

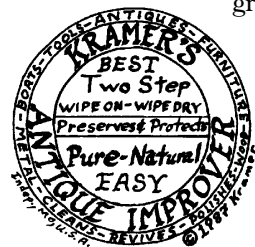
Kramer's Best Antique Improver DEALER NEWS

January, 1993

Volume 1, Number 2

A New Logo!

In 1985, after many years of study, research and testing, the first bottles of *Antique Improver*—at that time called *Master Lamb's Formula 1776* (in honor of John Kramer's great grandfather)—were sold to a few professionals and advanced collectors with individually hand-written labels.



1987-1992

John utilized an ink pen and typewriter, with labels printed on a photocopy machine six at a time. In 1988, and again in 1989, the label was upgraded with real type to offer better directions and more information, but keeping the original logo.

Now, after all these years, it has finally reached what we feel is a final stage of design and development.

Much thought went into the design of the new logo. We knew it must be in keeping with the traditional concept of the products, but also eye-catching and memorable. The first decision was that the logo, as well as most print materials would always remain black and white in color. Not only is this more traditional, but it stands out clearly among the myriad of color in the race for more and brighter colors on all the bottles and boxes competing for attention.

The next requirement was that it be hand done—a little more professional than John's original logo—but still keeping that "look". Carol Wells, local calligrapher and artist worked with us to produce what we had

visualized.

Carol does excellent traditional work, a lot of which you have seen in the hand-lettered signage and materials of the Renaissance Festivals.

And, when we made the decision, after studying many logos, products, advertising, etc., that the likeness of a person, especially the creator of the product, was what seemed to stand out and be the most memorable, we again turned to Carol, who we feel has done an excellent job.

We have had many favorable comments about the new logo. It is silkscreened on the canvas banners which we use as the backdrop in our booths at shows. We have used it on the new materials described elsewhere in this issue. In some cases, such as newspaper advertising, we are using only the line art of John because of size limitations. We are already finding that people quickly recognize the product by the logo—remembering John from seminars or shows.

We are pleased. We hope you agree.

The Hat... Obviously not an "off-the-shelf" creation, John's new hat is a hand-made recreation of an Eighteenth-Century Workman's Cap. Aside from being traditional and something he has tried for many years to get "just right", he reports it to be the most comfortable hat he has ever worn and intends to never wear any other.

**New LOWER Dealer Delivery Costs!
See Page 3.**

New Labels...

All bottle labels now feature the new logo and a slightly revised format. We have tried to explain uses for the products, instructions and necessary cautions as thoroughly as possible in the

limited space available. The revised copy, in addition to the much more professional and finished look, should be a great aid in promoting sales. The goal is to build the customer's confi-

dence and encourage them to make a first-time purchase. Once we get the folks to try the products, we know they will be regular customers. We know nothing else works as well.



MORE...

- A new, expanded 16-page brochure!
- New format for the fliers!
- New dealer display materials!
- And now, finally, a new newsletter!

To help you increase sales...

THE NEW BROCHURE is packed full of suggested uses, instructions, and information about the products. After two years of compiling information and then working—and reworking—that information in order to make it as complete and understandable as possible, we are very proud of the results. It is, by far, superior to materials provided with any product of this type. Notation on the cover of “BOOK OF INSTRUCTIONS \$1.95, FREE WITH PURCHASE”, will make it possible to leave these with the product display without the concern that they will all “disappear”. Customers who do make purchases will be more certain to see that their FREE brochure is included. This is very important because correct and successful use of the products are essential to repeated sales.

THE FLIER size format has been revised to match that of the brochure. *Blemish Clarifier* and *Wood Food Oyl* are now also discussed briefly and have been added to the order form. The fliers continue to be the same “salmon” color.

