

POTTER'S PAGES

Volume 6 · Issue 3 · 2006

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Dan Christoffel and Randy Brodnax

ALL FIRED UP CONFERENCE SIZZLES IN LONG ISLAND, NY

Gina Mars, All Fired Up Conference Coordinator

Approximately 130 people attended "All Fired Up," the alternative-firing workshop in Garden City, New York, July 6–9. The weather was absolutely perfect and those involved had a blast. Opening night at Adelphi University's ballroom was inviting with people mingling, meeting the presenters and enjoying food and drink. Conference host, Gina Mars, gave a heartfelt introduction, introduced the presenters and welcomed everyone to the event.

Friday was filled with excitement. Sessions started with demonstrations on the potter's wheel by Steven Branfman, Randy Brodnax, Don Ellis, Harvey Sadow and Gina Mars. Posey Bacopoulos demonstrated her handbuilt functional pieces and Linda Keleigh worked on her burnished pieces, which were later barrel fired. Mitch Lyons did some wonderful printmaking on clay. Dan Christoffel created a bust of Randy while he told many great stories. Mel Jacobson worked with a captive audience and left everyone wanting more. Bill Shillalies made horsehair-fired pots and created incredible double-walled vessels. Steven Hill worked his magic with B-Mix extending his session well into the afternoon to everyone's delight. In the evening, everyone headed over to see Professor Gene Hecht give a talk on George Ohr and visit the galleries, which displayed work by all the presenters.

Saturday everything started to heat up with the raku kilns firing and the soda kiln going all day. Linda did her barrel firings, and Don and Randy fired with ferric chloride and copper matt. Throughout the day, Gina fired all the participant's raku pieces with an impressive pit crew of volunteers. After a steamy time around the kilns, pizzas were ordered and enjoyed as we listened to live jazz music by the John Ray Band. The bowl exchange was also a big hit with presenters and participants waiting in anticipation to choose a bowl. Cindy Gatto from The Mudpit in Brooklyn, NY had potters fighting over her beautiful opaque porcelain bowl.

Continued on page 10...



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

GIVE THANKS

GREGG LINDSLEY, POTTERS COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Raku pioneer Hal Riegger was laid to rest in his family cemetery in Perry, New York a few weeks ago at age 92. Hal became interested in raku after reading a description from a magazine article published in the early 40s of how it was done in Japan. After a disastrous, and according to Hal, hilarious first try, he soon found the proper method to achieve the results he had read about.

Such was the genesis of a lifelong exploration of raku. Hal's journey in this life also involved a deep love of the railroad, and from this love sprang several books about locomotives. Hal became as well known for his love of locomotives as for his love of raku.

He was a fundamentalist when it came to raku. By this I mean that he believed very strongly that the only way to do "true" raku was the way it was practiced in Japan. All other forms were fake and dishonest. To say he did not like the form of raku prevalent in America today would be an understatement.

Hal had a very interesting childhood, one that would color the way he taught and thought about raku, and the way he lived his life. Having lost both parents early in life, his uncle sent him to study at the School for Organic Education in Fairhope, Alabama, which was a precursor to both the Montessori and Waldorf schools. The students there were allowed to do what they wanted, when they wanted to. If they never set foot in a classroom, so be it! The idea was to let the child find what they were meant to do. Hal started building kilns all over the grounds of the school and firing everything he could get his hands on. From this grew his experimental nature, which served him well at Ohio University, Alfred, and throughout his teaching career. One other experience affected him deeply; he was a conscientious objector in WWII.

Hal's funeral was sparsely attended, which disappointed me tremendously. Here was a man being put to rest whose life has affected everyone who has practiced raku in America, who was honored and remembered at the last by a scant few. This is life, however, and life will go on. My point here is that there is a large group of potters who started working in the 40s and 50s who pioneered the path we tread today. There were no ceramic supply stores and very little literature on how to make ware. These were the people who, by the seat of their pants, created what we have to work with today.

I was lucky enough to have been able to say thanks and "good-bye old friend" to Hal before he died. My friend Jon Williams recently reconnected with his teacher Al Johnsen, who had a profound effect on his career. Jon was extremely thankful that he had a chance to thank him and so was Al. I urge you to take a few minutes to contact anyone and everyone who had a large influence on your ceramic career, and thank them for the hard work put into helping you get to where you are today. It's a great feeling. ■

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It is with great pleasure that I welcome Wayne Seidl to the Pottery Council Board of Directors. Wayne will be a fine and vocal addition to our group, and I know will serve the members of the Pottery Council with distinction.

