

# Carolina Clay Guild News



Issue 28

October 2010

## Dear Friends and Members,

October is upon us, and Charlie Brown has recently been seen checking out the local pumpkin patches awaiting the arrival of the Great Pumpkin. Like Charlie, I can't wait for Fall to get here. The Fall Festival and holiday pottery shows are about to start. It is a busy time for all of us whether we are attending or participating in the upcoming events.

I would like to thank Takuro and Santiago from STAR works Ceramics, Star, NC for their program presentation at our August meeting. They covered the products and services that STAR works offers.

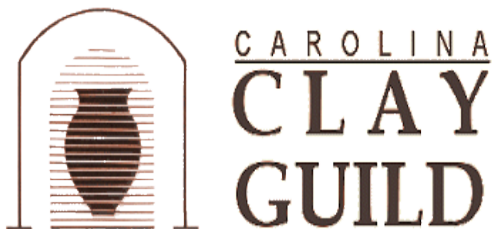
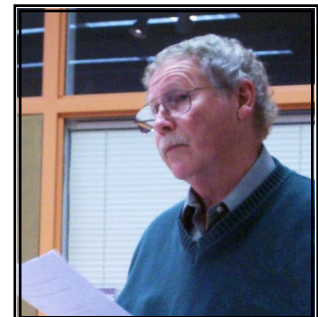
A lot of our members will be taking part in the 14<sup>th</sup> annual Triad Area Pottery Festival at the Greensboro Farmers Curb Market on October 24<sup>th</sup>. The CCG will have a booth at the show for members to sell their pots. Please contact Suzanne Cowan at; [Sue@gmdstudios.com](mailto:Sue@gmdstudios.com) if you are interested.

There will be a free workshop at the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the year on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011. We have arranged for Eck McCannless of Dover Pottery to present a workshop on crystalline and swirl ware. The workshop will be held in conjunction with our annual meeting and election of officers. The workshop will be from 10:00 am till 4:00 pm. We will conduct our business meeting and election of officers from 12:00 until 1:00. Free pizza will be provided for lunch.

Keep an eye out for a questionnaire from the workshop committee addressing the type of workshops you might want. Also, just a reminder of the upcoming meeting on October 16<sup>th</sup> at The Center for Visual Artists, 200 N Davie St, Greensboro, NC, 27401, @ 10:00 am., 'til noon. Hope to see you at the meeting.

Sincerely,

Dave Slater, CCG President



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## Other News of Interest...

The program given at the August meeting was an excellent presentation by Takuro Shibata of Star Works Ceramics. Takro and his assistant Santiago, gave a slide show of the four components of Star Works.

1. Ceramics Supply / Highwater and Local Clay
2. Clay Research and Testing
3. Clay Factory / the processing of local clay
4. Ceramics Studio / workshops

A message from Susan Kern :

Hi Friends, Family and Pottery Lovers,

I was pleased to find out that some of my pots are being highlighted on the Alamance Studio Tour Facebook page. This is the first year our county has had a studio tour and it will be held Oct 16th and 17th. If perchance you are a Facebook user, I wanted to invite you to go to the Alamance Studio Tour page and check it out. Feel free to share it if you are so inclined. If you would like to see work from other tour artists, or just want to support the effort please "like" the page and then you will get updates. I think it is going to be a good event. Thanks for your ongoing support!

Best Regards,  
Susan

Cindy Biles a current CCG member has great news to share. "Max and Gizmo" (pictured below) was accepted into the American Craft Today exhibition at The Bascom, in Highlands, NC.



Carol Sauvion, executive director of the Peabody Award winning and Emmy nominated Craft in America television series, was the juror for the show. She is also the creator and executive director of Craft in America, Inc., a nonprofit organization dedicated to presenting the history, practitioners and techniques of craft in the United States and their impact on our nation's cultural heritage. Ms. Sauvion is curator, juror and speaker at institutions such as Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian Institute, and Getty Institute.

