

THE CRACKED POT

The Clay Connection Newsletter

Graciela Testa Lynt, Editor

SPRING 2009

Current Issues Facing The Clay Connection

As you may be aware, our organization has recently begun a new membership year. Membership in The Clay Connection rises toward the end of odd years because people join to attend the Mid-Atlantic Clay Conference. This implies that membership wanes during even-numbered years and such was the case during 2008. We currently have 67 new or returning members. This compares well with organizations such as The Kiln Club, which has about 81 members. Yet, 2008 was a difficult year for our group as there was a significant decline in member interest and participation. The lack of volunteers resulted in our inability to host monthly programs, our inability to meet our commitment to provide bowls for Empty Bowls events, and the cancellation of the Fall Sale.

In addition, the lack of volunteers means that many Board members have been serving for a long time because no one has been willing to step up to take their places. This is particularly the case of our President, Roberta Couver, who has been selflessly serving the organization for five years now. The Board has recently taken steps on several fronts to address this situation: 1) we have surveyed the membership to get a better handle on needs and expectations; 2) our Volunteer Coordinator, Ann Granger, has contacted every member in an attempt to increase participation; and 3) because we lack a Program Director, individual Board members have taken on the additional responsibility for producing monthly programs for 2009.

Clearly, an organization such as ours cannot continue to operate without member participation. This is an issue that we would like members to think about carefully and contact Board members with their thoughts and interests as we prepare for the general membership meeting during the Clay Conference in October.

In this issue of *The Cracked Pot* we are sharing with you the results of the survey as well as providing status reports and information for each area of responsibility within the organization.

Survey Results

As each person joined The Clay Connection or renewed their membership during recent months, they received a welcoming letter from our President that also included their individual UserID and Password for the organization's website, as well as a questionnaire.

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Of the 67 current members, 36 sent in completed questionnaires. The survey queried members about their reasons for joining and their views of the organization and its activities. Networking and social contacts as well as training and workshops (including the Clay Conference) were, by far, the main reasons given for joining the group. Participating in exhibits and sales of pottery were also given as reasons for joining, but were ranked as less important. Respondents' views regarding the organization's primary mission fell under three categories: education for members, social contacts, and networking. Sales opportunities and promoting ceramic arts in the community were also noted but were not considered as important by most respondents.

In line with the above, responses regarding the types of activities that The Clay Connection should engage in heavily favored workshops, conferences, and educational programs. Pottery exhibits and sales also ranked high. When asked about the activities that the organization engages in, 42 percent of respondents felt that we have the right amount of activities. Members were asked which activities The Clay Connection should continue to support. As expected, the largest number of respondents stated that we should continue to support the Mid-Atlantic Clay Conference. The monthly educational programs came in second place and the fall sale came in third place. There appears to be comparatively less interest in continuing to provide bowls to Empty Bowls or supporting the high school clay competition.

Given the problems that the organization is currently having regarding the lack of participation, it was surprising to find that 27 out of the 36 respondents reported having volunteered in The Clay Connection in the past or currently, with a significant majority reporting a positive experience. Similarly, 72 percent of those queried stated that they would be willing to volunteer on a committee or help with an event. **Given this result, we are hopeful that many of you who expressed these views will now contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Ann Granger, and help us make this a vibrant and successful organization.**

In an attempt to ascertain what the favored modes of involvement might be, the survey asked about preferences regarding participation. A significant majority responded that they would be more likely to serve on a committee if responsibility for the topic or event was shared among 2 or more people. And a majority stated that they would be more likely to participate if business were conducted via email rather than in meetings.

The survey asked about making volunteering a requirement of membership. Twenty-three out of the 36 respondents stated that they would not consider such a requirement a "make or break deal," while 13 people responded that it would be so for them. Half of the survey respondents said that they would be willing to pay a surcharge for the years in which they did not volunteer in the organization. This question brought forth a number of comments and suggestions that the Board will study further.

The organization has three ways of communicating with members: 1) the website, 2) the newsletter, and 3) emails. Fifty percent of respondents stated that they were getting the information they needed from the website. With respect to the newsletter, 30 respondents (83 percent) said that they read *The Cracked Pot*. Finally, 27 persons out of the 36 respondents (75 percent) stated that they read the email updates.

These are important and efficient means of communication; however, as with everything else in the organization, they require member participation. A significant number of

people responded that they would be willing to either write articles for the newsletter or to contribute information for articles. Given the variety of suggestions for the kinds of articles that people would like to see in the newsletter, the newsletter editor expects to be getting lots of contributions for the next issue of *The Cracked Pot*, which is scheduled for June 21st. Please email your articles and other contributions directly to Grace Lynt at graciela@glyntpotttery.com.

