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## Miniature Enthusiasts of Edmonton Club

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September, 2005      VOLUME 20      NUMBER 7 est. 1982  
Box 70045, Londonderry Post Office, Edmonton, AB T5C 3R6

**General Meetings:** Held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month: 7:30 to 10:00 p.m. at McClure United Church, 13708-74 Street, Edmonton. Workshops are held every 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month, from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. There are no meetings or workshops during July, August, and December. Meeting only (no workshops) in January (assuming temperatures of over minus 25C)  
Admission: \$2.00    Membership: \$20.00



### Upcoming Club Activities

**Workshops:** The next workshops are September 13, 2005 and September 20, 2005. The September 13<sup>th</sup> workshop will be with Bonnie Lau, learning how to accent painted tiles. The September 20<sup>th</sup> workshop will be with Luba Barnes, and we will be making a pocket watch filled with a mini scene. The October workshops will be held on October 4<sup>th</sup> and October 11<sup>th</sup>. Maureen Heuchert will be teaching making office supplies and Cheryl Prentiss is teaching us to make a dry willow wreath for your door.

**General Meeting:** The next general meeting will be held on October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

**Fall Show Workshops:** On Saturday, September 17, 2005 (the day before the fall show), there will be two workshops: Jeanine Shore (Painting Easel – maximum size 12 for \$35 – FULLY ENROLLED); and with Laurie Saunders (Mailbox with Landscaping – \$37 – SPACES STILL AVAILABLE). The flower workshop by Margaret Jarrod has been cancelled can not make it up to Edmonton on that date. Please register as soon as possible with Luba.

**MEE Fall Show:** will be held on Sunday, September 18, 2005. The club also needs volunteers to sell tickets and to man (woman???) the display room. We still need lots of people willing to take on one-hour time slots for every hour from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Please talk to Lil to sign up.

**Brooke Tucker Workshops:** will be held on May 2, 3, and 4, 2006 (Soft Victorian for \$650 US) and May 6 and 7, 2006 (Things My Teacher Taught Me for \$475 US). Put these on your calendar now and register with Luba. Half of the payment is required on September 6<sup>th</sup>, in US dollars, and the remainder must be paid in full by December Christmas Party. You will receive your pre-workshop kit approximately a month before the workshop. Don't miss this opportunity to learn from a master before she retires!

**Fall Workshops 2006:** Advance information from Luba indicates that Sue-Anne Thwaite will be doing two classes of 12 making a Dutch Baby House filled with shops. Also, Debbie Montague will be doing a Christmas village.

### Printable of the Month – Victorian Posters

This month's "printie" is a set of Victorian signs that may come in useful in your mini-general store or pub. Just cut out and put in place.

### Minis On-Line

This issue of your newsletter is dedicated to organizing your miniature workroom So, here are some links to look at how other miniaturists arrange their lives:

- [http://members.aol.com/Kapricrn/new\\_page\\_9.htm](http://members.aol.com/Kapricrn/new_page_9.htm) - to look at another miniaturists workshop....
- [http://www.aircraftresourcecenter.com/Gal2/1401-1500/Gal1467\\_Modelingroom\\_Attar/gal1467.htm](http://www.aircraftresourcecenter.com/Gal2/1401-1500/Gal1467_Modelingroom_Attar/gal1467.htm) - although this guy makes models, rather than miniatures, the concepts are the same. Good use of limited space.
- [http://games.necrosys.com/per\\_lair.shtml](http://games.necrosys.com/per_lair.shtml) - the lair of an addict. This fellow paints Dungeons and Dragons Figures, but has an interesting workshop!
- <http://community.webshots.com/album/190417437oqQVtA> -

## **Hints and Tips – Organizing your Workroom**

This article got started because my workroom was a mess (see before and after photos)! In the process of cleaning it up over the summer, I learned a lot about organization, and thought I would share what I've learned. Where I have actually put the idea into effect, I took a picture.



**BEFORE**

**AFTER**

### ***Selecting the Space***

- Any available space can be fitted out as a workroom, ranging in size from a small closet to a whole room. Don't overlook any space – on the porch, in the garage, in the attic, that dirty corner in the basement.... They can all be turned into an effective workspace with a little paint and elbow grease.
- Any closet with bi-fold doors that can be liberated from more mundane uses can be quickly turned into a workroom through the addition of a chip-board or plywood bench held up by one or two drawer units, coupled with some overhead shelving.
- If you don't have a specific space that can be assigned to miniatures, at least try to identify a specific storage area where the little bits and pieces can be organized and easily located.

### ***Lighting***

- Overhead shelving above your worktable provides great accessible storage and takes up little space. It also provides you with a place to install fluorescent lighting under the shelf directly above your workbench.
- An adjustable light clamped to your bench can provide spot-lighting for various projects.
- A magnifying lamp with the light underneath the magnifier is very helpful to light up your work. Light is equally if not more important than the magnification because you can see much better with proper light. Alternatively, wear reading glasses from the drug store and get whatever strength is necessary to easily see without straining. Mini-work while "watching" television is good because the looking up, refocusing, looking down, refocusing, is good exercise for your eyes. Moral: Use whatever it takes to see without strain, BUT be sure your work surface has the proper light!

