



CRAFT CORNER

Leave Your Mark

With Decorative Lettering

BY KELLE BANKS BARFIELD
Copley News Service

From our earliest school days, most of us have been taught the value of good, careful penmanship. Our handwriting is usually considered to be one of the surest indicators of our personalities and our moods.

By learning and practicing decorative lettering, you can produce elegant artwork for your home, make greeting cards that are uniquely yours, and create memorable invitations and gift cards.

Decorative lettering, better known as calligraphy, is a craft virtually as old as the written word. Although printing presses eliminated much of the hand lettering practiced by modern-day artists, in recent years the art form has regained popularity across America.

The term calligraphy comes from the Greek words *kallos*, or beautiful and *graphein*, which means

writing. Your frequent practice of decorative lettering will indeed produce beautiful, satisfying results.

The Foundational-style alphabet is just one of dozens of lettering styles practiced over the centuries. Others you may be familiar with and may be interested in learning are Old English, Gothic and Italic.

With any style lettering, begin with a staff, the tool used to hold lettering nibs, and the broad-edged pen points. High-quality rag content paper is the best canvas for finished artwork, including proverbs, poetry or a family tree. Black ink is the most traditional lettering medium.

All of these supplies should be available to any art supply store in your area. In addition, you will need a drawing board, a pencil for ruling lines, and a T-square to make those lines as horizontal and as parallel to one another as possible. Use an extra sheet of paper under your hand to keep your work clean as you write.

Centre County 4-H Sheep Club

Eleven members of the Centre County 4-H Sheep Club traveled to Berks County July 14 and 15 for their annual tour. The club finances the tour through fund raisers such as serving food at the Keystone Ram and Ewe Sale and cookie sales.

Berks County extension agent Clyde Myers arranged for the members to visit a number of tourist attractions. Members visited the Strausstown Fur Shop, where they saw expensive fur coats, and Amazing Acres, where

they saw how wool is washed and prepared for spinning without the use of high technology machines. They also visited the Reading Pagoda, a lookout over Reading. Members spent the night in a cabin at the Daniel Boone Homestead.

Tuesday, members visited the George W. Bollman and Co. Inc. Hat Factory where they saw how wool becomes hats. They also visited Hopewell Village, which is an old iron ore furnace. They completed the day with a swim at French Creek State Park.

Once you begin printing, you will see that the thick and thin strokes that characterize decorative lettering are made by varying the angle of the nib to the horizontal rules. The pressure of the pen to the paper should remain constant.

Just as important as clean, sharp lettering is the spacing between letters. Only practice will give you a real handle on proper spacing, but in general, the size of the letters (the amount of space within each letter) determines the amount of spacing. In other words, wider elements require more space between elements.

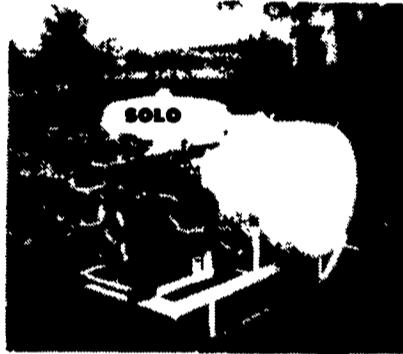
As you print, you may want to leave enough space in the margin for a decorative border, such as a curved stroke line repeated around the block of letters. It is especially fun to create borders from repeated letters.

Another trick is to vary the size of your lettering on one piece of artwork. Print the most important parts of a saying or the names on a family tree larger, for example. And write the names of the person you're quoting or dates in smaller print.

Once you've mastered this century-old craft, you'll enjoy always adding your distinctive touch to paper.



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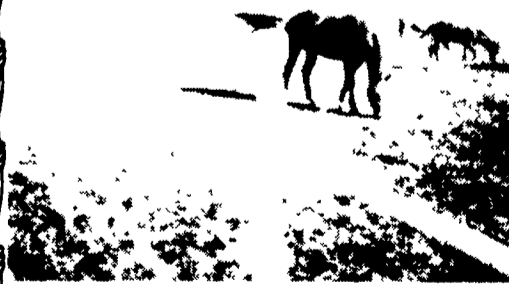
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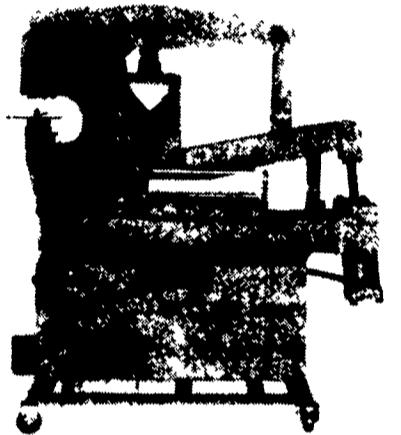
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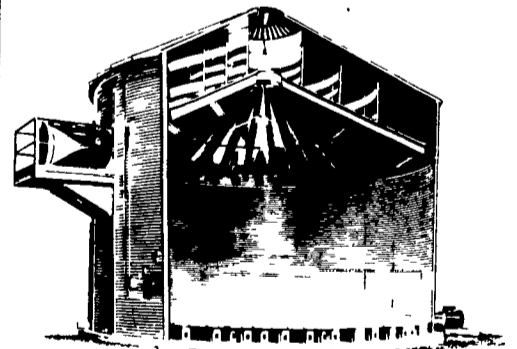
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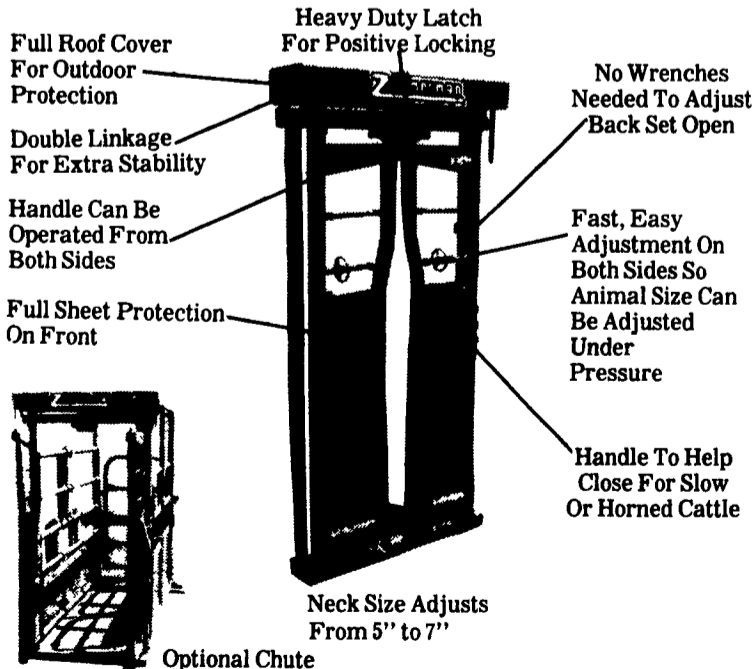
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