



# The Kramer Letter

News and information for the friends of Kramer's Best

Issue Number Four  
FALL/WINTER 2008

**Where did YOU first hear about 'Kramer's Best' products?**

If you have phoned us to place an order, or even to just ask a question, you will probably remember our question: "Where did you first hear about our products?"

We probably ask mainly because we're curious. But there are other reasons.

For many years we have given our Dealers a small credit anytime we can determine that the customer first learned of *Kramer's Best* from them. Since many of our Dealers have their displays in high-traffic tourist spots, travelers may have to wait until they get home and then place an order — especially if there is airline travel involved where anything flammable is forbidden.

*We probably ask mainly because we're curious. But there are other reasons.*

Or a customer may purchase a small bottle to try, then, after using it, find they want more and order from us. If we can identify the original dealer, it's only fair they get credit for sales they generate.

We also are curious to know if the advertising we do is effective. Our advertising budget is limited and we appreciate feedback about what might be working best.

But our favorite part of the "Where did you first hear of the product?" answers are the ones from folks who are ordering based on a word-of-mouth recommendation.

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## A TOOL COLLECTOR'S DREAM:

### D'Elia Antique Tool Museum—over 1,000 antique planes.

We first heard about this amazing collection when we asked a customer: "Where did you first hear about *Antique Improver*?" His answer: "In Scotland, Connecticut at the D'Elia Antique Tool Museum!"

And we've heard that same reply several times since. Each time we've heard about the friendly gentleman, Andrew D'Elia, owner of the collection, who our customer had visited with at the museum — and who, when the inevitable question about care had come up, had explained that he used *Kramer's Best Antique Improver*. Most recently a customer related that "Andy said that every piece in the place had *Antique Improver* used on it."

From Internet research we learned more about the museum and how Mr. D'Elia made a permanent home for his 35-year collection by providing funds for a new library building to be built in the town of Scotland, with a wing devoted to display of his valued pieces.

The museum brochure describes the collection: "Over 1,000 planes are neatly exhibited in over 20 oak cases with glass doors and shelves. Planes are accompanied by captions providing basic information and many are displayed with a copy of their patent."

In a March 2006 article in the *Chronicle of the Early American Industries Association, Inc.*, author Elton W. Hall described the collection:



TOP OF PAGE: Above each of the 5 windows in the museum is a custom-made stained glass panel depicting a rare piece from the collection. (3 are shown at top of page.)

PHOTO ABOVE: Some of the oak cases and shelves that display the over 1,000-piece collection. (photos by permission from the D'Elia Antique Tool Museum Web Page: [www.deliatoolmuseum.com](http://www.deliatoolmuseum.com))

"The D'Elia collection of planes is remarkably comprehensive. While the concentration is on patented planes, that group is put into the context of the whole history of planemaking in America from the early-eighteenth century up to World War II. . . . The planes are grouped in the cases according to a number of themes. Early planes are together. Then there are a number of trades or processes represented. For example, all the different planes necessary for making window sash are in a group. Because the D'Elia's came from Connecticut, he has a special interest in Connecticut-made planes, so those planes also have a case. The collection of patented planes must be among the most extensive ever assembled."

To know that our product has been chosen to care for this unequalled collection is, to say the very

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Here we have quoted a few (names omitted):

*"Long time fan of your amazing product since my days of working for Hallmark Cards in Kansas City. First discovered at the Lawrence Antiques Mall. Also purchased it from a dealer while living in Sarasota, FL. Can't find it here in NYC.*

*"A friend . . . let me try some of your product and I was very impressed with the results. I recently bought a house which has a lot of wood paneling that was marred and scratched. By using your product, the wood looks almost new. I clean for myself will a lady who highly recommended I use your product to other friends and family. [Rowlett, TX]*

*"Recommended by a professional restorer. [Chappaqua, NY]*

*I discovered your AMAZING product through a now deceased, incredibly gifted interior designer . . . she was from Wichita Falls, Texas, my home town. Your product sat in a drawer for 3 years before I got up the courage to use it. Now I'm a believer! [Wellesley, MA]*

