

To My *Kramer's Best* Customers:

Over 19 years of making my *Kramer's Best Antique Improver*, I have developed a growing customer base that is more like friends and family.

We have answered your questions, discussed your projects, and been gratified as you praised results of our products. You have recommended *Kramer's Best* to others. Your word-of-mouth advertising has helped make our company successful and our lives rewarding. This is why we want to make you aware of a dramatic challenge we now face.

As you know, turpentine is one of the natural ingredients we use. It is part of what adds "life" back into the wood and finishes, rather than accelerating dryness as petroleum products do.

Each of my 14 ingredients is essential. I spent years experimenting with old ingredients, old recipes and long unused methods to formulate the "recipe" that is *Kramer's Best Antique Improver*. I know changing the recipe will result in a less effective product. My customers have my word – I will never change the recipe and still call it *Kramer's Best Antique Improver*.

On January 5, 2006, I received word that my supplier's domestic source for turpentine is quitting the business <http://www.herc.com/pinova/index.html> see "Newsroom". Since I absolutely will not substitute a lesser ingredient, we have no choice but to find a supplier outside the USA. With costs already rising the past few years, we are concerned for the future.

The bottom line is that as the market forces prices up, we may have no choice but to implement a substantial price increase. No words can describe how bad we feel about this possibility.

We are a small home-based business. You can usually reach Marian Blades, or myself, by phone at most any hour. Aside from 4 days we snuck away for a trip to Branson between the holidays, one of us is here at all times. If we can't make it to the phone, leave a message. We get back to you promptly. This business is our life; customer happiness is our goal.

A price increase is always upsetting. With costs rising in all areas of our lives, it sickens us to add to this difficulty.

But to stay in business we must remain solvent. We live frugally. We have no multi-million dollar executives to support and no million-dollar ad campaigns to fund. We have passed up offers of TV "Infomercial" promotions because our narrow profit margin does not allow profitability for the multiple parties involved. We economize production every way that we can.

The decision we face now is, do we discontinue production of *Kramer's Best*, or do we move ahead and rely on your appreciation of a truly unique and exceptional product? We know many of you depend on our products, and some have made them an integral part of your businesses. This loyalty is encouraging us to leave no stone unturned in seeking a solution to this challenge.

It is my goal to use only “Made in USA” ingredients, but that is getting more and more difficult. Though I have no choice but to consider the possibility of imported turpentine as a last resort, I will continue to seek other solutions.

I have approached the “Agrirama” (Georgia’s Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village - <http://www.agrirama.com> ), in Tifton, Georgia. They have a seldom-used turpentine still in their village, and a few local old timers who fire it up in the Spring for their yearly festival. I have let them know that I would be a ready market for their product if the still could remain active for longer periods. It’s a long shot, but who knows? I will explore all possibilities.

To learn more about turpentine and its historic significance, look at <http://www.valdosta.edu/turpentine/index.htm> – a state-funded site that presents the complete story with video and audio. See the “Virtual Exhibit” page for a pictorial of our country’s last turpentine harvest.

*Kramer’s Best* is not the only business that will feel the loss of this valuable commodity. Turpentine originated as part of the naval stores industry and has served us as a medicine, a solvent, a disinfectant, an insect repellent, and a laundry bleach – to name just a few. We hope you will join us in our effort to prevent complete disappearance of another small, but historically important piece of our past.

Sincerely, John T. Kramer