



NSPG

NOVA SCOTIA POTTERS GUILD

# The Dish

February 2014

## Presidents' Message *The Dish* 2013

What a year we have had!

As a direct result of **your** enthusiastic response to our email entitled "***This Summer I'd like to...***" here's what we did:

- ☞ **Louise Pentz Smoke Firing Workshop last June**
- ☞ **Raku Workshop with Carol Smeraldo and Judy Gordon in September**
- ☞ **Swoon Gallery will be presenting "Current Works by NSPG" in May. Remember, the deadline for this show is April 5th - Are you Currently working on anything??**

**Feedback Feasts** will be starting again soon with our first Feast to be hosted by Janet Doble. Details for this will be revealed at our AGM on February 16th. You might want to think about hosting a Feedback Feast yourself. If so, please contact us with your proposed date.

We'd like to extend a **Great Big Welcome** to new members:

Bronwyn Arundel, Terry-Lee Bourgeois-King, Joan Bradley, Therese Bombardier, Kelly Code-McNeil, Tracy Horsman, Cindy MacKinnon, Terry Mitchell, Cathy Morrison, Amy Noel, Mariko Paterson, Diana Smith, Sally Tully, LiLynn Wan. We're glad to have you! If we can be a resource for you, that's great. If you want to share something with the membership, we'd like to hear from you.

2013 marked a milestone in the pottery world of Atlantic Canada when Atlantic Pottery Supplies

(APS) closed its doors in May of 2013 and handed the torch to Cyndi Yeatman at Dragonfire Pottery & Supplies. Nadine Cooper Mont has been a fixture (and we mean that in a really nice way) in pottery circles for many years and, as owner of APS, she did everything in her power to promote potters and pottery in Atlantic Canada. She opened APS School and hired Carol Smeraldo as Head Instructor. Then she had the good sense to (as Nadine said) get out of the way and let Carol run it. As a team, they made a huge impact on the pottery landscape here in Nova Scotia. Both were more than generous with their time and knowledge. The pottery world in Nova Scotia has been tremendously enriched because of the school Nadine and Carol established. To their credit, many of their students have become accomplished potters with their own studios. Both Judy and Sharon want to thank Nadine and her staff for their many contributions to the clay community over the years.

We'd also like to thank Cyndi for taking on the challenge that is supplying potters and running a studio and classes at Dragonfire. She's made a great start and if you talk to her, she'll tell you there are growing pains, as with any new business. We're expecting good times with delicious food, great pots and fabulous events - like the recent Kiln Workshop with Michael Leonard. That was terrific Cyndi!

Our members were quite prolific this year - with shows at the Mary E. Black Gallery, Argyle Fine Art, Swoon Fine Art, Jo Beales Gallery in Glen

Margaret, the Harvest Gallery in Wolfville, to name just a few of the galleries which support our potters. In addition to local shows, members of the Guild participated in the Medalta International Cup Show and others were invited to participate in *Art of the Pot* in Austin, Texas.

"Pop up Galleries" are trending as well, so look into the possibility of participating in one, if it comes your way. We know of at least two in 2013 which have

featured our members. If nothing comes your way - do your own "Pop up". Potters are the epitome of independence - in fact they are the original "indie" people.

We have noticed resurgence in craft markets. We would urge our members to take advantage of opportunities available to you when participating in these types of events. Consumers of craft like to meet the artist and form a connection with them. It can be an inspiring experience to watch someone respond to your work. Sometimes you will get negative feedback and we would encourage you to embrace that as well - feedback is valuable to you if you have the courage to look at it objectively. The main thing is - Participate! Make more pots.

### Annual General Meeting

Look to your email soon for the Minutes of our 2013 AGM, together with an agenda for this year's meeting and other details.

**Time: 2-4pm**

**Date: Sunday, February 16th**

**Place: Sharon Fiske's House, 2751 Robert Murphy Dr., Halifax**

Bring your wish list with lots of detail about what you'd like the Guild to do for You. See you there!

**Your Co-Presidents,  
Sharon Fiske & Judy Gordon**

## Smoke Firing Workshop with Louise Pentz



In June, fourteen members of the guild arrived bright and early at Louise Pentz's home and studio in Pentz for a full day workshop in smoke firing techniques. Smoke firing is a method of decorating ornamental ceramics with "mottled black and tonal colours being absorbed into the porous clay body"(Hamer, 338). Participants were asked to bring some already bisques pieces to work on. The workshop began by exploring some techniques for burnishing greenware. Burnishing creates an ultra-smooth finish on the smoke fired piece giving it sheen, similar to being glazed. Louise discussed sanding pieces with fine sanding paper to first remove any surface flaws and demonstrated using baby oil on a greenware to stop water from being absorbed while wiping away the sanding dust with a damp rag. We all tried burnishing with nylons and with polished stones or the back of spoons. Using paint thinner or lighter fluid can also result in a polished surface. These techniques take the guess work out of making terra sigillata. Scraffito can be achieved by using graphite to blacken and polish the surface and scratching designs through the graphite revealing the clay beneath.