As members have noted, email updates have been few lately. The reason is that we no longer have an Email Coordinator. Given that a majority of those surveyed expressed a preference for receiving emails only once a month, **this is an excellent volunteer opportunity for those members with a little time on their hands.**

~ ~ Graciela Testa Lynt

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Team Reports

In keeping with members' desires as expressed in the survey responses, we are looking for more than one person to volunteer to fill vacant positions, dividing up responsibilities and making each person's tasks less onerous. Vacant positions that readily lend themselves to job-sharing include hospitality, marketing, nominations, and all the event and program planning teams. **Please contact Ann Granger (at 703-470-3038 or anngranger@comcast.net) to volunteer for these important positions.**

Communications Team: This team is made up of the Email Coordinator (**Vacant**), the Database Administrator (Barb Oksanen), the Mailbox Administrator (Barb Oksanen), the Newsletter Editor (Graciela Testa Lynt), the Postcard Coordinator (**Vacant**) and the Webmaster (Jim Dunning).

As members may have noted, **email updates** have been few lately. The reason is that we no longer have an Email Coordinator. Given that a majority of those surveyed expressed a preference for receiving emails only once a month, this is an excellent volunteer opportunity for those members with little time on their hands. Please volunteer for this important job in our organization by contacting Ann Granger.

Barb Oksanen has recently taken responsibility for managing the group's **database**. In addition to listing all Clay Connection members, the database also includes a list of customers that has been built up over the years during Clay Connection sales. The list also contains media contacts who can receive information about our events. Barb also manages our mailbox in Merrifield by retrieving and distribution incoming letters and brochures.

Survey respondents find **the newsletter** to be an important source of information. A very few stated that they do not read *The Cracked Pot*, and most of those expressed difficulties in opening the file. To address that problem, we will be emailing this issue of the newsletter in both PDF and Word formats. If recipients continue to encounter problems, please email the editor and request that a hard copy be sent to you through the regular mail. In addition, a significant number of those who responded to the survey stated that they would be willing to either write articles for the newsletter or to contribute information for articles. In addition, many respondents suggested topics, including: reviews of

workshops and classes, information about individual Clay Connection members and their work, studio tips and techniques, calendars of upcoming events, and marketing ideas. We would like to start some of these features in the newsletter and would appreciate your contributions (you can also send basic information and let the editor do the write-up!). Given the variety of very interesting suggestions for the kinds of articles that people would like to see in the newsletter, the editor hopes to start receiving lots of contributions for the next issue of *The Cracked Pot*, which is scheduled for June 21st. Please send your articles or contributions directly to Grace Lynt (graciela@glyntpottery.com).

The Internal Publicity (**postcards**) Coordinator mails postcard reminders to the membership to encourage participation in Clay Connection events. This position remains **vacant**. Please volunteer by contacting Ann Granger.

All Clay Connection members should now have their updated UserID and Password to access the **website** (www.theclayconnection.org). The website now includes updated information on the Mid-Atlantic Clay Conference as well as other upcoming meetings and events, volunteer opportunities, video lending library titles, an extensive list of local resources (including local suppliers and equipment repair as well as pottery classes in Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia), the student competition and the brand-new members gallery. If you have not sent your pictures and write-up for the gallery, please do so soon (contact Jim Dunning at jimcdunning@gmail.com).

Administrative Team: This team includes coordinators in the following areas: Hospitality (**Vacant**), Marketing (**Vacant**), Membership (Julie Sedell), Nominations (Carolyn Brinkman), Video Library (Ed Bull), and Volunteers (Ann Granger).

The **Hospitality Team** provides light refreshments during programs, drinks and paper products during the Annual Pot Luck Dinner, heavy hors d'oeuvres during receptions for exhibits, and a catered dinner at the Annual Membership Meeting. The Board is hoping for at least 2 persons to **volunteer for this position** to help us make our programs and events more memorable.

The **Marketing Team** develops and maintains a current press kit and writes and distributes press releases. They also review the advertising portion of the consolidated database and provide updates to the Database Administrator. The Board is hoping for at least 2 persons to **volunteer for this position**.