DEALER DISPLAY ITEMS now available are shown in the photo below. The “Mini Banner” at the back of the display is a miniature of the banner which we have in our booths at shows. It is screenprinted on unbleached muslin, with leather ties and wooden frame. The “Brochure Holders” are designed to hold the Flier and Brochure so that they become part of the display. Stickers emphasize “FREE” for the Flier and “\$1.95, FREE WITH PURCHASE” for the Brochure to lessen customer confusion. The table folds easily making its own handle for carrying. All pieces come to you ready to finish. Wiping with *Antique Improver* brings out the natural beauty. Add a little pigment or oil color if desired. Individualize your display and make it a sales tool. Pieces are priced individually. See separate *Dealer Information* sheet for pricing.

[Note: the bottles shown in the photograph below do not have the new labels.]

Sure way to boost sales: BEFORE & AFTER SAMPLES!

Reports from our top dealers, as well as our experience at shows, consistently tell us that one thing which always increases sales is to display BEFORE & AFTER samples of use of the products. The better the samples—the better the sales.

An old stair spindle, a drawer front, a piece of a table leg—half wiped with *Improver*, the rest in the damaged condition—can convince a prospective customer more than any spoken or printed words.

One dealer even keeps a piece of furniture available, with a bottle of *Improver* and a rag, for the customers to try it themselves.

A sizable, attractive display, kept in a spot where it is readily visible, where customers can pick up and look at the bottles, read the information and look at BEFORE and AFTER samples, has proven to be the sure way to top sales. TRY IT!





The World according to John Kramer

By JOHN T. KRAMER
*Antiques Doctor & Apothecary
Traditional Wood Conservator*

[Editor's Note: While trying to determine how this newsletter can be of most help, it occurred to me that in order for you to best use, and interest others in using, Kramer's Best products, you must first understand John's philosophies, goals, and intent for use of his products. Those of you who have been involved with Improver since the early years of the company, purchased the product directly from him and maybe attended one of his seminars or at least spent some time getting acquainted. This is no longer always the case. Some of you have dealt only with me at shows that I do, or have ordered directly by mail. John's philosophy of preservation and restoration is an integral part of the products. And his philosophies are, of course, not limited to antiques and wood (as those of you who have heard him speak well know). Hence I have named this page as you see above. This page (and as much of the newsletter as necessary) is devoted to his writings on matters of interest in many areas: conservation, preservation, restoration, or...(?) Send your questions. Share your problems and concerns as you work with antiques and with wood or in any area where John's knowledge and expertise may be of assistance. Others can also benefit from the answers. If there are subjects you would like to see discussed, let John know. If he doesn't already know the answers, he has exceptional resource materials available. We want to hear from you.]

Grandma's secret recipe for fine furniture, etal.

A great number of folks come up at shows and seminars and begin telling me about some secret recipe handed down in their family. Most of the time they've never tried it. Often they can't quite remember what the ingredients all were. Mostly it's a fuzzy recollection because modern education doesn't allow for listening to, or learning from, the elders.

From time immemorial, knowledge has passed from one generation to the next . . . until now.

The age of industry demanded the industrialization of education: *the factory school*. [Is it at all curious that as industry gained greater sway over our lives, school buildings came to look more and more like factories? And old school buildings must be torn down and replaced to look like the modern form of factory.]

The factory schools assured us they had education under control and finely tuned to the needs of every student. A part of this process has been the denigration of previous forms and schools of learning. Any knowledge not of the factory school or one of its authorized and franchised associates is simply heretical and of no substance. Certainly not worth consideration.

This attitude has caused virtual intellectual genocide. We have solemnly allowed the true and proven knowledge base of humanity to be supplanted by the contention that if it is not in the currently approved versions of acceptable knowledge, it is spurious at best.

The apprenticeship system served well and garnered a great body of knowledge unto each skill, discipline and craft. Not all knowledge can be written, recorded or filmed. For a knowledge base to be complete, it needs to be vibrantly practiced. When the last Masters died, much died with them, lost for all time.

A few wrote about the secrets of the Masters. A few Masters recorded a part of what they knew. A few were able to pass on some of what they knew to posterity. Knowledge is a tenacious thing—difficult to completely eradicate once known.

A few have, by exhaustive personal research, and through experimental and living history programs, rediscovered and relearned some of what has gone before—most through great personal sacrifice and with little to no financial rewards.

