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Letters to the Editor

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Dear Editor:

I found out the hard way that some of the polymer clay web pages I thought were saved on my CD actually were saved as a broken link. I now save all my pages as "Web Archive, Single File". So far I haven't had a problem.

I'm not sure if this will help the people who were unable to print some of the .jpg's in the Rainbow Altoid article or not.

Newbie,
Laurie

Dear Laurie:

Thanks for the tip. Also, all our issues are being turned into Adobe Acrobat articles, so if any of you have trouble viewing our pages, be sure to click onto the Adobe Acrobat link to download .pdf page.

Deirdre



Deirdre, Polyclay friends and all our American friends,

This is just a little message to tell you all our best wishes from France after the horrible events of the last days. May our polyclay community help keeping our world in peace : it is one of our responsibilities to show that everywhere in the world, human beings can share and bring something positive to others.

Peace.
Chris Lajoinie
St Orens (Toulouse) - France

Chris:

Thank you so very much.

Deirdre



Hello,

Just wanted to say that I enjoyed the piece about the Montreal Polymer Clay Guild. I was especially interested in the pieces by Gaby Orbach and Dyna Toutoungi. Does the guild have a website? I would love to see more of their work. Love that polymer clay!

Pamela Simpson

Dear Pamela:

Not that I know of, but perhaps your words of encouragement will inspire them to start one!

Deirdre



Hello,

I just visited for the first time. Very interesting. I was wondering where I might find the wonderful cookie cutter used in the inlay article. Any help is appreciated. I'll be back.

Barb

Barb:

I asked Bob Wiley, who wrote the inlay article. Here's his response:

I bought the dragon cutter at "Make A Cake" in Houston. They specialize in everything needed for cake making and only that. The dragon is actually a cake cutter. I imagine that most cake making shops might have one.

Bob Wiley

I did a little searching on the Internet, and guess what? [Make-A-Cake](#) has a website!

Deirdre



Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to the letter in September issue by P. Fawcett, wanting a source for plastic vials. I would suggest checking with a local Pharmacy or two, as they typically have a large number of a variety of sizes.

Love the Polyzine, thanks for all the effort that goes into it!

Sue Lee

[Poly-Tools](#)



Dear Editor:

In regards to the question on where to get small vials. Here is a free source- ask your local vet office to save their vaccination bottles for you. Some are plastic and some are glass. The top pops off easily with a pinch from pliers and I wash mine in soapy bleach water. I wear gloves when handling them, since they do still have some residue in them.

Also, note on trouble with printing articles. If I am having trouble printing from the web

page I do this. Open up your word program and copy and paste it on a new page. Some things that will not print directly from the web, once copied and pasted can then be print from the word program.

Kerrie



Hi Deirdre,

I wrote you a note saying that I wasn't getting complete pages from the web site. You wrote back suggesting refresh. Well, that didn't work, but I did find out what the problem was... my browser. I use Netscape 4.7. You changed the format of this issue and Netscape 4.7 cuts off the part of the page that includes either the "Donations/Mailing List/Previous Issues/etc" or the text that is side by side with the Table of Contents.

I have also had a problem printing some articles. The pictures show on the monitor but will not print. Many times, all I need to do is go back the next day and everything runs well. Other times, the picture doesn't show anywhere and nothing seems to help.

Tonight I used Explorer and it worked for everything. I have a troll head and full pages of the September issue. Yippee!!! I finally understand why some web sites say that they work best with one browser or another. It seems that Explorer is the preferred browser (at least when compared with Netscape 4.7). Maybe that is the problem for Yeager1 (letter to the Editor) this month.

Sorry I "blamed" you. I just wanted one of the neatest "magazines" that I read.

Bobbie Hayes

Dear Bobbi:

Well, I am to blame a little bit. I have been writing code that isn't very Netscape friendly. So, I first fixed the code, then downloaded Netscape. Now I check all my pages in Explorer and Netscape.

I hope this fixes the problems our viewers have been experiencing.

Deirdre



Dear Editor:

Does anyone know when Nan Roche's new book is due out?

Thanx
Lee

Dear Lee:

I'd love to know myself. Nan? Anyone?

Deirdre



Dear Editor:

I am a fairly new reader to your 'zine & must add my kudos to everyone else's.

