

# CARD CLUB

## BOOKLET OF HELPFUL HINTS



**DATAW ISLAND VISUAL ARTS CLUB**  
**DATAW ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA**

So...you want to make a card...it is easy enough to do. However, there are tons of methods, techniques and ways to approach this task. This booklet has been compiled to help you in your card-making quest. Our VAC Card Club members have shared many of their tips to make your cards “works of art.” Please note that this booklet is a “work in progress.” It will never be a finished product because each time we meet, there are always new ideas to share and they will be added to the booklet. One of our goals is to provide this booklet to our new members upon their joining our Card Club. Of course, all members will be afforded access to this joint effort. This booklet is a compilation of all the techniques and strategies we have learned on our journey. No idea is too basic, as this document will probably be used by new and “old” members to help them feel more comfortable. In addition, there are so many ways to do things...some techniques will work for some people and others are looking for a “new way” to get things done. Please share your thoughts and ideas here or email Dena or Pam ([ddard@att.net](mailto:ddard@att.net) or [pamfarris12@gmail.com](mailto:pamfarris12@gmail.com).) Thanks for any help you can provide this effort.

## **INKS, PAINT, CHALKS —**

### **Types of Inks**

#### **Dye Inks:**

- Are thinner than pigment ink
- Are more transparent
- Dries quickly
- Absorbs by paper it quickly before it “dyes the paper”
- Firmer ink pad than pigment ink
- Made of felt (ink pad)
- Stamps lighter than the color of the ink pad (always show the ink color as darker)
- Most popular type of ink for card makers

#### **Pigment Inks:**

- Ink is thicker than dye ink
- Much more opaque
- Takes longer to dry
- Sits on top of paper
- Softer ink pad, feels like a wet sponge
- True to color (the color of the ink pad is the color that will be stamped)
- Because it is slow to dry and thicker, you can heat emboss with pigment ink
- More fade resistant than dye inks and therefore perhaps more preferred use in scrapbooking

#### **Distressed Ink:**

- Terrible for stamping but great for techniques
- Techniques include ink blending, shading, coloring, distressing, watercolor and more
- Reacts to water, great for tone-on-tone techniques

### **Distress Ink Pads: (Tim Holtz and Ranger)**

- Water-based dye ink pad. They are perfect for adding a vintage, stained, aged effect to your papers and photos. These are slow drying inks which can be spritzed or wiped with water after inking an image or wiping the ink pad directly on paper to create an aged look. Acid free, non-toxic, fade resistant.

### **Distressed Oxide:**

- Distress Oxides are primarily constructed of pigment ink, a type of ink that is opaque and, due to its natural thickness, dries more slowly
- They are slow drying inks so they are perfect for blending, especially smooth blends between colors
- Use a blending tool, make-up brush or sponge to get gorgeous blends
- Use your ink pad directly on your paper to lay down some ink, spray with water and drag or drop your tool to blend to your liking

### **Memento Tuxedo Black Ink Pad:**

- Use for general stamping on any color of cardstock
- Water based
- Dries quickly
- Good ink if you want to stamp then color with markers or watercolor pencils
- Use with Stampin' Blends, Aqua Painters filled with Alcohol and Blender Pens
- Refill available
- Best black ink

### **StazOn:**

StazOn (trademark) is the ultimate permanent ink. It can be used on paper – as well as any non-porous surface – like metal, plastic, glossy paper, transparencies, leather, glass and ceramic. It only takes about 3-5 minutes to dry on a non-porous surface. This is an alcohol-free, archival, fast-drying solvent ink.

### **A Word of Warning:**

- Ink is NOT erasable, so be careful what you touch during and after use. Always remember to let your paper dry before handling it or before placing it on another paper. (It generally takes less than a minute to dry.) It is easy to get ink on your fingers or hands and you do not want to transfer that to another surface...like your white shirt, the edge of your card or your face. Always keep a package of unscented baby wipes by your side so you can keep everything clean.
- Your ink pads are one of your most basic stamping supplies, so it is important to care for them well.
- **Put a lid on it –**  
Always put the lid back on your ink pad...even if you're only stepping away for a minute. You know how life is: you step away for a minute, and the next thing you know you are coming back the next day – only to find a withering ink pad! For those of us with crowded workspaces, it's all too easy to accidentally shift a piece of paper or a scrap of ribbon onto an open ink pad. And for those of you with small children around...well you know what can happen!
- **Cleaning your inkpads –**  
If an ink pad becomes muddied with another color, tap it off with a paper towel. Still not clean? Spritz lightly with ammonia-free window cleaner, let it sit for a few seconds and wipe clean.

