

The Dish

Presidents Messages 2011

- Sharon Fiske

Clay pots and sculpture may be making a comeback. Featured on the front cover of House and Home Magazine were wood-fired vases, sculptures and other pottery pieces. Maybe, just maybe, we will finally get away from the plain WHITE designer look. Give us back, artistic expression, design, pattern and color, including form that isn't so tight, perfect and sterile! As Suzi Cameron pointed out "I knew they couldn't stay away from collectables and art works for too long."

A new-year and time for reflection

We put on two workshops in 2010. The wood fire at Jane Harold's in Mabou, Cape Breton and Joan Bruneau's at the NSCCD craft studios on Marginal Road, Halifax. I attended both and they were fantastic. Lots to ponder!



Janet Doble had a brilliant idea for the night of Nocturne and made it into a night to remember. Her proposal was to create totem poles out of clay which the potters would initially throw to predetermined specifications, and then have the public

interact by coming to the studio by putting their mark on them. They carved; press molded, painted on slips, added bits, manipulated and sculpted that clay. What a great time for those who participated. Congrats! You wouldn't believe what came out of this night! Talk about public relations. The finished pieces are being displayed in the front entrance and offices of the NSCCD –Mary E. Black Gallery. Thank you to all who made this night such a success. Special thanks to Alexis Doiron, Technician.

New! Swoon-Fine Art, Antiques & Fashion, 1410 Hammonds Plains Road is the up and coming destination spot for art, clothing, jewelry, antiques and pottery. They are promoting members of the potter's guild and give us much needed exposure - truly, a delightful place to spend some time. Thank you to Brandt Eisner and Susan Paczek. Let's give them support and send lots of clientele their way.

Lorraine Kelly is no longer our web host and designer. She has chosen to concentrate on her other business, *Bamboo Spa*. If you need a massage or any other bodily delights please call her. Much thanks to you Lorraine for your dedication to the Potters Guild and for making the transition a smooth one. Peter Eastwood, of Eastwood Design's will be our online service provider for the Guild. We welcome him with open 'links' to all of you! Make sure you come to the AGM with news for the web site and anything else you may feel we should be promoting on the site, whether it is your own information and pictures or someone else's.

In Memoriam

I really cannot make predictions on the future but if I could, my wish would be to

have a year without the passing of fellow potters. This year we lost David Taylor, January, Betsy Stuart Goodstein, March 21st, Roman Bartkiw, July 14th, and Chris Tyler, December 4th. My heart is so saddened. All were true to the craft and passionate about clay. They will sorely be missed. "Live everyday as if it were your last." Make every pot as if you were to leave it to a museum. As Linda Sakora once said to me "You know when someone has been working with clay for a while, they know how to pay attention to detail."

Let's make 2011 a year where we all can say we made strides and have made a difference to the art of pottery and paid attention to detail.

We have lots on our "plate" for 2011 and if it all comes to fruition, we, the members of the Potter's Guild should have a phenomenal year. See you at the AGM, 2:00 pm, Sunday, March 13th. Help us make 2011 a year to remember!

We are holding the AGM, potluck and an experimental primitive firing in my new digs 2751 Robert Murphy Drive, Halifax. H 453-0210 C 471-8429

AGM "FUN" Primitive Firing

After we have the meeting, there will be a potluck. While some are eating, a space will be set up outside for some others to start painting some pots and start firing. Primitive it is!

If you wish to participate, bring a few small to medium bisqued pots. Clay type does not matter and they should not have sentimental value.... they could crack. I will supply the paint and brushes but feel free to bring your own oil paint colors and brushes to make for a little more variety. We will be painting these with artist's oil paints, possibly thinning the paint with gasoline for a watercolor effect; and then wrapping them in newspaper and firing in my metal portable outside fire pit. One half hour later we will pull them out, plunge them in water and VAVOOM - brilliant colors. We then seal

them with floor wax DONE! Sounds fun, eh? See you at the meeting. For those of you who do not have to go home, plan on staying late if you can and we will do more firings.

Co-President's Message

- Louise Pentz

A belated New Year's greeting to all Guild members.