Polymer clay captured my heart the moment I open Nan Roche's book "The New Clay". I am now trolling the net in search of sites and resources to learn as much as I can about this wonderful medium! So many projects, so little time!

There are no guilds or classes near me, so the internet has become my polymer clay classroom. Thank you for this resource! And I agree- it would be fabulous to see the issues available in pdf format!

Regarding printing the altoid project, I just selected all the text on the page & printed it out from note pad.

Karen in PA



Hi!

I'd love to be put on your mailing list. I've been an avid reader since your very first issue and am thrilled at the work you do for all us polyholics. (And I've been one for over 10 years now, so guess I'm incurable!)

As the founder of the South Texas Polymer Clay Guild and the "mother" of the San Antonio Polymer Clay Guild and the "midwife" of the soon to be started in October Victoria guild, you might say I've been spreading the disease as quickly as I can all over the south Texas area!

A little over 2 years ago in May of 1999, I attended a retreat sponsored by the Houston guild and bemoaned the lack of guilds in my region of Texas. Now, 2 years later there are 3 guilds and I'm thrilled to see all my new claying friends. So, like your PCPolyzine, "just doing it", seems to fill a void we sometimes don't even know exists.

Congratulations again and many wishes for your continued success.

Patty Barnes
President, South Texas Polymer Clay Guild

Dear Patty:

Thank you for your kind words! Now, of course, you must write an article for us about those three guilds and what you all are doing down in Texas!

Deirdre



Dear Editors;

Well, I finally have come by and I am sorry I didn't take the time to do so before. There is no truth to the saying, "You can't teach an old dog, new tricks!" I love the idea about the

buffing cloth and plan on using that when I get a chance.

I congratulate you on your endeavors and am happy to help should you ever need anything from me. I will post this site in my store near the Polymer Clay supplies for all to see!

Be Well

Klew

[Klew Expressions](#)



Dear Editor:

I was wondering if you know of any way to cure polymer clay other than by heating in an oven....preferably a chemical additive?

Thanks,
R. Dean

Dear R. Dean:

I have no idea, so I asked an expert: Nan Roche. Here's what she had to say:

There is no other way to fuse or melt polymer clay to cure it other than to apply heat. Heat can be applied by an electrical, gas or convection oven or can be applied using a solar oven.

You might wish to contact Katherine Dewey as I believe she has built and used a solar oven. The temperature must approach close to 300 degrees farenheit for a sufficient period of time to fully fuse or melt the polymer.

Since plastic is an insulator, it can take some time for uniform temperatures to be reached inside a thick object so more time must be allowed.

I typically use a convection oven that is set at 290 degrees and carefully calibrated against two different mercury thermometers and I bake for 1 hour.

There is no chemical process using the materials present in polymer clay that can

generate these temperatures.

Never use a microwave oven for fusing polymer clay. Extreme hot spots can develop in the clay and can ignite and create fire and noxious fumes.

I hope this answers the question.

*Thanks,
Nan Roche*

Thank you, Nan, for that very important information.

When is your new book coming out?

Deirdre



Deirdre:

I'm sorry you had trouble using the Lazertran Silk with polymer clay. You will find pictures and instructions for using Lazertran Silk in the July issue of PC Polyzine.

I used the [oval pendant project](#) to introduce people to the Lazertran Silk. Wilma Yost and I ran all the same experiments you did with Lazertran Regular and Lazertran Silk at the NPCG retreat in May (great minds think alike).

And it wasn't until the end of the retreat that we discovered the Lazertran Silk works so beautifully when applied face down on the raw clay (so your image does get reversed - think about that ahead of time) and let it set about 10 to 15 minutes (though that may differ according to the freshness or amount of toner the particular copier puts on the LTS. At the retreat, 30 minutes worked well, but at home that is too long a time).

I use a bit of Diluent on the clay first. Make sure the clay is not slick with too much Diluent; you want a bit of tackiness or drag. Then use a sponge with water and soak the back of the paper. Blott off excess water and the paper will come right off leaving a beautiful vivid transfer.

Let the clay set for a while so it dries thoroughly. The clay can now be manipulated to some extent. I even pressed an [imaged slab into a face mold](#).

