Sharpening, Sales and Marketing Tips for Scissors Sharpeners and Clipper Blade Sharpeners!

Preview Issue

The Newsletter That Will Help You Keep Your Edge

On The Edge Newsletter • 112 Derby Downs •

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# **SCISSORS ARE** THREE SIMPLE **MACHINES**

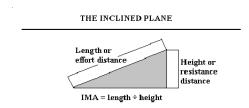
## The Basic Sharpening Series

By Jim O'Donnell

In On The Edge last month I started my Basic Sharpening Series by tackling freefall and the proper tensioning of shears. As I said last month, this was one of the main fail points in many of the shears that were sharpened and submitted for certification at last years NBTSG.

This month though, I want to go all the way down to three very basic points about shears and then build on these three points over the following three issues. These points consist of three simple machines and each of them play a part in the overall function of a shear. These three machines are the inclined plane, the spring, and the lever. Let's look at the basics of each in turn right now, and then next month we'll start with the inclined plane and deal with each in detail over the next three issues.

#### The Inclined Plane = The Cutting Edge



The inclined plane is a very simple tool that is used to reduce the amount of force required to do a particular job, in this case - cutting though hair. We see this machine most often in the form of a ramp. The mechanical advantage of an

#### **EDITOR'S NOTE**



Top O' the Mornin' to Ya! Welcome to On The Edge, the only newsletter designed specifically for Scissors Sharpeners and Clipper Blade Sharpeners.

This Preview Issue will give you an idea of what you can expect to find in On The Edge each and every month. Whether you want to learn more about sales, more about sharpening tips or tricks, or more about ways to grow your sharpening service; you'll find what you're looking for here.

On The Edge is available in a paper addition or an electronic addition. The paper addition is just \$39.95 in the USA only per year, and the electronic addition is just \$34.95 USD per year whether in the USA or not. To order On The Edge, see the sidebar on page 11 or call me at 864-909-3381. You can also order *On The Edge* online via paypal at www.otenewsletter.com. Thanks for taking a look! If I can help you in any way please let me know.

Jim

Continued on Page 2 . . .

If passion drives you, let reason hold the reins.

~Benjamin Franklin

#### A POINT FROM GOD

Read 1 Chronicles 28:1-21 When God provided David with a vision of the Temple, he wanted to be personally involved in building it: but the Lord told David that Solomon would build it. So David decided he would communicate the vision for building the Temple in such a way as to infect Solomon with a passion to build it. Notice how David went about this. First, he made it clear the vision came from God (vv. 1-3). Second, he told Solomon his role would be to lead the charge and that this would require total devotion. A halfhearted effort wouldn't get the job done (vv. 6-10). Third, David assured the people that this enormous task would be accomplished because God would enable it (v. 6). Fourth, David gave his son sufficient details about the Temple so that Solomon could visualize what it would look like (vv. 11-19). Finally, after casting the vision, he gave his son another dose of encouragement (vv. 20-21).

One of the most important things you need to do as a Sharpener is infect others with the desire to use your service. As you consider how you are marketing your business, think about David's strategies for casting a vision and consider which of those are transferable to your business.

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#### ... Continued from Page 1

inclined plane is the ratio of the length of it's sloped surface to the height it spans. The angle and the length of the inclined plane reduces the mechanical energy needed to do a specific task. So if you need to place a barrel on a truck, it's a whole lot easier to roll it up a ramp than try to lift it. It takes a whole lot less energy too! This is where the angle of the cutting edge on a shear plays into how it cuts. There's much more to this that we will deal with next month, but for now, understand that the angle of the shear is one of the things that governs the amount of force necessary to cut through hair cleanly and easily.

#### The Spring = Set



The spring is the next tool we'll look at. The spring is a simple tool that is used to store mechanical energy. I'm showing a picture of a coiled spring in this article, but another example of a simple spring is an English longbow. The longbow may be an even better illustration of what I'm getting at here because the spring I'm talking about is the bow of the blades in the shears. This bow, or set as we call it, causes the blades to exert pressure on each other as the blades close. This creates a shearing action. Without set, a shear will not cut and will fold whatever material is between the blades.

Now I could beat this horse to death and go into the many different kinds of springs there are like compression springs, tension/extension springs, and torsional springs, but that is be

Continued on Page 3 . . .

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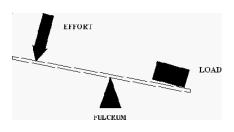
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yond the scope of the point I'm trying to make. I could also mention that some of this can be achieved with a ramp in the ride area of the shear or by cutting a rake angle into the shear when it's ground on the inside, but again, I want to keep this simple. I'll deal with many of these points in the March Issue, but for now just remember, no set means no cut.