The official newsletter of The Pottery Council of The American Ceramic Society

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POTTERS COUNCIL CONFERENCE IN... INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA



The “Clay Expressions” Conference (September 14–16) at the University of Indianapolis will showcase eight accomplished artists from around the country, and their use of clay, glazes, underglazes and overglazes. Besides the exposure to great technical knowledge and artistic talent, participants will also see how top-quality glazes, clay, kilns and potter’s wheels are designed and engineered while visiting AMACO’s manufacturing facility. Each participant will be given the opportunity for hands-on experimentation with any of the AMACO/BRENT wheels and clay bodies they choose, and will receive sets of Velvet Underglaze Colors and GDC Majolica Colors.

Dee Schaad will demonstrate construction of his large whimsical figures using white clay slabs, hand modeling with emphasis on texture, and enhancing figures with underglazes and glazes. Steve Howell will discuss traditional majolica decorating, and offer his own perspective on decorating on white and black glazes. Randy Schmidt will focus on pottery and sculpture by highlighting techniques, tips, recipes, and the best tools to use. Paul Wandless will introduce image transfer techniques including monoprinting and plaster slabs, stenciling, stamping, embossing, and relief printing. Ron Korczynski’s focus will be on underglaze applicators and brushwork to produce very intricate and colorful images. Melisa Cadell will demonstrate monotype print processes on wet slabs. Rimas Vis Girda will illustrate basic silk-screen printing (serigraphy) techniques using direct emulsion with user-friendly processes applicable to home or studio.

The celebrated keynote speaker, Richard Zakin, has taught ceramics at College at Oswego, SUNY, since 1967. He published a number of articles and books, the latest being the very informative second edition of *Electric Kiln Ceramics*. He’ll be available for signing books.

AMACO/Brent Contemporary Clay Gallery will host the Clay Expressions show for Potters Council and featured guests on September 8–27 in Indianapolis.

For more information regarding this conference, please contact Danielle McIntosh, marketing manager, Potters Council, 614 794-5827; dmcintosh@ceramics.org.

Danielle McIntosh

MARK YOUR CALENDARS AND START PLANNING FOR THE FOLLOWING UPCOMING CONFERENCES

2006 CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

PATE DE VERRE

*Glass Casting for Potters and Sculptors • In conjunction with Flat Rock Studios
Fayetteville, AR • November 2–5, 2006*

Demonstrations at the Pate de Verre Conference will include model making in wax and clay, the making of refractory molds, charging (filling) molds with glass, and also information on firing schedules, annealing, glass finishing and polishing.

For more information, contact Danielle McIntosh at dmcintosh@ceramics.org.

A FINE LINE WORKSHOP

Hosted by the Berkeley Potters Guild • Berkeley, CA • January 2007

The Berkeley Arts Guild is happy to present Robin Hopper, Lana Wilson, Chris Gustin, Sarah Gregory, Margaret Grisz, Willie Hulce, Gary Holt and Rikki Gill to kick off the 2007 Potters Council Regional Conference Series.

While all of the details have not yet been decided, we do know that Robin Hopper will be our keynote speaker and give a talk about his new book. He will incorporate a slide presentation into his talk. Chris Gustin is a noted sculptor who throws and alters his very large, beautiful works; you might have seen him as an exhibitor during NCECA in Baltimore. Lana Wilson is internationally known and liked for her incredible work and personality. Gary Holt does superb work with rare earth colorants. Sarah, Willie, Margaret and Rikki are Guild members, and their work can be seen on www.berkeleypotters.com. There is a great deal to see and experience in Berkeley such as the theater, music and galleries. We are planning a walking tour of the Ceramic Arts district, and the city has helped to designate the walk with banners and visits to other studios. In addition, Berkeley is a wonderful restaurant town. We hope to have fabulous weather in January to welcome all of our guests to the area.

For more information, contact Rikki Gill at rikigil@cwnet.com.