### ***Working Surfaces***

- Do you know that your ironing board makes a perfect work bench? It's portable so it can be moved anywhere you want to work. It has adjustable height so you can lower it down for good height etc. and a washable cover too! Why do you need to iron anyway? This provides the perfect excuse not to iron. It takes up precious miniaturists' time anyway.
- An ironing board also works great if you have back trouble and can't sit for a long time. But if you can stand, you can work at an ironing board table (at highest level) for hours. Get some pieces of cotton fabric from a box of remnants, and put a piece over the board. Don't worry about getting glue or paint on it. Just throw it in the wash after a while. If you apply paint or glue with a needle, to clean the needle, just stick it into the fabric and slide it back out again. Works great. Because it's padded underneath, it's great for fragile stuff, almost like working on a long flat pin cushion.

- Or you can work on Styrofoam sheets or acoustic ceiling tiles. You will love the way you can pin items to them, spill and have the mess absorbed rather than dribbled down the front of you, stick your tools into them, brace glued objects with pushpins as they dry, etc. You will also enjoy the sound they make as you stomp them after a particularly frustrating design faux pas.

### **Storage Ideas**

- Wood pieces such as clapboard etc can be stored in computer keyboard boxes. Check with your Tech department at work, or go and plead with Compu-Smart or Future Shop for spare boxes. Dowels, trims, mouldings etc. can be stored in Pringle boxes and coffee cans. Or, store strip wood, trim and dowels in PVC pipe cut to the length you need. And always have a dedicated box for scrap pieces of moulding and wood. You never know when you will need a little piece of wood.
- If you have some spare ceiling tiles around, hang one (or two) on the wall and put your teeny supplies (beads, etc.) in mini Ziploc bags, then use a pushpin to fasten them to the ceiling tile. Everything is visible at a glance. Or stick project instructions up on the tile for easy reference.
- If you have trouble finding just the right piece of mini-fabric or trim, take a box of sheet protectors and put the fabric, paper from the scrapbook store, pieces of felt, etc., in the sheet protectors and into a binder. Everything is visible, nice and flat and dust-free.
- If the white plastic covered wire paint carousel at Michael's feels a little too expensive for you to hold crafts that you've already spent too much on, start saving empty toilet paper rolls (cut in two) and empty paper towel holder rolls (cut in three pieces). Then, making sure they sit flat on a surface, glue the sides all together until you have enough to fill a sturdy box. The bottles of craft paint stand up nicely in these and if you put a little dab of the corresponding paint on the lid of each, it works great, and you can see all the colors at a glance!
- Plastic shoe boxes, sweater boxes, and larger "under-bed" boxes an excellent way to store - - on shelves and in stacks. Also, the divided boxes for teeny tiny items which might get lost or broken in the larger boxes. The Lee Valley jeweller's boxes are great for findings. Inexpensive Zip-lock storage containers from any large grocery store work well. Just make sure you label the front so you can find (and file) things quickly.
- As for books, if you have a computer, you could start a data-base for all your dollhouse magazines, books and catalogues so you can find the one you want easily. Helpful, too, when you KNOW you have a book and it turns out you don't - you borrowed it from the library and returned it! God bless senior moments!
- **The Power of Pegboard** – inexpensive pegboard can be purchased at any home improvement store like Home Depot, and there are a wide variety of storage accessories (not so inexpensive) that plug into the holes to keep tools and other items handy and in view for easy access. This system can be installed under overhead shelving, and only takes up an inch or two of space.



- For those of you with little children, you can make an organizer for small objects with baby food jars. Get a piece of wood (1-2" thick and 4 inches wide, and however long you want). Put the lids face up on the piece of wood in a row (by face up, I mean with the "inside" up.) Drive a nail through the lid into the piece of wood so that the lid is attached. (The sharp nail point should be buried in the wood.) Screw the jars into the lids. Then nail or screw the whole board under a shelf in your workroom so that the jars are hanging down underneath the shelf. You can unscrew the jars, put small objects (beads, etc) in them, and screw them back onto the lid. They're out of the way, you can see what's inside since the jars are clear, and you're using space that would otherwise have been wasted.
- Stacking wooden trays from Ikea are great for carting projects around. The high sides ensure that pieces don't get lost.

### ***Organizing Your Ideas and Projects***

- Set up a small notebook, scribbler, or file folder for each of your projects. In it, keep track of photos, ideas, wiring, costs, wallpaper, purchases made, provenance of purchased items, paint colours, etc. for each major project you undertake.
- Use a desk drawer divider (from Office Depot or Staples) to keep frequently used tools close at hand, yet organized.
- If you start collecting things for an idea before you have the setting built, designate a container for each roombox or dollhouse room that you plan to create. In it, store all of the “bits” that you pick up along the way (or find when you are going through your treasures) for that room in its own box. Projects close to completion require larger boxes than those still in the distant future.