#### The Lever = Balance or the Shears Leverage



The lever, particularly a first class lever, is the final tool we'll look at this month. This is a tool that's used to multiply mechanical force. The fulcrum point of this tool provides leverage and reduces the force required to do a particular job. Depending on

where the fulcrum is located along the length of the lever will determine the amount of force necessary to lift an object, or in our case cut though hair or other material. The fulcrum point of a shear is the pivot point where the two blades are attached together. Where the pivot point is located will determine whether you have a high-leverage shear, or a low-leverage one. We will deal with this more in April.

Now all of this may be very new to some of you and old hat to others, but all of this is important. We can address some of these points as sharpeners. For instance, we can increase or decrease angles or add more set, but we can't change where the pivot is on a shear.

As we tackle each of these mechanical points of a shear in more detail over the coming months, I think you'll see that there really isn't much to a shear, but you do need to know how to sharpen it properly and have a basic understanding of how the shear functions. We'll talk more next month.

Passion, though a bad regulator, is a powerful spring.

~Ralph Waldo Emerson

# WHEN TO REPLACE SOCKETS

By Bob Schiessl

This month I will talk about when to replace sockets. At Nebraska Blades, when a new customer calls and asks for prices, we tell them the price and that we replace all bad parts. If they agree to this, fine. If not, we tell them they should look for a different sharpener. It's like asking for a tune-up, but not replacing bad plugs or wires, it's going to come back and bite you.

The first thing to look at are the ears of the socket; they may be missing or bent. If they are missing, replace the socket. If they are bent, use Nebraska Blade's Socket



Continued in the Sidebar on Page 4 . . .

# Chase down your passion like it's the last bus of the night. ~Terri Guillemets

. . . Continued from the Sidebar on Page 8

Setter to repair them. The setter will bend the ears back plus square them again. For some new customers, we have replaced as many as 50% of their sockets. After the first time, we rarely have to replace them again; the setter will not over bend them. We find that 100% of sockets on blades coming in for sharpening need to be bent, a quick job with the setter.

The second thing you find is the socket is bent down at the place where the latch engages the socket. This is mostly caused by the customer using two clippers, one with a trigger to release the blade and one without; then they forget and try to pull the blade off without using the trigger. You can square it up by using the other end of the deluxe setter.

The last thing that can go wrong is that the socket is damaged at the point where the latch hits the socket. You may not be able to see it, but it will not engage the blade, replace this socket. We always use Andis sockets, but it may be a good idea to use the correct one for your blade be it Andis, Oster, or Wahl. You can see all this up close on our "Clipper Sharpening" tape.



# ERGONOMICS AND SCHOOLS Part 2

By Jim O'Donnell

Last month I showed you a number of exercises that can help a stylist or groomer reduce the chance of getting tendonitis or carpel tunnel. But I also mentioned that handle designs can play a part in repetitive motion injuries as well, in particular we'll be dealing with shoulder injuries and/or stress in this issue. The right shear for the job can really make a difference in how a stylist or groomer feels at the end of a day, and which handle is the "right" handle is determined by the job being done.

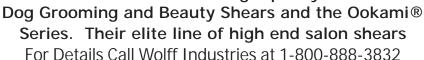
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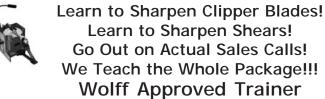
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I will be dealing with three different handles in this issue. The straight handle, the offset handle, and the swivel thumb handle. There is also the crane handle, but this is a form of offset handle and we'll deal with it in that relationship.

The straight handled shear is the one on the top of the picture to the left. The offset shear is in the middle, and the swivel thumb is last. Each shear has it strengths and

weaknesses. Let's start with the offset shear.

#### **Offset Handle Shears**



Continued on Page 6 . . .

Here I'm holding a pair of offset shears. I know, I'm holding Wolff shears and wearing a Kenchii shirt, but let's not get into that! The point here is to show how an offset handle on a shear will allow you to hold a shear in the palm out position with the blade of the shear straight in front of you, and in-line with your cut. This is important to a stylist in particular because

Follow your passion, and success will follow you.

~Terri Guillemets

# HOW TO START A SHARPENING ROUTE

By Gene Megowan

A sharpening route helps you develop a systematic method of connecting with the salons in your territory. These are the steps that I suggest to new sharpeners creating a route.

First, make lots of cold calls. There is no other way around this. It takes about 200 base salons to make a successful full time sharpening route. These are actual salons in which you are sharpening. You may have already developed this list.

Second, divide your 200 salons into groups of 25 by geography. Each group is the backbone of your eight week route. With an eight week cycle you will see each salon six times per year.

Third, break down your 25 salons further and create 5 base calls each day. With the additional time that

Continued in the Sidebar on Page 6 . . .

