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Letters

This column is for CM readers who have something to say—be it quip, query, comment or advice. All items sent in must be signed; names will be withheld on request. Send letters to: The Editor, Ceramics Monthly, 4175 N. High St., Columbus 14, Ohio.

COLD AND HOT FOR ECKHARDT
# I am not at all pleased with my recent copies of your magazine. They tend too much to instruct only children without any attempt to display the true or the beautiful.
In sculpture, if you can call it that, your Miss Eckhardt is a primitive and this kind of art may be all right for children, but during the last few years I have looked in vain for something more mature.
Why can't you show some animal figurines modeled, molded, and cast? I mean animals that could be identified and not distorted caricatures. Unless something like this comes along I am not going to subscribe to your magazine any longer.

ROBERT H. ROCKWELL
Exmore, Va.

# . . . I especially enjoyed “A Chat with Eckhardt—” in the September issue. I am a beginner in this fascinating art and I read everything I can on the subject. Miss Eckhardt’s article is very enlightening. I am sure there are others like myself who will refer to this article over and over . . .

MRS. O. L. ADAMS
Wellington, Ohio

LIKES TWO NEW SERIES
# I just could not let this month end without telling you that September 1959 is your finest issue. I miss the July and August numbers and September is doubly appreciated; but let me assure you that that is not the reason I find this issue to be superior. One look at the cover—the words Kiln-Formed Glass and Lively Art of Earthenware and I knew this was special. How long I have waited for the earthenware series and although this is really only the “kick-off”—the promise of much information to come is there. I know that Kay Kinney is one of the pioneers in forming glass—once again you made an excellent choice.

There is much I do not know about publishing, but this I am sure of: you are very particular about the person chosen to write your articles and those articles must be top quality . . .

MRS. G. B. HODGES JR.
Williamsport, Pa.

SHARING IDEAS ON GLASS
# . . . I’m having a lot of fun with kiln glass. Thank you for telling about it. I enclose a small sample decorated with ceramic colors and Japanese brush painting. The latter technique has good possibilities, it seems to me.
I am also experimenting with high-fire glass colors for convexing. This gives wider range than ceramic materials. Also, I use some finger painting methods for decorating as you can see in the enclosed photo.
Thanks again . . . Merry Christmas!

HENRY BOLLMAN
East Gloucester, Mass.

HOBBYIST GIVES APPRECIATION
# The home hobbyist needs a magazine such as CERAMICS MONTHLY to keep up with new ideas. Even if one doesn’t try everything, it does combat the staleness and that well-known rut that’s so easy when one works alone. Even a trip to the studios is more interesting; you know what you want and ask for it.
I do think it is fine to cater to the advanced ceramist, but please don’t forget us “time-killer,” try-to-do-it and sometimes-proud hobbyists . . .

MRS. GLENN PADESKIE
Davenport, Iowa

---

TEACHERS....

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CERAMICS MONTHLY
Conducted by the CM Technical Staff

Q Is a special plaster needed for making molds for ceramics or will patching plaster work alright?—E.B., Seattle, Wash.

Always use pottery-grade plaster. This is made especially for ceramic molds and will give best results. It is very fine grained, free from impurities, more standardized and thus will give consistently good molds. It costs about the same and is readily available at most ceramic supply shops. Builders' plaster can give hard and soft spots as well as rough surfaces and should not be used, except perhaps for small press molds.

Q I am planning to make tiles approximately four inches square and about one-half inch thick for countertops. Can you give me suggestions on casting so that I will have durable tiles that are easy to make?—Mrs. G. M. W., Hockessin, Del.

I would suggest you pour them in a solid mold (not a drain mold). A red clay fired to vitrification will be very durable and will not even require glaze. A good stoneware slip will also be adequate. A high-fire glaze will withstand wear best—say cone 4-5 and above. —K.S.

Q Is it safe to serve food in homemade plates that have been decorated with an "art" glaze? I am worrying about the possibility of lead poisoning.—V.O., Tifton, Ga.

Many low-fire glazes contain free lead which, of course, can be harmful if eaten. If acid-containing foods, such as citrus fruits, juices, rhubarb, etc., are served in these containers they... Continued on Page 11
**Where to Show**

**Indiana, Greencastle**
November 15—December 5
First DePauw Ceramic Show; DePauw Art Center. Open to residents and former residents of Indiana; may submit one to six pieces. Jury; prizes; sales. Fee: $2 each person. Deadline for entry blanks and work, November 4. For entry blanks and details, contact: Richard Peeler, Art Instructor, DePauw University.

**Ohio, Youngstown**
January 1—31, 1960

**Special for Hobbyists**

**Florida, Orlando**
November 5—8
Central Florida Ceramic Show, at the Orlando Garden Club. Open to residents of Florida. Awards; jury. Deadline for entries: November 3. For details, write: Bertha Davis, Show Chairman, P.O. Box 11011, Coconut Station, Orlando.

**Louisiana, New Orleans**
November 21—22
Tri-State Ceramic Show; sponsored by New Orleans Department of Recreation, at Lyons Center. Open to residents of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Florida, who are amateur or hobby ceramists. Fees: 25 cents each entry; Nativity or other sets, $1. Delivery date: November 20. Jury; awards. For details, write: Jay Handelman, Department of Recreation, Civic Center, New Orleans 12.

**New York, White Plains**
November 6—13
Westchester Arts and Crafts Guild 29th Annual Exchange, at County Center. Open to residents of Westchester County. Media include crafts. Fee: $5 membership dues. Jury; prizes. Work due: November 5. For details, contact: Charlotte E. Kizer, County Center, White Plains.

**Ohio, Columbus**
November 5—26

**Illinois, Charleston**
November 8—29
"Midwest Designer-Craftsmen," Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition, Civic Center, Charleston.

**California, Los Angeles**
November 14—December 6
"British Artist-Craftsmen," Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition; at Art Department, University of California.

