

HAPPENINGS

Chicago ACCI 2003

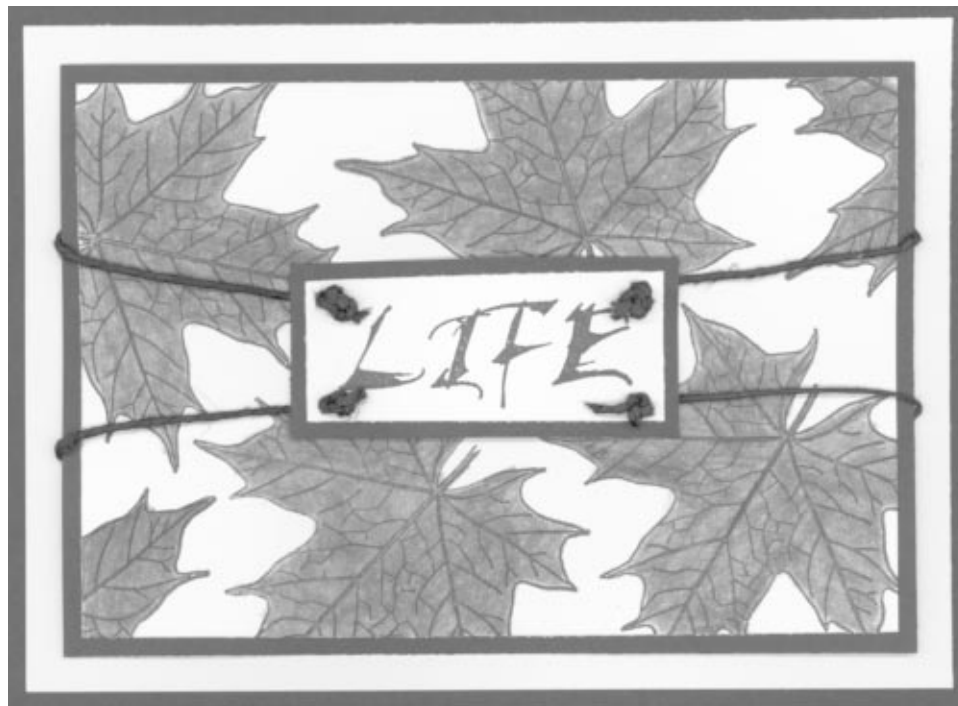
Chicago, July 18-20

By Judi Kauffman

It was hot and sticky outside, but cool and wonderful in the Rosemont Convention Center where exhibitors gathered for the yearly Association of Crafts & Creative Industries wholesale trade show. As always, there were too many things to see and too little time. I worked as a demo artist for **Sulyn Industries**, introducing Shimmer Sheetz to store owners, teachers, designers and their guests. Before the show and on my lunch hour and breaks, I raced around to see new products and visit with editors and manufacturers - many of whom have become close friends. I arrived a day early to teach a mulberry paper projects class for **Sanook Paper Company** and stayed two extra days to work with **Coats & Clark** (I love yarn and needles almost as much as rubber stamps).

I noted that more and more companies are selling unmounted stamps, either singly, especially the large patterns and textures, or in sheets. There were beads everywhere, lots of interesting fibers sold for scrapbooking and paper crafts (small amounts wound on cards with coordinated color combinations), endless metal embellishments and eyelets in too many shapes to count. There were lots of products geared toward altered art and collage, labels, cigar bands, vintage photos and ephemera (including Beth Cote's new book from **Design Originals** that you can cut up or use for photocopies without worrying about copyright issues). The lines con-

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Corrine Mihlek-Brzys (Black & White. See also page 21-22)

"Stamp leaf in black ink on a piece of white cardstock. Color with black Prismacolor pencil, blend. Stamp word in black on white cardstock strip. Mount on black cardstock, punch corner holes, and thread knotted hemp through. Attach to leaf stamped piece with foam tape. Attach hemp to back and attach entire piece to white cardstock with foam tape. Attach to black cardstock and card body." (Images: Just Jhone)

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tinue to blur between categories. Companies that used to sell only stamps now sell stickers and scrapbook papers. Companies that used to sell only paper products now sell tools and embellishments. It is a great time for stampers - there are lots of thriving companies, though not as many new exhibitors in the category as I might have predicted.