Louise then discussed the construction of her smoke kilns. A shallow pit was dug into the ground and rimmed with concrete builders blocks laid up on end with the solid surface facing in. The blocks were not fit tightly together but spaced a little apart to allow air circulation. A metal grate was placed on the ground to

allow air under the pieces being fired, and a piece of metal sheeting was used for the lid.

Preparing bisque pots for smoke firing was an eye opening experience. Colours and patterns on pots can be enhanced using whatever might be around. Traditional ceramic colorants are unrefined earth sourced pigments such as ochre, Louise's happy statement "It's all just pigment right?" allowed for experimentation with untraditional decorating materials such as make up, coloured pencils, pastels and paint. Some of these materials we understood would burn out in the firing process, but that added to the anticipation of opening the kiln. Louise noted that with using colorants, it is not interesting to cover the entire piece as you would try to do with a glazed pot, but use them for accent and design for best effect.

Much of what happens in smoke firing is the effect of chance; however Louise shared many tips with the group that she has gleaned from years of experience. How a piece is placed in the kiln affects how the smoke will reach it. Face up or face down? Propped against a brick or a nail? Wrapped in string or paper or seaweed? She suggested that lidded pieces should be placed close together so they get the same atmosphere and have cohesiveness. Particular combustibles such as pine needles, string, wire and straw can all give unique pattern effect to a piece. Even the type of wood used and the size of the shavings will have an effect. Patterns can be achieved with sand or stones placed on a piece, as a smoke resist, to stop the carbon from being absorbed into the bisque.



The first demonstration firing Louise explained the process of layering a sheet of newsprint over the grate to keep the combustibles from falling through to the ground. Then loosely layered combustible materials are artfully placed under, around and on top

of pots which may also be wrapped in paper. Pots are not crowded and the materials are best if dry, light and fluffy. The idea is to allow air to circulate at the same time as the fire is burning. Once the kiln has been lighted and the fire is burning well, the cover is quickly placed over the top to make the fire smolder and increase the smoke. A scant fifteen minutes later the kilns were cool enough to open and discover the wonders inside.

Once we had seen the method, participants were off on a pyro maniacal frenzy with multiple successive firings happening all afternoon. We all crowded with questions for each other on what worked and what didn't.

Toward the end of the workshop Louise then demonstrated some post firing finishing techniques that helped to amp up the kiln results by isolating specific parts of a piece to be treated to enhance a pattern or a mark. She suggested using patterned combustibles and scorching them quickly with a blow torch, or lighting an accelerant. We were impressed with her daring.

While this all seems a little dangerous, Louise did caution us against the possible hazards and to use safe work practices and habits to avoid any accidents. Remember to work in a well vented area when using VOCs such as lighter fluid, use a mask when sanding, stay upwind of the smoke, use welders gloves and a leather apron when unloading the kiln, keep the extra combustibles away from the fire and mind the wind forecast.

We would like to thank Louise for opening her studio and her home for a whole day last June and sharing her expertise and experience with us all.



**Raku Workshop September**  
**Carol Smeraldo and Judy Gordon**



***The Right Fuel***

The right fuel is what we had, those lucky enough to attend the September 15 & 16 Raku workshop hosted by Carol Smeraldo and Judy Gordon. Held at Carol and Art's home by the lake, this turned out to be a happy exercise in delayed gratification as it was postponed from an earlier date in the summer.

It turns out the right fuel for a successful Raku workshop requires a careful mix of fire, food, and friends. In preparation for the workshop, we were e-mailed a comprehensive list of what to bring. For those of us who didn't come equipped with all the requisite bells and whistles; Carol, Judy, and our fellow participants generously shared what they had. We all received printed copies of Raku techniques and tips. With typical Smeraldo modeling of precision, we recorded details of our glaze application and noted the results, through words and drawing on a paper-based firing/glaze record.



Sharon, Judy, Carol M, Mary Jane, Jane, Gerri, Carol S

Each day included several firings, so we were each able to get quite a few pieces done. In addition to various glazes, we also used horse hair, feathers, and ferric chloride. Like a well choreographed ballet, we shared the division of labor in taking care of our own and one another's pieces in pulling them from the kiln and into the waiting receiving pots, ready to surround the literally red-hot pieces as they emerged from the kiln. The receiving metal pots were layered with newspaper; and the tops were then covered with wet towels. We had excellent advice and support whenever we needed it. The magic of doing this in a group is sharing the delight and surprise as we all get to see the pieces as soon as they've cooled. We all learned from and celebrated one another's successful firings.



Carol using horse hair

We had continuous access to wonderful food and wine shared in great company.