The exhibition opens October 2 and runs until December 18, 2010

## Other News of Interest...

Carolina Clay Guild Members:

We have received information from Arts Together in Raleigh, NC regarding their eighth annual Gift Gallery. This event showcases the talents of local artists and provides them with an opportunity to sell their wares. This event will run December 4 & 5, 2009 and is a holiday fundraiser for Arts Together. Application deadline is October 19.

If this event is of interest to you, please reply to the email below and I'll get the application and detailed information to you.

Carolina Clay Guild Officers  
dsells@triad.rr.com



Thank you to the old Salem Potter for his demonstration in press molds.

## *Random thoughts on Pricing and Making a Living*

*By : Ellen Currans*

While recently looking at Clay art postings, I found the following comments posted by Ellen Currans, an Oregon potter who was the Newsletter Editor for the Oregon Potters Association for 15 years. She has a strong desire to share information's and has graciously agreed to allow her posting to be a part of our newsletter. Grab a cup of coffee from your favorite mug and enjoy the following:

Debbie Sells

Just my opinion and it applies only to functional pottery I know very little about ceramic art or sculpture.

Pricing is local. The same mug by the same potter can be sold for more money in some places than it can in others: big, more sophisticated cities versus small towns; college connected, long running craft fairs versus Saturday markets; in a highly regarded gallery versus your own back yard sale.

Work by a well known potter will sell for more than very similar work by new potters. It takes time to be known and for your work to have a following. Mugs sell themselves once you have learned how to make a good one that people love and simply must have for every cup of coffee, even when it is in the dishwasher.

Selling well has a lot to do with making pots people want to buy. (Just think about that for awhile.) In tough times they have to REALLY want to buy, and usually they want something they need or can really use, or that lifts their spirits in some indefinable way. You are not obligated to price your work to support the prices other potters may be asking. If you are a beginner your work probably isn't worth the higher price anyway. Perhaps their \$40 mugs aren't worth \$40 either. Be a bit humble in pricing at the beginning and raise your prices as your work justifies it. It is really hard to lower prices on the same work when the public has become accustomed to certain price points. Earlier purchasers will feel cheated, and others will wonder why you are underselling your own work.

Making lots of (well thought out) pots and selling them is the key to making better and better pots. There is nothing wrong with selling beginning work to people who want to buy it. We do not live in a society that supports us while we break up everything we make for years and years. Keep working on your skills so that you become the potter who can easily make many pots efficiently and quickly..., rather than just the few we all hover over as beginners. Very few potters make big money or become famous, but many have managed to make a good life. Expect to live carefully and frugally. Appreciate spouses, partners, friends and family who support what you are doing. Learn as much as you can from those with skills to teach you because the more you can do for yourself the less money you will need to pay out for services.

continued >

Older potters are not looking down on beginners when they give advice about making your own clay and glazes, or learning to weld. They are sharing with you hard won information that has made it possible for them to succeed. We are all free to go about our clay life as we wish. Make our own or buy glazes, stop for a \$3.50 latte every morning or make leaf tea, dig our own clay or never recycle ready made. It is our choice. We get to choose the parts we like and ignore the rest, and perhaps we succeed..... or not.

Potting part time does not mean you are not a serious or good potter. Starting late in life does not mean you are not a serious or good potter. Using low fire glazes in an electric kiln does not mean you are not a serious or good potter. The size and beauty of your studio (closet, garage, where ever you work) does not mean you are a good or poor potter--we all start where we can. Firing in the more esoteric kilns or having your work in the magazines does not necessarily mean you are a serious or good potter, nor do the degrees behind your name. Eventually, the work speaks for itself.

Most of us have missed some part of the necessary education for being a potter. Hopefully, not as badly as the art teacher Logan has been asked to help. It is up to us to learn what we need to know to succeed. I am appalled at how many potters do not bother to read books or magazines and keep them around to refer back to. The wealth of information available to us is mind boggling. All the glazes and techniques and firing schedules and tools to make are available in abundance. Skip a few high priced workshops and buy books. The more you know about the craft the better able you will be to survive tough times. Many good potters, who were setting the rules for show or guild entries some years back, are now doing something else because they could not adapt their way of working or selling to make enough money to live on.