Originally, I had planned to limit myself to half a dozen "discoveries" but the number grew and grew. The list isn't in order of preference - it would be impossible to pick favorites when there are so many wonderful tools, books and materials.

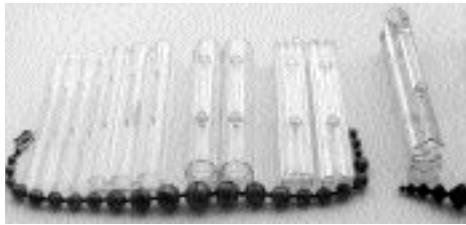
The **Products for the Cure.com** booth struck my eye because of the bright pink color, but caught my heart when I stopped to talk to Pam O'Neal, whose mission it is to raise awareness about health and social issues and raise money for research. Products include card and stationery and scrapbooking kits, greeting cards, orna-

ments, stickers, confetti, stencils, gift bags and more.

I never knew that there were so many cause-related awareness ribbons - not just pink (breast cancer), red (AIDS/HIV), and Yellow (POW/MIA, military support and missing children). Visit the web site to find out about what teal, green, gold, purple, and the others stand for, to learn more about the charitable giving, and to see whether some of these products will fit in with what you're stamping, for gifts or for yourself.

I had tried ColorCutters from **Gizmo Enterprises, Inc.**, but hadn't seen the new companion tools called Married Mat and Married Templates. ColorCutters have a safe blade inside the marker tip so you cut while you draw, making a perfect "edge" outline in one quick process. The Mat is a cutting surface for working freehand, but there are holes around the edges so the Templates can attach with a peg system.

When you run the ColorCutters in the channels of the templates, you can cut perfectly spaced lines, waves (scallops if you look at them the other way), and curves. For paper weaving, this is a real find! There's a ColorCutter called Smoovy that doesn't have any ink if you want to cut but not draw an edge. I like knowing that the owner has named colors for his children, too. (Also see *Product Picks*.)



I am in love with the Bead Rollers from **Poly-Tools, Inc.** I couldn't tear myself away from the demo table. There is something almost hypnotic about watching someone turn pieces of polymer clay (accurately measured in the tool) into perfect round, oval, or bicone shape beads. If you use more than one color clay, the colors swirl and marleize as if by magic.

The tool does the work. It is a long curved plastic tray with a lid. You measure the clay inside the tool, cut a piece, and then roll the lid back and forth. Very easy! I learned how to lay a piece of wire or zipper in the tray to create textures or a channel for adding a band of wire and smaller beads, too. I am hooked. Jewelry and altered books, anyone? (See *Product Picks*.)

Clearsnap showed off its new Fluid Chalk eight-color trays, stylus tips, molding mats, and a fabulous Limited



Edition pigment ink pad that has twenty-four colors and looks like a quilt block. It is a collector's item (almost time to hint for holiday gifts - or treat yourself); a splurge that is also a good value. There are so many colors packed together with only one lid. It is portable with handles and each design/pattern is a color spectrum that is coordinated and gorgeous. The problem will be which one(s) to choose.



McGill's new punches include one called "Ribbon" that makes two parallel slits, just right for weaving paper strips, yarn or ribbon and another called "Button" that makes small holes side by side.

Blumenthal Lansing's Button Shank Remover was an immediate must-have, too. The handles are cushioned and purple, my favorite color. Makes snipping off a button shank for a smooth flat back embellishment an easy task.

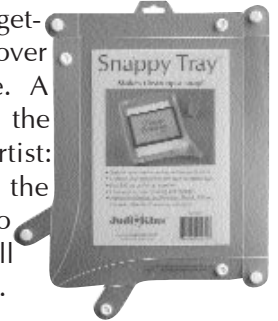


Walnut Hollow's Creative Hot Marks is a multi-purpose tool that marks, cuts and more. Use it to transfer black and white or color laser images to paper, cut foam core, burn paper edges for a vintage look. It works on plastic, stencils, embosses velvet fabric and paper. Or how about gourds, soap, leather and wax? There is a calligraphy point for drawing and a mini flow point for details and textures. The universal point is all-purpose; the shading point is for large areas. There are eight stamp points, too (and fifteen points total).