*I was given a bottle 12 years ago by a friend. I have been hoarding it. It is time for more. It is an awesome product. I have tried to duplicate it but nothing I've tried has worked so well. Thanks. [Bloomington, IN]*

*"I clean for a lady who insisted I use this product when dusting all of her wood furniture, so I did and I love it. I own a 150 year old bed and had it refinished. Already I wish I would've known about this product earlier. [New Virginia, IA]*

*"Mother is taking a reupholstery class and someone mentioned how good the product was for cleaning wood. [Beaver Falls, PA]*

*"Recommended by a poster on [www.homesteadingtoday.com](http://www.homesteadingtoday.com). [Monmouth, IL]*

*"In an article on antique gun restoration. I've tried your product and am amazed at what it has done to several antique gun stocks, especially an M1816 Springfield musket that was made in 1838 and spent the last 50 years in an attic. The stock was to say the least very dry, but coming back to life beautifully. Your product is great and*

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## **A tool collector's dream...** *(continued from previous page)*

least, extremely gratifying for us. And we, of course, had to ask Mr. D'Elia our favorite question: "Where did you first hear about Kramer's?"

We reached him by phone at the museum, where he undoubtedly spends a lot of time. He told us that about 10 years ago a fellow tool collector gave him a bottle of *Improver* to try — he has been using it ever since. And, when visitors to the museum comment about how nice the pieces in his collection look, he tells them about the product. We

couldn't be prouder.

The museum has regular hours May through September and by appointment other times.

Since days and hours vary, Mr. D'Elia suggests you phone him to set up an appointment. His home phone is 860-423-2016, and the museum 860-456-1516.

Complete information is available on the museum web site: [www.deliatoolmuseum.com](http://www.deliatoolmuseum.com), where there is also an E-mail address.

## **The old ways worked then... and they still do.**

[FOLLOWING IS A REPRINT OF AN ARTICLE THAT FIRST APPEARED IN THE OCTOBER 17, 2006 ISSUE OF COLLECTOR'S JOURNAL / REPAIR & RESTORATION REGISTER, [WWW.COLLECTORSJOURNAL.COM](http://WWW.COLLECTORSJOURNAL.COM)]

Our ancestors did not have the luxury of a quick trip to the store to purchase a new concoction touted as a miracle solution for the chore at hand. They lived simple, and many times isolated, lives. They worked with a limited number of basic materials, using knowledge handed down through generations — plus good hard-learned common sense.

John Kramer, Missouri wood conservator and maker of *Kramer's Best Antique Improver*, a popular wood care and restoration product, has patterned his products after those simple methods and formulations.

"My *Kramer's Best Antique Improver*, used appropriately, can accomplish most wood restoration, care and preservation needs. It cleans, reverses dryness, restores natural finishes, provides an enduring finish on raw wood, and in general puts the life back into the wood — all by using materials that are natural to the wood and to the finish. In addition it can be used to remove and prevent rust on the metal of tools and weapons — leaving a soft natural patina," explains Kramer. "And it can be used to restore painted finishes, such as those of old tins, toys, or folk painted pieces. And much more.

"Yes, it is much like stories you hear about the old 'fruit jar' concoction Aunt Minnie or Uncle Joe used as a solution for a myriad of concerns — or to just brighten things up when company was coming.