[Polymer Clay Express](#) will soon have a new project using it as well, and *Bead and Button* magazine is scheduled to carry a project in the Feb issue.

As to the size question that came up in discussion on the Yahoo list: I have used it for small images on a slab of clay. You don't see the edge of the transfer because it is only the toner that is on the clay not a decal which would have an edge.

I have also used it for [an 8x10 image onto clay](#). The horse is a bas-relief that was put on top of the Lazertran stable image. To be honest it did get a couple of spots that did not transfer, guess I trapped a few air bubbles, but I just used some chalk pastels and a small paintbrush to blend them in ([closeup pic](#)).

Sorry to make this so long but I just didn't want anyone to be confused about using Lazertran Silk with polymer clay.

Thanks for a great polymer clay resource: PC Polyzine

[tlc](#)

aka: Terry Lee Czechowski Terry:

Thanks for all that great information! I have taken your advice, and I've redone my [Lazertran Silk experiment](#). Check it out!

Deirdre



Dear Editor:

[Regarding getting hard clay soft:] I've had pretty good luck mixing the pieces with Transparent Liquid Sculpey. Just keep adding small amounts of the tls until the mass will hang together. Leave it overnite to absorb, then try working it. Usually it works unless stuff really has been baked. Then forget it.

Crumbhaven



Dear Deirdre,

In the September issue of PC Polyzine. Vicki wrote that she had old crumbly clay, and asked what she could do about it.

The first thing Vicki should do is call or write the place where she purchased the clay. She paid for usable clay and didn't get it. If the clay was not advertised as being unusable or old, she deserves her money back or a replacement with viable clay.

If the places refuses to refund her money or provide a replacement, I hope Vicki will let the readers of PC Polyzine know from whom she purchased the clay so that we can boycott the supplier in protest.

Vicki may also want to contact the manufacturer of the clay, and ask the manufacturer for assistance. If they provide a workable solution, I hope Vicki will share that with other readers of PC Polyzine.

I do not hold myself out to be an expert on polymer clay (I have many degrees, but none in chemistry!), but if the clay has cured, as you posited, I suspect it cannot be transformed into uncured clay. Yet, I have a couple of suggestions that Vicki may try so that her polymer clay is not wasted.

If I have clay that is old and crumbly (not cured, just old and dry), I crush it into as many little pieces as possible. I put the pieces in a container, add a glob of Vaseline, and mix it all together. I seal the container overnight.

The next morning, I throw it in the food processor and pulse it a few times to ensure a thorough mixing. I end up with a soft mess that, when kneaded and run through the pasta machine a few times, makes perfectly usable clay.

Only once did I put in too much Vaseline, and that problem was solved by letting my glob sit between some sheets of paper for a few hours for the excess oil to leach out.

Vicki could also use her crumbles of clay as inlay. I have seen jewelry where a sand-textured mixture of a semiprecious stone (e.g., turquoise, coral) is mixed with epoxy and inlaid into a depression in the surrounding metal. You see this frequently with Mexican

silver jewelry; it is a good way for the jeweler to use up fractional pieces of stones.

I've done the same with intentionally cured polymer clay that I have ground up. Place the crumbled clay where you want the inlay to be, cover this with a mixture of half Sculpey Diluent and half TLS. Mix it all together and pat it into place.

If you want a smooth surface for the inlay, after you have mixed the crumbles and solution, pour a thin layer of 1/2 and 1/2 solution over the mix so that you have a smooth layer of the fluid laying on top. If you don't have this smooth top surface, you'll be sanding forever (I learned the hard way).

Crumbles can also be mixed in with polymer clay to get a wonderful rugged texture for the clay. You just use the crumbles as you would colored play sand.

Vicki could also bake the crumbles so she knows they are cured, and then run them through the food processor to make a fine powder. If she mixes this with translucent polymer clay, using enough fluid (Sculpey Diluent or mineral oil) to keep the mixture pliable, she will have a softer version of the original color.

In short, Vicki's investment in clay has not been wasted. While she probably will not be able to use the polymer clay as she originally intended, she will be able to use it to expand her knowledge of polymer clay and learn new techniques.