Judi-Kins Snappy Tray is another find - Flat for easy storage, the Snappy Tray folds and snaps into a work tray with a pour spout at the end. It is just right for embossing powder, con-fetti, beads, and all those other powders and things that need pouring and have a way of getting all over the place. A hint from the demo artist:

Fold well on the score lines so the bottom will be perfectly flat.



Ellison's Paddle Punch is a position-able hand punch from Sizzix that lets you punch anywhere, not just within reach of a grip-style punch. It is kind of therapeutic to give a little whack and have a shaped hole obediently appear just where you want it! There are hearts, leaves, Christmas lights, a dragonfly, dog, fish . . . and more.



A show stopper: The EasyCast resin knobs at **ETI!** These are so new that the molds haven't shipped to stores yet. If you are thinking about re-doing a favorite piece of furniture, or want to change the look of a kitchen or bathroom, or add a knob to the lid of a box - this is for you (and me - I already have a list). The molds come in eight shapes. Each mold has enough cavities to make six knobs or four handles (pulls) and offer endless possibilities for unique, custom looks.

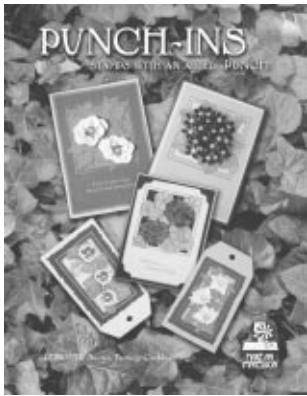


You can embed anything you want (a small piece you have embossed, a found object, a shell, leafing foil, stamped shrink plastic). You can use the resin clear or tint it, or color it with opaque dyes as well as creating lay-



ers, or make entire knobs using faux granite powder (eight colors). The hardware is brass or chrome. There is a molding compound that lets you make your own shapes, too. This is the real thing - durable, functional, but very much about creativity and fun. The knobs look like design center knobs that would be \$35 each! (See Cover.)

Susan Tierney-Cockburn's Punch-Ins stamps (sold through **Make an Impression**) get better and better with each show. She's added a book called "**Punch-Ins - Stamps with an Added...Punch!**" that is almost as much fun as attending a class with her. Techniques include cupping, layering, shaping, shading, molding and coloring plus wonderful close-up photos. Also available for those who don't want to invest in punches or want an alternative when time is short are Petal Papers - sheets of laser cut petals, flowers and leaves.



Another company that recognizes that some people like to craft with pre-made components is **American Traditional Stencils**. They now offer both Cut & Fold templates (get out your knife, it's easy - pg 12) and Fanci-Folds (laser cut and ready to fold). There are also Rub-Ons that



look like the stencil painting is done. "3 in 1 Cut & Fold templates" have three of a single shape for embossing, stenciling, and cut & fold designs. I got several of the Piercing templates to use with Shimmer Sheetz and discovered a "Feathers & Eggs" stencil that is already becoming a favorite (not a new product, just new to me). American Traditional now makes rubber stamps, too. They are mounted on dense foam with a wood grain.

The brand new **Tsukineko's** VersaMagic inkpad is well named. It is magic to see such a versatile ink in thirty-six colors. Multi-surface (paper, wood, fabric, leather and more), archival chalk ink with excellent coverage because it is opaque, you are going to love it for dark papers. It comes in stackable containers, too. VersaFine is now packaged with a hinged lid in a stackable raised pad. This is the fine detail ink that is oil-based and lasts three times as long as an average pigment pad. It dries instantly on un-coated papers and is waterproof and fade-proof, too (watercolor fans - take note).

I found a small booth in the scrapbooking aisle that has laser cut wood pieces that would be fabulous for stampers to use on cards, journals and more. Check out **Ariden Creations** if you're on the web. I am going to use the bonsai tree on an Asian collage and the nutcracker for a holiday card.