"My products are very versatile, but," Kramer adds, "my challenge is to convey to my customers — and prospective customers — what *Antique Improver*, and the other *Kramer's Best* products, can do, and how they are best used to accomplish successful results. My products are not difficult to use — mostly wipe-on/wipe off. But many of us are used to the home center '1-2-3-step' directions specific to each project. With antiques, each piece is unique. Due to what has happened to a piece over its many years, what each needs now may be different from any other. Methods of using my products vary for specific needs. However, a basic understanding of uses,

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an absolute pleasure to use.  
Thanks! [Madison, OH]

"Last weekend — a friend (originally from K.C) came over to help me identify the problem with my dining room table top . . . We used both your products (she had brought your products from Kansas City — can't find in NJ) and it solved the problem! I am going to use on the entire set. Thanks. [Far Hills, NJ]

"My brother shared it with me when I was restoring an old pump organ. WOW! It works great. [Olathe, KS]

"Ten years ago in an antique mall in Nappanee, IN. I have used it to restore furniture, rejuvenate old butcher knives and waterproof canvas haversacks. A miracle product!!! Smells good, too. [Middlebury, IN]

"Mentioned on a blog that I belong to [caning] by someone who had already used the product. [Woodbridge, VA]

"My brother-in-law, who is an antique dealer, recommended it to me. [Washburn, WI]

"My sister introduced me to the Improver and I am SOLD!! [Chico, CA]

"Recommended by my piano tuner. [Borger, TX]

"A friend shared this. I cannot believe what I see. I send my thanks. [Indianapolis, IN]

"My friend and fellow home improvement nut, bought your product and used it on his 20 year old oak kitchen cabinets that he was going to strip and refinish . . . Used the product and did not have to strip and refinish. [Peoria, AZ]

"Received as a gift from my daughter in law. Wonderful!!!!!! [Boca Grande, FL]

"I have a friend that purchased it in Indiana and used it to restore some of his mother's furniture and they were amazed at the results. [Sanford, MI]

"My neighbors . . . let me borrow their bottle to repair the finish on an antique bed that we'd bought. I ran around the house, using it on all my special hand-me-downs. [Asheville, NC]

"www.wkfinetools.com article on finishing old saw handles. [Medina, OH]

"My husband's sister had used your product on some cabinets that had lost some finish due to steam. Your

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## THE OLD WAYS WORKED... (continued from previous page)

and methods of application, is all that is needed to be able to successfully use *Kramer's Best* to accomplish most of what is needed.

"To help our customers use our products to best benefit, we furnish a 16-page book of 'Instructions & Suggested Uses' with each bottle. We know we can't give precise instructions for each piece or circumstance, so what we have tried to do is help users understand 'the object of the game', and with *Kramer's Best* products, be able to get back to the basics, using common sense and simple methods of our ancestors," Kramer says. "There is much we can learn from the past.

"The instruction book (also available on our Web Site) helps a lot, but there may still be questions. We urge our customers to contact us when they have a specific project they need help with. We enjoy talking to our customers and helping whenever we can.

"And, we have a Q&A page on our web site. Much can be learned from seeing answers to other people's questions and this is a very popular format." Kramer adds,

"In order to make better use of this page, we have recently had it reformatted as a 'blog' — so we can add new questions regularly without bothering our Web Master. Our customers tell us that they also learn a lot from reading through the over 300 user testimonials on the 'Letters' page. We think the Q&A page, as it grows, will be equally popular.

"We try to give our customers all the information they can use." Kramer says, "It was recently proven to me that our efforts are worthwhile when a customer told us he printed out the Instruction Book from the web site and put the pages in plastic protectors in a notebook which he keeps on his workbench. Needless to say, he is using the products successfully."

"I have worked hard to provide my customers products that work, as well as complete information and assistance on how to use them". Kramer concludes, "The old ways worked then, and they still do".

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## Where have all the kettles gone???

When signs of Christmas began to appear in our neighborhood shopping areas, we moved our bag of collected change to the car — keeping it handy to place in a traditional Salvation Army Red Kettle. Though it isn't a huge donation, we like to "make-the-day" for one of the dedicated bell ringers by adding major weight to their collection.

But at two weeks before Christmas we still had not spotted one. In our corner of the Greater K.C. area, Red Kettles seemed to be missing.

We know many are struggling these days, and bellringers may be hard to come by. Volunteering ourselves would, of course, be admirable, but our research has come up with a much simpler and more effective alternative. We have set up our own "on-line" Salvation Army Red Kettle on the Salvation Army Web Site. It's something new.