Diane, Gerri, Sharon, Carol

Yes, we had just the right fuel in so many ways and are very grateful for the skill, patience, and enthusiasm shared throughout the workshop.

-Gerri Fragger

## 2013 NSPG mini website report

We had a good year on the website with some interesting statistics I want to share with the membership.

We had 4867 unique visitors to the site with 70.7% being new visitors.

The average page visit duration was 2 minutes, 54 seconds.

The most visited page was the "Classes" page with 2218 page views.

Top keywords used to search that resulted in people finding our site:

NS Potters Guild  
Nova Scotia Potters Guild  
Pottery classes Halifax  
Nova Scotia Pottery

Page views for each member ranged from 45 to 269 views.

Tips to increasing views to your page and the website in general:

\*Share your unique page url with everyone so that they will have an easy way to get to your page.

\*Updating the website often. Send me your show announcements, new photos you want to share, special events you are involved in, and update your bio. It only takes moments to make these changes and they all help to improve traffic to our site.

\*If you have a website, include our website link on it. The more linking that happens the more traffic we will get.

\*If you have not submitted information to have your own unique web page, consider sending it in. You can go with a minimum of one photo, along with a short bio and one way of contacting you. It not only looks good on the site but also looks good for you.

\*If you have your web page up already, consider changing the photos or your bio statement. Refresh!

I am looking forward to 2014 being an even more active year on the website and when we all work together we can improve our views which improves our visibility within the local and global community. –**Shauna Mcleod**



<http://dragonfirepottery.ca/>

### **What a Year 2013 Was!**

We closed Atlantic Pottery Supplies on May 24 and opened Dragonfire Pottery and Supplies June 1<sup>st</sup>. What an exciting and massive job that was! What a great learning experience this has all been for both France and myself.

The Grand Opening of Dragonfire was fantastic. We gave away a TON of clay, that's right ONE TON of clay and a brand new Shimpo VL Whisper Pottery wheel, thanks to Frank Tucker from Tucker's Pottery Supplies. Excitement was in the air that day with almost 200 people to celebrate with us.

We are very excited to be doing our first workshop on Kiln Repair, January 25<sup>th</sup> with Michael Leonard from Cone Art Kilns. We are planning another workshop this fall with a guest potter from Virginia. The details are still being worked out but I will keep you posted on dates and times. We are accepting workshop proposals and I would love to hear from you.

Please send all proposals to [info@dragonfirepottery.ca](mailto:info@dragonfirepottery.ca).

Our goal for 2014 is to continue to work on the website and ordering on line. I know that it has been very frustrating, myself included.

I would also like to say a big thank you for all the support the community has given us during this start up of our new adventure. Your love and support has been so appreciated during this time.

### **Kiln Repair Workshop**

**- Sharon Merriam**

Our workshop Saturday January 25<sup>th</sup>, bringing in Michael Leonard from **Cone Art Kilns** <http://www.coneartkilns.com/> for a workshop to talk, demo and answer any and all questions on kiln repair and maintenance. A diverse group of at least 30 folks interested in kilns and pottery attended. The breadth of knowledge and experience ranged from very extensive to almost nonexistent.

Michael started by doing a very basic little diagram comparing electric current to the flow of water into a pool; so for the electronically challenged among us, think of the current, the speed at which the water flows as the **voltage**, the depth and width of the stream as the **amperage** and the river the resulting pool of water you can draw on as the **wattage**. He explained that a kiln at its most basic is just a box to hold heat in. Essential a kiln is just a big toaster with a box to contain the heat, a switch to control the heat, an element to make the heat and a cord to bring the power in from the source to the element. Then he went through methodically talking about each of those things starting with how much power you have coming in, available for your kiln.

You have to make sure you have sufficient power to safely operate your kiln and your home so you need to know how much current your kiln draws per wire. All that information is written on your kiln. The switch can be on off, a low/med/high or an infinite switch. The better insulated your box is the more efficient it is at keeping

heat in. Smaller kilns are less efficient as they have more bricks etc. per cu ft. to heat up. Cone art kilns are double insulated with 2 ½" of premium firebrick plus 1" of block insulation. This double wall insulation ensures a safer, cooler jacket and approximately 30% energy savings over single wall kilns with 2.5" bricks about 20% with 3"ones. They are the only kilns built in North America that have double wall construction although that is the norm in Europe where energy is more expensive.

**Caution:** Don't try to get around the electrical requirements **there is a reason your kiln only comes with an 8 foot cord!** Here I would just like to thank my 'in house tech person' and his support team of fellow engineers as well as our excellent electrician for their diligence in installing my excellent wee 3.3 cu ft. kiln.

