

QUICK TIPS

Quick Tips is a collection of tips mailed or emailed to the Editor or that were posted on internet stamping email lists (used with permission.) If you are interested in joining an internet group, see the top section **VSN's** links list at: www.vampstampnews.com. Many of these groups are found on Yahoo, so if you don't see a link for the group you are looking for, try the Yahoo link and see if it is there.

This sample *Quick Tips* article is represents a selection of tips from previous issues of **VSN**. My thanks to each of these kind folks for not only giving me permission to quote them in the actual pages of **VSN**, but for then agreeing to let me quote them a second time here online so you can get a taste of what a *Quick Tips* section is like. I've made a few very small editing changes so that these tips will make sense when pulled out of their original place in the issues, but otherwise they are just as you would see them in **VSN**. There may be a few more tips/inspirations added to this sample, so be sure to check back soon!

Goo Gone on Sticky Scissors [Oct '04 VSN]

On Midwest Stampers email list, Cheryl McVeigh (www.onyxxpressions.com) shared, "a wonderful way to remove the stickies from your scissors after cutting unmounteds with adhesive foam is using Goo Gone. I found that having to use two hands - one to lift the bottle, one to open the screw cap from the top, tip and pour onto a paper towel, then replace the cap - was just too many extra steps to deal with so many times during a frenzy of cutting sticky foam and rubber." "So, I transferred my Goo Gone into a cleaned-out pump bottle and eliminated the paper towels. (Note: This is

a pump bottle, like hand lotion dispensers and not a spray bottle.) I now keep a disposable foam paintbrush on tinfoil underneath my pump bottle of Goo Gone. Then when I need to clean my scissors, with one hand I pump a small squirt onto the foam paintbrush, and wipe the scissors clean with a few strokes of the brush — all with one hand. The excess Goo Gone stays active on the paintbrush a lot longer than it did evaporating on the paper towel, so it extends the Goo Gone proportionately. The roughness of the foam brush acts like a scrubber and does a fine job cleaning."

"I was delighted to have found that Goo Gone now came in a spray bottle, but surprisingly, it didn't work well. The spray was not a fine mist, so it splattered around my work area and that's a no-no, sprayed way more than I needed, I had no control over the amount, and it sprayed way beyond the foam brush. The pump bottle is smooth. You can control exactly how much comes out by how much you depress the pumper."

Watercolor Crayons [Apr '05 VSN]

Yet another product [discussed on StampTalk] was watercolor crayons. Suze Weinberg (www.schmoozewithsuze.com) shared an idea for using these: "Here's a different way to use water color crayons and Ultra Thick Embossing Enamel (UTEE)."

1. Coat a piece of cardboard with a warm color of UTEE, like Gold or bronze. You can either heat gun it on or dip it in the Melting Pot.
2. After the surface sets but is still warm, take watercolor crayons (only crayons, not pencils) and draw parallel lines in different colors next to one another.



Suze Weinberg

3. After you've drawn all the lines on the UTEE surface, get out your heat gun and something VERY thin to marble with - I use the metal pick end of a hair comb. Heat the whole thing until it starts to "move" a bit.

4. Then, in the OPPOSITE way to which you striped, pull the comb through to 'marble' the crayons through the UTEE. It really comes out very cool. The technique is shown on my website under 'SUZE SEZ' techniques." (www.schmoozewithsuze.com)

Cutting Designs Using Metal Templates [Upcoming May '05 VSN]

On MidwestStampers email list, Jerry Stevens of Pop-Ups By Plane Class (www.popuptemplates.com) had some advice for successfully cutting a design using metal templates. Jerry said, "Ever have trouble cutting when using metal templates such as Lacé, pop-ups and cut-n-fold? Many people do because they use the wrong blade or technique."

"There is a knack, along with special tools and technique, needed to make cutting with metal templates EASY (such as POP-UP templates and Lacé templates). We at POP-UPS by Plane Class teach crafters at conventions and at stores all over the country and have successfully taught each and every one the proper method of cutting. Every person we've taught says the same thing: "It really is easier with

the #16 blade and the POP-UPS technique". There are two videos available on our web site that teach the technique along with many other tips. Follow the tips below, exactly, and you should have NO difficulty cutting."

"USE a #16 blade. DO NOT use the #11, standard blade or a swivel knife. Both will make cutting difficult."