**Where to Go**

**New York, New York**
December 4—31
Second Annual Show; Art Directions Gallery, 654 Avenue of Americas. Media: Painting, sculpture, ceramic and other crafts. Sale of ceramic-craft juror, David Campbell, President American Craftsmen's Council. No entry fee. Handling charge, $5 for accepted work only. Purchases; two-man show awards. Work due November 21. For prospectus, write: Gallery, 545 Ave. of Americas, N.Y. 11.
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Glaze Combinations

#1 Two coats #103 Rusty Brown
  Two coats #105 Coral
#2 Two coats #103 Rusty Brown
  Two coats Spill base
  Two coats #105 Canary
#3 Two coats #103 Rusty Brown
  Two coats Spill base
  Two coats #142 Waikiki Blue
#4 Two coats #102 Black
  Two coats Spill base
  Two coats #105 Canary
#5 Two coats #102 Black
  Two coats Spill base
  Two coats #141 Orange
#6 Two coats #105 Canary
  Two coats Spill base
  Two coats #117 Streaked Amethyst
#7 Two coats #111 Camellia Pink
  Two coats Spill base
  Two coats #201 Matt Gun Metal
#8 Two coats #114 Gray
  Two coats Spill base
  Two coats Camellia Pink
#9 Two coats #108 Chartreuse
  Two coats Spill base
  Two coats #104 Tropic Green
#10 Two coats #139 Cyclamen
  Two coats Spill base
  Two coats #105 Canary
#11 Two coats #139 Cyclamen
  Two coats Spill base
  Two coats Blue
#12 Two coats #141 Orange
  Two coats Spill base
  Two coats #201 Matt Gun Metal
#13 Two coats #222 Pewter Gray
  Two coats Spill base
  Two coats #203 Birdseye
#14 Two coats #213 Italian Antique
  Two coats Spill base
  Two coats #226 Inca Gold
#15 Two coats #207 Gumwood
  Two coats Spill base
  Two coats #120 Emerald Green
#16 Two coats #120 Emerald Green
  Two coats Spill base
  Two coats #103 Rusty Brown
#17 Two coats #103 Rusty Brown
  Two coats Spill base
  Two coats #210 Jade
#18 Two coats #103 Rusty Brown
  Two coats Spill base
  Two coats Satin #12 Magnolia Green
#19 Two coats #103 Rusty Brown
  Two coats Spill base
  Two coats #141 Orange
#20 Two coats #134 Golden Amber
  One coat Spill base
  One coat #101 Imperial Ruby
#21 Two coats #134 Golden Amber
  One coat Spill base
  One coat #110 Coral
#22 Two coats #134 Golden Amber
  One coat Spill base
  One coat #137 Orchid
#23 Two coats #134 Golden Amber
  One coat Spill base
  One coat #142 Waikiki Blue
#24 Two coats #134 Golden Amber
  One coat Spill base
  One coat #209 Obsidian
#25 Two coats #142 Waikiki Blue
  One coat Spill base
  One coat #103 Rusty Brown
#26 Two coats #142 Waikiki Blue
  One coat Spill base
  One coat #108 Chartreuse
#27 Two coats #117 Streaked Amethyst
  One coat Spill base
  One coat #141 Orange
#28 Two coats #107 Dark Oak
  One coat Spill base
  One coat #123 Myrtle Green
#29 Two coats #141 Orange
  One coat Spill base
  One coat #102 Black
#30 Two coats #141 Orange
  One coat Spill base
  One coat #233 Autumn Glory

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NOVEMBER, 1959
CM's Pic of the Month: This stoneware tea set with sgraffito decoration is by Jim and Nan McKinnell, Deerfield, Mass. It was one of the top attractions at the Univ. of Illinois spring exhibit, "American Craftsman—1969," devoted to 12 husband-and-wife teams. Both McKinnells received ceramic degrees at the University of Washington (Seattle). They have studied and taught, both here and abroad, and have been producing pottery for 11 years. In 1957, they moved to New England where they now maintain their studio. Operating as a team, each does all phases of forming, decorating, firing. Their work is wheel thrown; they use five wheels—two electric and three kick—each having its own special application.
Answers to Questions
Continued from Page 7

can attack the glaze, dissolving some of the lead, and thus entering the human system.

Write to the manufacturer to see if the specific glaze you are concerned with contains lead. If so, I would avoid the type of acid foods mentioned or not use the plates for any food.

Q Can you tell me how to make glass pieces in my kiln? Mine flows together and bubbles and never gives a smooth finish. G.J., Abilene, Tex.

It sounds as though you are firing the glass much too high. The trick is to fire the glass only enough to allow it to sag into the mold. This is tricky because the actual time and temperature will vary for different kinds of glass and for different makes of kilns. For full details on how to arrive at the best firing procedure, see the detailed article by Kay Kinney in the September issue of CM.

Q Every once in awhile after dipping my bisque pieces in clear glaze one or two of them will come out of the kiln with several small craters. Can you tell me why?—P.C., New Haven, Conn.

These craters are generally called pinholes. Usually it indicates that the glaze was not allowed to heal sufficiently in the kiln.

During firing, a glaze will "boil and bubble" as the materials melt and give off gases. As it approaches maturity, however, it should be fluid enough to heal over and become a smooth-surfaced glass. Either the glaze is too viscous at its maturing temperature or you are slightly underfiring the glaze or not allowing it to soak sufficiently at its final temperature.

Trouble-shooting by remote control is tricky at best, but I would think that your best solution would be to try soaking

Continued on Page 13
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December 7—28

PENNSYLVANIA, PHILADELPHIA
November 9—December 31
Christmas Crafts Exhibition, The Philadelphia Art Alliance, 251 South 18th Street.

TENNESSEE, MEMPHIS
November 15—December 13
"Fulbright Designers," Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition, Brooks Memorial Art Gallery.

WISCONSIN, MILWAUKEE
through November 15
The 1959 Wisconsin Designer-Craftsmen 39th Annual Crafts Exhibition, at the Milwaukee Art Center. Display includes glass and ceramics.
Answers to Questions
Continued from Page 11

the glaze as long as possible at its final temperature. This would
mean slowing down your firing so that the final cone will bend
at a very slow, even rate. Instead of turning off the kiln com-
pletely, switch back to medium for approximately a half hour
so that the glaze will soak at its final temperature without over-
firing. Some ceramists cover the top of the kiln with asbestos
insulation so that the heat will be retained longer and the kiln
will cool more slowly giving a smoother glazed surface.

Pinholed pieces do not necessarily have to be thrown away.
You can rub the pinholes with an abrasive stone, dab on some
more glaze and refire.

In your copper enameling handbook, one of the projects
mentions the use of squeegee oil. What is this and where can
it be obtained?—Mrs. W. A., Huntington, N.Y.

Squeegee oil is a commercial product available from most
enameling suppliers. If you have trouble locating it in your
own city, drop us a note and we will be glad to steer you to
several companies that handle it.

Why do I get fine hair-line cracks in transparent enamels?
Repeated firing doesn’t seem to help, as the cracks vanish in
the kiln but reappear after awhile.—R. K. C., Trenton, N.J.

Some transparents absolutely require a transparent counter
enamel (the enamel coating on the back of the piece) or they
will crack. This is caused by a difference in the expansion and
contraction between different kinds of enamels. So if you are
having trouble, use a transparent counter enamel on pieces
that will have transparent enamels on the face.—K. B.

All subscriber inquiries are given individual attention at CM; and
out of the many received, those of general interest are selected
for answer in this column. Direct your inquiries to the Questions
Editor; please enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope.

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NOVEMBER, 1959
OF AMERICAN PottERS

by GEORGE BEZANSON

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When I began this series of articles on famous contemporary potters, I knew that eventually I should have to come to the craftsmen of the United States.