- **Stamp Cleaner –**  
¼ cup simple green  
½ cup water...distilled water is best, as it will not have any impurities  
Put in a spray bottle
- Or  
2 tablespoons glycerin (in the RX department)  
8 ounces of distilled water  
1 teaspoon of baby wash
- YouTube video  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T--ZL1JWgg4&t=81s>

## **PAINT AND CHALKS –**

Watercolor paints and chalks can be used to provide a “different look” to your cards. Each of these mediums can be applied to the cardstock to embossed surfaces and provides a dimensional affect. Particularly with the use of chalks, due to the fact that they may fade or be brushed off, you may wish to use a finish, such as Glitter Dust, to adhere the finish.

## **STAMPING TECHNIQUES –**

### **Inking your selected stamp:**

- Experiment with color and texture by *ombre* embossing
- Use *fussy cuts* to add depth and dimension
- Fill a stamped image with watercolor
- Turn a card into a work of art by stamping on a painted background
- Stamp around a blank shape (then remove it) to create a *masked negative space*
- Make a *pattern* by repeatedly stamping one image or design
- Create a fuller design by *layering and overlapping* one stamp in different colors
- Try white embossing for a subtle sheen
- Emboss on a dark background for a dramatic contrast of colors
- Sandwich stamped cutouts between a card and a *vellum overlay*
- Stamps or stencils do not have to be perfect. There are many ways to cover up a “mistake.” Be creative and save the card!

## **KEEPING STAMPS CLEAN –**

- Clean your stamp after each color. Whatever you do, do not contaminate a stamp pad with another color. Always check your chosen stamp before inking it to make sure it was properly cleaned by the last user.
- If you are sharing a stamp and using the **same** color, you do not have to clean the stamp until you are finished using it,
- Use Unscented Baby Wipes and the Stamp Scour pad to clean the stamps

## EMBOSSING FOLDERS —

- We are fortunate to have over 50 different embossing folders in our collection. From time to time, we have had donations given to us. It is good to get familiar with our inventory as embossing adds a great deal to a card. Embossing can provide an added dimension to your creation.
- To emboss a card surface, select the folder of your choice. You will need to use a Cuttlebug or Big Shot. There are different size “plates” that are utilized for this feature. You will need to use an “A”, and two “B” plates. You will make a “sandwich” with the embossing folder and your paper. Make sure to line up your desired design and paper before you feed your sandwich through the Cuttlebug.
- **Die cuts/Thinlits —**
- Cuttlebug – use plates “A,” “B,” and “C.” The order of layering the plates is very important (see below Sandwich Recipes).
- Keeping your die cuts sharp – if you find your die cut is getting dull and does not cut as well as it used to, simply run your die cut through the Cuttlebug with aluminum foil. Do this a couple of times to sharpen the edges.
- Some die cuts are made to be used with specific stamps. In order to do so, you must stamp your design first, place the die cut over the stamped design, and then run it through the Cuttlebug. Be careful when you line things up so that you maximize the stamped design...it should cut the design out for you.
- Use Washi tape to keep the die cut/thinlit in place.
- Frequently, you will need to help get rid of excess paper from the design. This can be done using a hat pin or exacto knife.
- Cuttlebug/Big Shot (Stampin’ Up product) Sandwich Recipes – (items listed should be layered from bottom to top)
  - **All Framelit. Die Cuts or Edgelits Sandwiches**  
Multipurpose Platform (Plate A)  
Clear Cutting Plate (Plate C)  
Cardstock  
Framelit/Die Cut centered over the stamped image – cutting edge down.  
Clear Cutting Plate (Plate B)  
\*Always cut with the sharp side of the die toward Plate C
  - **Embossing Folders and Embosslits**  
Multipurpose Platform (Plate A)  
Clear Cutting Plate (Plate B)  
Embossing folder with cardstock inserted  
Clear Cutting Plate (Plate B)
  - **Bigz Dies**  
Clear Cutting Plate  
Bigz Die – cutting side up  
Cardstock  
Clear Cutting Plate  
(Note: If using a Bigz die that has score lines, try the Impressions Pad in place of the top Clear Cutting Plate. You may have to add a shim to ensure the cut lines cut and the score lines score.)
  - **Sizzlit Sandwiches**  
Multipurpose Sandwich  
Clear Cutting Plate  
Sizzlit – cutting side up  
Cardstock  
Clear Cutting Plate