I can only touch on the information that Michael covered, for more extensive information check the manuals which are available online. **Cone Art has their manuals available** online as a down loadable pdf file. [coneartkilns.com/.../Instruction%20manual-Pottery%20Kiln.pdf](http://coneartkilns.com/.../Instruction%20manual-Pottery%20Kiln.pdf) See p11 on preventative kiln maintenance and pp 11-12 is trouble shooting with Appendix A-F giving more explicit instructions. Bartlett Controller Manuals are available at [www.bartinst.com](http://www.bartinst.com) Go to the source and get the complete accurate information. He discussed:

Buying an old kiln and the kinds of questions you need to ask. Including is it single phase or three phase your house is single phase. Where it has been stored? Cold does not matter but moisture does. All the electrical information should be on the panel.

Questions that your Electrician is going to want to know the answer to.

He talked about single (2 wires), three (3 wires) phase kilns and how to change a triple to a single using clear simple diagrams.

Discussed in detail how Kiln Sitters work, and the importance of a certain little piece that tends to get thrown away with the instructions

✚ How to change your kiln from a kiln sitter to a controller. Controllers require more power. You need 1.4-1.5 kW/cu ft. for a kiln sitter vs 1.6-1.8 kW/cu ft. for a controller

✚ The advantages of controllers which are amazing but are **not** a safety device their only purpose is to fire your kiln evenly.

✚ **First always turn off the power at the breaker.**

✚ **Before you touch anything** you have checked to make sure that power is off then taken photos of the inside so you can get it back together exactly the same way again.

✚ Tuckers have a video of the inside of the Bartlett controller which shows how to open it and the wiring etc. See <http://www.tuckerspotttery.com/tkps/index.php>

✚ He demoed checking the connections, changing elements, and relays using a small Cone Art Test kiln with a Bartlett Controller.

✚ CNOS adjusts the cone temperature up or down which is one the advantages of a controller. We get to be much fussier with our glazes just because we can. I am guilty of this pleasure myself. Such a shame to have a feature on your kiln and not use it!

✚ TCOS thermocoupler offset, if you have used that for whatever reason it will of course continue to adjust that new thermocoupler too, so if you have fooled around with that make note of it somewhere prominent and remember to tell people who are helping you to trouble shoot what is going on with your kiln.

✚ Full power test. Turn your kiln on and check that each element is coming on with a piece of paper. Do a visual inspection of each element to see that there are no cool spots, glaze bits etc.

✚ Trouble shooting was discussed with examples building on previous knowledge to explain the reasoning behind it.

✚ Should you need a new part make sure you order the correct relay, element, thermocoupler for your kiln. You cannot tell just by looking. Best practice is to give them the serial number of your kiln then they have no excuse if you get the wrong part.

✚ Continuity test and he wrote and programed an example of User defined programs for both a continuity test and for firing down.

✚ Discussed what to do if the power goes off during a firing

He also demoed changing elements. The more elements are used the more brittle they become at which point they are very difficult to get out as they come out in pieces. You have to get all that debris out including any glaze. Michael recommended that you change your elements after 100 firings when they are still a bit flexible to save yourself grief. Look at the shape of your element channel before you start to figure out the best way to take them out without damaging your brick. Some pull out straight others with an upward motion and the roll of your wrist. Clean the channel out completely before inserting the new elements. The cone art ones go around your kiln twice others once. Good luck!

Least you think it was all work I must mention that we had a break in the morning between the two very technical parts and were later rewarded for lunch with a **marvelous potluck** lovingly arranged on the slab roller. I am always impressed by our potlucks. The sum as always was greater than the parts. In the middle of the afternoon we broke for the mug exchange. It is always fun to see what people bring to these and the different directions they are working in.

It was a great workshop. I think everyone must have learned something. I certainly understand so much better and I feel more qualified about the possibility of changing elements etc. Thank you Cyndi, France and Paul for making this workshop on Kiln repair and Maintenance possible, and Michael Leonard thank you so much for sharing your extensive knowledge and experience with us.

# ***Our Potters Sharing Their News and Travel Stories***

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## **Turnstile Pottery Co-operative Closes Its Doors**

**- Lily Meadows**

The Turnstile Pottery Co-operative closed its doors in May of 2013 after a great run of twelve years in business. Over its life span it was an important facet of the Halifax Ceramic Community as well as the larger Business and Arts Communities. As an artist run co-operative, it provided inexpensive studio and retail space for many small-scale potters and ceramic artist, as well as providing classes and open studio opportunities to the general public, and workshops for many local non-profit organizations.

Turnstile Pottery was started in 2001, by Laura MacKay and Andrea Puszkas. Aptly named for its turning over of membership, Turnstile has had over forty members help run it over the years. The membership consisted mainly (although not exclusively) of former NSCAD

university students and graduates. Turnstile served as a training ground in the basics of starting your own studio business, many of the details not taught at the university level. Things such as equipment installation and repair, how to teach classes and run a store front gallery, book keeping and filing taxes, leadership and interpersonal skills, as well as many other things. But, most importantly, Turnstile provided an encouraging environment in which to develop your art.