I wish you health, peace and happiness for you and your families this upcoming year. The Guild is looking forward to a year of supporting the development of our members through workshops, social contact and the sharing of information and ideas.

As most of you know, the Guild made a submission this past fall to the Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery in Waterloo for an exhibition. We should hear by spring as to whether or not we have been successful. We also submitted our catalogue from the SHAPING SPACE-A CELEBRATION OF LANTZ CLAY exhibition to the Burlington Art Centre to request an exhibition. With each of these applications a request was made to consider our individual members for their future exhibitions. Now we must wait to hear their response.

There are also plans to have a workshop in either late Spring or early Summer....but details aren't finalized yet so we'll keep you posted on that.

Our annual general meeting and pot luck is happening on March 13th at Sharon's. It would be great to meet most of you at this once a year event. We would appreciate hearing your views and input as the artists' world can be pretty isolated. There's something else you could do for us - please send along, to either Sharon or myself, your ideas for workshops. If you have something that you think other members would enjoy or benefit from knowing and or would you offer a workshop to the group? If there is some artist whose work you admire and you

would like to have a workshop with them, would you tell us about them. The members would appreciate hearing from you. Let us know how we can help you to grow and develop in your clay experience.

I'm happy to share with you that CERAMICS: ART AND PERCEPTION will have an article on my sculpture show, *Broken - But Still Standing*, in the upcoming edition of their magazine. This exhibition was held at the Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery in Waterloo, Ont. last January.

Also, please stay in touch with MJ (our wonderful communications diva) and share your successes, failures and ideas with the rest of us. If you have something to buy, sell or questions....let's talk to each other.

My Trip to Turkey



We all probably have "BUCKET LISTS" ...the list of things we would like to do before we become too infirmed or "kick the bucket".

I've wanted to visit Istanbul and the Haggia Sophia for decades. Last September Don and I toured parts of Turkey and the experience was better than I imagined. This land is rich with its incredibly ancient civilizations, its history and the breathtaking natural formations which make up its landscape.

Visiting the palaces, mosques, museums and galleries has refilled my creative batteries and I wait to see how these wondrous places will materialize in future work.

As potters and sculptors we always want to know about the ceramics wherever we visit. The historic, figurative sculpture was usually carved from stone and, unless it was quite robust, the frequent earthquakes of the area have left much of it fragmented. Only very small sculpted objects were made from clay and those seemed to have played a role in religious practice.

The ancient pottery in the museums was wonderfully simple in design, beautiful to look at and very functional. What we all strive for!

There was very little use of glaze but rather the surfaces bore the marks of their earthy, painted patterns, the firings and of their use. You could image holding them and pouring from them. They were elegant yet ordinary. The pottery that filled the roadside markets was all the same...terra cotta in colour, unglazed, and the same functional designs of bowls, casseroles, pitchers etc... Throughout the trip I didn't see one of a kind, handmade ceramic work.

Our tour made a stop at one of the government sponsored ceramic outlets for tourists so we were able to see pieces being thrown on a primitive wheel, large platters being cast, slip decorating and of course the grand showrooms full of finished pieces. Brilliant, breathtaking, low fired colours and patterns adorned most of the pieces, though some featured the patterns of more historic work. At one point during the tour of the showroom all the lights were turned off and in the darkness the script from the Koran which had been written on the large chargers and vases glowed. They had used phosphorescent material under the glaze and it had absorbed the light. The sales people were very proud of this technological accomplishment. Talk about putting "a little magic" into the work!

Turkey was WONDERFUL! The richness of the culture and the land is difficult to convey with words. Should the opportunity ever present itself to you to take a trip to Turkey..

...SEIZE IT!!!

-Louise



Christopher David Tyler
May 12, 1944 – Dec.12, 2010

-Karen Robinson

On Saturday morning, December 4, 2010, The Potter's Guild lost more than we likely yet realize. That day, Christopher Tyler passed away at the age of sixty-six. Some of you may not have known Chris. He had become active in the Guild after retirement, and shortly afterward was diagnosed with the illness that took his life too soon.