Passion is universal humanity. Without it religion, history, romance and art would be useless. ~Honoré de Balzac

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may occur that day, make additional cold calls.

Fourth, set a daily goal. Try to sharpen in at least three of the five stops you call on each day. Also plan on when your last call will take place and continue to make cold calls until then. Some days there is no income until after 3PM. One day Bonnie brought in \$600.00 just in sharpening all after 2PM. Don't cut the day short!

We have found that the average active salon, seen six times per year, will generate \$300.00 per year in sharpening business. We average about 10 shears sharpened per day or \$250.00 each day in just sharpening. Also, checking statistics from 3 different established sharpeners, I found that they averaged \$32.00 per hour. This included windshield time as well as the time actually sharpening.

So looking at the math three different ways, 200 salons by \$300.00 per year equals \$60,000.00. 10 shears per day or \$250.00 per day equals \$62,500.00 Working a 40 hour week at \$32.00 per hour brings in \$64,000.00.

Continued in the Sidebar on Page 6 . . .



#### . . . Continued from Page 5

it allows him or her to do a straighter cut and most of the cutting they do is in this kind of palm out position. You can also see in my picture on page 5 that my elbow is down as I hold this shear in front of me.

#### Straight Handle Shears



If I add a straight handled shear like I'm doing in the picture here and keep my elbow in the same position, you can see that the tip of the straight shear is pointing upwards.

In order to align the straight shear so it's blade runs straight in front of me I have to lift my elbow. If I did this day-in and day-out, it would wear on my shoulder. So you can see that an offset shear is the better choice for cutting in the palm out position. The crane handle shears func-



tion the same as the offset in this instance, only they are bent downward more, further reducing the need to lift the elbow.

Continued on Page 7 . . .

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Now if I switch to a palm in position, like for cutting scissor-over-comb, you can now see that the straight handled shear is the better choice.

If I wanted to align my shear blades in this position I'd REALLY have to lift my elbow to do my cut. Talk about uncomfortable! So you can see that each of these two shears, the offset and straight handled shears respectively, have their place depending on how you're cutting.



But the swivel thumb is cool because it's so versatile. You can easily cut in either of these positions with a pair of these! Take a look at the next page.

Continued on Page 8 . . .

Without passion man is a mere latent force and possibility, like the flint which awaits the shock of the iron before it can give forth its spark.

~Amiel

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I feel confident in saying that establishing a systematically scheduled route, along with putting in a full days work, will reasonably bring 60 to 70K per year. If you want to increase this income there are several ways to do this:

- 1. Sell shears Shear sales add 10 to 50K to your gross earnings.
- 2. Sell Razors, combs, oil and other items These small items add up.
- 3. Sell Dryers, irons, and clippers One sharpener who spoke at last
- year's Jam made over \$100,000.00 by adding appliance sales to his shear sales and sharpening.
- 4. Increase your base of salons by making more cold calls and asking for referrals Be willing to work extra hours if you need additional income.
- 5. Be creative Think of promotions and specials each month as well as customer appreciation premiums.

If you are hapahazardly calling on salons, look at some organizational methods that new sharpeners have discovered to get their businesses flying.

# Renew your passions daily. ~Terri Guillemets

# LARRY BROOKS' NEW CLIPPER BLADE TEST SCALE

By Jim O'Donnell

Have you seen it? Have you tried it? It's a great little tool that's easy to handle, carry, and use. It acts like a go/no go gage and would make a great addition to your sharpening arsenal.

A few months ago, Larry sent me one to evaluate. At that time I did a post about it on my blog Jim Sharp. A number of sharpeners bought this tool when I did and I've heard nothing but praise about it. Here is a picture of the Sharp Edges Blade Scale:



If you'd like to see it in action, one of the best places to do that is on my blog. Here is the address that Continued in the Sidebar on Page 9 . . .



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You can see here in the pictures above that my elbow

is down in both the palm in and palm out positions. So why not sell a swivel thumb to every customer? Well, you could, but not everyone likes the feel. Your customer will not always want the best tool for the job, but this article will allow you to at least show some of the benefits of each of the different handle styles.

I'd also like to end this with an admission that much of this applies to stylists more than groomers. Groomers have it hard any way you look at it because they have to cut in all kinds of strange positions. Next month I'll do a short write up that pertains more to them and look at curved shears and bent shank handles. So keep your chin up, there's more to come. Also, you are welcome to use any of this info for classes that you teach.

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# SLIDE CUTTING?

#### By David Wolff

Slide cutting is one method used to cut fabric, instead of opening and closing the blades as someone normally does with scissors, they use the blades of a scissors as two knife blades.