Artists often work in seclusion, not by choice, but by circumstance. Turnstile, however, was a safe space to create next to, learn from and be inspired by fellow artists without the pressures that often exist in academia. Memberships lasted anywhere from 2 months to 10 years and consisted of a wide range of people with varied skills, all of which helped make Turnstile work so well. Skills would be passed from one member to the next when there was need or interest. And when Turnstile was in need its membership rose to the occasion. The level of camaraderie was exceptional.

Originally situated on Gottingen St. (2001) and later moving to Agricola St (2008), it has been a long-standing part to the North End Arts Community. Known for its weekly opportunities for the general public (open studio drop in, and sculpture club with live nude model) as well as its more structured classes and private lessons, Turnstile was well loved by the community. They were also known for their work with at-risk-youth and women's organizations providing opportunities to explore artistic creativity through clay. Turnstile also participated in a wide variety of community events, fundraisers, and organizations.

Sadly as with many volunteer run organizations, burnout is a risk. Faced with a second unexpected loss of location, and a membership that was in flux, Turnstile's current membership made the difficult decision to disband this past

year. It will be missed, but fondly remembered by those that it touched. Thank you to all those that were a part of the Turnstile Pottery Co-operative. You made it extraordinary!

## **Gleaned from The Potters' Council's Conference An Altered Approach to Clay**

**-Sharon Merriam**

When I opened up an email from Ceramics Arts Daily this summer I read that there was a conference with Jennifer McCurdy, whose sculptural porcelain creations have fascinated me for years and Susan Filley, Suze Lindsay and Courtney Murphy on an Altered Approach to Clay my first thought was how much I would love to be able to go. Then I saw that it was being held in Nashville where my youngest daughter lives. I took that as a sign. I have always altered my thrown pots so I joined the Potters Council, registered and bought my tickets.

***Pay attention to form; emotion will come spontaneously to inhabit it. A perfect dwelling always finds an inhabitant.***

– Andre Gide

It was a wonderful experience. I found so much that spoke to me including the wonderful quote above from Jennifer McCurdy's notes that it actually took me longer to write up than to attend the conference. One underlying theme that I found running through it was the useful question. Suze Lindsey, who I found to be a terrific teacher, did a useful variation on the: who, what, where, when and how much of your personal clay practice.

- How do you measure success? What are the ways that you measure success?
- Where do you get your ideas from? Books,

museums, nature, collecting pots...

➤ How do you develop your ideas?

Most Presenters talked about clay sketches, how ideas come as you work, not always, there will be dry periods but you have to work through them. The hand leads to the mind.

➤ Why do you like this pot? How does it make you feel?

➤ If you want to alter, ask yourself why? Intention matters.

➤ What about the pot do you want to accent? The answer not only determines the placement of surface decoration but the alterations, if any, as well as the development and refinement of that vessel over the years.

➤ What is your voice? Find, develop, revisit and refine your voice.

Courtney Murphy on trimming: Where is it hiding its weight?

Susan Filley on quality control talked about throwing a number of pots and then playing survivor because you know that 1<sup>st</sup> pot is never as good as the others; wisely suggesting that we ask ourselves, "Who in this room are you trying to fool?"

There was an emphasis on the basics we all know with that creative little twist.

➤ Susan Filley likes handles and works with porcelain joins with water not slip as slip makes a weak joint.

➤ Not everything needs to be attached there can be the suggestion of attachment, the glaze is strong enough to hold it.

➤ Courtney who conditioned her clay for pulling

her handles by taking a piece right out of the bag and then just slamming it down on the table, rotate, repeat – how brilliant is that! No wedging and all ready to attach then pull into shape.

➤ Jennifer McCurdy, who no longer makes handles surprised me by pulling the bottom of one of her altered bowls. So much more fun than trimming. The lesson: don't be afraid to apply your skills in new creative ways.

➤ Suze Lindsay emphasized that potters tend to avoid drawing but that we shouldn't be afraid to draw with the caution to remember that you're working in 3D.

➤ They all work on their ideas using clay sketches.

➤ Be decisive, intentionality matters. Don't stop in the middle of a line, a cut. You have to be bold. Know what you want to do and do it in one continuous sweep.

And these helpful hints:

➤ Having trouble with cracking? Look at how you are drying your pieces. They start drying from the moment you make them. Cracks come from uneven drying.

➤ Drying in Styrofoam coolers is better than using plastic.

➤ Glazing is not easy, such a relief to hear Susan Filley say that. She makes 35 different pieces and has 40 glazes. She likes both the elegance of white and colour. She fires to cone 10

reduction in a gas kiln

**New word:** Blunge I still haven't come up with a satisfactory definition but that is how you attach a handle especially one that is to be thrown off the pot to the wall of your vessel. You **boldly** and intentionally **plunge** your clay into the wall of your vessel while supporting it on the other side.

