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Beginners' Corner by Deborah Hayes [print version](#)

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When undertaking a new venture, such as painting or cooking, or designing with polymer clay, you can expect to learn about your new art form and buy supplies and tools from some standard sources: art supply stores, craft stores, or perhaps business or kitchen supply sources.

In our line of art, many places offer unexpected sources for tools and ideas. I would like to tell you about one of my favorites: American Science and Surplus.

[American Science and Surplus](#) is a VERY fun place to visit. Browsing the site might even make you laugh. The descriptions can be called witty or maybe corny, but I would bet that you at least grin at some of them!

You will find lots of things a clayer can use: small bottles **and** corks, vials, ampoules (think wish bottles, or Bottles of Hope). There are dental tools, needle files and weird things you might not ever have considered before, but which seem logical once you have started browsing in a "clay state of mind". (Buttons from the Russian Army? Think molds!) You can order a paper catalog as well, and it makes for entertaining reading on long trips! They even sell surplus crayons! (Think crushed crayon in translucent).

One of the neat things about the AS&S catalog is its offbeat suggestions for items. Personally, I find that charming, and since offbeat is me, well, enough said!

By the way, I have not been compensated by AS&S for this article. I found them accidentally, and don't buy very often. However, when I do, I get things that I actually **use** in my claying, unlike some "traditional" clay tools I have that just take up space.

Please remember to email your questions and suggestions to polyzine@pcpolyzine.com.

Have a great month!
Deborah