One of our neighbours commented at Chris' funeral that, while she knew how intelligent, gentle, steady, and wise he was, because of his unassuming ways she had no idea how accomplished he was. So, from excerpts from his obituary, the NSDCC 12/6/2010 newsletter, and input from his wife, Lynda, here is a brief account of the expertise we in the Guild had been quietly benefitting from before he was taken away:

Following his graduation from Leeds University in England in 1966 (BA in English Literature), Chris immigrated to Canada and earned a MA from MacMaster University in Hamilton. He spent years teaching high school English in Galt, Ontario, and later English and Art History at the Sault College of Applied Arts and Technology in Sault St. Marie. During this time, Chris worked with Richard Hirsch to co-author *Raku: Techniques for Contemporary Potters*, which is believed to be the first book on contemporary ceramics by a Canadian, and is still considered a source book on the subject. From 1975-76, Chris did studio work in ceramics, and researched low-fire ceramics and craft history at Ohio University. He earned a MFA from NSCAD in 1978, and that summer began his six

year stint as the Nova Scotia Designer Crafts' (NSDC) Administrative Coordinator.

In the summer of 1984, Chris assumed the position of Crafts Development Officer with the NS Department of Culture, Recreation and Fitness. During his career in the public service, Chris held several job titles including Crafts Advisor, and Head of Production Crafts, and he was instrumental in conducting studies, developing funding programs, managing the craft studios on Grafton Street, and overseeing the Atlantic Craft Trade Show and the Buyer's Guide to Art and Craft in Nova Scotia. He recognized the need for a provincial craft gallery, particularly for group shows of clay work. Thus, two of his most significant accomplishments during this time were the opening of the Mary E. Black Gallery and the Nova Scotia Centre for Craft and Design which Chris managed up until he became the Department's Manager of Anchor Organizations in 2001, the position he held until his retirement in 2004. He served on the Board of Governors of Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD) from 1986-89. His own ceramics have been included in exhibitions that travelled both nationally and internationally.

Post-retirement, Chris continued his work in the crafts world, achieving a national and international reputation as an independent curator, juror, and author. By invitation, he contributed a section on contemporary ceramics for the revised Canadian Encyclopedia. He continued to be involved in the provincial crafts community by serving on the Board of the Economusee Network, and serving as Treasurer on the NSDCC Board of Directors. His long and valuable contribution to the crafts community was recognized by the Atlantic Canada Craft Award for Excellence for Industry Leader in 2005, and when he was named an Honorary Member of the NSDCC in 2007.

I met Chris and Lynda at NSCAD in 1978, and our friendships deepened when my family moved across the street from their Tremont Drive home. I will cherish and miss

the long talks about pots, plants, and life, sharing tasks and ideas around various shows we both were entering or had gone to see, and hearing his laughter burst through the quiet summer evenings in our neighbourhood. We are all better off for having had Chris in our lives, but he left us all, potters and neighbours, too soon.

Jane Herold's **inaugural wood firing**

- Sharon Merriam



We were very fortunate this summer to have the opportunity to take our pots to Cape Breton where Jane Herold who has been single firing with wood for about 30 years was having her inaugural wood firing. Thank you MJ for all the organizing that you did that allowed this to happen. Jane and her husband Robert graciously opened up their home to us. We arrived from all over NS with a large contingent from the Halifax area, Darryl and Cyndi from PEI, Carmen and Elspeth from Black Rock, and Sarah Beck from Cape Breton with our pots, our camping gear, our food and our enthusiasm. A big thank you to Paula Weiss of Arizona for all of her assistance during the workshop and her stepson who was wonderfully handy especially when it came to wood preparation. Jane and Robert have a wonderful large property, a cool clear brook that runs through it and an old house that was very lucky to have found them.

After driving up the first day, we setup the campers and tents, outside toileting facilities – Thank you Gillian! Glazed our pots, checked out the local brook, the path to the brewery, had our evening meal brought to us by a neighbour, who in the grand Cape Breton tradition, appeared with a huge pot of soup. That evening we gathered in the big room for slides and a talk. Jane shared with us her journey in clay including her experience as an apprentice of Michael Cardew, who she credits with giving her “the opportunity to live a life completely immersed in clay”. She talked with quiet confidence about her process, her aesthetic, her way of thinking about, making and evaluating pots. Why wood firing? What makes a good pot? Much of her process, philosophy and expertise can be found online on her website: www.janeherold.com where there are several articles she has written, galleries, and her pots which look ever so much better in person, where you can see the depth, warmth and liveliness of the glaze.