**Best tool:** a brush made with long strands of bright pink dyed deer hair which was bought at her local tackle shop. I have picked up the noxiously coloured deer hair from a local Fishing gear shop in Halifax and plan to attach them to those wooden chopsticks that are so useful in the potting studio.

All Potters Council Workshops are different, I'm told. One thing that I liked very much about this one was how well the Presenters integrated their presentations. I can definitely recommend the experience.

### **Claude Chaloux**



I am in Mexico, San Miguel de Allende (GTO) for the winter!! From November 17 until early to mid May!!

I am doing clay in the morning and paint in the afternoon!

The photo is one of the small clay pieces that I want to have them in bronze!!!!

I am in love with Mexico!!!!



## Sara Bonnyman



**326 Maple Ave, Tatamagouche , NS**

[www.sarabonnymanpottery.com](http://www.sarabonnymanpottery.com)

I've been making pots as a business for the past 40 years. I started with hope; 2 books; a kick wheel; a bookcase; borrowed use of a kiln and two hands. I love making pots. But it's not that easy is it? Making pots also requires marketing – and that was a concept that took a long time for me to grasp. Sure, I have always had lovely cards to go with my pots, but marketing is so much more than that.

One of the major events I now hold every year – I started on my 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary, is my Open House. I have it on the Saturday of Thanksgiving weekend, mostly because I'm exhausted in the summer and so grateful by Thanksgiving. For my Open House I send out 250 invitations; run ads; have professionally designed posters made; dust; and have lots of pots on hand. But then there is the problem of food. I got around that by asking the local Hospital Auxiliary to make lots of squares and cookies to give away – and I give them a large cheque to cover their costs. I also make 100 stem less wine glasses which I give to the Auxiliary, they in turn fill with warm apple cider and sell for 12.00 each - they keep all the money. The Auxiliary sets up in a tent in the driveway leading to the Potshop, the spouses of the Auxiliary direct and slow down traffic (I live on a narrow bit of highway) and I make pots for 2 hours straight and we have draws for door prizes. Luckily for us Scotiabank is set up on the corner on Main St., Tatamagouche, and a couple of their employees volunteer for the Open

House which in turn means that all monies raised that day by the Hospital Auxiliary will be

matched by Scotiabank. For the past 5 years we have raised between 3,000 and 5,000 dollars each year (with the help of Scotiabank) for the Auxiliary in those two hours. Of course after the folks have gone, we open the case of champagne and have a party for all the workers and have catered treats.

I'm sharing this with you hoping it will motivate you to do the same for your community. Give it a try

## **Anne Pryde**



After a five year hiatus from the studio Anne Pryde is making pottery again. In September she started working in her home studio full time designing a new body of work. Anne had a busy lead up to the holidays participating in two Halifax Crafters events, a group pottery show at Swoon Fine Art Gallery and attending the Historic Farmers Market most Saturdays. Fourteen of her fermenting crocks are now being used at Big Life Bakery's new cafe in Dartmouth. Anne has joined the board of directors for the Peggy's Cove Area Festival of the Arts which happens in July.

You can view and purchase Anne's new work at Swoon Fine Art Gallery, Linens for Life, Kept, and online at [annepryde.ca](http://annepryde.ca) or potterybyannepryde on Etsy.

## Nancy Roberts



“Appetite” was accepted into a group show titled: *Strange Figurations* at the Limner Gallery in Hudson, New York, <http://www.limnergallery.com> for the month of September, 2013.

## Joan Bruneau



In May 2013 Jim Smith and I were among 10 guest Artists at *Art Of The Pot Studio Tour* in Austin Texas. <http://artofthepot.com/> I'm having a solo show at the *Clay Studio* in Philadelphia in March

<http://www.theclaystudio.org/exhibition/joan-bruneau>

Ceramics Monthly is writing a feature on my work which will appear sometime over the following year.



## Sally Ravinda



I donated 12 mugs to the Burlington Art Centre's 35th anniversary fund-raising on-line auction a few months ago. They had a particularly decent plan for donators in exchange for the donation, they offered to sell up to 24 of your regular production mugs, at, of course, 35 dollars each. So 17.50 each for the potter. This seemed to me to be a nice, and fair approach. 6 of the mugs I donated were "elephant mugs", one of which got its photo in the Hamilton Spectator. I highly recommend a visit to the Burlington Art Centre, on the Lakeshore near Hamilton, as it is really a fabulous and creative place a bit tricky to get to without a car, but really worth a visit galleries, shows, workshops, and lessons, all sorts of wonderful and creative fundraisers really a great place.