The operator opens the blades partially and then slides the blades cleanly through the product that is going to be cut. With fabric you may need to do a starter cut then you are able to slide through the material. When my parents owned a sewing

center in Michigan they had a slot cut into their cutting tables and used this slot to guide the scissors as the slide cuts the fabric for the customer. This works for best stiffer fabrics like cotton and vinyl.

Slide cutting is also used to remove flash when a product is removed from a mold. Flash is the excess plastic or rubber that is left behind at the parting lines or where the two molds come together. Scissors with curved blades are more popular for this application. Scissors need to have both blades honed during the sharpening process to make it easier to slide cut. The operator also needs to change the point on the scissors the materials make contact with it or you get a heavy worn spot at this point on the scissors. Contact us at Wolff if you have questions or need help with your slide cutting operations.

#### Editor's Note:

All Wolff industrial shears are available to sharpeners at a 33% discount. Just ask for factory edge when you place your order to receive your special price. The number at Wolff Industries is 1-800-888-3832 or visit Wolff online at www.wolffind.com.

Don't ask yourself what the world needs; ask yourself what makes you come alive. And then go and do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.

~Howard Thurman

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will take you to the post with the video:

http://jimsharp.blogspot.com/ 2010/02/clipper-blade-sharpenersnew-clipper.html

If you'd like to talk to Sharp Edges about this new tool, or give one a try, call them at 217-422-0911. Don't forget to ask them about info on this years NBTSG when you call.

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If you like what you see and want more than just a one year subscription, On The Edge is also available in it's electronic version all the way back to 2002. The back issue CD is just \$49.95 and contains back issues of this newsletter up to the current date\*. Many have purchased it, all have said it's a wonderful resource for them. See the ad on Page 11 for more information.

\*There are at least 2 issues that are missing from the CD. They have been lost over the years. One issue is also missing a couple of articles. Other than that, this CD takes you back to October 2002.

Passion and prejudice govern the world, only under the name of reason.

~John Wesley

# CLASSIFIED ADS

Since I didn't have much to put in the classified section this month, I thought I take a moment to remind you that this section is here for you. You are welcome to list any old equipment, stock items you'd like to liquidate, or other things that pertain to sharpening. There is never any charge for this. I provide this as a service for my readers so you can have an outlet to get rid of stuff you're not using and pass it along to someone else that may have a use for it.

What this section is **not** is a place for manufacturers to sell product. On The Edge provides a very affordable ad program for that.

If you're a reader and you have something you'd like to sell, just drop me a note via email at otenews@gmail.com with a description of the item, price, and contact info.



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## MAKE YOUR MARK

By Jim O'Donnell

I did some advanced training for my friend and fellow sharp-

ener Stephen Toth the other day. While here he showed me a program he uses to mark the clipper blades he sharpens so he knows when he did them last. To do this he uses a product called Brite-Mark Paint Markers. The paint will stick to clean metal and dries hard in 25 to 30 seconds. Here is a picture of the markers. Each month has a color and red is for first time sharpenings.



The story that made me want to share this with you though came up not 3 weeks after Stephen had been here. He called to tell me the program saved his backside with a long time customer of his. Here's how it went...

A groomer called him and said that none of her blades were cutting. Stehpen went to see her and while on his way Stephen called his wife and asked her to check this customers records and see when she last had them sharpened (keeping good records is important too). She said he sharpened 14 in March.

When he got there she started to show him her blades, about 40 of them. He started going though all of them and sure enough they wouldn't cut. What he noticed though was none of them had his mark on them. Once he checked a few he ask if she had any other boxes of blades lying around. She said she had a box

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under the counter, but they were sharpened a while ago. Stephen asked to see them and she gave him the box. Sure enough, there were 14 blades in the box all marked with a dark green dot.

Once he had those blades in hand, he showed the dot to his groomer and showed her his color chart. He asked if those blades could have come from anywhere else and she realized they were from a box of blades she bought from another groomer that went out of business and it was her mistake (which seemed like an honest mistake to Stephen).

What Stephen told me though was if he didn't have this marking system he would have been sharpening 40 blades wondering what in the world he did wrong. It's a good system. The way he marks the blade is shown to the right under the cutter. He layers each new color one over the other with a small



amount of the other colors showing. I just wanted to pass this along because you can see why doing this can be helpful. You can buy the markers online at:

http://www.durablesupply.com/matexbrma.html

# **BACK ISSUE CD**

I've had many requests for back issues of *On The Edge*. To fill this need, I'm offering this CD filled with all the issues back to 2002! It's on sale for just \$49.95 again this month! If you would like to purchase one, or if you have questions, call me at 864-909-3381.



Passion makes the world go round. Love just makes it a safer place.

~Ice T

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