Why is any of this important? The past is what we have to learn from. The future is still an unknown.

If we fail to preserve knowledge accurately and fully, we have no idea of what we may risk in the future. If we do not have the past to heed, are we not condemned to repeat the errors gone before? Do we not risk forgetting that one simple little thing that suddenly makes the difference?

So what does this have to do with that old family recipe you or Aunt Emma are the last possessor of? Well, it just might be the one we all need. It might be real good—or not. It might be an accurate

translation—or not. It might be it comes with clear instructions, or it might be you will have to experiment for years to figure out how to use it.

The first, and most important thing to do, is write it down in as much detail as possible. Ask anyone and everyone else in the family to tell you all they can remember and write that down, too. Then make some up and give it a try.

Family Bibles are a good place to look. If it was important enough for one of your ancestors to write in the Bible, there's a pretty good chance it's a good'n. Early recipe books, published for centuries, covered a lot more than just food and most early homemakers had favorites into which they would insert special recipes of their own and from other sources.

So remember, that face cream, muscle liniment, special paint, bug repellent, fancy soap, potion, nostrum, lotion, cleaner, remedy, or whatever, may be the best thing of its type you've ever used. It may be as good in its own way as my products are in theirs. It may not be something you want or need to sell—it may be worth more as a product that comforts and aids you and your family. A personal family product always makes a wonderful gift.

At least save it for future generations to try. We don't know, they might really need it.

[NOTE: I always appreciate receiving old recipes for my collection and am interested in purchasing any old recipe books which you may encounter—pre 1850 publication dates preferred.]

New, LOWER dealer delivery charges!

Since UPS changed its rate structure 2 years ago, delivery charges have been a serious problem—expensive, as well as cumbersome and confusing in the way we have been forced to bill them.

I have been billing for the exact amount of the shipping charges with an invoice sent after the shipment was made. A second bill on a single purchase is a nuisance, at best, to everyone's bookkeeping. It has also made it difficult for you to ascertain a fixed known cost for the products.

Now that we have grown a little, I am better able to absorb more of these costs, pass the savings on to our dealers and simplify the system.

Shipping has been averaging \$10.00 per shipping unit (a unit being what UPS will allow us to put in one package: 12 8-oz. bottles, 4 quarts, or 1 gallon). Because of special packaging requirements, materials and labor involved are also very expensive, but I have always absorbed these.

As of November 1, I have instituted a shipping and handling charge amounting to 10% of the total order. Based on average past deliveries, this represents an estimated dealer savings of \$4.02 per dozen on 8 oz., \$2.81 on 4 quarts and \$3.75 per gallon—profits you put in your pocket.

So just figure up your total order, add 10% for delivery. We will arrange for best method and see to it from there.

As always, if you can catch us at a show to pick up your order, there is no delivery charge. (If you plan to do this, try to let us know in advance, to ensure that we bring sufficient supplies.)

Because margins are being cut so close in instituting this new delivery program, we must now require a 5% surcharge on dealer orders placed on credit cards. I am sure you will understand the necessity for this and the savings with the lower delivery charges should outweigh this inconvenience.

About product sales . . .

New logo, new labels, new brochure, new fliers, new point-of-sale display, now a new newsletter. By cutting back on the number of shows I was doing, we've finally brought a few of the ideas we've had working into reality.

I think the new brochure will be very helpful in answering most questions about how to use the products and will go far in providing the information to aid sales. For those dealers who have been using

(continued on next page)

or selling some of the products no longer listed in the brochures, we will still be able to provide these items on special request. We will no longer be including these on the order forms or price sheets. We can better support a smaller product line at this time.

The most exciting development is the point-of-sale (POS) display. This is one tool we have long needed. What seemed at the outset to be a simple task, has taken a great many hours and drawing of too many, too elaborate, and too costly, plans. After many false starts we've come up with something we feel is unique and attractive which can be produced at a reasonable price.