I just returned from a trip to Ethiopia and saw a lot of black pottery most of it the same themes over and over lions, angel candle holders, painted hens, and the like. The most interesting and lovely pottery shape, however, is the Jabena, the graceful, round-bottomed coffee pot

used in "coffee ceremony"-- an elaborate and relaxed drinking of incredibly strong coffee that is roasted on the spot in a pan, its aroma waved around the participants, then boiled in the jabena, which is set right on a charcoal fire. Once it is done, it is poured into tiny cups and drunk with lots of sugar--usually one has to drink three cups! Sometimes I saw the coffee ceremony going on in local markets where the coffee was chased with a few swigs of local honey wine and other brews!

## Carol Smeraldo



<http://www.smeraldopottery.com/>

Oct.-Dec. 2013 were exciting and busy months for me. My work was shown in 5 shows. **Swoon Fine Art Gallery, 1410 Hammonds Plains Rd**  
[www.swoonfineart.com](http://www.swoonfineart.com)  
Swoon represents me and carries the biggest display of my work on an ongoing basis as well as work I make for special shows such as:

-**"Ever Present"** a 2 person show with Anna Horsnell Wade in June, showing my tallest lit sculpture and many others. These represent a new direction in my work.



-**"Spectre"** a juried Halloween group show in which I have 2 lit sculptural pieces. Oct-Nov.  
-**"Christmas Presence 4-A Group Pottery Show and Sale"**, Dec.  
-**"One-of-a-Kind Christmas Tree Ornament Party and Sale"** Nov-Dec.

**Mary E. Black Gallery, 1061 Marginal Road Suite 140, Halifax**  
[www.craft-design.ns.ca](http://www.craft-design.ns.ca)  
492-2522

MEBG showed my work in 2 group shows with a few pieces available for immediate sale in the NSDCC gift shop adjacent  
-**"Change Ahead"** members curated show with my biggest lit sculpture and 3 other major pieces. Nov.



-**"Carry It Forward"**, a show of 6 NS clay artists'/potters' work from the 1970's and currently. My work includes 5 pieces from the 70s and 4 major pieces from now. Dec.  
**The Art Gallery of NS., 1723 Hollis St., Halifax**  
My work was featured in the large cases outside of the gallery gift shop in the entrance foyer (now open during renovations) with an ongoing display in the shop.





## **Janet Doble** **Residency in France**

When I was in college I wrote a paper on the ceramics of Picasso, about his time working with the Ramies in their ceramic studio in the town of Vallauris, in the south of France. This led me to become interested in the broader ceramic history of the town. During my time living in Quebec, I developed a love of the French language. So a couple of years ago when I was idling searching the internet for possible ceramic residencies and came across A.I.R. Vallauris, [www.air-vallauris.org](http://www.air-vallauris.org) I got very excited and resolved to somehow get myself there. It took a couple of years and some good luck, but the dream became a reality in September 2013, when I was able to spend 6 weeks living and working in the town.

Southern France has been the home to many great artists Matisse, Chagall, Braque, Picasso, Leger, and many more, making the area a mecca for artists and art lovers. There are many fabulous museums in small medieval towns all over the region. In the town of Vallauris there is a gem of a museum featuring the ceramics of Picasso as well as work by the many well-known potters from Vallauris; and an exhibition of art works from the Maeght Foundation collection. [www.fondation-maeght.com](http://www.fondation-maeght.com) The streets of the

town are filled with pottery shops selling brightly coloured traditional table ware, and off the main

streets are hidden pottery studios where ceramic artists carry on the tradition of Picasso, freely creating art that is fresh and inspiring.



Typical Street Wares

About my whole experience there, I still feel at a bit of a loss to describe it; thrown into an environment that is so unfamiliar, is exciting, exhilarating and challenging on so many levels. To live and work in a town that had captured my imagination, in an area that is so infused with the aura of the artists that have lived there is indescribable; awakening every day to a sense of magic, wonder and possibility was a dream. The history, the colours, textures and atmosphere, the light, days on days of sun and warmth were a delight, I fully came to understand the meaning of the word sublime.

My idea for the body of work that I wanted to make while there, required a reality check when I fully realized the cost of glaze materials, firing costs, and the cost of shipping work home; this meant that the idea of working with somewhat larger pieces and doing glaze tests to create textured glazes was not practical. I did not want to do what I had been doing at home; it was not a place to do maiolica, to do the familiar, so I looked to my new environment for inspiration. The history, the textures, the colours and the vegetation filled my senses and so I used those elements as a starting point. Instead of creating

glazes to give me texture, I started rolling the clay on the streets and buildings around the

studio where I was working. My themes came from the vegetation that grew from the sides of building, from drain pipes, in the cracks of the lanes, in the ruins of ancient villages, plants growing in pots on the streets, in containers outside front doors, the vegetation was lush and covered many of the stone and stucco buildings; the contrast of stone and vegetation was stunning, adding life and beauty to the towns.