It is fashionable to criticize the Americans in almost every respect. It has become a wearisome institution to regard everything they do as crass commercialism—devoid of sensitivity. It is almost socially obligatory to accept the benefits of their tremendous energy without thanks.

On the subject of pottery, I confess that I find this general deprecating attitude a little tiring, if not downright ridiculous. If the "Parvenu" were to convey their knowledge of American ceramics solely from that bag of stock cliches—"plebian .... artless" etc., I would be no less inclined to laugh than were they to exclaim: "pale face speak with forked tongue".

The artificially sophisticated view of American production, at whatever level, is a sort of flood of stereotypy. From the studios of American artist-potters has come a flood to be sure, a veritable deluge of all that is most beautiful in contemporary ceramics.

Quite hollow are the moulings and aesthetic cant of the "crass commercialism" crowd. The Scandinavians, for all the reverence their work evokes, have not the singular resourcefulness of the American potter. On the one hand the Scandinavian potter is largely supported by industry subsidy, a luxurious existence contrasted to the American potter who has wrested his craft from pioneering hardships, and marketed it through individual effort.

The venerable Bernard Leach has in the past stated that American potters unfortunately have no traditional roots. This would be a genuine criticism to the British, so steeped in

Continued on Page 34
Stilts for Jewelry

Stilting small pieces such as earrings and small costume pins can be a headache, but here is an easy method that we recommend to all our friends: Take a very small portion of regular ceramic modeling clay and roll it into a bead about the size of a small spring pea. Put this tiny bead of moist clay in place on the kiln shelf. Now, put the glazed earring button on the clay bead and press lightly. This will hold the piece off the kiln shelf during firing. After the kiln is fired, the little clay bead will either drop off or if the glaze has stuck, a flick of a fingernail should loosen it. Stilting earrings this way has the added advantage of creating a small glaze-free area on the back where the earring back can be glued. Try it; it has been a timesaver for us!

—Conrad Wilson, Chipita Park, Colo.

Doctor’s Light for Close Work

A doctor who was getting rid of some surplus equipment gave me something that has proved extremely useful for cloisonne enamelwork and other techniques where good light is essential. It is a light attached to a leather headband—the sort worn by ear, nose and throat doctors when you say “aaaah—.” It’s wonderful the way the light is directed on the work.

—Laura K. Popenoe, Washington, D.C.

Avoid Distortion while Applying Handles

When making cups, I invariably push them all out of shape when putting the handle on. I resolved this problem as follows. I glaze and fire another cup of the same size or slightly smaller, that has no handle. I place this inside the leather-hard cup before trying to attach the handle and it acts as a firm support and prevents distortion.

Usually you can use a cup of the same size because it will shrink enough during drying and firing to fit inside the greenware cup.

—Mrs. Alfred Klein, Scarsdale, N.Y.

Easy Way to Wax Feet

Often I find on getting ready to spray bisque ware, that I have forgotten to wax-resist the foot to keep it free of glaze. To avoid a delay while the water-soluble wax is drying I started waxing the foot as I take the warm ware from the kiln.

Two ways are possible: 1) I take a small candle or taper such as are used in churches and run it around the warm foot. It fits at once to the foot and will not slip. Also I can notch the candle and make the waxed area as wide as I wish. 2) If I have no candle handy, I use the large-size crayons of any color. The color burns out leaving a slight whitish residue which is rather a good finish for the bare clay. If this is undesirable, it can easily be removed by the humble wire pan cleaner.

—Jeannette R. Moore, Rochester, N.Y.

Hint for Glazing

I find that a “Long Finger,” the kind used for removing pickles or olives from tall jars, is very useful in dip glazing very small pieces. It also is very convenient for holding them when brushing on glaze. The fingers may be found in the housewares section of department stores.

—Mary R. Perrey, Baltimore, Md.

Dollars for your Thoughts

CM pays $1 to $5 for each item used in this column. Send your bright ideas to Ceramics Monthly, 4175 N. High St., Columbus 14, Ohio. Sorry, but we can’t acknowledge or return unused items.
THERE IS an exciting technique of firing pottery which produces very different, beautiful glazes. The results vary. They may be copper and silver lusters, all shades of copper reds, copper reds with designs in the glaze, variegated smoky grays, glazes with incised crackle and many other effects—depending on your imagination, ingenuity, and diligence. The firing technique is important—the temperature can vary from cone 10 to as low as cone 04.

I stumbled upon this idea once long ago while trying to produce a copper-red reduction glaze at cone 04. The kiln I was using was a broken-down, round, china-decorating gas kiln. The glazed pottery had been fired to cone 04, but being curious and impatient I opened the door of the kiln to peep inside to see the beautiful copper red. All I saw was a weak green color. Being determined to get some sort of result, I decided to smoke the kiln more and reheat the pottery in a reduction atmosphere to see if this would help, since there was nothing to lose.

The poor old kiln did not have a damper, so to make the kiln smoke I had to go outside the studio, up a ladder to the roof, put an enamel pan over the chimney, then climb down to see how the kiln smoked. Then back up on the roof to open the chimney a bit, then back down to look at the smoke and flame! Black soot was everywhere. I opened the kiln door to look at the pots again, while the kiln smoked and I learned something new in the hard way. When the reducing kiln door was opened and I stuck my head into the kiln that was robbed of oxygen, in rushed fresh air that ignited with a swoosh of flame, soot, and heat. For weeks, I had no eyelashes or eyebrows, and a peculiarly uneven haircut with a singed smell that seemed never to leave.

Since then, during firing I always open the damper of a kiln before I open the door!!

Anyway, after becoming exhausted climbing up on the roof to adjust the pan on the chimney and rushing down to the kiln to adjust the flame for what seemed hours and hours, the effort was rewarded. On opening the kiln door there was a most wondrous effect. One pot was covered with a lustrous copper color. What could be done to retain it or preserve it? The heat remaining in the cooling kiln might destroy the glaze color.

I put on asbestos gloves, wrapped my arms with old pieces of cloth, took a blacksmith's tongs and reached into the hot kiln and removed the copper-colored pot. The copper luster remained to confound all who gazed upon it. The pot was not much, but the glaze promised much future excitement and adventure.

With a better kiln and hundreds of tests and many changes in firing techniques, the process has been simplified and improved and most important is always rewarding. This is the how-to-do-it process I have worked out.

**HOW TO DO IT**

For a glaze, use Ferro frit number 3134 or O. Hommel frit number 26. To this, add 1% copper carbonate for color. Add gum and a suspension agent such as Epsom salts, add water and mix the glaze twice through an 80- or 100-mesh screen to mix it. The glaze is now ready for application.

