guild](#) website and see if there is a guild near you.

Deirdre



Dear Deirdre:

Just ordered a bunch of SuperFlex clay from the Clay Factory and though the white was very fresh and easy to work with, the blue and red were flaky and hard to work with. Considering I ordered several pounds of the stuff, wondered if others have had this problem.

I am going to be talking to the Clay Factory, but thought I would ask you if you had heard complaints before.

Thanks,
Beckie Fox

Dear Beckie:

No, I haven't heard of this before. Does anyone have an answer? Clay Factory?

Deirdre



Here's an answer to R. Dean, a letter writer who in a previous issue wanted to know if it was possible to cure polymer clay with chemicals.

Hi R.Dean,

I don't know any chemical cures for polymer clay but there are a few other ways you *might* cure it. (Since there is an optimum temperature for properly curing each brand and type of polymer clay, the other methods would need to be experimented with and well calibrated to the correct temp though.)

Having said that, here are a few alternate curing methods: boiling, heat guns, electric frying skillet (tile in bottom), crockpot (liner removed) --and possibly even cars/car engines or long sits on sunny (UV) windowsills!

Some people will use these methods to harden their pieces initially, keeping them safer until they can bake them thoroughly at a later time (...but some people feel that an incomplete first bake results in a less stable item; opinions vary).

Depending on how much you really want to find an alternative to toaster or other ovens, check out these pages for more info on the methods I mentioned above: [Glass Attic Baking](#) (look near the bottom, in Other Ways to Cure), [Glass Attic Drilling and Boiling](#).

Diane B.

[Glass Attic](#) (polymer clay "encyclopedia")



Dear Deirdre,

After messing up my Lazertran silk a few times (and lots of polymer clay) I finally decided to go to the horse's mouth. [lazertran.com](#). There I found some updated instructions for using Lazertran silk with polymer clay. . . and wonder of wonders I got perfect transfers! Check out their site.

What I did was burnish the Lazertran on Sculpey Ivory Brilliant, which I had run through the

pasta machine on number 1 [the thickest setting].

I tried running the image through the pasta machine with the Sculpey, as they suggest, but that didn't work well - it curved and lost the bond between the Lazertran and the Sculpey.

So I tried again, without using the pasta machine, but burnishing very well. Then I let it sit for about 10 minutes. Then I ironed it, paper side up, very carefully with a warm, not hot, iron. Then I put the entire thing into a tray of lukewarm water and let it sit until the paper lifted loose from the Sculpey, leaving a perfect (!) image, which I let rest for a half hour (per instructions) and baked as usual.

Success finally! I was about to give up on Lazertran silk, but I really like it now.

Thanks for all your effort - I hope this helps.

Rima Phillips

Dear Rima:

Yes, that helps indeed! I look forward to following your procedure and checking out Lazertran's website.

Thanks!
Deirdre



Hi,

Have a nice day plz help me. I want glitter making powder machine. We are in search of a cutting machine to cut metalized polyester film in to small particles (very small fine powder form called glitter). Will appreciate.

With best regards
Kashif Arif PK Trading Company

Dear Kashif:

Personally, I don't know of any such machine. However, perhaps someone in the reading audience can help?

Deirdre



Dear Editor:

As Vice President of the Southern Connecticut Polymer Clay Guild, I have heard people often mention 'Polyzine' and the great information they were getting from it. Unfortunately, I never seemed to remember to go check it out when I was near my computer and could do so. Boy, have I missed a LOT!!! I'm presently teaching a beginners class in polymer clay and will be sharing the web-site with them too, it is simply a wealth of information!

And in an effort to keep the good thing going, I will be sending my contribution shortly.

Keep up the wonderful work!

Deborah Goodrow
Vice President Southern Connecticut Polymer Clay Guild



Hello,

Will you kindly let your readers know about our new video? It's *Precision Caning with Judith Skinner*, and viewers can create a cane in a classic quilt pattern, create a standard log cabin quilt pattern, and explore ideas for using slices from the quilt canes to create pieces of jewelry.

Thank you
Bette Abdu
Abbadabbavideo