Ellen Currans

Working in clay for over 50 years through all the stages of novice, part-time, workshop junkie, wheel in the kitchen corner, lugging pots and kids to fairs for many years, easing my studio into a bigger and better space from time to time, selling comfortably and then selling all I can make, and now trying to scale back my work to adjust to some kind of semi-retirement at 77. But not quitting. There is always something new to learn.

Additional comments from Ellen:

My husband too, was a full time partner in our pottery, and I might have added to my post, that I think it is probably very difficult for a single potter to do all the various work necessary to make a living in pottery. The best solution is when two partners or spouses with the same goals, share the work load. In our case, Tom makes and pugs my clay, mixes large batches of glaze, loads and unloads the bisque kiln, unloads and sands pots from the gas kiln, and maintains all the mechanical and electrical equipment. He also built our house (unfinished) and our studio and showroom, which is where we spend most of our time anyway. I get to do all the creative actual clay work and test glazes. He has never been interested in actually making anything out of clay, but always right in there loading up the truck, building a new shelf or fixing a quirky tool. We have been fortunate to make our living from pottery for the past 35 years, and I think our kids were fortunate too, to have us both at home while they were in their teen years.

# Carolina Clay Guild August 2010 Minutes

Date : August 14, 2010  
Location: Visual Arts Center,  
Greensboro, NC

*Hospitality Chair:* Pat Shurr,  
[patschurr@triad.rr.com](mailto:patschurr@triad.rr.com)

Please let Pat know of any members in need.

President Dave Slater called the meeting to order at 10am.

Minutes were read from the last meeting.

Debbie sells read the treasurer's report; our current balance is \$5,983.56

Susan O'Leary reported for the Nomination Committee. The following individuals have agreed to be nominated for the coming year:

President / Dave Slater

Vice President / Debbie Sells

Treasurer / Lorie Price w/ Barbara McGinnis assisting

Newsletter / Elizabeth Baird

Workshop Committee / Pat Harden, Ann Lynch, and Beverly Fox

Programs / Suzanne Cowan (looking for an assistant)

Secretary / need someone

Publicity / need someone

Membership Committee / need someone

## Carolina Clay Guild Meeting - 2010 Schedule

Join us @ the Center for Visual Artists,  
200 North Davie St.  
Greensboro, NC 27401  
10am - noon on Saturday

Oct. 16th

Meeting Schedule for next year (2011)

January 15

March 12

May 14

August 13

October 15

A question was asked if the Guild was going to contribute to the advertising for the Fall Pottery Festival at the Farmer's Market again this year. Dave reported that the Board decided not to continue to make that donation as it was going away from the Guild's main focus of education.

## CCG Newsletter Staff

### **Editor**

Elizabeth Baird

### **Associate Editors**

David Slater

### **Contributing Writers**

David Slater

Debbie Sells

Pat Shurr

### **Photography**

Ann Pearman



**PO Box 5656  
Greensboro, NC 27435**

Please visit us at:  
[www.carolinaclayguild.com](http://www.carolinaclayguild.com)

**To:**

## **Carolina Clay Guild Officers**

**President**  
David Slater

**Vice-President**  
Pat Schurr

**Secretary**  
Kelly Willard

**Treasurer**  
Debbie Sells

**Assistant Treasurer**  
Barbara MacInnes

**Workshops**  
Pat Harden  
Molly Lithgo  
Jane Ralston

## **Carolina Clay Guild Membership Form**

Membership fees are due annually and cover the calendar year  
January-December.

\_\_\_\_\_ Individual \$20.00  
\_\_\_\_\_ Individual and Spouse \$25.00

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

My ceramic interest are: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If you would like your contact information listed in  
*Website Membership Directory* please fill in following information.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Pottery Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Webpage URL \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Send check with completed form to:  
PO Box 5656, Greensboro, NC 27435