The following day after a magnificent breakfast - best Granola ever - Thank you Wendy. The food! I must report that we all ate exceedingly well with potters teamed up in twos and threes to provide breakfast, lunch and dinner. Plus Sarah Beck who could frequently be found playing her fiddle by the glazing shed, when she wasn't providing snacks. Everyone certainly pulled out all the stops. Potters truly rule when it comes to preparing and serving magnificent meals. Mother never made pot roast like that Judy! And what food wouldn't taste better in Jane's kitchen with her warm and generous woodfired plates, bowls and mugs?

There were wonderful stories. Over the next few days - being a short roll from a the local brewery and adjacent to an invigorating and refreshing cold stream - we were rained out, consumed by black flies, busy with wood prep, Paula's son wore out a chainsaw. Everyone assisted with the wood prep but I would like to specially thank

those brave souls who in the heat of the afternoon soldered on. A Herculean effort preparing the wood by Cyndi Yeatman, France Arruda, Toni Losey, Carmen Dalrymple and Elspeth Mackenzie. Who have I forgotten? Even friends of Jane's from NY were pitching in the heat of that afternoon while the blackflies invigorated by the previous nights rain feasted. Magnificent food, more wood prep. and Glo-rings, must not forget Glo- rings, in the dark and the fun they inspired while stoking furiously to get the kiln up to temp. Eighteen hours after the preheat we had cone 10 down in the top of the kiln. Calls to Suzi Cameron for discussion and then in the wee hours of the morning we closed the kiln down, and everyone just sat, content; not wanting it to end.

Thanks to Jane for showing us the joys of taking a Village to fire a wood kiln. Firing a wood kiln is an amazing amount of work. Jane is rightly very particular regarding the preparation and use of wood. – in the collecting, cutting and sorting into appropriate sizes. Years of experience, distilled knowledge on the preparation and feeding of wood kilns so that in her words, "...the wood doesn't get wasted." Loading the kiln Jane wisely distributed the pots so that everyone hopefully got at least one good one. Many of the pots were under fired but the kiln was safe. I was impressed by Jane's focus, even temperament and professionalism. She was constantly aware of what was going on inside the kiln. Her depth of knowledge and calm meditative spirit shone through. Thank you, Jane.

Post script: From an email Jane sent to workshop participants, "For those of you who obsess about these technical things (like I do!) the bagwall has been significantly shortened, so it comes up to the half way point in the chamber. The chamber floor is lower, so the full exit flues will be open, underneath the first layer of shelves, which will be stacked on 9" stilts. The firebox has two very short mouseholes just inside slot # 2 and 4, and will get nice, wide hobbs

tomorrow, 6" deep on both sides. And the center exit flue is blocked off by 2/3rds. With these relatively simple changes I think the kiln should fire much more evenly."

Note: Sharon Fiske has refired her pots to cone 10 in a reduction kiln and they came out beautifully.

Celebrating our Joan

-Suzi Cameron



Many thanks go to Joan Bruneau for sharing her knowledge, expertise, and her totally engaging teaching style during the Nova Scotia Potter's Guild (NSPG) fall workshop. In the true spirit of the clay community we drew on many resources. The NS Centre for Craft and Design (NSCCD) provided their teaching studio on Marginal Road (in the South End Port Area of Halifax). This was the first opportunity for many of our members to visit the NS Designer Crafts Council NSDCC/NSCCD studios and offices since they moved from Barrington and Grafton Streets. Claire Hodge and Alexis Doiron helped with set up, borrowed a projector from NSCAD University (Nova Scotia College of Art and Design) and made us very welcome. Jim Smith loaned his laptop and Joan's Power Point presentation went off without a hitch.

During the morning session, throwing was the main feature. Joan's inspiring presentation gave credit to Clary Illian's A Potter's Workbook and Plant Forms in Nature by photographer Karl Blossfeldt. Both books are valuable resource material for potters at any level of experience. For

Clary Illian go to <http://atomburke.com/a-year.html> and scroll down for video clips.