Apply the glaze to a bisque pot. Fire it in an oxidizing kiln to any temperature from cone 04 to cone 10. Better results are produced if the glaze is fired to cone 5 or higher. This may seem like a mistake to many potters, but it works. The glaze will fire well over this wide range. Of course, the proper clay body must be used for the temperature at which the glaze is fired. [A cone 04 body for a cone 04 glaze firing, a stoneware or porcelain body for a cone 5 to 10...](Continued on Page 36)
Nativity
IN CLAY
by ALICE LASHER

Slab Sculpture makes the Creche an Adaptable Project for the Schoolroom. At Home, It's Ideal as a Family Activity. Full details on the following pages.
THE CRECHE, of course, is the major expression of the birthday celebration called Christmas. The stable at Bethlehem with the Infant Jesus, Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, the oxen and asses, the adoring shepherds and Magi have all been presented in Christmas displays in many different ways.

Clay is my favorite material for creating a Nativity scene for the mantle above my fireplace. And slab building is the method I used for making the figures pictured here. This could be a family project—each member of the family being given a figure or two to make. To be most successful, however, design ideas should be pooled and one design theme selected for the whole group to use to hold the project together in size, shape, and general design. Once the approach is worked out, each member can make his own figures. (This is what is known as “togetherness.”)

Clay and slab construction have good possibilities as a classroom project, too. A class of 30 or 40 students, for example, could be broken into groups of six or seven, each making its own Nativity set. Or, they could do one huge project—an extensive Nativity scene including lots of animals, shepherds, and such. Here, too, it would be an interesting group project to arrive at a common design. Perhaps a “juried show” of sketches or models would bring out the best from the group.

FOR HELPFUL ideas on designing the various members of the Nativity scene, I went to several Christmas picture books for children. Here I found many large detailed drawings and I received more inspiration than I needed.

I roughly sketched out the standing figures and decided that I would build them all in an identical manner to make things simple. By changing the dress in a couple of instances and using different decorations and accessories, each figure could take on its own personality. (Mary and the Christ Child were to be built individually.)

Clay slabs are for me the easiest to work with. Unlike balls of clay or other solid building methods, hollowing out isn’t necessary since the figures will be hollow to begin with. I decided on cone-shaped figures to which I would add heads, clothing, and other details for individuality. I decided on a buff clay (cone 04) to which about 20 per cent grog had been added.

I like to work with patterns and I decided that only two were necessary; one for the cone-shaped body and another for the sleeves of the robes.

1. I rolled out the clay to the desired thickness, using a small rolling pin and two sticks of wood as thickness guides. The patterns were set in place and cut around with a very sharp knife. Here you see the body being cut out and at the left the pattern for the sleeves. I am working on a piece of cotton sheeting so that the cut-out shapes will be easier to handle.

2. I don’t remove the cut shape but instead reach under the sheeting and fold the clay into a cone. This is the easiest way to handle the slab and shape the cone.

3. I gently pinch the clay to form a tight seam. Brushing thick slip along the edge before welding the two sides together might be a good idea to help prevent cracks when the piece dries.

4. When the cone has been neatly shaped and is stiff enough to stand without sagging, I roll a small ball of clay in my palms and with a dab of slip fasten it to the flattened top of the cone. This will be the head. Other shapes to be added are shown on the tile at the left. These include the beard, a crown, the hair and other features. The large shapes are the flowing sleeves of the robe.

5. The various pieces are attached with slip and firmly thumbed into place so they won’t break off during drying and shrinking. Here the facial features are put in with a modeling tool.

THE MOTHER MARY and her Babe in the Manger is a bit of clay work any child (or adult) would love to do. This manger is three inches long; the posts, two inches high.
AS EASY to do as they appear in these pictures are these first three steps. Once you have your patterns made and get the cones cut out and made, you're well on your way to the real-fun stage. Making the cone shape with the clay still on the cloth is a neat trick; it makes easy handling of the thin slab of clay. Now the cone-shaped body is set aside to stiffen a bit.

THE FIGURE begins to go together in Steps 4 and 5. Carving adds decorative touches, but it is all kept quite simple in design and clean of line. In the sixth picture, the man begins to look like somebody as final touches are added to his beard. His robe is yet to be given some decorative detail around the sleeves and bottom.
Christmas sculpture brings together the Magi and the shepherds to join in the Nativity scene.

6. All of the necessary features have been added and textures and decorations are scratched and pressed in.

As I mentioned, all of the standing figures were made in the same way. You can see close-up views of all of them in the various photos on these pages.

The figures of Mary and the Christ Child were modeled from pieces in much the same way.

All the pieces were dried very slowly. First, they were wrapped in plastic bags, so the moisture content throughout would become equalized. After a day or two, they were placed in a warm draft-free corner until thoroughly dried. The grog in the clay will help the sculptures dry without danger; however, since so many small pieces were added, you can't be too careful. The pieces were then fired without glazing or further decoration. The plain clay, either buff or red, is more satisfying for these humble figures. Very dull matte glazes could be used on portions of the sculptures; however, avoid gaudy decoration.

THESE SHAPES are quite easy to make. The sizes of the figures could be something between four to eight inches tall. (Mine are a shade taller than six inches.) With figures less than four inches, you would find pinching or carving from the solid lump of clay more practical. Figures taller than eight inches would present problems in sagging and drying.

After one or two are made, the rest will come rapidly. And, since there is no glazing or decorating, one firing takes care of the whole project.

For family projects, you may even decide to make a variety of these Nativity sets to give as family gifts.
OUR WISE MAN, at the right, is in profile showing the flare of his sleeve and how simple the decoration.

THE SHEPHERDS in their simple garb come with hope on their faces; one brings a lamb, the others carry their working staffs.

THE WISE MEN, or Magi—priests from ancient Persia—are dressed more elaborately and carry gifts. They had been expecting a Savior; so when they saw the Star, they came prepared. This idea is conveyed with the accessories in their hands and the extra decoration on their robes.
The Lively Art of Earthenware
by Karl Martz

"Memo from Rome—3rd Century"

With the contemporary appreciation of texture and surface quality in the materials used in our homes, I feel that an overlooked effect is the simple ceramic finish so successfully used by the potters of the Roman Empire: Terra Sigillata.

The sharply molded metallic-looking relief on the Arretine type of ware is evidence that it was a cut-price imitation of costlier silver vessels; but, nevertheless, surviving repaired pots show that it was valuable enough to be worth riveting together. Most inspiring to me, however, are the freely decorated wheel-thrown cups, bowls and beakers made in Gaul, Britain and the Rhineland. The forms are sometimes a bit awkward but the deep, crisp incising or the spirited slip trailing are, at their best, done with a sure vigor that points the way for an exciting contemporary use of this ancient technique.

Terra sigillata is a hair-thin surface coating of ultra-refined clay. It is refined by gravity—letting the larger particles settle out of a thin slip until only the very finest particles remain in suspension. These extremely minute particles melt at a slightly lower temperature than do the larger particles constituting the bulk of the parent clay, thereby yielding a denser more vitreous surface, with a sheen reminiscent of waxed wood. Being so thin, all the detail and freshness of the clay texture comes through clearly.