The **Membership Team** (Julie Sedell) is currently looking for another volunteer. This team maintains membership records, maintains information kiosks at local clay-related establishments, publishes a Biennial Membership Directory, sends renewal announcements to current and lapsed members, Welcome Packets to new members, and postcard acknowledgements to renewing members. Julie has had a busy few months. She redesigned the flyer and reproduced it in a more festive light green paper. Area ceramics education centers, ceramics suppliers, and local community centers were contacted and agreed to display the flyer and other information from the Clay Connection (such as the newsletter and the Clay Conference flyer) in places where potters will be able to see them. This is an important effort to get the word out about the Clay Connection and to attract new members. A new set of the flyers will be sent out in June.

Carolyn Brinkman has volunteered for the **Nominations Committee**. Additional **volunteers are needed**. The Nominations Team works with the Volunteer Coordinator to identify potential candidates for vacant positions on the Executive Committee of the Board.

Ed Bull has agreed to be the organization's **video librarian**. The video librarian manages the lending library of over 30 videotapes and DVDs related to pottery. The librarian makes the library available to members during monthly meetings, collects the \$1 lending fee, makes \$3 prepaid mailers available for returning items, and provides a monthly report to the Board summarizing the status of the library. Ed could use one more person to assist him in keeping track of the inventory. As soon as a volunteer comes forward, the library will be set up at Creative Clay.

The **Volunteer Coordinator** (Ann Granger) engaged in a concerted effort in February to find volunteers for the High School Competition and for the Sales Team. Unfortunately, the results of her efforts were quite disappointing. To follow up, in March, Ann sent an email to the entire membership with "Urgent Need" in the subject line (members who do not have an email address registered received a phone message). The email also requested a volunteer for the position of Treasurer. While the overall response to this significant effort remains disappointing, we are glad to report that we now have a Sales Team and a High School Competition Team. The Sales Team is made up of Marvel Adams, Amy Wandless and Napapan Carpenter; while the members of the HS Competition Team are Denise Corcoran, Curtis Haymore, and Lori Langford. Moreover, Curtis Haymore has agreed to be our new Treasurer. **Thank you to these members who have stepped up to volunteer!**

The Clay Connection Board has been planning an exciting calendar of events for the remainder of 2009 and your help is needed to make them, and the organization, a success. You can be a valuable part of the Clay Connection team, get to know some great folks, and have fun at the same time. To volunteer contact Ann Granger, Volunteer Coordinator, at 703-470-3038 or anngranger@comcast.net, or email potters@theclayconnectin.org. The current volunteer needs are as follows: the high school competition and exhibit, the fall sale, hospitality, membership, marketing team (external publicity), postcard team (internal publicity), video library, exhibits, finance team, and nominations.

Event/Program Planning Teams: These include the Clay Conference Team (Marianne Cordyack), the Empty Bowls Charity Event Team (Committee), the Exhibits Team (**Vacant**), the Holiday Pot Luck Team (**Vacant**), the High School Student Competition and Exhibit Team (Committee), the Programs Team (Committee), and the Sales Team (Marvel Adams).

Planning for the **Mid-Atlantic Clay Conference** is well advanced. In addition to Marianne, the team includes, Barb Oksanen, Stephanie Firestone, Mike Swauger, Jayne Shatz, Guy Zoller, Dick White, and Deb Barger. The registration flyers have been mailed and there have already been expressions of interest, including registrants. Copies of the flyer have also been sent to clay-gathering spots. Main presenters are Gay Smith, Suze Lindsay, and Frank Giorgini. With help from Ann Granger, a local band (*Nightmusic*) has been booked for the Friday night dinner/dance. All presenters have also sent in their contracts. If you need information about the Mid-Atlantic Clay Conference, check our website, www.theclayconnection.org, a link appears on the home page that will provide all the information you need.

The **Empty Bowls** Committee (Roberta Couver, Marianne Cordyack, Amy Wandless, Barbara Oksanen, Graciela Testa Lynt) decided to provide bowls to The Giving Circle of Hope, which will host a charity event whose proceeds will go to Food for Others. Every Clay Connection member has received a phone call from a Board member as well as an email requesting bowls and informing them of the various places to drop bowls off. The most recent information indicates that almost 400 bowls have been delivered. **Please check your stock one more time and see if you have any more bowls to donate to this worthy cause. Your help is especially important now that so many people are in need!** The event will be held from 5:30 to 8:00 pm on Friday, April 17th, 2009, at St. John Neumann Catholic Church, 11900 Lawyers Road, Reston, VA 20191. We encourage everyone to attend this event and show your support.