## **EMBOSSING POWDERS —**

- Embossing powders can give your card a more “professional” appearance. A little bit of powder goes a long way.
- Must use embossing ink or pen (i.e., Versamark), to stamp or draw on paper before adding the powder. Powder must cover all of stamped image.
- Sprinkle your embossing powder on the preferred image over a coffee filter. The filter will act as a catch basin to collect the extra powder. Once you are satisfied that the image is sufficiently covered with powder, knock the extra powder into your coffee filter. Return extra powder to container
- Heat with a Heat Gun to “set” the powder, being careful not to let it get too close to the paper’s surface. Getting too close to the paper can create a burn mark...the heat gun can also burn you...BE CAREFUL!
- Stampin’ Up ink pads can be used with a clear embossing powder. This gives the colors a whole different appearance and really adds to the card.

## **PUNCHES —**

- Punches come in all sizes and shapes. They are fun to use and you can do so many different things with punches, besides the original design they were intended to make. It is really fun to explore options and to create new ways to utilize a punch.
- If a punch is not cutting correctly, punch on aluminum foil to sharpen.

## **WATERCOLOR PENCILS —**

- When using watercolor pencils, you will want to use watercolor paper. Color the paper as desired. Take a little water on a small paint brush and lightly go over the colored area. Too much water will warp the paper. Once the paper is dry, you may stamp an image on the colored/painted surface.

## **PAPER SELECTION —**

- For some of us, this is a very fun part of card making. Deciding on what color, pattern, paperweight, etc., is usually the first step. There are thousands of options from which to choose. Double-sided, textured, complimentary patterns, seasonal, vellum, etc., are just a few of the choices one has. We attempt to provide a wide selection of paper for our members to use. Often, when a new card is demonstrated, we will purchase a specific paper to have available.

## **CARD SIZE AND SHAPES —**

- Cards can be made in all shapes and sizes. You can make your own envelope to fit any card.
- One 8 ½” x 11” sheet of paper will make two 5 ½” x 4 ¼” cards. This is the size card that will fit in the envelopes we provide.
- To fold this card, using the scorer, lightly score at the A2 mark.
- To make a vertical card, where the fold is at the top, cut an 8 ½” x 11” sheet of paper at 4 ¼”. Score it at 5 ½”.

## **BLOCKING YOUR CARD —**

- In order to determine what you want your finished card to look like, get all the pieces or design elements together.
- Before you glue or do anything permanent, play around with the design elements until you arrive at your desired outcome.
- If you are using a layered look, be careful to get your distance from the edges as equal as possible.

## **EMBELLISHMENTS —**

- There are so many types of embellishments that can be used to create a nicely finished product. Some examples of embellishments are stickers, flowers, die cuts or Thinlits, punched pieces, ribbon, googly eyes, hand cut design, to name a few. These can be attached to the card by using dimensional or foam backing. This provides a three-dimensional look. There are so many different ways to add to the appearance of your card.
- Free clip art and printed images that can be trimmed to size are great additions to a card.
- Do not throw away old cards you have received. Most have an image or sentiment that can be reused on a brand-new card – “new and improved.”

