

WPA PRESS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WISCONSIN POTTERY ASSOCIATION

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WPA Exhibit and Sale a Big Hit

"Excellent!" "Stunning!" "First Rate!" were just some of the adjectives overheard from the crowd of pottery lovers to describe this year's sale and exhibit. Over 1,200 people attended the Wisconsin Pottery Association's fourth annual Art Pottery Show and Sale, held in conjunction with the Ceramic Arts Collectors' Association at the Marriot Hotel in Middleton on August 28th. The number of show attendees far surpassed any previous attendance marks. Based on attendance figures, booth sales, and customer enthusiasm for the Roseville exhibit, the show was a resounding success!

The featured event was the superb exposition of over 400 pieces of Roseville pottery. Many rare early pieces, experimental examples and highly sought after patterns, such as Pine Cone and Futura, were on display. The exhibit was a hit, thanks to a lot of hard work from some key individuals. The following is just a sampling of

the individuals I'd like to thank, on behalf of the WPA, for their efforts:

Chris Swart, Dave AuClaire, Barbara Budig, and Nicol Knappen deserve special recognition for their dedicated work with the planning, organizing, and skillful display of this outstanding exhibit. In addition, Glenn Clark performed his usual fine job as show manager. Mary Clark again served much of the day at the admission table and did a great job. Elaine Staland was our hotel liaison and did a great job of keeping things running smoothly between the hotel and the WPA. Barb Huhn did a terrific job coordinating the volunteers this year. Everyone seemed to be where he or she was supposed to be.

Tim Holthaus and Jim Petzold deserve much credit for attracting another large crowd of Ceramic Arts Convention goers to their special presentations and events. Their members give the show a national following.

Additional thanks goes to the Boone's, the Knutzen's and Rose

Lindner for helping the exhibit staff put away the exhibit Saturday night. Thankfully from the reports that I've heard, all the pottery made it home safely.

The pottery identification table was new this year and seemed to be a popular spot most of the day; show goers had an opportunity to bring in a 'mystery piece' for our WPA volunteer evaluators to identify. It was estimated that 40-50 pieces were brought for identification. Audience response to this new activity was very favorable.

Norm Hass provided insightful information on art pottery fakes and reproductions at his table at the show. Norm's information was very pertinent to the Roseville exhibit.

With this year's show behind us it's good to pause and congratulate all that took part. The work of all of our WPA volunteers was much appreciated. And now the planning begins for 2000! Stay tuned – your suggestions and ideas can make the next exhibit and show even better. - *Jim Riordan, WPA President*



Pictures of an exhibition. Barb Reed entertains questions and educates viewers (left) while hundreds pass through the Roseville Exhibit (right) at the fourth annual WisconsinPottery Association Show and Sale, August 28th, 1999. The Ceramic Arts Collectors' Annual Convention was held in conjunction with the Show and Sale, adding to the throngs of pottery lovers.

**Featured WPA Member –
Barbara Budig**

Editor's Note: Each edition of the WPA Press will feature one club member. The goal of these brief interviews is to help us learn more about each other and our particular collecting interests. Barbara agreed to submit to an email "interview" :

Q: When did you join the Wisconsin Pottery Association?

BB: I became aware of the WPA in 1994 when I saw a notice for a lecture on "Red Wing Art Pottery" to be presented by Ray Reiss. I attended the meeting and first discovered the Red Wing "Nokomis" glaze, with which I fell in love. Ray's book had not yet been published and so I was able to purchase several pieces of Red Wing art pottery at "prepublication" prices (at antique malls in the next several months) before his price guide hit the streets. At the meeting I was also impressed by the atmosphere of sharing amongst the membership. People were so willing to pass on what they

knew about pottery and there was so much for me to learn! I joined the association, feeling lucky to have found such an organization.

Q: When did you start collecting? What was your "first love" in collecting?

BB: The first pottery I collected was American majolica. I loved the fanciful designs and whimsical shapes. I was also drawn to matte green-glazed pots, many of which sat unidentified on my mantelpiece until I began attending WPA meetings.

Q: Has your collecting changed and if so how? Do you enjoy collecting as much as when you started? More? Why?

BB: With education comes appreciation. Several years ago the WPA staged an exhibit of Wisconsin Art Pottery. My involvement in that exhibit gave me the opportunity to handle and view "up close and personal" many wonderful pieces of

Pauline and Norse pottery. My small collection from these potteries is what I now cherish the most and hope to expand in the future. The role these potteries played in our region's cultural history adds to their aesthetic appeal.