We are looking for volunteers for the **Exhibit Team**. This team coordinates all aspect of exhibits to be held in the local area, including dates, times, participant registration, inventory sheets, set-up, take-down, receptions, and fees. The Exhibit Team also identifies new opportunities for exhibiting member work. Last year's exhibit at the Green Spring Gardens Park was a great success thanks to the work of Steve Gammicchia and Jo Ellen Walker. Many more exciting opportunities to exhibit our work can be explored, including the recently-opened Workhouse Art Center. Please contact Ann Granger to **volunteer for this team**.

It is not too early to beginning planning the year-end **Holiday Pot Luck and Pot Exchange**. In fact, we need a venue for this event. Please consider volunteering to plan this fun event for our group!

We now have a team for the **High School Competition**, which will be held from April 14 to May 20, 2009 at the Lee Center in Alexandria, Virginia. This venue is the Parks and Recreation headquarters for the City of Alexandria and is open until 9 pm Monday through Friday. The application packages and posters were sent to the high schools in March. Steve Gammicchia is working with pottery-related organizations to obtain prizes. Roberta Couver is working with schools to ensure participation. The City of Alexandria will coordinate the event at the facility. **Additional volunteers to assist at the Closing Reception and Awards Ceremony are needed.** In these days of budget shortfalls, school art departments are really feeling the pinch! Our support of high-school art teachers through the hosting of this competition is a real boost to their art programs. Denise Corcoran, Curtis Haymore, and Lori Langford have volunteered for this team, please join them! **We still need volunteers to help takedown for this event.**

In view of the continued lack of a Vice President for **Programs**, individual Board members have taken responsibility for planning events for 2009. Events are currently scheduled for April, May, June and September. See the calendar in this newsletter for more information.

As noted, we now have a team for the **Fall Sale** that includes Marvel Adams, Amy Wandless and Napapan Carpenter. **Additional volunteers are needed to plan this event** which will take place December 5 at the Vienna Community Center. Help will also be needed with setup, cleanup, and cashiering. The first planning meeting for the Fall Sale will be held on Sunday, May 3 at noon in the Packard Center. Please plan to attend this meeting!

Officers: The Officers of the Clay Connection are its President (Roberta Couver), President-Elect (**Vacant**), Vice President for Programs (**Vacant**), Vice President for Membership (Julie Sedell), Secretary (Aileen Redding), and Treasurer (Curtis Haymore).

We are pleased to welcome Curtis Haymore as the organization's new Treasurer! We now need volunteers for the **Finance Team**, which assists the Treasurer to draft the annual budget, analyze expenditures, and complete and submit the annual income taxes using IRS Form 990.

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Calendar of Upcoming Events

Please mark your calendars for these important Clay Connection events:

- ❖ **April 17, 2009, 5:30 to 8:00 pm ~ ~ Empty Bowls Supper at St. John Neumann Catholic Church, 11900 Lawyers Road, Reston, VA 20191**
- ❖ **April 26, 2009, 1-3pm ~ ~ Post-fired Finishes with Pam Eisenmann at Creative Clay Studios**
"Post-fired finishes" refers to surfaces that are applied after firing and are an alternative to glazed ceramics, offering a way to control surfaces and effects that may not be possible with traditional ceramic processes. Pam's demonstration will include the use of acrylic colors, metallic patinas, and sealers, as well as a discussion of other materials and methods. A flyer with all the information for this program is attached. This workshop is offered free of charge to members of the Clay Connection. It is open to non-members as space allows for a nominal fee of \$10. For planning purposes, please RSVP to potters@theclayconnection.org or by calling Grace Lynt at 703-768-0956. This event will be held at Creative Clay Studios from 1 to 3 pm. Driving directions to the venue are at the Clay Connection website or at www.creativeclaypottery.com/directions.htm
- ❖ **May 3, 2009 at noon ~ ~ Planning Meeting for the Fall Sale at the Packard Center**
All persons interested in participating in the Fall Sale should help us plan this event! Three persons have already volunteered, but more participants are needed. One of the survey respondents noted that marketing of the Fall Sale needs to be addressed. This is your opportunity to help us in this effort! We need people interested in planning the event itself as well as those interested in marketing and hospitality. We have a significant mailing list of repeat customers who look forward to this event, please help us make it the successful sale it has been in years past.
- ❖ **May 20, 2009 ~ ~ High School Clay Competition Closing Reception and Awards Ceremony**
This event will take place at the Nannie J. Lee Memorial Recreation Center in Alexandria. Please check our website for more information. Support high school art programs and budding high school ceramists by attending this event!