Slowly I experimented with the clay, bought some ready-made glazes, to which I added pigment, used bits of glaze material left by former residence and created enough work to exhibit for the last week of my residency, and I came home with a clear idea for a new body of work. I am now making larger pieces and along with the textures that I am lifting from my environment, I am adding textured glazes, ideas are still fresh and I am slowly working my way into a new phase of my clay practise.

The rewards of doing this residency are many, to have lived in and learned about a part of the world that had always captured my imagination, to have worked there and gotten an intimate insight into new possibilities, has changed me in some basic way, reinforcing the creativity of everyday living.



Stone Textured Vase



Pillow platter

## Mary Jane Lundy Somewhere in Costa Rica

I have been the NS Potters Guild Communicator director and editor of the Dish for the past 10 years. I will be retiring from this position this year. I would like to share with you who I am and my trip I took last year.

I was 35 years old when I fell in love with clay. It was 1994 while studying part-time at Nova Scotia College of Art and Design University in Halifax. It would take me 9 years to complete my BFA major in Ceramics graduating in the spring of 2003 the same year as my son's high school graduation. and I have been a full time studio ceramic artist ever since. My home of 28 years is in East Dover where we raised a son and two daughters. Three years ago my husband Mark and I built a cottage studio and named it Crescent Clay. It overlooks peaceful Dutchman's Cove. East Dover is a small village about 2km off the main Route 333 that leads to Peggy's Cove.

February 2013 while on holidays in Costa Rica I had the wonderful opportunity to attend a 3 day pottery class in Tamarindo. Tamarindo is a small beach town on the Northern Pacific coast.



I love honing new skills and Arbin Espinosa Guevara, my teacher, who owns and runs Guaitil Pottery Studio, was ready for the task  
<http://tamarindopottery.com/>



Arbin comes from a family of potters - 1. "For over 800 years, the Chorotega Indians have been producing organic coil built pottery throughout Central America. This artistic tradition has been passed down, generation to generation, and is one of the remaining indigenous crafts still being practiced in Costa Rica. In the small pottery village of Guaitil, located on the Nicoya Peninsula of Costa Rica, Arbin Espinosa Guevara was handed down this tradition from his mother. Growing up in the village and being surrounded by this art form, he learned all facets of production and has been practicing this ancient craft ever since." Arbin enjoys sharing the ancient knowledge of his ancestors creating his pot forms with a tool I would not have imagined using before this class.



A corn husk is used for smoothing a pinch pot form that gets enlarged/taller by adding clay coils to it. He uses a fly wheel which comes from a car engine. It has a stronger torque/pull to it than our Canadian standard banding wheels. Using natural clay from his home area he creates a pinch pot that is placed on the flat surface of the fly wheel and he operates it, making it spin with his left hand while his other hand holds the corn

husk resting on a pole that is attached to the table. The pole keeps the hand steady allowing only the fingers holding the corn husk to move up and down the cylinder smoothing it coarsely to attach the coils. This would have been done inside and outside of the form. Once the cylinder is created to the desired size it is left to set up lightly covered. The second class was smoothing the surface inside and out with a hard piece of recycled plastic. This technique is called burnishing. Once it is all smooth liquid white slip clay is brushed over the entire surface. It is again left to dry lightly covered with plastic so it doesn't totally dry out. The third class was burnishing again the white surface and then using color pigments to create a drawing of my choice upon the surface. I chose starfish and sea turtles, brightly colored. The next technique is to lightly trace along the outline of the drawing bringing the white clay back through the color surface, called scraffindo which gives dimension and movement to the drawing. Once all is complete, making sure the surface is fully dry; you are again needed to burnish the surface. There are no shiny glossy glazes added to the burnished surface. Once fired it will create a wonderful sheen to the pot. These techniques are labor intensive and require skills of patience.



Pot created by Arbin Espinosa

I very much admire Arbin keeping to his traditional roots and keeping alive this ancient culture of his people. Unlike Arbin I don't come from a family of potters; only me the first generation but perhaps one day a grandchild may come along and I can share the knowledge I've acquired through my explorations as a Canadian ceramic artist.

## **Potters from the Past**

Dennie Cox/ Shape Shift  
to  
Carol MacDonald/Goose Cove Pottery

*As the "wheel" turns, and you reach "maturity"*

*Do your eyes become "glazed"?*

*Do you feel yourself "slipping" and "shrinking"?*

*Does your "body" feel "wedged"?*

*Like you don't fit the "mold"*

*Do you "knead" to "reduce"; are you  
"bloating"?*

*Is your mind getting "warped"?*

*Do your words come out "slurred"?*

*Do you find yourself "cracked" and "crawling"?*

*Well then....*

*Just re- "fuse" to believe it!*

*"Resist" the "pinholeing"*

*Don't drive yourself "batty"*

*Get a "grip", get a "handle",*

*Drink some "grog" and get "plastered"*

*For that's life....and it's all just a "crock"!*

## **The NS Potters Executive**

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