My version of this Roman technique is made from a local red-burning shale obtained from a plant producing common field tile. To prepare two or three quarts of terra sigillata slip, I start with ten pounds of clay and ten pounds (or pints) of water. This is deflocculated by adding two tablespoons of ordinary drugstore waterglass. The thin, watery slip is blunged vigorously with an electric mixer for about thirty minutes.

The shale, as it comes from the tile plant, has been ground to pass only an 11-mesh screen. It contains coarse sand and rock fragments which settle out almost instantly when the mixer blade stops. The rest of it takes longer and although I am habitually impatient to start testing it, I find that the slip must settle for at least 24 hours before satisfactory results can be expected.

After 24 hours practically all of the clay has settled, filling the lower two thirds of the container. The upper third holds a water-thin slip. This has enough clay suspended in it to be opaque and at the very top is a little clearish water, usually not over a half inch. All of this thin slip is poured off. With this particular clay the sediment settles so firmly that it remains undisturbed during the pouring. If the sediment is not this firm a siphon will quietly remove the slip.

You will have to experiment with available clays and find the exact process best suited to the clay you select. I find that with less deflocculant the sediment does not drop so quickly nor pack so firmly and there is much more clear water at the top. Since clays vary so much it is impossible to give specific instructions applicable to all cases.

You have observed that undeflocculated clay tends to settle as a fairly uniform mass leaving clear water on top. Deflocculation helps to suspend the slip if the clay is thick enough. In a slip with excess water, as this one is, deflocculation suspends only the finest particles, letting the larger ones sink.

The right amount of deflocculant can be determined only by the way the clay reacts. By trial and error, determine the amount of deflocculant which gives a watery, opaque suspension with a minimum of clear water on top and a distinctively separated sediment on the bottom. Then you can be reasonably sure that only the finest particles remain in the suspension. These are the ones you want.

Before application, the slip is screened through 100 mesh to remove bits of straw, dried grass and other floating impurities. When it is agitated, characteristic shimmering swirls appear, very similar to the swirls that appear in aluminum paint when it is stirred.

I usually apply this terra sigillata slip to a dry piece by brushing or by dipping if the piece is small. Other methods can be used. There is so little clay in the slip that at least three leisurely dips are minimum to produce a good surface. The specific gravity of the slip at this consistency is roughly 1.05.

As the slip ages the settling continues at a slower rate. After a week there will be perhaps a half inch of very smooth textured sediment in the bottom of a gallon jar. I sometimes use this as an undercoating to produce a smoother surface. To do this, pour off all the liquid except an amount equal to the sediment which is re-suspended by working it through the fingers. One or two brushed coats of this concentrated slip topped with one or two coats of the original slip (the very finest particles) produces an effect similar to the appearance of aluminum paint.

Continued on Page 37
IT'S SUCH JOY to trim a Christmas tree! I cannot imagine one single person who does not love to do it, just for the love of it and the spirit that comes over you, year after year, after year. We can invent no end of ornaments to decorate a tree; and, for some reason or other, we never have enough of them.

Enamel, with its color and luster, is fine for Christmas ornaments. So I will try to inspire you to start a collection of tree ornaments to which new pieces may be added every season. I will make them easy to do, with not too much work, but they are just basic ideas. If you really develop them, they can become little treasures.

Tree ornaments have a habit of turning around and around on their strings. Even if we prevent that by attaching them to the tree with wire, they still show both sides. Nothing else to do, but to make tree ornaments attractive from every angle. A simple suggestion: A strip of copper bent to a U like sugar tongs; a hole drilled through in the center of the curve to lace a string through. The string, of course, is added after we have enameled the U-shaped piece of copper as colorfully and interestingly as we can.

This is only the "A B C" of the U; certainly we can embellish it with a lot of tricks. We can bend to a U the double-shape of a fish, or an angel, or Santa Claus, or an abstraction, or whatever comes to mind. We can make it more and more three dimensional. I just want to give you ideas or technical hints, and no specific designs, to make you create for yourself. Sometimes people send pieces that they have done after reading this column. It pleases me no end to see how different their pieces are from what I had ever done with the same method—this only by the way! These U-shaped objects, without the hole in the head that is not needed in this case, can be used standing up as figurines or as bases for candlesticks or whatnot. That for the U-shape!

A sunburst star for the top of your tree can easily be made if you take a cork ball or solid rubber ball and stick in wires so that the wires go in all directions. One wire should be longer to be tied to the treetop. The other wires get their ends curled to a loop. On these loops, with jump rings, we can hang assorted earring blanks, enameled of course with whatever we like. This star will look charming any which way.

Strips of copper, with the sharp corners rounded out and a hole drilled on each end of the strip, can be bent to any shape so that the ends meet like a bracelet and hang on a tree. It is good to decide on a design and make a trial-run from wire. Then stretch out the wire to arrive at the correct length for the strip to cut.

To enamel these shapes on both sides faultlessly demands some practice. If they are dipped in slush and then decorated with our regular enamel techniques, we have no problem covering the copper. Everything comes out well that starts well.

In the case of tree ornaments, there is nothing to say against pasting on bits of rhinestones and mirror or anything that glitters and catches the light. In my opinion everything is allowed that gives you pleasure and makes your tree a joy to look at, even if it is not correct for a "purist's" enamel.

Have fun and a very happy Christmas to all of you!
MULTI-PIECE ornaments (connected with nichrome wire) are especially appealing. On these, glass gold was applied over the entire surface and the pieces fired to 022. The wires and covering jewels were glued in place (the gold was first erased at these points) then a design in liquid glass colors was painted on. During retiring, the gold disappears where the colors were applied giving beautiful color effects.

TREE ORNAMENTS of glass certainly isn't a new idea. But glass decorations, that you have made yourself to brighten the home at Yuletide, might very well be something new.

Working with glass is fun and making Christmas decorations is an excellent way to practice. The whole purpose is to create colorful items, so you needn't worry about specific shapes, decorations, etc. Anything that will catch the light and glimmer and shimmer will be in good company on your tree.

In the first two articles in this series [September, October] we covered firing techniques and glass cutting methods. The new procedure to learn with respect to hanging ornaments is how to make the hanging mechanism. There are two ways: Embed a loop of fine wire in the glass; or drill a tiny hole at one end.

HOW TO DRILL A HOLE

An ordinary manually operated hand drill with a spade drill-bit is best for making a small hole in glass. A power drill is not recommended as it is harder to control and can easily shatter the glass.