To see Blossfeldt's 1928 Urformen der Kunst:

www.soulcatcherstudio.com/exhibitions/blossfeldt/index.htm). As well, Joan shared specific technical details—the addition of 8% kyanite to a tight red ware body will help prevent thermal shock. Also, ½ teaspoon of soda ash added to a clay slurry made from vinegar and crushed dry scraps of throwing slip makes a mixture that's especially effective when joining a thrown piece to a slab. After lunch, it was more handles, lids for squared rims, teapot spouts rolled on a dowel, and carefully timed slip application.

That evening was an opportunity for some of us to dine out downtown. We celebrated by taking Joan to the "Talay Thai Restaurant"—her fave—the food is to be recommended, nicely presented and matched by their good service.

In appreciation for using the studio, we, The Guild, donated a new digital projector to the Centre for Craft and Design and it will be available to future presenters. Again, thank you to Joan, the organizing committee, and all those who contributed time and energy to this very successful event. For regular email bulletins re: workshops, exhibitions etc check out our membership information nspottersguild@gmail.com.

Upcoming Exhibitions

Alex McCurdy:

is part of a group commercial show at Secord Gallery on Quinpool Road in Halifax called BEACH, which will open in April (final date still unknown), and will be showing her ceramic beach birds and bowls with melted beach glass.

And her travelling retrospective called CROSSING MATERIAL BOUNDARIES will open at the Burlington Art Gallery in Ontario on September 17, 2011; at Saint Mary's Art Gallery in June of 2012 (partnered with

Dorothy Caldwell, textile artist), and the Beaverbrook Art Gallery in Fredericton, New Brunswick in November 2012. Gloria Hickey from Newfoundland is the curator.

Working in schools

- Bunk Trinacty

Bunk Trinacty a clay carver shares his talents with schools. This year was his son William's grade 5/6 split class. The project became an installation piece, in the front lobby, at St. Margaret's Bay Elementary. Each student had a letter that spelled out the school name, and an area of tile in which to add figures. There were demonstrations in slab rolling; cutting; figure making; the all important slip & score technique; as well as glazing and tile gluing. The project was weeks in the making, and was a learning success for both students and artist. Bunk has used his personal molds with other grades over the years, but always as a take-home project, and is looking forward to seeing this hang whenever he is in the school.

Pottery Tips

If the clay body you use is prone to plucking, try this useful cure. (When edges or bottoms of pots stick to the kiln shelf). Add ½ tsp. of alumina hydrate to ½ cup of wax resist. Not recommended for wax resist decoration.

For fun, and to help you see your wax lines, colour your wax resist. Buy Bingo dabbers in the variety pack colors and mix to create your own hue. In my business we came up with some doozies!

Cone 6 Tuckers MCS is the most awesome of clays to fire in a wood kiln. You will get some magnificent flashing. This clay body seems to go to cone 10 and higher with little slumping or cracking – just ask Lee Clark. It is prone to plucking so make sure you duffer the bottoms. Plates are not recommended unless they are fired flat on a "well" kiln washed shelf.

Recommended Books

-Nancy Roberts Design

The Clay and Crime Mystery Series

By Melissa Glazer

A Murderous Glaze

Includes directions for a pottery project!

In Maple Ridge, Vermont, Carolyn Emerson planned to ease into her golden years running her paint-your-own-pottery shop, Fire at Will. She never expected to uncover a dead body in the shop, and she certainly didn't plan on a drop in live clientele. Now it's up to Carolyn and her shop's pottery club, The Firing Squad, to help clear her name. But can she find a killer and more customers without her own brush with death?

The Cracked Pot

When the body of a new potter with a mysterious past is found in Carolyn Emerson's raku firing pit, she calls upon her studio's pottery club, The Firing Squad, to dig up evidence and crack the case.

A Fatal Slip

When a building inspector is found drowned in a bucket of liquid clay slip, potter Carolyn Emerson's husband Bill is the prime suspect. It's up to Carolyn to clear his name and not let the real killer give her the slip.

What do ceramic tile and men have in common?

If you lay them right the first time, you can walk on them for life!



**Ease tension by taking up a new hobby.
You might want to try throwing pottery.**

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