❖ **May 23, 2009 at 10 am ~ ~ A Visit to the Workhouse Art Center**

Marianne Cordyack has arranged a visit to the Workhouse Art Center in Lorton. In addition to a tour of the Center, we will be given a brief history of the place and will have an opportunity to ask questions. We will also be free to wander around and visit other buildings, including the main gallery. We will meet at the clay building, which is the next to last building on the left. Please check the Workhouse website at www.workhousearts.org for more information. As the time draws near, we will be sending you a reminder email and additional information.

❖ **June ~ ~ Making Tiles without a Slab Roller**

Julie Sedell is organizing this workshop, which will take place at the Packard Center in June. Additional information will be made available on our website as the plans are firmed up.

❖ **September ~ ~ Photographing Pots**

Barb Oksanen is putting together a workshop on photographing your work that will take place in September. Additional information will be made available on our website and in the summer newsletter as the plans are firmed up.

❖ **October 1-4, 2009 ~ ~ The Mid-Atlantic Biennial Clay Conference**

By now everyone should have received the flyer with all the information for the 2009 Mid-Atlantic Clay Conference, which will take place at the 4-H Center in Front Royal, Virginia. Additional information is available on our website's home page.

❖ **December 5, 2009 ~ ~ Fall Sale, Vienna Community Center**

Even if you will not be participating in the sale, please make plans to drop by the Vienna Community Center to see the current work of our fellow potters, offer your encouragement, partake of the refreshments, and sign up for the pot give-away!

❖ **December ~ ~ Holiday Pot Luck and Pot Exchange**

Partake of the fellowship of your colleagues and friends in this great year-end celebration! Bring a dish to share and pot to exchange! Keep an eye out for additional information on this event and please volunteer to serve on the planning committee!

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Member News and Achievements

Denise Corcoran ~ ~ After graduating with a BFA Summa cum Laude in the Fall of 2008, Denise is now enrolled in the Masters of Art in Teaching Art Education at George Mason University.

Nan Rothwell ~ ~ Nan hosted a weekend workshop taught by Kevin Crowe in her Nelson County studio in early March. Eight potters participated in the hands-on event making large bottles and bowls as well as two-part constructions.

Marianne Cordyack ~ ~ Marianne and her family welcomed a new grandbaby! Maggie Whitehouse arrived in July 2008. She is Marianne's 3rd grandbaby!

Graciela Testa Lynt ~ ~ Grace and her family also welcomed a new baby. Joshua Drake Bevil was born in December 2008 and is the Lynt's 5th grandchild!

Ann Granger ~ ~ Ann and her family are looking forward to a joyous spring and summer since both of her daughters are getting married this year: Kristina is getting in May and Jennifer is getting married in July. Congratulations!

Several members, including **Roberta Couver, Jim Dunning, Reggie Pointer, and Guy Zoller** attended the 43rd annual **NCECA** conference in Phoenix, Arizona.

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Studio Tips and Shortcuts

Sheila Ford has a great use for the plastic bags that your newspaper comes in. She uses them to cushion pots that need transporting! Sheila crumples up the bags and creates multiple layers of plastic between the pots. This method works quite well because the plastic traps air, which adds to the cushioning effect. It certainly beats newspapers!

Julie Sedell attended a production potter's workshop and learned a great trick for making multiples of an item. After you have thrown your mug or bowl, affix a long feather or a reed (something that is flexible, but can point and hold its position) on the plastic base of your wheel or on the rim of your splash pan with a glob of clay. Position the feather or reed so that it lightly touches the top of the vessel at the desired height. Now you can throw subsequent items and have an easy way of measuring height to ensure that you have a matching set.

You don't have to be into sport fishing to appreciate these two great tips that Grace Lynt got from **Jane Cullum** a few years ago! You'll never lose your shammy again if you get a small plastic bobber and attach it your shammy... the shammy may sink, but the bobber will always tell you where it is! Since you're already in the fishing section of your local sports store, get yourself some fishing line. Tie fishing line to a couple of clay or plastic beads and you've got a thin and remarkably strong cut-off wire.

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Marketing Corner

In addition to studio tips, we would also like to start sharing marketing ideas. Please send your marketing tips to the newsletter editor.