A small scratched mark made by twisting the pointed end of a file will help keep the drill bit in place so that you can get started at the exact spot that you have selected for the hole. Be sure you have an adequate mar-

SIMPLEST TECHNIQUE is to cut interesting shapes from single-strength glass (so they'll be light in weight) and paint on easy-to-do geometric designs. On these—gold designs were fired on one side. Then the pieces were turned over, the wire set in place and designs in glass colors painted on the other side. The transparent glass allows the two decorations to "intermingle."

BEJEWELED pieces—glimmering and shimmering in the light—are the most colorful, and are fun to make. Small squares and irregular shapes are glued in place in a pattern paying attention to color, too. They are not allowed to touch. During firing, they melt into domed shapes and fuse to the base glass. The two pieces at the right are free-form shapes of lavender-colored glass with gold decorations.
from GLASS

gin of glass surrounding the area for the hole.

Hold the piece of glass firmly in place by using a wooden jig or by clamping it to a padded surface. Adhesive foam rubber fixed to the inner jaw of the clamp will ease the pressure and help prevent cracking of the glass.

A lubricant, usually a half-and-half mixture of kerosene and light oil, will keep the bit cool and make drilling easier. Only a drop on the drill bit after it is in position is required.

The drill is held vertically and turned as fast as possible. If the resulting ground glass is dry and white, add another drop of lubricant. Very little pressure is needed; usually the weight of the drill is sufficient.

As soon as the glass is pierced, stop drilling and turn the glass over and complete the hole from the other side. This will prevent the under side from chipping out.

If holes are drilled before firing, make a paste of whiting and water and pack the hole so that it will not seal shut in the kiln.

**WIRE LOOPS FOR HANGING**

Fine wire permanently embedded in the glass is a trickier method for providing a hanger. The wire cannot simply be laid on the glass surface with the hope that it will embed itself sufficiently to hold. It must be sandwiched between two layers of glass (laminated) to hold sufficiently. For ornaments of this type, the method is simple.

Make a loop of wire; set it in place with a dab of glue so that it will remain where you want it, and then set a small glass jewel on top also held in place with a dot of glue. In the kiln, the jewel and the base glass will soften and fuse together and the wire loop will be tightly entrapped in the middle.

The glue I mention is a commercial paper glue called Wilhold Glue. You may find other glues to work, but this is the best I have found as it fires out in the kiln without discoloring the glass or leaving a residue. Not all other glues are so accommodating.

The covering jewel can be any kind of glass. Jewels are made by taking any small pieces of scrap glass (ranging from a quarter-inch to a half-inch square) and firing them just enough so that they melt and form a nicely rounded ball. Of course, they will have one flat side—the side that was resting on the kiln shelf. A generous amount of whiting on the kiln shelf, incidentally, will help prevent the jewel from sticking.

*Pre-fired* jewels are needed if the covering glass is made from a harder glass (such as bottle glass) than the base glass. Obviously they would not be able to melt into

Continued on Page 33

**BRUSH STROKES** are featured on these ornaments but they were made exactly the same way as the simple pieces shown at the far left. A gold decoration was fired on one side and wire and colors on the other. Overglaze colors, although generally used at lower temperatures, work well on glass at the approximate cone 014 that is required.
QUICK AND EASY decorations are foremost in our minds, this time of year. Every ceramic hobbyist (who is proud of his work) wants to make his own gifts; but we must all be careful that we don't become involved in long, tedious processes. Time and impatience won't permit it.

So we look for simple techniques: decorating methods that can be done very quickly but don't look skimpy or hurried. More often than not we find that some of the very simple, direct decorating methods give a more interesting decoration than most of the long drawn-out approaches—a spontaneous freshness and vitality instead of the all-too-common painful, tedious look.

The sponge shapes demonstrated here are particularly fine as motifs for children. Their simplicity is something a child understands and loves. Just dip a soft medium-size sponge into underglaze color, and half the decorating job is done. One caution, however; it is easy to dab on too-thick a layer which can flake off in the kiln. It's well to have the underglaze thinned down and be sure the sponge is well dampened with water before dipping into the underglaze. Also make sure the greenware has been freshly cleaned and is quite damp. Don't dab on too many coatings or the interesting sponge texture will disappear.

Outlining in a dark color completes the motif. Don't try to outline the exact shape neatly—keep it spontaneous and free. Also avoid too much detail. After bisque firing, the pieces shown here were glazed and refired.

The teddy bears are only one motif possible with the sponge. Any furry or feathered animal can be portrayed this way. You might even try "the gingerbread boy."

Plates and tumbler sets, like the one shown here, will be cherished by any little boy or girl. Particularly if you personalize them with a greeting on the top or underside. •

In this series of articles, no specific brand of underglaze is either suggested or implied. The nationally advertised brands are highly competitive in quality and price. Mr. Bellaire's advice is to use those brands you feel give you the best results.

THE TECHNIQUE, as you can see, involves dabbing on a rough shape with a sponge dipped in underglaze color. Then outline and put in details in black with the liner brush.

YOU'LL be surprised how many pieces you can make without having any two come out exactly alike. Each will have its own personality.
A FANTASY VILLAGE

from greenware by Phyllis Cusick

FANTASY VILLAGE has a dream quality in keeping with Christmas sugarplum fairies, Santa’s workshop elves, and all the rest of the holiday-inspired sprites.

Only three molds were used: A cone and two sizes of balls. By limiting the forms, unnecessary cuteness is avoided and elaboration is by brush strokes only. If a variety of forms were used, the eye would be confused by a riot of shapes and color.

STEP 1. Cast eight cones in various heights. (Note photo above.) While cones are in a leather-hard stage, cut out heart-shaped areas, leaving one end attached, and gently pull away from cone to simulate branches of a tree. Remove two branches entirely. In these holes, we place small birds or tree animals. Do not clean branches; the roughness simulates pine needles. After drying, coat branches with a white foamy glaze and fire to cone 06.

STEP 2. Apply a flat green color to entire tree, wiping excess from white tree branches. The line work is done in black in a scroll-whirlygig type of decoration. Bows, zigzags, curves and dots cover the entire tree, accenting the branches. Gold is used for highlights. Paint birds or animals and attach to holes provided for them.

STEP 3. Cast three large balls and two medium-size balls. Flatten bases immediately after removing from molds. Place two large balls together firmly with slip, and two medium-size balls, and leave one large ball for a single house. Cut a hole and insert an L-shaped clay coil for a chimney. Carve lines for doors and windows, and apply foamy-white glaze to chimneys and housetops. Fire to cone 06.

STEP 4. Paint small house bright red, medium house bright yellow, and the large house turquoise. Using black, outline doors and windows. Finish curtains, doors, and other areas in brilliant colors, and accent with gold.

Continued on Page 37
HAVE YOU ever thought of making a wall plaque with either a religious or happy holiday theme for the Christmas season? Cleverly designed and brilliantly colored, it can be just that extra something that your decorating scheme needs. As a gift for a friend or relative, it would certainly be received with overwhelming enthusiasm.