CLAYSCAPES II

*Presented by Mother Earth Clay Art Center • Sunnyvale, CA • April 2007
For more information, contact Abby O'Connell at abbyo@mamasclay.com.*

CONTEMPORARY CASTINGS: DISTINCT OPINIONS

*A Plaster Symposium and Gallery Show • Richmond, VA • October 4–6, 2007
Sponsored by Campbell's Ceramics, The Potters Council, University of Richmond, and Virginia Commonwealth University's Art Department*

“Contemporary Castings: Distinct Opinions” is a plaster symposium composed of two parts. A gallery show is scheduled to open during the first week of October 2007 at the University of Richmond's, Lora Robins Gallery. This exhibition was designed to introduce guests not only the variety of conceptual works being produced in the United States, but also to illustrate the complexity and versatility of plaster. The three-day workshop is designed to demystify the fine craft of mold making. Guests will watch as artists build objects with moist clay that will then be cast in plaster. Visitors will leave armed with the knowledge and confidence to build, cast and reproduce their own objects. One of the symposium participants, Richard Notkin, was recently quoted as saying “This is the first plaster, slip-casting, press-molding symposium designed for contemporary ceramic artists that I have been aware of in my 38 years as a ceramic artist.” The symposium is open to the public and a detailed itinerary will be available soon.

For more information, contact Scott Meredith at scottm@claysupply.com.

HOST A REGIONAL CONFERENCE

How exciting would it be to host a conference built around a theme that truly gets you energized? Gather your own community of associates and fellow potters in one setting to share techniques and presentations that one would be hard pressed to find any other place. Sounds great! A conference in your area, highlighting your expertise! The best part is that you'll have help putting it together. That's right, you'll have plenty of help from the Potters Council staff to organize your event.

If the idea of hosting a conference interests you, please let us know! We welcome your submissions.

If you have more questions, please feel free to contact Danielle McIntosh at (614) 794-5827, or you may submit your proposal to dmcintosh@ceramics.org. ■

POTTERS COUNCIL WORKSHOP STAUNTON, VIRGINIA

NAN ROTHWELL, POTTERS COUNCIL BOARD MEMBER AND CONFERENCE HEAD



Bill van Gilder

As the name predicted, “The English Connection” was all about connection. I was already aware of the strong influences that the British studio pottery movement has wielded in the US, and I knew that the six presenters shared a common training. But I was unaware of how deeply interwoven our lives had been over the years, both personally and professionally.

Five of us (Silvia Dales, Micki Schloessing, Bill van Gilder, Toff Milway and I) studied in the Harrow studio pottery course 1970–72. Dan Finnegan learned to pot shortly thereafter at Winchcombe, working with Toff. Since that time, Silvia has worked with me here in Virginia, as well as with Micki in her pottery. Toff and Bill worked in Africa together; Bill and Dan shared a kiln; Dan and Toff have helped build each others’ kilns; Dan and I have shown pots in several locations together—the list of inter-connections was so extensive, we were all surprised by it.

After a preliminary session when those connections came to light, we broke into a series of demonstrations. Working in pairs, one American and one Brit in each studio, we threw and finished pots. Toff described it as “pottery four hands.” I really enjoyed that format, as we could watch and learn and comment on what our co-presenter was doing. For those watching, it was proof that there is not one right way to do things. Over the years, each of us has evolved visual and technical solutions that work for our pots.

This case study in variation also extends to our work situations. Some of us work in large rural setups, and thus have access to salt and wood fire, while others are constrained by small-scale urban situations. The conference drove home the point, both in theory and practice, that a potter’s end products need not be limited by physical setup.

One of the conference attendees described her reactions in a note to ClayArt, saying she was fascinated to hear about our training, and then see the similarities and differences in the way we work today. We still use similar throwing and finishing techniques and share a commitment to quality functional ware. But despite a faint family resemblance, our work has evolved into distinct and unique styles. ■



Dan Finnegan



Micki Schloessing



Toff Milway

Photos by Vicki Kirby

The conference concluded with a discussion about making a life in clay. We talked about the economic realities of potting, and how each of us has managed to keep working in clay. Harrow and Winchcombe trained us to produce an affordable line of work, but the six of us have each departed from that strict model. As I saw from the lively group discussion between presenters and conference attendees, this is a conversation our community needs to continue.

If you are interested in helping me put together a 2007 conference, please get in touch! info@NanRothwellPottery.com; 434-263-4023.



Nan Rothwell



Silvia Dales

From Mud to Music By Barry Hall

This exciting book is truly a unique blend of ceramics and music at its best. The only one of its kind, *From Mud to Music* is about the remarkable transformation of how the simplest of materials—clay or mud—can be used to make tools for producing one of the most complex human expressions—music. It describes not only the history of each type of ceramic instrument, but also provides the most complete survey of ceramic artists and their instruments today, including several step-by-step projects for creating your own. Filled with over 440 color photographs and illustrations, this book also includes a mesmeric CD of music performed by talented musicians on well-crafted ceramic instruments. *From Mud to Music* is the perfect blend of ceramics and music and is a must for anyone who enjoys the best of these two art forms.