### ***De-Cluttering***

- It is sometimes very hard to get rid of stuff. To help out, use four key decluttering rules. First, use the smile test. If what-ever it is doesn't bring a smile to your face, then why do you have it? Then, ask yourself, "If my house burned down tomorrow, would I really miss this thing?" Next, ask yourself if you are planning to use the item in the foreseeable future. Lastly, ask yourself if the item can be easily replaced. If it doesn't make you smile, it wouldn't be missed, you don't have a plan to use it, and it could be easily replaced, chuck it!
- Separate the items that you are getting rid of into various categories:
  1. Throw it out, because no one will want it or can use it.
  2. Start a kid's craft box where you can chuck all the things you don't need or won't use in the next two years. Keep it handy when visiting (or your own) children want to "play miniatures" with you, or, every time the box is full, donate it to a local daycare.
  3. Give to women's shelters. Even in shelters there are kids that need to play with something and women need clothes, household items or even material, thread etc, for setting up a new home for themselves and their kids, (many of these women get out of bad family situations with just the clothes on their backs). This is also an opportunity to de-clutter your closet. If it doesn't fit, and hasn't been worn in two years, give it away.
  4. Give excess supplies to a rehab hospital or seniors residence for use in occupational therapy.
  5. Libraries would welcome any no longer needed books, magazines, etc.
  6. Give to church (or your club's) garage sale (if its still too good to throw out then someone may buy it at a sale).
  7. Put an ad in the newspaper, giving away free crafter's stuff or whatever; it will go fast.
  8. There is always the old reliable method of putting it out on the front curb of your house with a big sign that says FREE, it always is taken by someone!

## **“Tool” of the Month – Paint Drying Rack**

This one you can make yourself..... Take a thin piece of wood about 3 feet long and about 1 inch wide (a wooden yardstick would be perfect). Using a jigsaw, cut slots about ½ inch deep, and about 1 inch apart all down one side of the wood. Using double sided tape or a few small nails, affix the holder underneath a shelf, with the slots sticking out. Now, when you have to paint/stain tiny wooden parts before assembling, insert a T-pin (available at any sewing store) into one end of the wooden piece and hang it from the slot to dry. This allows the paint to dry with no places actually touching a surface. Make this now – you will be glad you did when the pre-work kits from Brooke Tucker arrive, and every piece has to be stained/painted.



## **TINA’S TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR MINIATURISTS**

(learned rather painfully as a novice from many other miniaturists)

1. Thou shalt have no other interest before miniatures. If thou dost, thou shalt not discuss it with other miniaturists.
2. Thou shalt not take unto thee any graven image that is copyrighted for use in thy miniature projects unless it is strictly for thy own personal use.
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: not when thou just crazy-glued thy fingers together, nor when the show item thou coveted was sold while thou was “thinking about it”, nor when thy pet ate your mini-project, nor when thou drop and shatter thy favourite miniature.
4. Remember all thy days of working with miniatures, and keep them special. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work – but the seventh day is to renew thy spirit with thy miniature collection. Complete thy projects before thou buyest more.
5. Honour those who introduced thee to miniatures and taught thee about making and collecting that thy days may be long in the world of miniatures. If thou should dishonour those experts, thy days may be short for they will shun thee. Honour those who are members of thy club for they have much to teach thee. Honour thy spouse or partner, for they show much forbearance with thy obsession.
6. Thou shalt not kill any person, pet or child that destroyeth thy miniatures (no matter how tempted thou art). Keep thy treasures safe for the generations that follow.
7. Thou shalt not steal any thing that belongs to another miniaturist: not her place at the table, nor her new magazine, nor her tools, nor her lunch. Never touch without asking. Thou shalt not steal an idea or design from another miniaturist and pretend it is thy own. All contributions to your project, be they ideas, techniques or actual miniature items, shalt be attributed to its originator.
8. Thou shalt give of thy time and effort to smooth the path of other miniaturists by volunteering for club and show duties as well as by generously sharing thy tools, supplies and expertise with other miniaturists.
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness about miniatures thou hast made or purchased, nor shalt thou exaggerate or brag about well-know artisans that thou hast met or shows that thou hast attended. Thy word is thy bond, especially during Show and Tell.
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's miniatures, but must create thine own. Thou shalt not covet thy min-friend's roombox, nor her dollhouse, nor her expensive tools, nor her creativity, nor any other thing that is thy miniaturist neighbour's.

**Remember these commandments, and keep them always, in the name of the Mother (Mrs. James Ward Thorne), and the Daughter (Colleen Moore) and the Holy Ghost (Brooke Tucker).**

Please, if I have misunderstood or mistranslated the explicit and implicit instructions I have received over the years from other miniaturists, for heaven's sakes, let me know!

# **Let's enjoy our Show!**

THIS NEWSLETTER IS ON-LINE AT: <http://www.camacdonald.com/MEE/>

Contact Tina (487-8943) if you have something you want to sell, or to place an ad or an announcement.