The way we do it, plaques of this type are very easy to make; so don't let their impressiveness make you hesitant. Here is how we made ours.

We sketched a simple line design on a large sheet of paper the size of a commercial plaster slab. We then reversed the design and traced it through carbon paper onto the plaster slab.

Next, the plaster was soaked in a pail of water for a few seconds (wet plaster carves easier) and with round and V-shaped wood-cutting tools we carved along the carbon lines. (In the finished object, these carved lines will stand out as raised lines.) We added texture and other details until we felt the design was complete enough for casting.

A coil of clay was built up around the four sides of the slab to act as a retaining wall for the casting slip. Then the slab was very carefully leveled so that the slip would build up in an even thickness over the entire area.

A good quality casting slip was poured all over the plaster surface to a depth of approximately 3/8 inch. As soon as the slip was firm, the clay was removed from the edge. In a few minutes, the slip seemed dry enough so that it would easily come away from the mold. A plywood sheet, slightly larger than the plaster slab, was placed on top of the casting and the entire assembly turned over. The plaster slab was carefully pulled from the casting.

Cast wall plaques, with your signature, make treasured gifts...
PLAQUES

At this point, you either have a good casting or a good idea for alterations that are needed. Study the casting and see if the design stands out as it should. If not, carve some of the lines deeper, add more texture, and make whatever other corrections are needed.

This, essentially, is the procedure for making the plaster mold and the casting. We made quite a number of castings and to keep them from looking alike, we changed the plaster slab each time by carving additional features. Also it is possible to use only sections of the design, so that with these variations you can make a large number of “individualized” plaques.

The edges were trimmed and sponged and then the decorating and glazing were done. Some of the castings were glazed directly on the greenware because it was easier to scrape and sponge away mistakes. On some we made the raised lines black to resemble stained-glass windows; on others we made the lines gold or platinum.

We fired the castings by standing them on edge against the side of the kiln. We found that this method helped prevent warpage and cracking.

The finished pieces were mounted in a variety of ways. Some were glued to boards covered with linen; others on monk’s cloth; some just on shellacked and varnished boards.

(Your plaques, incidentally, don’t have to be so large. You can take small plaster slabs—you can even use the outside surfaces of old molds by scraping them clean and smooth—and use this identical procedure to make small decorative pieces for the Christmas tree.)

This has always been a favorite project of our entire family, and we are sure it will be of yours once you have tried it.

VARIATIONS ON ONE DESIGN

THESE PHOTOS by the Seeleys show one design with variations in treatment. The plaque with black lines (upper left) and mounted on polished wood gives a stained-glass-window effect.

A SILHOUETTED design (center) on a fabric-covered board achieves another interesting and decorative panel.

Just another Christmas Tree?

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by CLARK HEIPLE

KIDS LOVE clowns. And every kid knows that there are no two clowns alike. As a clay project, therefore, a clown face is a highly creative project, since each child will be absolutely determined to avoid copying and create his very own clown.

If you don't believe this, give a classroomful of kids a three-inch ball of clay each; tell them to make clown faces—and stand back! That's what we did at our summer camp and it proved to be one of the most interesting projects of the summer.

General instructions to the class include a reminder to avoid adding clay wherever possible. The children are encouraged to pinch out the entire shape so that the disappointment of stuck-on pieces of clay falling off during drying or firing can be avoided. If pieces must be added, they are "glued" together with thick slip (made by mixing some of the same clay with extra water until it has the consistency of thick cream).

When the clown face is completed, the back is hollowed out by digging with a spoon or clayworking tool. This will help the piece dry more evenly preventing cracking during drying or blowing up during firing.

Decorating is always special fun and here again you will be surprised at what the young folks can come up with. On second thought, it shouldn't be too surprising; after all, how can you go wrong with color on a clown's face?

Underglazes are fine because they will give vivid colors and will stay put—no running in the kiln. A clear glaze over all and the job is done. Another good coloring medium is the self-glazing engobe which fires at cone 06. With this material, you are essentially applying the color and the glaze at the same time. I have used this material with several groups of elementary children with very good success.

What can clown faces be used for?

Well—they don't have to be used for anything, but they do make good paperweights. If they insist on something functional, remind the youngsters that paperweights are easiest to use if they have a handle. They will get the idea immediately, and the nose will become the most obvious handle to most of them. The more adventurous will make handles out of the ears, a hat, or even the chin. Kids sure are inventive. The more I reminisce about this camp project, the more I realize that it was as much or more fun for the instructor.

TAKE ONE small ball of clay and add one small boy—and you will soon have a clown face to end all clown faces!

A SPOON makes a good digging tool to remove the clay from the back. Hollowing out gives good cracking insurance.

SIDE VIEW of the finished product shows the neat handle the nose makes so Dad can use it as a paper weight at the office.
SCULPTURE WITH BELLAIRE—IN NEBRASKA

An enthusiastic letter from Hastings, Nebraska, brought the photo below and the following information to our attention. The writer was Lole Wallenmuth, supervisor of the ceramic department of the Hastings Museum.

She wrote: “Enclosed is a picture showing the results of one day of sculpture class with Marc Bellaire! Only with such a teacher as he could eight of us who had never sculpted before start with 15 pounds of clay ... and achieve these results.”

Shown in the photo, left to right: Bellaire, Dorothy Heil, Mabel Spady, Mrs. E. C. Moranville and Nellie Jungert. Other sculptures in the photo were made by Karen Wright, Jan Keogh and Mona Mackie.

CM readers will know Marc Bellaire for his monthly article on underglaze decoration and for the CM Handbook he authored.

A NOTE FROM HOUSTON

The Texas Gulf Coast Ceramic Society, Houston, Texas, has installed new officers, as follows: president, Edgar J. Kauflmann, Jr.; vice presidents, Barney Wilborn, Mrs. Al Donaho, and Mrs. E. L. McDaniel; secretaries, Mrs. Alber White and Mrs. Fred Ham; treasurer, Mrs. Teddy Gutowski; board members: E. C. Atson, Kyle Roundtree, Mrs. Else Huckaby, Mrs. Pat Price, and Mrs. Alfred Spreen.

FULTRIGHT EXHIBITION ON TOUR

Outstanding work of more than 35 young American designers and craftsmen, who have received Fulbright Grants for study abroad, is on tour as a Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition. The “Fulbright Designers” will be in Memphis, Tenn., November 15. (See Itinerary—Where to Go—to keep posted on touring exhibits.)

This exhibit of about 150 works includes ceramics and stained glass. The selection of works for the exhibit was made by writer and critic Edgar J. Kaufmann, Jr., former director of the Museum of Modern Art’s “Good Design” project.

ARGILARTISTS ON EXHIBIT

The first ceramic exhibition of the recently formed Argilartists is on display until November 4, at the Nonagon Gallery in New York City. The Argilartists, a cooperative ceramic group, is composed of leading young ceramists on the East Coast.