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2006 EVENTS/EXHIBITIONS

CALIFORNIA, ENCINITAS

Fall workshops at Revival Tileworks. September 21–25 “Architectural Ceramics.” This workshop will cover freeform and modular construction techniques, history and background, pressing, extruding, slabs, design, design transfer, measuring, clay bodies, firing, glazing, and installation, plus visits to some notable examples of architectural ceramics in San Diego. Students will complete group projects such as a door surround, column or arch. Fee: \$500; limit of 10 participants. October 12–17 “Tilemaking,” includes how to make field and decorative tile. This workshop will cover clay bodies, tile techniques and methods: pressing, extruding, modeling, relief tile, design and design transfer, drying, firing, glazing, and installation. Students will make their own relief tile and mold. Fee: \$500; limit of 10 participants. Instructor/session: Stephani Stephenson. For more info, see www.revivaltileworks.com; (760) 730-9141.

CALIFORNIA, LANCASTER

August 5–9. Architectural ceramics workshop with Mary Harper. Fee: \$575. Bed and breakfast for 4 students available for additional fee. Call Mary for details (661) 547-4319 or (661) 951-1445.

CALIFORNIA, SAN FRANCISCO

Janet Starr, a tilemaker specializing in Arts & Crafts inspired designs, will be participating in Arts & Crafts San Francisco on August 12–13 at the Concourse Exhibition Center on 8th & Brannon. You can see Janet’s work at www.craftsmantiles.com.

COLORADO, CARBONDALE

August 25–27 “Let’s Salt—Thrown, Altered & Assembled Forms” with Blair Meerfeld. \$250. Contact Lauren Kearns, director, 135 Main St., Carbondale CO 81623; www.carbondaleclay.org; (970) 963-2529; fax (970) 963-4492.

CONNECTICUT, CANTON

July 29 and/or August 26 “Crystalline Glazes,” throwing, assembling, glazing and firing. Fee: \$225. August 7–11 “The Five Days of Fire,” glaze and fire for naborigama wood and salt kiln, gas reduction kiln, raku, saggar, pit, sawdust and more. Fee: \$485. August 19–20 “Form & Contrast, Porcelain & Stoneware” with Tom O’Malley. Fee: \$225. “August 22 “Fearless Electric Firings,” programming, firing, loading, wiring, maintenance and ventilation. Fee: \$110. Instructor (unless noted above): Tim Scull. Contact Canton Clay Works, 150 Cherry Brook Rd., Canton 06019; www.cantonclayworks.com; (860) 693-1000

MINNESOTA, MINNEAPOLIS

“Tiles of the Northern Plains: Building on Tradition” is being presented by the Handmade Tile Association and the Tile Heritage Foundation in Minneapolis, September 13–17. The focus of the conference will be on the remarkable achievements of local tilemakers and mosaic artists as well as the historical traditions that have nurtured this development. There will be tours, both guided and self-guided; presentations by noted tile historians; studio demonstrations and workshops in which participants will get a firsthand view of all the goings on; and exhibitions—at least two planned at this time—that will feature contemporary tile work and its historical predecessors.

NEW YORK, DIX HILLS

Through August 13 “Patterns in Clay,” juried exhibition in conjunction with “All Fired Up” Potters Council Conference (July 8–August 13). Art League of Long Island, 107 E. Deer Park Rd., Dix Hills 11746; e-mail ruth@ruthsachs.us; see www.artleagueli.org; (631) 462-5400.

NORTH CAROLINA, WENTWORTH

September 30–October 1, 2006 Hands-on weekend workshop on colored clay and murrini building at Rockingham Community College in Wentworth, North Carolina with Chris Campbell. Participants will learn to mix colored clays, re-mix for color blends and finally to create patterns for murrinis. Each participant should be able to leave with at least one finished murrini and a supply of colored porcelain. Knowing how to use colored clays is useful for any type of potter as it gives you one more tool to add to your pot making and decorating skills. Fee: \$75; Carolina Clay Guild members, \$55. Contact Molly Lithgo, Carolina Clay Guild, PO Box 5656, Greensboro, NC 27435; www.carolinaclayguild.com; (336) 275-1202. Wentworth is about 25 miles North of Greensboro.

