

WPA Press

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WISCONSIN POTTERY ASSOCIATION

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WWW.WISCONSINPOTTERY.ORG**In this issue...**

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FROM THE PRESIDENT...

Dear Members:

The 10th Anniversary/Christmas Party was wonderful. I only wish I had been able to visit with everyone. Time does fly when having a good time. Many thanks to Elaine for hosting us in her lovely setting. It was a very nice ending to 2002 and our first 10 years.

Now onto 2003, which I am certain will be another very good year for the WPA. The main mission of the WPA has been to educate ourselves and the public about art pottery. As you know, our show, sale and exhibits have been very successful in educating the public about art pottery as well as generating some of the money needed to pursue our educational goals. The revenue from the show and sale has allowed us to put on our exhibits, bring in speakers for our meetings, put on other pottery exhibits such as at Cambridge and the 2002 WADA Show, contribute to the Arts Council of Edgerton's Pauline project as

well as buy educational materials for our library.

We have done 8 major exhibits which are a great deal of work but have been wonderful vehicles for educating the public. We are faced with the challenge of continuing to provide good educational exhibits without stressing the resources of the WPA unduly. Comprehensive exhibits of one pottery require significant amounts of pottery representing that pottery's output through the years. We have been fortunate to have had some major donations of pottery and figurines from WPA members and some non-members to make the exhibits possible. But when we have to go outside the membership for donations we take on a great financial responsibility in case of damage. Many of the possible exhibits, for example Rookwood, would require a great many donations of very expensive pottery from non-members, which is a great responsibility to take on.

We would also like to have an exhibit that would allow more members to participate in this educational experience. Hopefully our 2003 Spectrum of Ohio Pottery exhibit will provide the public with a view of the wide spectrum of pottery produced in Ohio in the last century and will also allow more WPA members the opportunity to share their collecting preferences with the public. Therefore we are hoping the McCoy, Hull, Peters and Reed, Rookwood, Brush, Cowan, Burley Winter, Zanesville Stoneware, RRPC, Shawnee,

Gonder, etc. collectors will have a chance to share their cherished pots with the public. Please look over your shelves of Ohio treasures and let us know what you would like to share with the public next August.

- David Knutzen, WPA President, 2003

2003 WPA Calendar

- February 11**—Abingdon Pottery by Christine and Jamie Boone
March 11—Rosemeade Pottery by Linda and Bill Bakken
April 8—Wilde Studio Pottery by Kurt Wilde
May 13—WPA Members Present on Ohio Pottery
June 10—Cowan Pottery by Steve Schoneck
July—No meeting
August 23—WPA's 8th Annual Sale and Exhibit featuring Ohio Potteries, 9-4, Alliant Energy Center, Madison, WI.
September 9—Haviland Pottery by Art and Eileen Wendt
October 14—Galena Pottery by Bill Engel
November 11—Art of the Figurine by Tim Holthaus, Rose Lindner, Elaine Staaland
December 2—WPA Holiday Party (note that this is the *first* Tuesday in December)

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*All meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month (except July, August and December) at the Shorewood Hills Community Center.*

## NEW BOOK ON GEORGE OHR By Richard Mohr

In April of 1999 Richard Mohr presented a slideshow on George Ohr and his relation to the Anna Pottery to the Wisconsin Pottery Association. Professor Mohr has now expanded the slideshow into a book, which the University of Illinois will publish in March 2003, entitled "Pottery, Politics, Art: George Ohr and the Brothers Kirkpatrick". Richard Mohr shares this introduction to the book.

"Pottery, Politics, Art: George Ohr and the Brothers Kirkpatrick" uses the medium of clay to explore the nature of spectacle, bodies and boundaries. It analyzes the sexual and social obsessions of three of America's most intense potters, artists who used the liminal potentials of clay to explore the horrors and delights of our animal selves.