We found it to be a convenient way for us to donate and maybe we can help generate other donations. If you're interested, you can go to our "page" using this link, <http://give.salvationarmyusa.org/goto/kramerproducts>. From there you can donate through our kettle (goes to our area) or you can designate the donation to go to your local Salvation Army. You can also choose to set up your own Red Kettle.

It's not our intention to be "pushy" about this, but in case others have also missed the kettles, we would like to provide this opportunity.

[NOTE: Since first writing this, we have found some Bell Ringers and Kettles, though they don't seem as plentiful as in the past. We still think this on-line version is a good idea. Every little bit helps.]



product worked great. [Cross Timbers, MO]

"A friend bought the two products I ordered and is raving about the difference it has made in her antique furniture. [Canal Winchester, OH]

"The woman who repaired one of our clocks recommended Kramer's for the wooden clock case. I found the website and thought the bottle looked familiar, and, sure enough, there was some already in my cabinet, brought from my

mother's house after she passed away several years ago! I found it to be a godsend for the clock case antiques. . . . It also

[Ashland, KY] brought my great-great grandmother's cherry chest back to life — not bad for 150+ years after the big trip on the covered wagon! [Toddville, IA]

"From my mother. It is making our remodeled barn floor look great. [Lancaster, WY]

"It was referred by my cousin in Iowa. [Dade City, FL]"

These are just a few from the big stack of comments we have received from happy customers — and we look forward to many more.



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Peace  
on  
Earth



Good Will  
Toward  
Men

## Notes from The Kramer Place...

**G**reetings from Missouri where, on this day, we are enjoying sunny weather with a light covering of snow. And, especially enjoyable is the **\$1.29-per-gallon** fuel that is available in our Sugar Creek/Independence area. We keep our vehicles full, just-in-case, then when the price again drops a little, we wish we had waited. It is definitely a fun "game" compared to when prices were headed the other direction.

We hope you will forgive us for adding a little "reprint" copy to this issue. Marian, our chief typist for this piece, took some time out to have a new shoulder "installed" a few weeks ago. Recovery and therapy are going well. She already reports less pain and more flexibility than before the surgery. It is amazing what is possible these days.

During production of this newsletter we continued to receive customer comments that we managed to "squeeze" in. One more just came from a new customer in Everett, WA, who reported that he first heard of *Kramer's Best* on [www.enginova.com](http://www.enginova.com). This web page author calls his site "A collection of technical and entertaining miscellany." Our customer found a recommendation of our products, with a link to our Web Page, in a section on Antique Radios. We've found this is a very interesting site with an amazing amount of information covering many subjects — you might want to take a look.

We know there are many "blogs" on the Internet that were started with enthusiasm and good intentions, but have not been updated for a very long time. Ours is definitely one of those, and we apologize. Along with many other "resolutions" — exercise, dieting, keeping a journal, etc. — that are popular this time of year, maybe "blogs" will receive some deserved attention. We are certainly going to give it a try. If you've given up checking the blog on our "News & Blog" page for new "news", we hope you will give us another chance. We have managed to keep the "Dealer Activity" blog on our "Find-A-Dealer" page updated and we hope it is helpful, but other news that comes up from time to time may be of interest to our customers. The blog is a great tool — and we intend to make better use of it in the future.

**KRAMER'S BEST — Products that do what you hoped the others would do!**

*Previous issues of this KRAMER LETTER are available on our Web Site on the 'NEWS' page.*

*Beginning with the Spring/Summer 2008 issue, photos in the on-line version are in color — go there to fully appreciate the before/after shots.*

**Customer Satisfaction** — We want happy customers! Whether you purchase directly from us, or from one of our dealers, if you have any questions or concerns, CONTACT US. If you need advice about a project or use of the products, CONTACT US. We want you to use our products SUCCESSFULLY!