I look forward to reading in PC Polyzine other suggestions readers may have to help Vicki. And I extend many thanks to the readers who responded to my Letter to the Editor regarding how to clean my clay gun. I learned from each letter, and appreciate the time each writer invested in helping me with my problem.

Good luck, Vicki!
Celeste



Hi,

In a recent letter to the editor someone asked about old crumbly Fimo.

I, too, had some older Fimo that just wouldn't hold together no matter what I did. Ended up being very surprised when I was using it for making faux opals.

I normally don't do much clay work in the summer, but I was planning on teaching an online class for making faux opals and so I needed to take some pictures of the various steps. I had been using my very old crumbly Fimo for the bits of color in the opals, and did this time, too. The house being warmer than normal might have made the difference, I don't know. I do know that instead of staying in bits, all the Fimo softened as I worked the cane and I ended up with very streaky clay. I had to quit mixing so that my faux opals wouldn't be ruined.

I took some scraps later and kept mixing. The Fimo ended up blending totally into the soft translucent clay until I ended up with mud. The reader with the Fimo that won't soften might try crumbling it or chopping, and mixing with a much softer clay like Premo translucent. It sure worked for me!

Thanks for a great online magazine.

Victoria Deloy



Dear Editor:

Re: Rockfish Boxes

These are really cute. My question - Where you discuss embellishment layer and detailing, you chose a NINEBLOCK CANE. I never heard of a nineblock cane. Is there somewhere on the website where I can find the instructions?

Thank you
LoraLee Larson

LoraLee:

In short, you take nine different color logs, stack them 3 x 3, roll them through the pasta machine, then fold them together, accordion-style, and start slicing away (with a ripple blade) to get a mokume gane-type look.

Desiree McCrorey has a similar technique -- the braided cane -- in her article [Rainbow Altoid Tin](#) in the March 2001 issue of Polyzine.

Also, [Glass Attic](#) has a link to [Kathy's photopoint album](#), which shows a series of photographs of the nineblock cane.

The nineblock cane is one of the most beautiful techniques I've seen used. I just did a quick search on [Google](#), [Altavista](#), [Polymer Clay Haven](#), and [Polymer Clay Central](#), but I couldn't find a lesson. Perhaps someone out there would like to write a lesson for Polyzine?

I hope this helps!

Deirdre



Dear Editor:

Please put my name on your mailing list. Thank you! How can I find out about polymer clay classes in my area. I am a beginner.

Jeanne Schaap

Dear Jeanne:

One of the best places to start is the [National Polymer Clay Guild](#) website. You can see if there are any guilds in your home or neighboring states, and then check out their websites to see if they are offering any workshops.

Call your local art centers to see if anyone there is working with polymer clay. I found people when I went to Baltimore Clayworks and asked around.

Also, you can look in your area craft stores to see if there are any local or regional artists working in polymer clay. Perhaps they would be interested in attending a class or even leading a class.

Finally, you can check with area universities to see if people in their fine arts departments are working with polymer clay.

Good luck!

Deirdre



Hi,

My name is Nilli and I loved your mosaic examples. Just one question: Do you polish the end result or do you varnish it? If so, what kind of polisher do you have? a bench model (which one?) or a hand held dremel (which is what I have but have never gotten any results with polishing) If you varnish, which varnish?

Hope you answer this one.

Thanks,
Nilli

Dear Nilli:

If you are referring to Elissa Powell's [Mosaic Cane](#) project in the May 2001 issue of Polyzine, you might want to check out her [Varathane article](#) in the February 2001 issue of Polyzine, and her [second installment of the Varathane article](#) in the April 2001 issue of Polyzine.

According to Elissa, she sands, using larger grits to smaller grits, then buffs, then varnishes. She's very labor intensive! But of course, we can see the absolutely gorgeous results from all her labor.

A lot of people use the Dremel as a hand-held polishing device, and haven't had lots of luck. However, Desiree McCrorey has written excellent articles on both [making a better Dremel mandrel](#) and [making a better Dremel polishing wheel](#). Both of these articles should help you get nicer buffing results from your Dremel.

Thanks for writing!

Deirdre



Dear Editor(s),

I would like to thank you kind folks for posting my message on your front page. I alone would be a drop in the bucket, together we can fill the bucket.

Thanks again.

Sincerely,
Maura