If you're thinking of targeting your marketing efforts, here are some ideas:

- ❖ **Buy Local, Buy Handmade!** ~ ~ Print inexpensive flyers or postcards and distribute them in your neighborhood and local stores (florists, gift shops, beauty salons, etc.) emphasizing the "local" and "handmade" quality of your products.
- ❖ **Give your Neighbors Holiday Gifts** ~ ~ Here's another great way to remind your neighbors that they have an artist in their midst! Fill small bowls and mugs with Hershey's kisses and wrap them in Saran wrap. Place them in an appropriate paper

bag with a ribbon or some sort of Holiday ornamentation, and include your business card and other business literature as well as a Holiday greeting card.

- ❖ **Calling all Garden Clubs!** ~ ~ If you are part of a group of potters, consider inviting the local garden club to hold their next juried show at your studio. We recently did that at Manassas Clay and it was a great success! The garden club members chose vessels made by Manassas Clay potters for their flower arrangements, they then had a panel of judges review all the arrangements and give out first, second and third place ribbons. The arrangements were displayed throughout the Manassas Clay aisles and in the windows for two days. The garden club sent out invitations to all their members as well as other garden clubs. The result was that Manassas Clay potters sold quite a few vases and the garden club got kudos from their judging organization for the very unique venue of their garden show!
- ❖ **Here Comes the Bride!** ~ ~ Our work lends itself very well for weddings and other such festivities. Do an Internet search of "wedding planners" in your area and send out targeted mailings highlighting your work as wedding favors (small trinket dishes, for example); centerpieces (bowls and vases); commemorative pieces; bridesmaid gifts, etc. For example, when one of my daughters got married, I made large votive candle holders with heart cut-outs glazed in the wedding colors. These were given to the bridesmaids with a nice candle. The candle holders were placed on the main table and they held each girl's bouquet during the reception. I'm sure that you can come up with lots of ideas for wedding receptions!
- ❖ **Interior Designers** ~ ~ Do an Internet search of "interior designers and interior decorators" in your area and send out targeted mailings highlighting your work.

~ ~ Graciela Testa Lynt

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Workshop Reviews

Several survey respondents suggested that we publish reviews of workshops/classes in the newsletter. We did have a workshop review in the Fall 2008 issue and will publish reviews whenever members share their experiences with us. We invite all readers to send in their reviews of workshops and/or classes that they have attended. You can also send the basic information about the workshop together with your impressions and recommendations, and the newsletter editor will work it into the newsletter. So, don't let "I can't write" stop you from sharing your experiences with us!



- **Kevin Crowe Workshop at Manassas Clay**

On March 14 and 15, I attended a Kevin Crowe workshop at Manassas Clay. Kevin is a marvelous teacher whose workshops combine teaching pottery skills with poetry and

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inspiration that helped push my skills to a new limit. We learned techniques for throwing plates and large platters as well as bottles, teapots and large pots thrown in two parts. I recommend Kevin's workshops for anyone interested not only in honing their skills, but also in getting more in touch with their inner voice and really stretching into new areas. For more information, see www.kevincrowepottery.com.

~ ~ *Graciela Testa Lynt*

- *Raku Workshop at Creative Clay Studios*

Raku has its origins in the 16th century Japanese tea ceremony during the Momoyama period (c 1540). It is believed that during the reign of Emperor Hideyoshi the famous potter Chojiro received a commission from Rikyu, the influential tea master, to make tea ware for the ceremony. From that time forward, Raku pottery has been used in the ceremony. Since the time of ancient Buddhist temples in China and later Zen temples in Japan, tea drinking was considered an aid to meditation. Appreciation of the way of tea and the cup was an inspiration to a person's "contentment" and "enjoyment." The calligraphy "Raku" is derived from the word "Jurakudai," which is variously translated as "enjoyment, ease, contentment or happiness."

Raku making in the United States began in the 1940s. The first potter to produce and exhibit Raku pots was Warren Gilberton in Chicago. In 1970, Paul Soldner introduced "American Style" Raku. Henceforth various potters tried firing Raku.

Like many other potters, I have discovered the contentment and enjoyment that Raku can bring to mind and spirit. I took a Raku workshop at Creative Clay Studios on December 6, 2008. This type of firing is my favorite. It is reduction firing requiring both experience and constant vigilance. Once fired, Raku pieces should be removed from the kiln and placed in a metal can filled with sawdust or shredded newspaper to allow the reduction to proceed. Like a good detective or mystery novel, there is no telling what the conclusion will be. Raku is akin to the creation of our planet, an amalgam of earth, fire and searing temperature all combining to create the potter's reward.