Another small booth with big possibilities was **Memory Melodies**. They make musical modules you can tuck into a card or pop up scrapbook page. Can you hear me humming "Take Me Out To the Ballgame"? (See pg 14.)



Sanook Paper Company's booth was a treat for me since many of my projects were on display. The new die cut mulberry paper sheets and die cuts, mulberry paper flowers and metal embellishments are unique and such fun to use. Everything is made in Thailand with the "one-village" concept of fair trade employment.

Another paper company with a booth I wanted to scoop up and take home was **Jennifer Collection**. The papers are heavily embossed with leaf, flower, pinwheel, textures, vines, and more. There are also metallic prints and Asian papers, nesting boxes, journals and memory books and stationery items. Everything is made in northern India with 100% recycled cotton rag and earth-friendly processes.

I love to stop at the **Jesse James & Co.** booth, both for the people and the products. It is hard to pick just a few favorites, but these caught my eye: Tiny Sew-Thru Shapes, Finishing Touches Beaded Sequin Flowers, ". . . And All That Jazz" Swarovski Crystal assortments, and Memory Mates Glitter Combos. The glass bead assortments called "Dress It Up Bead Company" are an incredible value. I have seen some of the beads in the assortments sold singly for as much as sixty cents each. There is a great attention to detail, color, and quality in every one of the products.



Ranger's

Adirondack inks have been favorites of mine for years and the new colors make a wonderful product line even better. Seeing Tim Holtz work magic with the re-inkers, markers and inkpads is a great experience. If you see his name in a teaching schedule at a store near you, sign up immediately.



If you like exquisite jewelry components, charms and unusual embellishments, **Karmul Studios'** line will make you feel like you've walked into a fantasyland (see above.) I spent so long at the booth that they gave me candy and offered to get me something to drink so I'd have enough energy to look at everything. No description could possibly do it justice.

Wordsworth always has beautiful stamps, but now they have a unique

line of scrapbook and papercrafting papers, stickers, and some awesome "WildCards" templates for cards and envelopes that are not your basic rectangles! They have layered flaps, flaps that squiggle, triangular windows - you have to see them. They can be mailed through the post office with additional postage (two-ounce stamp is plenty).

My friend and roommate Mary Lynn Maloney taught at the **Bagworks** booth showing handbags and "Additions" embellishments. We stayed up way too late every night thinking of new ways to stamp, paint and change the purses. Her book, **Making Fun, Fabulous Handbags**, is filled with project ideas. The bags are simple, well made, and are literally a blank surface for any kind of creativity.

SilverCrow Creations

← GOLDEN DOG TAG & CHAIN NEW
1" x 1-3/4" metal dog tag on 25" chain - 75¢

← SWEET CUTTINGS UNMOUNTED ORABRAS
1/2 pound package of trimmed rubber
15 to 32 stamps for \$18.00

← WOODEN COLLAGE PARTS
30 or more wooden pieces for collage, jewelry, etc.
Includes fine wooden tags, smooth wooden caps,
flat & dimensional shapes. Lots of possibilities for \$4.00

← SHREPPED MONEY NEW
Real shredded US Currency - straight from
the US Bureau of Engraving & Printing
1/2 ounce for \$2.50

← LOTERIA DE MEXICO NEW
54-card Loteria Deck and 18 Playing Tokens
Perfect for Collage and Assemblage - \$4.50

← BINPI
Package of 3 for 75¢

← MOUNTED STAMPS BY THE POUND
Non-Cute-Cute-Mixed \$12 per Pound!
No Duplicates! Finest Quality!