Q: How did you first get involved with the annual Art Pottery Show and Sale?

BB: My membership on the WPA "Education Committee" (now known as the Program Development Committee) led to my involvement with the annual educational exhibits that are part of the show and sale. This year's Roseville exhibit, which I co-chaired with Chris Swart, marked the my third year of involvement, working mainly on the physical layout, set-up and graphic elements of the exhibits – with a bit of advertising and promotional activities on the side. One year Nicol Knappen and I, as WPA officers, were invited to promote the exhibit &

sale on the local television program "Live at Five." We waited for the interview in the studio with the other invited guest – a champion watermelon speed-eater (not to be confused with a seed-spitter). A live sporting event that preceded the show was running overtime and it looked as if there would be time for only one guest. We had a sinking feeling we were not going to be chosen to appear. As it turned out, the entire show was pre-empted! But we knew that our public educational outreach efforts would need to be stepped up in order to compete with speed-eaters in the future.

Q: You have been integral to the annual fundraising effort, the Show and Sale. What do you feel are the Show's strong points?

BB: Our focus on education sets us apart. But the real strength of the show & sale and the educational exhibit is the dedication and many hours of hard work given by those WPA members who have taken on the responsibility of ensuring a high level of quality. This year's event set a new standard that will take the involvement of many more WPA members to sustain in future years. Even though our membership has grown steadily over the years, the overall number of active members has remained about the same.

Q: What areas of the annual Show and Sale need more WPA member support?

BB: The August Show & Sale is the WPA's major fundraising activity. It supports the educational programming for its mem-

bers and the general public. The preliminary planning for the August show and sale begins in September, with work beginning in earnest in January or February. There are many tasks throughout the year that provide opportunities for WPA members to become involved – mailings, promotional activities, press releases, advertising solicitation, graphic design, data entry, flyer distribution, loaning pottery for exhibit – as well as volunteer duties during the August show. Many of these tasks require only a small commitment of time.

And there are rewards; being involved with the exhibit can be a tremendous educational experience. For example, how often can one see 448 pieces of Roseville pottery, including 'experimentals' and 'trail glazes' in one room?

Q: Anything final words for the WPA membership at large?

BB: I continue to be amazed at what our group can accomplish as a volunteer organization. Our organization has a committee structure that allows and encourages participation by all members at whatever level of commitment fits their schedules and interests. Our monthly meetings are a great resource for learning about pottery in general and guidance for personal collecting. Best of all, I've made some wonderful friends and shared a lot of fun times.

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**WPA Calendar for Fall 1999**  
(All meetings held at the Shorewood Community Center)

**October 12** - John and Sandy Fiscus' presentation on **Frankoma Pottery**

**November 9** - Rose Lindner's presentation on **Century House Pottery**

**December 7** - Holiday Party!!

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Members of the Wisconsin Pottery Association and the Arts Council of Edgerton outside the Pauline Pottery factory building in Edgerton, Wisconsin, October 1998. The decorating studio was housed on the top floor of the building, with manufacturing and shipping on the lower floors. The article below describes a separate, log cabin, which was used as the pottery at one time. Photo courtesy of Nicol Knappen.

Pottery News from Wisconsin: The Pauline Pottery

In October of 1998 members of the Arts Council of Edgerton (ACE) hosted the Wisconsin Pottery Association for a tour of Edgerton, which featured landmarks of Edgerton's rich history in the pottery business. A highlight of the tour included viewing the log cabin that Pauline Jacobus used as a studio for her art pottery. The log cabin, dating back to the 1840's, was in deteriorating condition and in danger of being lost to expected development of the land. The tour also included the small pond in which the clay was collected near the building that housed the Pauline Pottery Company. Plans had been laid out for the development of this area for recreational park space and the addition of a historical/educational aspect to the project was a perfect match. It was suggested that the cabin be relocated to the

park and be the centerpoint of a historical site dedicated to the reclamation of the city's rich and important history in the pottery industry. The log cabin was generously gifted to the ACE and plans are underway to dismantle it for storage until the remainder of the park project is completed and money can be raised to rebuild the cabin in it's new location. Funds and volunteer assistance are being sought to create a historical marker for the site as well as pay for the rebuilding and maintenance of the building. Rick Petersen of the ACE is overseeing the project. ACE is interested in eventually starting a museum that will feature Pauline Pottery. Ori-anne Pagel, Member of ACE, the WPA and a prominent antiques dealer in Edgerton, along with her husband Paul, credits the people of Edgerton for their forward thinking and assistance in making the project happen. She

notes that everything that is being done has been completed on a volunteer basis but that much more is left to be done to bring the project to fruition. Yet to be developed is the possible archeological excavation of the kiln site to study the history of the pottery. Ori-anne credits the owners of the property, Al Pope and Lars Lien, for their contributions. They not only donated the cabin, but also historical information and documents related to the history of the property, and they have indicated a willingness to continue to assist with projects, such as the possible excavation of the site.