"Hold the knife handle straight up and down so as to use only the tip of the blade. The palm of your hand should not touch the table. Use your little finger to steady your hand. THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT. If you hold the #16 blade as you would the #11 blade, you will not be able to get around tight corners. When you need to navigate a tight corner, simply rotate the knife in your fingers."

"Hold the knife with thumb and two fingers, gently. If you hold on too tightly, you will cause your fingers to fatigue and your forearm will tire. You will also have a tendency to press down too hard and cause excess drag in the cutting pad, thus making it harder to cut the paper or card stock. You CAN make cutting very difficult if you try too hard."

"Before using any template, practice this technique on a regular piece of paper, until you can easily make cuts through the paper. Then do the same with some scrap cardstock. After you have the feel for cutting, practice with a template that has straight line cuts. Many people start right out trying to cut using a very detailed template (such as the Happy Birthday POP-UP) and have difficulty and give up. Cutting is easy, but you must get through the learning curve before you will master it."

"Always cut away from corners. Because of the thickness of a template, and the angle of a blade, it is impossible to get all the way into a corner if you cut that direction. If you have opposing corners, cut out from



Jeannette Stumpf
(Handmade Paper Cord)

one, part way, then cut from the other corner and overlap with the first cut."

"Always use a sharp blade. If you run the blade into the metal of a template, you can dull it very quickly. Hold the blade parallel to the template so the blade glides along the edge of the metal, and do not run the blade up over the metal when you reach the end of a slit (non-corner). With POP-UPS, since you are cutting pieces of paper or cardstock out, you will always be cutting out from corners. With Lacé templates, cut out from corners also, but, if there is no corner, just the end of a slit, cut to the end of the slit. Just be careful not to run the blade up over the metal at the end of the slit."

"If you follow these tips, you should have no difficulty after two to three practice cards."

Homemade Paper Cord [Nov '04 VSN]

Ever wanted some paper cord for a project but wanted to have something beyond what is available in the craft store? Jeannette Stumpf shared a technique for making your own cord using crepe paper streamers with stampers on MidWestStampers: "While discussing how to make Mizuhiki cord on another group, I decided to experiment with making my own at home. I didn't get Mizuhiki, but I did get a fantastic paper crafting cord."



"To make it, take a 36" or so length of crepe paper streamer in your choice of color. On the diagonal, start twirling it between your index finger and thumb. Twist tightly and try to keep the tension even so you will get a more uniform cord."



"Take the twisted cord and dip it into liquid laundry starch. Stretch and smooth the cord and lay it flat to dry on a non-stick protected surface (think trash bag, freezer paper or plastic wrap.)"

"When dry, you will have a nice somewhat stiff paper cord that you can knot or thread through your cards. What is nice is now you can make it in a rainbow of your choice of colors." Note: You need to have dry hands to twist the cord since the paper is fragile. The cord dries overnight.

(Note: The Nov '04 VSN contained a sample of homemade paper cord.)

Twisted Homemade Cord [Dec '04 VSN]

In last month's issue (Nov '04 VSN) I included a sample of crepe paper that was twisted and starched, a suggestion from Jeannette Stumpf. In the issue I described twisting the paper by www.vampstampnews.com

hand, which as you could see in the photos that went with the tip, I did. After sending the issue off to the printer, I spent a day twisting cords and lots of time on my knees in my basement, starching them and laying them out on garbage bags to dry. This worked fine.

But the next day, as I started on yet another day of paper twisting, my husband sat watching me. He had that look in his eye that only a husband can have, the *"This can be done better and I think I know the solution"* look. He went down to his workshop and came up with his variable speed power drill. He had replaced the bit with a wood dowel and plugged it in through an outlet with both a dimmer switch and an on-off switch. This allowed me to clip on a three to four foot length of paper streamer to the end of the wood dowel with a wooden clothespin and use the dimmer switch to adjust my speed and the on-off switch to start and stop the spinning.

The results were interesting and nicer looking than the first batch of hand twisted cord. (Some of that I wound up tossing out because it got too lumpy.) I found that you have to experiment with the drill speed to find a speed that isn't too slow to put you to sleep waiting for it, but not so fast that it gets ahead of you. I also found that it made sense to start with my right hand (I'm right handed) near the dowel end of the paper with my thumbnail underneath the paper. Then as the drill turned the paper, I



would gradually move my hand backward toward the other end of the paper, keeping my thumbnail underneath, until the whole paper cord was twisted. The result was more tightly wound and more even than my hand twisted version. I really think that you can skip the starch step if you do it this way since it winds up very tight and secure. (Caution: We are talking about power equipment here. Please be very careful. Don't do this around children who might want to reach out and touch – or kittens – we have four kittens who found this process fascinating!)