## **SCRAP PAPER—**

When working with paper in making cards, scrapbook pages, etc., you will always have some leftover paper pieces. Do not throw these away! Put them in a separate container. You will be surprised how often you go to that bin to:

- Find a piece of paper to practice your stamping;
- To use for an embellishment – example: use a punch to make a butterfly, or flower, or square;
- To use for layering a card; and
- Whatever you want to do!

Keep solid colors and printed paper in separate containers for your efficiency.

## **PINTEREST —**

One of our go-to places for inspiration is Pinterest. There is a wealth of information on card samples, card-making tips, step-by-step instructional videos and so much more. It is not just a site for card-making ideas but has just about any topic you can think of with suggestions and samples. Give it a try.

## **FINISHING TOUCHES —**

- We have a large and small corner punch that will make your card corners rounded and give is a little more polished look. In addition, there are some corner punches that have a variety of designs. Experiment to get the look you like.
- Make sure that you give yourself credit for your card-making efforts. On the back of each card, have some kind of “signature” that identifies you. This can be one of the “Created By” stamps, or a particular sticker that represents you...a daisy, a ladybug, a heart...whatever **you** want.
- Some cards need just a "little something" to set it apart. There are a variety of products that can be used to achieve this – Glitter Dust, Glossy Accents, Pearl.
- Don't forget your envelope. Many of our card members like to add either a stamp or embossed touch to their cards.
- Remember: when someone receives a handmade card, they are usually impressed that we took the time to make it for them, and less worried about it being perfect, (as stated by Martha Moulton).

## MAILING TIPS —

- When mailing cards with embellishments (thick cards), save your Amazon envelopes or any used padded envelope when received and cut it up slightly smaller than your card. Put this on top of your card to be mailed to give it extra padding. You will need extra postage for any card with embellishments.
- You can buy “extra postage stamps” at the Post Office. They are 35 cents each. Use regular postage stamp plus one extra ounce stamp. This will ensure that your card will be hand stamped and not go through the meter.
- Do not stamp your envelope on the front bottom right or where the stamp is placed. The Post Office does not like that!

## TOOLS —

Every card maker needs a variety of tools in order to complete any card. Here are a few of the tools we have available for our members:

- Scorer – makes crisp folds for your projects.
- Paper Cutter – provides clean, crisp, and straight edges
- Cuttlebug – makes embossed designs and cuts out die cuts
- Cricut – The Card Club has two Cricut machines. The most recent one purchased is the Cricut Maker. Internet connections are needed. In order to use it, one must have had instruction in how to operate it. All the necessary tools are available. We hold instructional sessions from time to time. You must have taken some training in order to use these machines. They are not something that you can figure out on your own, like some of the other tools we own (i.e., punches, etc.).
- Scissors – We have all types of scissors on hand. In the cabinet over the sink, there are buckets of scissors...with different sizes and types of “cuts.” The “fancy edges” can be utilized to create a unique finished card.
- Heat gun – Basically this is used to heat up the embossing powders. Caution should be used when handling the heat gun.
- Toothpicks – Toothpicks are a great little tool to help with gluing delicate items, punching out die cut forms, etc.
- Q-Tips – Q-Tips come in handy when gluing or cleaning up intricate areas.
- Glue – There are many types of glue used in making cards. The above two items are very helpful when using bottled glues. Some glues dry more quickly, are better in certain instances, specifically made for intricate craft work.
- Glue Runners – For some of us, these have become a favorite way to adhere our card pieces together. We attempt to keep a good supply of these on hand but they do go fast, due to their popularity. *Run the Glue Runner in one direction only. Do not move it back and forth.* This will actually ruin the Glue Runner.
- Placemats – we ask that our members use a placemat at their setting. This helps to keep the tables free of glue, ink, paint, etc. As the end of each session, it is requested that you clean the placemat and return it to the Storage Cabinet.
- Unscented Baby Wipes – Believe it or not, these are very beneficial in keeping stamps clean and ready for the next usage.

## ORGANIZING SUPPLIES —

- Rubber stamps – store them in containers that are easy to find and see through. This will maximize a small space and be more efficient for you. Clear stamp sets can be stored in Ziplock baggies or transparent cases.