The display takes only 4 square feet (2' x 2') to display the products—less if utilizing the top of an existing display case which holds other inventory, or the top of a piece of furniture (even better when the furniture is "half-done" with *Improver*).

Based on our testing and dealer experience, we now feel confident in being able to say that a good living can be earned with this product by an individual who wants to build a circuit of displays to regularly service and restock in a home district.

On even the smallest scale, if you will set yourself to selling at least one bottle every day you can generate \$208.95 per month in sales (based on 21 selling days per month). After cost of product, and cost of sale, this should leave at least \$50.00 per month in clear profit. \$12.50 per month, per square foot of selling space, in clear profit is better earnings than most other product lines available. If you do this each and every month for a few months, you will soon notice that you're selling more. People you've never seen will soon come looking for the product and sales get easier and easier while growing even more profitable for that same four square feet.

If regular contact and in-store demonstrations are supplemented with a few shows, flea markets and other public attractions, where you show-and-tell—with *Kramer's Best* always pointing customers back to your retail location—sales can be more than significant.

—JOHN T. KRAMER

New Ad producing results!

We have always known that advertising was a necessary marketing tool. However, since *Antique Improver* seems to be a "gotta see it to believe it" product, something other than conventional advertising methods was necessary.

A year ago we began running ads in 3 editions of the *Discover MidAmerica* publication which has distribution in 7 states in our area. These were small ads which simply listed area dealers where *Antique Improver* could be purchased.

The 5 editions of *Discover* have now been merged into one which covers all of the 7-state area: Arkansas, W. Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma and E. Nebraska. This, of course, necessitated a larger ad to include all dealers in this area. Our new quarter-page ad has already received many good comments and generated inquiries resulting in reports of increased interest and sales.

This program is obviously working very well, as word about the effectiveness of the products is spreading throughout the area and we will soon need to increase the size of the ad. In the future we intend to also expand this to a national publication so that dealers outside this area can be included.

If you are in this area and are not included in the ad, please contact us. Or for information about this publication, phone *Discover* at 1-800-899-9730.

We get letters...

"... you have a tremendous product in your ANTIQUE IMPROVER. I have had great success, not only with restoring antique furniture but with refinishing trim on restored houses as well. We first encountered your product at a woodworking show at the D.C. Armory. I picked up an order form, but have since lost it. Please send more. I have enclosed a SASE. . . ." WASHINGTON, DC

"Please send a list of where I can buy your products. A friend bought a bottle of KRAMER'S ANTIQUE IMPROVER and loaned it to me. The results were wonderful. I was very pleased with them. She had purchased her's at the Flea Market in Kansas City. Hopefully several antique shops carry it and I would appreciate a list of possibilities." PRAIRIE VILLAGE, KS

"Enclosed is my order for 1 quart of your ANTIQUE IMPROVER. Your product is excellent! We bought the 8 oz. to try and have used it on about everything! It was at the Cleveland Antique Expo in December that we saw your product and very glad we did!" MILAN, OH

"I recently purchased your product while you were at the Michigan State Fair, Detroit, Michigan; however, I only purchased an 8 oz. bottle. I wish you had sold me a larger bottle. I am out and I have lost your order form. Even though I was skeptic you have made a believer out of me. Your product does a marvelous job. My furniture really looks great." DETROIT, MI

It Works!

If you USE Antique Improver, you can't help but talk about Antique Improver.

If you TALK about Antique Improver you will sell Antique Improver.

If you SELL Antique Improver customers come back for more (and you get another chance to sell them something else).

They then tell their friends who come to buy Antique Improver and often leave with much more, to return yet again . . .

It all starts with USING Antique Improver.

The success of our top dealers is because they

*USE the product,
TALK ABOUT the product,
SELL the product!*

Earn a FREE dozen Antique Improver!

Remember, if you refer someone who then becomes a dealer for *Kramer's Best* products, we will send to you a FREE dozen 8-ounce bottles of *Antique Improver*. And we pay shipping.

It is up to you to let us know names of anyone you have referred. Also ask them to tell us that it was you who referred them. We want to be sure that you receive proper credit.

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