--Barbara Huhn, WPA Vice-President

About the Pauline Pottery

The Pauline Pottery business was established in Chicago in 1882. The founder of the pottery was Pauline Jacobus who originally learned her trade at the Rookwood Pottery. In 1888 the

business was moved to Edgerton, WI to be near a suitable source of white clay (early pieces were made with red clay). Pauline pottery was considered to be high quality ware, imitating designs and styles of Wedgwood and Meissen, and was sold at leading department stores, including Tiffany's in New York, Kimball's in Boston and Marshall Field's in Chicago.

The pottery closed in 1893. Following bankruptcy proceedings a new business, the Edgerton Pottery, took over the Pauline Pottery operation. The Edgerton Pottery also failed. At that time Pauline Jacobus purchased one of the six kilns, moving it to her Edgerton home. Mrs. Jacobus produced Pauline pottery and conducted summer schools in pottery art at her residence from 1902 until approximately 1909. The business finally ended in 1911 after a fire destroyed her home and studio. Pauline Jacobus died in 1930.

The two most common types of Pauline decoration are a thick slip and an outlined water-color style, both covered by glaze. The thick slip variety can be found on either white or red clay, while the water-color decorating was done on white clay. Almost all of the pieces have a very fine crazing. Some of the water-color examples appear to have started the crazing process while the glaze was still molten, creating small glaze filled valleys between plateaus. The red clay used is similar in appearance to that produced at Rookwood.

Many pieces of Pauline Pottery are unsigned. Features for identi-

fication are:

- a very fine crazing
- a cream colored clay under the glaze, an ivory clay unglazed
- outlined, water-color decorations
- gold trim
- decorations done in thick slip
- red clay for some pieces

From: *American Art Pottery* by Dick Sigafoose and *Art Pottery of the Midwest* by Marion Nelson

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**By the Way...**

Do you recall the presentation on George Ohr pottery by Richard Mohr in April? Here is an interesting tidbit found while reading about Newcomb Pottery in *American Art Pottery* by Dick Sigafoose.

A couple of the early potters hired by Newcomb College were from the old New Orleans Art Pottery, two young men by the names of Joseph Fortune Meyer and George E. Ohr. Meyer and Ohr knew each other well; they not only set-up the New Orleans Art Pottery in 1886, they had grown up together in Biloxi, Mississippi and had been employed by Meyer's father. Both men were accomplished potters who had learned their trade through apprenticeship. Ohr was fired in 1898 because he was seen as 'not fit' to instruct young ladies. This potter's firing, no pun intended, certainly fit with the "Wild PotOhr of Biloxi" reputation he earned. Ohr was thought by some to be the most talented potter and glazer ever. Meyer continued his career as the master potter at Newcomb until his retirement in 1927.

Perhaps this information is not surprising after the sorts of pieces produced by Ohr that we were introduced to last spring?!

- Kari Kenefick, editor WPA Press

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A Note from the Editor

Well, we finally have what some would say constitutes a newsletter for the WPA. Thanks for your patience during the first (one page) newsletter, and even yet while the editor learns how to be such. **Much thanks** to Nicol Knappen for his instructions and contributions, to Barbara Budig for being our first Featured Member, to Jim Riordan and Barb Huhn for their contributed pieces and help in making it to press, which would not have happened without Tim and Jim's assistance, as always!

Having said that bit about patience, I'd like to note that patience is usually, but not always a virtue. Often what happens is that in the crunch to finally get an item to press, things are overlooked. So as you read/review this issue and your brain is shrieking "Why didn't they mention___" please write it down and bring it to my/our attention at the next meeting. Or call or email myself (Kari) karken@chorus.net or 231-1549 or Barb Huhn or Jim Riordan. Tell us what that thing is that needs to make the next issue. I promise that content is far easier to alter further from than next to the Issue III deadline. Speaking of which, Issue III will be ready approximately January 2000. Contributions should please be to me by November 15.

We will continue to feature a club member or couple each issue. I also hope to feature a particular pottery each issue, hope to carry some news items and am waiting for further suggestions from you. Until next meeting, please wrap with care!

Kari Kenefick – WPA Press