~ ~ *Napapan Carpenter*

- *Masters Workshop with Hank Murrow at Creative Clay*

I attended a great masters workshop with Hank Murrow at Creative Clay Studios on April 3-5 workshop. He showed a fantastic slide show of Japan, including the potteries that he visited. Hank Murrow is from Eugene, Oregon, and has fifty years of experience that he shared at the workshop. He was fortunate to study with many of the icons: Shoji Hamada, Bernard Leach, and Michael Cardew among them. Hank presented the full range of wheel work in his repertoire, including displacement trimming, soft faceting, and lots of interesting ways to efficiently 'juice up' thrown forms. He also demonstrated how to make his faceted bowls: first he throws a cylinder, trimming the foot area as much as possible leaving the upper part thicker. Next, he uses a twisted wire cutter (a modified cheese cutter), cutting straight up and leaving a pattern on the cut off sections. After that he ribs out the pot, making a wonderful pattern on the sides of the bowls as well as putting a fluted rim on the pot.

Hank also showed us how to use a twisted wire to cut a plate off the bat (displacement trimming). To keep this texture intact he uses a special roller that brings up clay from the foot and then lays it over the outside edge of the bottom creating a foot. He uses this technique on a lot of his pots in order to keep that wonderful pattern on the bottom. He was moving clay from the side of the pot to the bottom creating a beautiful foot. He discussed with us how to produce the tools that he uses as well as the many kilns that he has designed. The discussion included costs as well as how he came up with his ideas. It was a very informative weekend. He'll be in the area for a few more weeks, finishing up at Creative Clay to glaze then do a special firing in their gas kiln (he usually fires for 30 hours.)

~~ Barbara Oksanen

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*Upcoming Workshops & Events*

Also, please check our website for lists of classes and workshops in Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia. We encourage members who attend these workshops to share their experiences with us.

~~*Creative Clay Studios*

**Salt Firing with Marianne Cordyack ~ ~ April 18-21, 2009**

Participants will work as a team and become familiar with all aspects of the process. Marianne reveals glaze recipes, loading techniques and her experience with previous firings. (\$185 includes glazes and refreshments)

**Raku Workshop with Ed Bull ~ ~ April 19, 2009**

There is a base fee of \$60 for the workshop which will include a full shelf, typically 4 or 5 pieces. The price per each additional shelf is \$20.

**Horse Hair Raku ~ ~ May 3, 2009**

Bring your bisque fired pots and learn how to produce distinct pottery with horse hair and iron fuming effects. Cost of workshop will include the firing of four pieces of bisque fired pottery. (\$45/\$50)

**Sagar Firing with Ed Bull ~ ~ June 7, 2009**

In this workshop we will apply some of the techniques of Linda and Charlie Riggs. Bring three or four modestly sized pieces such as small bottles. (\$45/\$50)

**Yixing Teapots with Dave Straney ~ ~ Sunday, July 19, 2009 ~ ~ \$60**

During this hands-on workshop, Dave Straney will demonstrate how to build Yixing style teapots. Little or no experience is necessary. You will have an opportunity to see actual Yixing teapots from China as well as Dave's own creations. Participants will be invited to choose a teapot and brew their own tea. The cost includes clay for constructing your teapot, tea, snack, and drink.

**Raku Workshop with Matt Freitas ~ ~ August 8, 2009**

There is a base fee of \$60 for the workshop which will include a full shelf, typically 4 or 5 pieces. The price per each additional shelf is \$20.

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For additional information about workshops and classes at Creative Clay Studios, contact Ed Bull at 703.750.9480 or [oneibull@msn.com](mailto:oneibull@msn.com)

## ~~Manassas Clay

### Deep Relief: A Tile Workshop with Joan Gardiner ~ ~ May 16-17, 2009

Bring a picture of an animal, plant or object to learn how to sculpt it into clay and cast it by end of the day. Then on the next day, you'll open the mold and make a few tiles. We'll look at glazes, choose clay bodies and do some tests. This workshop could get you ready for your own tile project! (\$100).

For additional information about workshops and classes at Manassas Clay, call 703-330-1040.

## ~~Potters' Guild of Annapolis

### Sandi Pierantozzi Workshop ~ ~ April 4, 2009

For information on this workshop contact Anne Webber, 2966 Valley View Road, Annapolis, MD, 21401 (410-224-6922).

### Spring Sale ~ ~ May 2, 2009

This sale will take place from 10am to 2pm at the Gloria Dei Church, 461 College Parkway, Arnold, MD. See [www.pottersguildofannapolis.com](http://www.pottersguildofannapolis.com) or contact: [susanschumpert@verizon.net](mailto:susanschumpert@verizon.net) or 410-757-0077.

