

Wick-ed with wax —

Candlemaker almost snuffs it

By Kelsey Anderson

Editor's note:

Kelsey Anderson, an Ottawa resident and frequent visitor to Russell Village, has revived the pioneer craft of candlemaking for her own relaxation ... and the reader's amusement as the following report reveals.

Have you ever had the urge to return to the days of yore? To live as the pioneers did? To make your own candles? If so, read on. I had and I did.

Armed with an antique candle mold borrowed from a friend, a box of paraffin, a ball of string and some red food coloring, I set to work. The candle mold, tired from years of use, had relaxed into rust. A bottle scrubber and some elbow grease took care of that.

While several bars of paraffin melted and burned on the stove, I tackled the job of feeding the string through the mold. This is a feat, I discovered, which defies the laws of gravity and drives grown women to tears. Feed ... snag ... shove ... snare ... knot ... sigh. A brainstorm! Wet the string! It fed beautifully.

On to color the melted wax and another discovery — like oil and water, food coloring and wax do not mix — no matter how long you stir them together or how much you want them to. Pretending that red globules floating in clear wax was the effect I wanted, I poured the wax into the mold. And I poured and I poured and I poured.

Instead of filling the mold I was plugging my kitchen sink. The wax was flowing in the top of the mold, slipping neatly past the wet string and heading for the safety of the drain where it cooled and solidified to become the greatest challenge my drain cleaner had ever met.

Two hours of cleaning and one trip to the candlemaking store later, I was back at the stove. This time I was prepared: proper wicks, proper coloring and a clump of tinfoil mashed around the bottom holes of the mold to stem the flood.

I also had a new plan. I would pour only a little wax at a time into each tube of the mold. No wax would escape because I would be holding the tinfoil against the bottom of the mold. Sure.

The plan worked well, but it didn't take into account the power of hot wax in search of human flesh. Lots of pain. Release of tinfoil. Rush of hot wax. More drain cleaner.

After another cleanup, I tried again. Success! The six tubes of the mold were filled to the brim! Eager to see the results of my handiwork, I set the mold outside to cool quickly. After celebratory

drinks toasting my candlemaking skill and pioneer spirit, I retrieved the mold. The candles were frozen!

Not to worry. A little hot water over the mold would loosen the candles. A gentle tug on the wicks would set the candles free. A moment later I held two wicks in my hand — the candles still snug in the mold. Perhaps more heat. I rushed to get my husband's blowtorch and made a few quick passes with it over the mold. Oops. Two puddles that used to be candles in my sink!

After cleaning the drain again, I began to gently and slowly ease the fifth candle out. Slowly ... slowly. Halfway there. Snap! Scream!

I turned my attention and hope to the sixth and last candle. How to get it out. I wasn't going to tug it or heat it. Maybe if I turned the mold upside down and gave it a little shake. Thud! It fell out. It just slid out of the mold. Thud. And it was perfect.

Suddenly it was all worthwhile. The four hours, the two cans of drain cleaner, the six pounds of wax — most of which went down the sink — the sticky burned hands. It was all worth it. A perfect candle.

But now I understand why the pioneers went to bed at sundown. After all that work who wants to burn it?



LITTLE DIPPER

A steady hand is required as Kelsey pours hot paraffin into antique mold. (Mike McDermott photo)

Thank you

Helen and Robert Morrice wish to take this opportunity to thank all our relatives and friends for their kind messages of sympathy in the sad loss of our dear granddaughter, Tracey Dawn Thompson.

Editor's note: Miss Thompson, a 17-year-old Osgoode Township High School student, died in a single-car accident last month on Highway 31 near Greely. Miss Thompson of Vernon, was travelling to Ottawa with three other teenagers, including her sister Sandra, when the accident occurred. The others escaped serious injury. The Castor Review extends its deepest sympathy to the Morrises and other family members.

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CASTOR CUPBOARDS

Prize-winning bread-buns
By Katherine Hamilton, Russell

- 1 compressed yeast cake dissolved in;
- 1 cup warm water
- 1 pint milk scalded and cooled
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/4 cup butter
- 2 egg whites



Add all ingredients to milk. Knead with hands then let rise beating well. Add flour gradual- again in warm place. When it ly, then beat well until mixture becomes light, mould into buns forms a soft dough and does not and put in pans. Let rise and bake stick to hands. Cover and stand in at 375 degrees F. for 20 minutes. warm place until double in bulk.



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