← ABACA ENVELOPES - 5x7 NEW
Perfect for that special
enclosure... closes with a loop
over a wooden button - \$2.50

← ANCIENT RUNES SET NEW
25 repro Viking runes stones in a
pouch with handover book - \$30.00

← LITTLE DARLINGS NEW
over 50 tiny items for your artwork: possible inclusions are:
vintage postage, clippings, Victorian scraps, hat pins, advertising
& pharmacy labels, Aston papers, origami, charms, one-of-a-kind
pieces... almost anything - \$7.50

← TAO RUNES NEW
Light weight key rings for tags
Package of 10 for 75¢

← LIMITED EDITION MAH JONG CARDS NEW
144 cards reproduced from vintage tiles (1-3/8" by 3-1/2") - \$24.00

← NAIPES ESPAÑOLES
Spanish Playing Cards - 50 card deck with
great graphics... A alternative surface: avocets,
clubs, caps & cones - \$5.00 NEW

← METAL MATCHBOX
Originally designed as an ashtray, this 2-1/4" x
1-5/8" box is perfect for all kinds of projects
fully-screened with different designs, these are
easily covered with art papers or permanent
paints & inks - \$1.25 each NEW

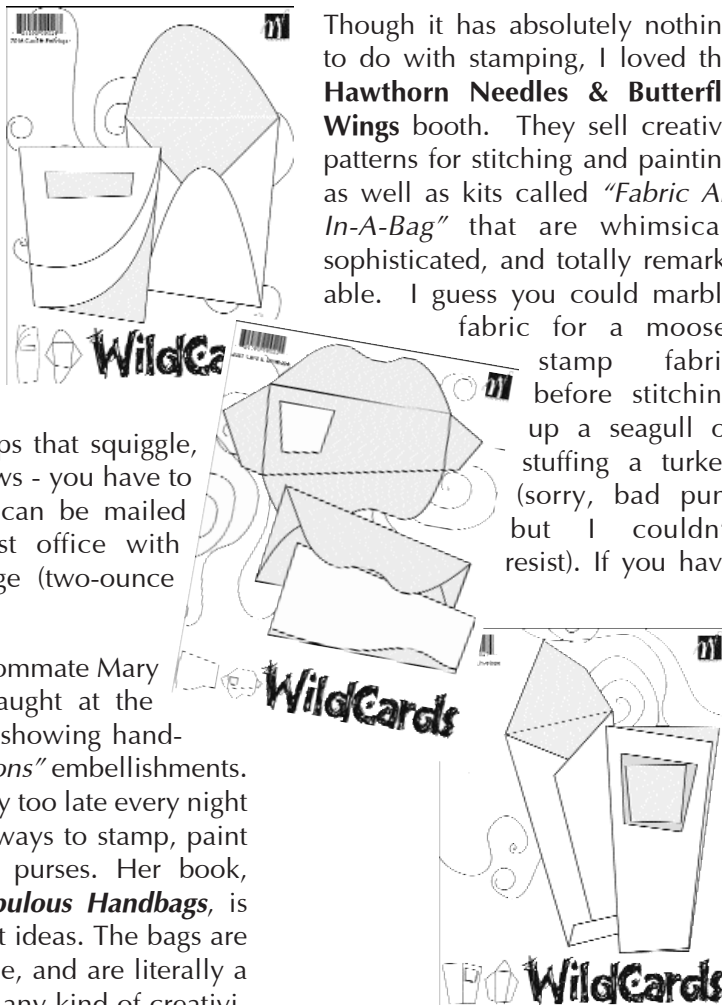
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Though it has absolutely nothing to do with stamping, I loved the **Hawthorn Needles & Butterfly Wings** booth. They sell creative patterns for stitching and painting as well as kits called "Fabric Art In-A-Bag" that are whimsical, sophisticated, and totally remarkable. I guess you could marble fabric for a moose, stamp fabric before stitching up a seagull or stuffing a turkey (sorry, bad pun, but I couldn't resist). If you have

wanted to try decorative painting, the plate patterns would be a fun way to start.

Stampendous gave me a sample of Fran's Fusible Fibers that let you go from a batch of gossamer strands to a sturdy shimmering fabric in minutes. This is a "WOW"!

Some people go to the beach or a spa to feel happy and get their batteries recharged but not I. I will take a wholesale trade show any day! I am off to Memory Trends in Las Vegas soon, then Dallas for HIA. I will keep my eyes open and report back. Meanwhile, happy stamping.

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