## ~~~~~ Employment Opportunity

The department of Art & Archaeology at Hood College in Frederick, MD, is looking for a part-time curator for the Hodson Art Gallery. They seek a candidate with an advanced degree in Art or Art History and with one or more years of related experience, or an equivalent combination of education and experience.

If you would like more information on this position, please send an email to [potters@theclayconnection.org](mailto:potters@theclayconnection.org), and a copy of the job announcement will be emailed to you.

## The Clay Connection

P.O. Box 3214  
Merrifield, VA 22116-3214  
[www.theclayconnection.org](http://www.theclayconnection.org)  
email: [potter@theclayconnection.org](mailto:potter@theclayconnection.org)

The Clay Connection is a nonprofit, self-sustaining, volunteer-run organization of potters mainly from the Washington D.C. metropolitan area. Members range from beginners to hobbyists to full time professionals who work in a broad range of styles.

The organization offers programs designed to provide its members educational and networking opportunities.

### Board Members President

Roberta Couver  
(703) 731-9808

### Vice President for Programs Vacant

### Vice President for Membership Julie Sedell

### Recording Secretary Aileen Redding

Treasurer  
Curtis Haymore

### Conference Planning Team Leader Marianne Cordyack

### Volunteer Coordinator Ann Granger

Past President  
Sheila Ford

### Hospitality Vacant

### Internet Resources Jim Dunning

### Lending Library Ed Bull

### Newsletter

Graciela Testa Lynt  
[graciela@glyntpottery.com](mailto:graciela@glyntpottery.com)

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From the President

The Clay Connection is a not-for-profit, self-sustaining, volunteer-run organization. To continue, the organization needs a more involved membership base willing to pitch in to complete the myriad tasks required to sustain a growing and diverse enterprise.

An involved membership also reduces the opportunity for unfounded rumors to spread unchecked—or at least allows timely resolution. For example, I recently heard an interesting rumor: The Clay Connection Board of Directors authorized a \$600 expenditure to the Vienna Community Center for the Fall 2008 Sale and then forfeited the fee when they cancelled the Fall Sale.

I would like to think—and I hope the membership agrees—that the Board of Directors uses sound judgment in disbursing the organization's funds, which ultimately come from the various membership, workshop, and conference fees—in other words, from the membership.

Before cancelling the Fall Show, the Board considered several factors: (1) number of show participants; (2) anticipated traffic; and (3) cost of venue. At the time, only 10 members had signed up for the show, most long after the early registration cut-off date. Postcards announcing the sale were not sent because none of the registrants were willing to step up to help organize the event. While the facility had been reserved, the use fee had not been paid. Not only did the Vienna Community Center Facility Manager not demand payment for the unused space, he allowed us to reserve the space for our 2009 Fall Sale.

This has me wondering how many other rumors are out there that need to be corrected. If you have concerns about actions taken by the Board, please let the Board know by sending an email to potters@theclayconnection.org so that we can correct any false impressions and make changes to the way we conduct business on your behalf.

~ ~ Roberta Couver

Post-fired Finishes with Pam Eisenmann

The Clay Connection is pleased to present the first workshop of 2009, featuring Pam Eisenmann. Pam, a past president of The Clay Connection, will present a workshop on "Post-fired Finishes." This refers to surfaces that are applied after firing and are an alternative to glazed ceramics, offering a way to control surfaces and effects that may not be possible with traditional ceramic processes.

Pam's demonstration will include the use of acrylic colors, metallic patinas, and sealers, as well as a discussion of other materials and methods

Pam calls her whimsical creature-oriented clay work "serious fun." Her work is an ever-evolving exploration and manipulation of clay that combines wheel and hand formed components to create fanciful, functional creature forms. Pam likes to see what develops in the exploration process and says that it's most fun when the creatures start looking back at her. Ms Eisenmann has approached her work from a humorous and quirky viewpoint, and is currently exploring creatures on wheels. She has over 35 years of working in clay as a student, teacher, art center manager, and studio artist, and currently maintains a studio at Manassas Clay where she also sells her work.

This workshop is offered free of charge to members of The Clay Connection. It is open to non-members as space allows for a nominal fee of \$10. For planning purposes, please RSVP to potters@theclayconnection.org or by calling Grace Lynt at 703-768-0956. Driving directions to the venue are at the Clay Connection website or at www.creativeclaypottery.com/directions.htm



Sunday, April 26, 2009
1 to 3 pm
Creative Clay Studios
5704-E General Washington Drive
Alexandria, Virginia 22312