Continued on Page 32
NEW!

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CeramicActivities
Continued from Page 31

The work of the Argilartists extends from pottery and sculpture to relief and enamels. Members of the group are: Fong Chow, James Grimm, Arthur Floyd, Marilyn Fox, Ka Kwong Hui, Didier Jouneaux, Mancour, Dean Mollavey, Minnie Negoro, Henry Okamoto, Stan Rosen, Jeff Schlander, and Oppi Untracht.

SECOND INLET POTTERS SHOW
The 1960 show of the Inlet Potters Association will be Alaska's second February state-ceramic show, to be held at Anchorage, Alaska's largest city.

The first show, last February 18, in the spacious lobby of the First National Bank, included 55 entries. In competition were wheel-thrown, sculptured, hand-built, and molded pieces. Cash prizes were awarded first and second winners in the four divisions. "How-to" demonstrations featured wheel-throwing during the four-day show. Available Alaskan clays and Alaskan motifs are adapted to the ceramic medium, reports Mrs. Vernon A. Johnson, president of the Inlet Potters. Shipping distances are too great to permit the use of clays from the south 48 states—shipping costs would be greater than the cost of the clay, so local potters dig and utilize a dark, gray plastic clay from a deposit south of Anchorage.

MRS. VERN JOHNSON won first in the wheel-thrown division with the jar (above) and first in sculpture with the mountain sheep. Each is 6 1/2 in. high. The jar has a speckled matte glaze.

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If your clay has a tendency to slump or sag when making tall, slim sculpture or figurines, cut a length of coat hanger and insert it through the part which needs support. Remove wire as soon as the figure is dry enough to hold the weight or else the clay will crack; then plug the hole.

—Malcolm Lewis, Billings, Montana

Recipe for Mending Cracked Bisque

There are many materials and methods for mending ware but this idea works best for me. I first apply a touch of clear glaze to give strength and then force kiln cement paste into the crack. When the cement is dry, I smooth it out and then apply glaze gum and a touch of underglaze to match the bisqued piece or to match as nearly as possible the glaze to be used.

I used this same procedure to mend a bad crack in a glazed dish, following it up with a touch of the original glaze and refinishing. I put a stilt under the cracked portion for added support. The mend was almost impossible to see.

—Priscilla Campbell, Center Ossipee, N.H.

Ornaments from Glass

Continued from Page 25

a smooth ball over the wire if merely fired to the lower temperature needed for the base glass. If soft glass (such as stained or cathedral glass) is used, it need not be jeweled in advance. Just glue a small square over the wire loop and fire it all at one time. The glass will shrink up slightly during firing, so be sure the square of glass is large enough initially or the ends of the wire loop may be exposed.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS

Any kind of scrap glass can be used for the Christmas ornaments. All margins and corners left over from previous cuttings provide an excellent source for these small projects; and many of the irregular shapes can often be used without further cutting.

No mold is required for these flat pieces, making this entire project a really simple one. The shape can depend entirely on your glass cutter.

Firing is done on a flat kiln shelf or fire brick. Since they are fired just enough to round the edges (and no bending and sagging to worry about), you can estimate the firing temperature at approximately 50° less than you would need for sagging temperature. Stained glass, being softer than window glass, should be fired at an additional 50° less.

You may want to make some extremely lightweight ornaments; if so, use picture-frame glass which is even much thinner than single-strength glass. Watch your firing temperature: The thinner the glass the less heat it will require (and the less pressure in cutting).

There are as many ways to decorate these pieces as there are people. A variety of examples are shown in the photographs and some suggestions and instructions for decorating are given in the captions.

If you haven't yet tried working with glass, this would be an excellent time—and these ornaments an excellent project—for getting started. And if you don't yet own your own kiln, this is another good reason to get one!
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SHOW TIME
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THE SEVENTH International Exhibition of Ceramic Art, sponsored by the Kiln Club, and held at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., in August and September, was held in three sections. The local show included 209 pieces from Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. Fifty invited American artists competed in a second show; and 116 works from 20 other countries formed the international show which was noncompetitive.

Three of the prize-winning pieces are shown on this page. Other prize-winners in the local show were: Martha Lorimer Fauntleroy, Florence B. Higgs, Thera E. Kahler, Annelies Kahn, Joan Orlov, Lynette Peters, and Don Turano.

Invited American Artists winners, besides Louis Raynor, were: Dale Hays, Ruth Gowdy McKinley, Alice Sperry, Leona and Frederick J. Whitteman, Irene Hamel, and Gerald Williams.

Jury members were: John Butler, Ossipee, N.H.; John Davis Hatch, Jr., director, Norfolk, Va., museum.

"BEST IN SHOW" award went to Louis Raynor, Michigan State University, for this large wheel-thrown stoneware vase. It was glazed in matte tans, browns, and greens. It also won the $25 cash award from the B. F. Drakenfeld & Company, N. Y.

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Strictly Stoneware
Continued from Page 16

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Memo from Rome

Continued from Page 22

tionally smooth surface. While it

is still damp, hand polish simply by

rubbing the piece like Aladdin's

Lamp.

Ball milling gives no better results

with this clay than the blunging

method described; however, if blung-

ing yields poor results, try milling the

slip. Clays vary widely and some

prove unsuitable for terra sigillata.

Since it is not generally considered

a watertight finish I use it on pieces

that will not be expected to hold

water for any length of time; but,

perhaps because I fire it to the rela-

tively high temperature of cone 04,

one small terra sigillata bowl held

water for three days with no apparent

dampness even under the foot rim.

This is the only piece I have tested

and it warrants no conclusions.

A slip prepared from a natural

black-firing clay (Barnard) gave a

very smooth black matte surface.

One part of this black slip mixed with two

parts of the red gave a slightly lus-

tious dark-brown surface. One per-

cent of cobalt oxide milled in with

the red clay resulted in a somewhat
darker shade of red. Other possibili-

ties would be a milled slip including

manganese or iron oxides.

Fantasy Village

Continued from Page 27

STEP 5. Pour two cones and while

hard, carve one with Santa’s features—arms, hands, hat and coat.

Apply foamy glaze to beard, mus-

tache, eyebrows, hat and coat trim-

ming. Fire to cone 06. Paint in San-

ta’s features, using bright red on coat

and hat. Finish with scrolled black

gold decorations.

STEP 6. Santa’s sleigh uses one

cone cut lengthwise as indicated in

photo. Use the cutout portions of the

cone for sleigh seat. Cut another slab

for runner and place sleigh and run-

ner together. Add decorative designs,

dry and fire to cone 06. Finish sleigh in

bright red with black and gold decorations.

Assemble your village as best suits

the setting you have for it. A fireplace

mantle, the top of a bookcase, a buffet

or dining table are all good show-off

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