- Paper – cardstock, scrapbook albums, scrap paper, etc., should be organized according to your own system.
  - Organizing by color, size, type of paper, etc., is very helpful when you are looking for just “the right paper” with which to work.
- Envelopes – come in all different sizes. It makes sense to have these all together for when you need to match an envelope with a particular card.
- Tools – have a handy tool caddy to keep all those important items that assist you in getting the cards made.
- Embellishments – Mason jars, decorative boxes, storage caddies are just a few of the things that can help you keep all of your stickers, ribbons, Washi Tape, googly eyes, buttons, etc., ready for quick access when you need to add some finishing touches to your card.

## **CARD FILES –**

- It is nice to have some homemade cards on hand for those “surprise” events that sneak up on us, from time to time. Being organized by events – i.e., birthday cards, sympathy, thank you notes, thinking of you...are just some of the cards you may need to send at the spur of the moment. If you are making one card for a special occasion, it is sensible to make one or two more of the same design... “just in case.” File folders are a good way to keep these organized.
- In addition, many of us have cards in various stages of completion. To organize those “stages of development,” is also smart. i.e., - folded card stock; card stock that has been water colored but waiting to be stamped; cards that have been stamped but need embellishing, etc.
- If you really get into card-making, you will definitely need to come up with a system that works for you.

## **MISCELLANEOUS TIPS –**

### **Sprucing up your cards**

- To “beef up” your cards, cut a piece of contrasting cardstock  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch smaller than your card base, i.e.,  $5\frac{1}{4}” \times 4”$ , ( $5” \times 3\frac{3}{4}”$ ) and glue that to the outside card base for a border look.
- If you are using a dark card base, it is difficult to see writing on the inside. Cut a white (or lighter) piece of cardstock  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch smaller than the inside dimension for your card to write/stamp your message.
- A piece of foam, cut to the shape of your design, can provide an extra dimensional appearance to your card.
- It’s always nice to stamp something on this white insert, such as a small flower, a sticker, or strip of pretty paper, matching the original card base color. Stamp this before adhering to the inside...just in case your stamping is not perfect the first time. You can always try again on the backside, then adhere it.
- On the back of your card, either stamp a handmade symbol, your signature mark, or just write your initials or “made just for you by \_\_\_\_\_”. We have several stamps just for this purpose.
- Your computer will help you print a special sentiment. Just Google whatever sentiment you are looking for, i.e., birthday, thank you, sympathy, etc. You can find a number of appropriate sentiments. Just type it using your word process program, with a nice font, print it off on regular paper or cardstock, cut to size and paste in your card.
- Don’t forget the envelope! Stamp something on the outside bottom left or the back flap...just as a treat for the postman or recipient.
- Another way to make your envelope fun is to run the flap through an embossing folder.
- While we have specific times when we provide instruction and “open studio” for our members, it is always an option for you to call the Community Center to see if you may use the A&C Room.

- Card Club Membership dues are used to purchase supplies and tools for Card Club members to use. The annual fee of \$25 is collected in January. You must be a member of VAC. All that we ask is that –
  - You pick up after yourself
  - Keep the cupboards and drawers straightened up
  - Let us know if we have run out of something
  - Let us know if something is broken or in need of repair
  - Create to your heart's content.

## **WHERE DO I FIND THINGS IN THE ARTS & CRAFTS ROOM?**

We are in the process of having a new mobile cabinet being made. Once that is completed and we are able to reorganize our supplies and materials, we will add a map of where items are located to this document. Our goal is to have a sensible plan of where things can be found for the convenience and ease of our members. Once again, we will expect members to replace used items where they were found...please take time to straighten up the area you were working in and place materials in their designated area. Clean your stamps, wipe up your work area...like you were never there!

## **SPECIAL CLOSING NOTE –**

A wave of gratitude goes to Ronnie Beidelman, Pam Farris, Linda Robinson and Dena Dardzinski for helping to compile this booklet. Their learned tips and techniques have made this a usable, evolving document that will assist you in making that next very special card...from your heart.

Creatively yours ~

*Dena Dardzinski*

*Pam Farris*