

SNUP Stuff

Serves No Useful Purpose

The highly opinionated views of Dennis Brady

There are two categories of SNUP stuff.

STUFF

A never-ending stream of gadgets, geegaws, trinkets, and thingamahoochies are offered that, while promising without condition or hesitation to do miraculous things to improve our life, do nothing more than lighten our wallets.

METHODS

We are constantly faced with the need to step around the obstacles of many antiquated work practices being taught as the “right way to do it”. Many things done are done for no reason other than they have always been done in that way.

Here's my personal list of SNUP Stuff.

SNUP Stuff

Pattern Shears

Cutting out scraps of paper for glass patterns is the least efficient way to work and therefore should be avoided wherever possible. For the rare times it is necessary to snip up a piece of paper, regular scissors are all that's needed.

Temperature Controllers

These are nothing more than dimmer switches. They don't reduce the temperature of a soldering iron, but just reduce the amount of electricity being delivered to the iron. A lousy investment. Instead of spending money on a controller, spend the time learning to solder at higher temperature.

Glass Saws (for stained glass)

Saws are terrific for cutting glass to be kilnformed, but have not been used in stained glass. Beginners use saws to avoid learning how to do difficult cuts and become reliant on them as a crutch to avoid spending practice time. It also allows them to cut out shapes that are structurally unstable and are assured to break – either during handling or even

after installation. Here's my opinions on the choice and use of saws.

- Any cut that can't be made by hand, shouldn't be made at all.
- The best kind of saw to buy is the saw you decided to not buy.

SNUP Methods

Paper Patterns

See comments for pattern shears. There's no need to make paper patterns. Most glass can be cut using the considerably more efficient “trace” method. For glass that can't be sufficiently seen through to trace cut, there are alternatives that are considerably more efficient than snipping up scraps of paper as cutting guides.

Stretching lead

This will help build your arm muscles but will do absolutely nothing to improve your work. It's an antiquated practice that should be abandoned for all but historical references. Stretching does not strengthen the lead and any stiffening effect lasts only a few hours. It's only function is to assist in the straightening of lead you may have foolishly mangled. Instead of stretching lead, you should learn to stop mangling it.

Sealed Units (with stained glass panels sandwiched)

All sealed units will eventually lose their seal but those built with stained glass sandwiched inside will do it considerably faster. Here are my reasons for refusing to do it:

- Heat buildup creates contamination.
- Seal loss introduces condensation.
- Ugly. Glare from covering glass.
- Repairs are costly and complex.