TEXAS, HOUSTON

Through July 31 “Traditions,” ceramics by Michael Unger and Wendis Easter Eggs by Susan Giguere Unger. Houston Potters’ Guild Shop and Gallery, 2433 Rice Blvd., Houston 77005; www.houstonpotters.com; (713) 528-7687.

WASHINGTON, MT. VERNON

October 27–28, 2006 The Cascade Clay Artists group of Washington State is sponsoring a Paul Lewing workshop. The presentation will be on Glazes and Glaze Software. As Paul says, “this is for anyone who can’t tell a futon from a proton.” Lewing’s work is well known and he is publishing a book soon. The workshop will be held at Skagit Valley College in Mt Vernon, Washington. Fee: \$75. For more info, e-mail June Gouran junegouran37@msn.com; (360) 299-0700.

MEXICO, MEXICO CITY

David Alberto Zimbrón solo exhibition August 16–31 at Alfredo Ramos Martinez Gallery, 202 Francisco Sosa St., Barrio de Santa Catarina, Delegación Coyoacán, Mexico City 04000. www.centrodeinvestigacionplastica.com.mx.

ALL FIRED UP CONFERENCE SIZZLES IN LONG ISLAND, NY

GINA MARS, ALL FIRED UP CONFERENCE COORDINATOR



Posey Bacopoulos



Steven Branfman



Continued...

Things wrapped up early Sunday morning with goodbyes, smiles and laughter. People came away from this conference with an enormous amount of information while sharing ideas with each other and meeting new people. Getting up close and personal with all these fantastic potters is something we will all remember for a lifetime.

Special thanks to Laguna Clay Company via West Ceramic Supply of New York, Ceramic Supply of New York and New Jersey, and Canton Clayworks, Canton, CT for their conference donations, which made this event a huge success. ■



Don Ellis



Randy Brodnax



Gina Mars



Steven Hill

GET TO KNOW A MEMBER

DIANN SCHINDLER

Follow Your Passion!

It all began with my enrolling in the local community college. I needed a challenge. I had been knitting, croqueting and sewing. Yards of fabric and skeins of yarn were piled high in my basement; however, I was eager for something new: College. Besides, tuition was \$10 a credit hour and I could afford that!

I became passionate about education. Four years later, I graduated from Oberlin College with a degree in English, eager to teach high school. Three months later, I was a high school teacher, attending classes in the evening to earn my Master's. Later, I was hired as an instructor at the very community college where I had been a student 3 years earlier!

A doctorate degree and 15 years later, I was a college president. Education was indeed my passion and I had reached my goal. A few more years and I met and married a college president, giving up my position for love! I was passionate about my husband and looked forward to assisting him with his presidency.

This move landed me in south Jersey without much prospect for finding work in higher education. I consulted but there was little passion. I felt like I needed a challenge once again. My husband's college started a clay program and he encouraged me to take a class. I followed his advice and, after all these years of focusing on my career in education, found that I had some artistic ability. What a pleasant surprise!

When Ken and I took people out to dinner as part of our role as president and wife, I gave them pottery. At first I thought that was rather presumptuous of me, but I found each couple really enjoyed receiving a glazed vessel. Word got around and clearly it was expected that I give a piece of my art each time. I was happy to share. Those couples began requesting additional pieces and were happy to pay for them. I was even asked to donate pieces for silent auctions at charity events. I was honored.

One day, out of the blue, Mel, the owner of one of the finest furniture stores, called to say he was opening a shop in the arts district of a nearby town and asked if he could sell my work in the shop. That was 2 years ago and my work is selling fast and furiously in that shop, and in other local shops and galleries. I built a beautiful art studio where I continue to follow my passion creating pottery and sculpture.

I've come full circle. It all started with college and I'm back in college earning a degree in art.

Manipulating clay into anything, functional or nonfunctional, is my passion. It is what I must do. Ceramics has a hold of me; I do not have hold of it. I may start with a definite idea; however, it nearly always transforms itself into something pleasantly surprising. And, it is the doing of this art, not so much the outcome, that feeds my soul. I'm fortunate to have been able to follow all of my passions.

Diann Schindler, Ph.D.
Amelia Island, Florida

CONTRIBUTE

It's FREE! Advertise a workshop or exhibition, share ideas, suggestions or comments. Get involved and submit your information today! Member participation is key to the success of *Potter's Pages*. Please send information to ratirchild@ceramics.org and share your news with 3000 members.

Deadline for the next Potter's Pages is October 13, 2006.

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