Twinkling H2O's

Mary Moyer a.k.a. Merry Mary from The Merry Stamper shared suggestions for using Twinkling H2O paints with stampers on MidWest Stampers. Mary said, *"One of my favorite looks with Radiant Pearls is using a stipple brush loaded up with paint and pouncing it on cardstock, completely covering the white of the cardstock. The paper would positively glow! After much experimenting, I've come up with a suitable substitute for this technique using Twinkling H2O's. Here's how to make it work:"*

1. Take a spray bottle and lightly spray into the pots of H2O's paint. Let the paint soften for a couple minutes.
2. Meanwhile, dampen your stipple brush. Don't soak it - just dampen it. If the brush is too wet, you lose some of the shimmer.
3. After the paint is softened, pounce your dampened stipple brush into the pot. Then pounce away on your cardstock.

"This same procedure works great when using Twinkling H2O's with direct-to-rubber techniques - pounce the dampened stipple brush into the softened paint, then pounce on your stamp. Stamp using the paint as your ink." Check The Merry Stampers' web site (www.merrystamper.com) for samples of the technique.

Bamboo Tongs

Tanny Ogren posted another kitchen supply idea on MidWest Stampers. *"Ever burn your fingers when embossing? I've tried clothespins — which are sometimes too short — and alligator clips — which sometimes leave a mark on the cardstock. Recently while shopping I found small bamboo tongs that work perfectly. They are long enough to keep my fingers from burning, the wood doesn't mar the cardstock, and they don't conduct heat. Check your Oriental market or that section of your grocery store. Chop sticks are also very useful in folding cardstock and holding small items in place while the glue dries. For a non-stamping application, put one in your flour container to level off when measuring!"*

Sign Your Work [Apr '05 VSN]

Joe Nathan (<http://members.cox.net/jnathan444/>) shared a tip with several lists that is a simple reminder and yet important! Joe said, *"Always sign your card. Be proud of your art."*

Share Your Love of Stamping

Robert Rosendale posted a wonderful note on StampTalk that I absolutely loved. Robert said, *"I love stamping - for me it started about twelve years ago. I couldn't draw a straight line without a ruler (still can't). Someone had told me about a Left handed store in St. Augustine (love my left handed scissors). The next time I went down to get something they had closed and a rubber stamp store had opened. I had must have been there for a couple of hours looking at all the stamps and got hooked. I thought it was a one of a kind store, so when I wanted more I drove to St. Augustine. Friends told me about other stores and about Christmas that year I went into a local store for the first time. The owner said 'If you can't figure out what to get your wife for Christmas we have Gift Certificates' My reply was 'What is a wife?'"*

"Living in Jacksonville I am very lucky in that from South Georgia down to Daytona area and across central Florida, I have eleven rubber stamp stores to go to and of course dozens of scrap stores to choose from. I do not limit my art to stamping but most of the time it includes it. I [also] try and go to a lot of conventions."

"If I am at a store and a husband is WAITING FOREVER for his wife to empty HIS wallet, I offer them a demo 'That even a man can do.' Several times I have been taken up on my offer. Heck I have even given a demo

(I always take sample cards with me) in Michaels. If I go out to dinner I take my latest project with me to work on and watch the faces of the people who pass by. One restaurant I went to had white butcher block paper as table cloths. I went out to my car and got some stamps and ink pads and stamped away with the staff watching. (They hung it up). Orlando had a restaurant called Black-Eyed Pea. I did a nice card with 'Give Peas a Chance' and they picked up my check. For this last Christmas my landlord, having seen my work, asked if I would make 250 cards for him to mail out and got

them done in five days. He loved them and traded my lot rent for them."

"I love stamping. Currently I am using a 1/8" inch whole punch with colored cardstock and using latch hook or cross stitch patterns. I punch out the holes, place them on an adhesive sheet (with tweezers) and then following the pattern (with tweezers), place each one on my background color. Is it art? Yes. Is it rubber stamping? The tools are; Is it what I like to do - Yes."

"HAVE AN ARTFUL DAY!"