"Pottery, Politics, Art" revives from undeserved obscurity the far-southern Illinois potting brothers Cornwall and Wallace Kirkpatrick (1814–90, 1828–96, respectively) and examines the significance of the haunting, witty and grotesque wares of the brothers' Anna Pottery (1859–96). The book then traces the Kirkpatricks' decisive influence on a central figure in the American Arts and Crafts movement, George Ohr (1857–1918), known as the "Mad Potter of Biloxi" and arguably America's greatest potter. Finally the book gives a new reading to Ohr's contorted, yet lyrical and ecstatic works.

Of Mohr's talk to the Wisconsin Pottery Association (April 1999) *The Antique*

*Trader* reported." Critics have long considered the Anna snake jugs to be propaganda for the temperance movement, but Mohr postulates convincingly that the jugs were parodies and that the brothers were politically progressive. Mohr also argues that the Kirkpatricks' influence on George Ohr's art is significantly greater than previously thought."

One aim of the book is to draw the decora-



The Brothers Kirkpatrick, snake jug  
(Courtesy of the Krannert Art Museum,  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign).

tive arts into the critical mainstream of art history. Nancy Owen, author of *Rookwood and the Industry of Art*, has said of the book, "Pottery, Politics and Art provides not just new interpretations but new categories for inquiry as well. In engaging, witty, debate-generating prose, Mohr takes studies in the decorative arts to a new level of critical sophistication."

Printed entirely on coated stock for quality reproduction of illustrations, the book contains 23 full-color plates and 113 black-and-white photographs, including many previously unpublished works by Ohr and the Kirkpatricks. The book has 272 pages and a trim size of 7 × 10 inches. The ISBN is 0\_252\_02789\_2.

The author is a professor of philosophy at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Classicist, social theorist and public intellectual, Mohr has also written extensively on art and architecture in such journals as *Architectural Record*, *Art Issues*, the *Journal of the American Art Pottery Association* and *Style 1990*.

For more information on the book, see its webpage at the University of Illinois Press' website:

[www.press.uillinois.edu/s03/mohr.html](http://www.press.uillinois.edu/s03/mohr.html)



## INTRODUCING WPA MEMBERS BOB AND LILA JEAN

*WPA members are regularly interviewed (interrogated?) for their stories, which are then printed (misappropriated?) in the WPA Press newsletter. January 2003's victims are Bob and Lila Jean. (Perhaps when the '15 seconds of fame' arrives, we find it's not all it's cracked up to be?) Seriously, we very much appreciate the Stahnke's taking a little time to tell us about themselves and how and what they like to collect. Lila Jean provided this information:*

**WPA Press:** Tell us a little about yourselves.

**A:** We are Bob and Lila Jean, originally from St. Paul, Minnesota. Bob is a Veterinarian retired from the Federal Government Meat and Poultry Inspection Service after 43 of service. I (Lila Jean) also work as a clerk for Black Horse Auction service—have been clerking for 20 years.

**WPA Press:** What do you like to collect when you're out antiquing?

**A:** We didn't start collecting until we moved here from Chicago area 30 years ago. When we started it was mainly RedWing and furniture. Bob enjoyed working with wood and was good at it. By now you can say we are eclectic as we enjoy many items. We enjoy collecting pictures, amongst other things.

**WPA Press:** When did you join the WPA and how did you hear about the club?

**A:** We saw the WPA announcement in the newspaper and decided to come to your meeting. It was so exciting to bring one of our favorite pieces to our first meeting, and with all your knowledge you were able to tell us it was a Roseville Winsor piece. We really enjoy the people at the WPA meetings and are learning a lot.

**WPA Press:** Do you antique when you are traveling? What kind of sales do you frequent?

**A:** We go to many, many, many auctions. If we do any traveling we always look for auctions.

**WPA Press:** Any other comments you'd like to make?

**A:** This was our second Christmas party [with the WPA, Dec. 2002] and want to Thank all the people who put it together. Fun was had by all!

*Thanks to Bob and Lila Jean for taking some holiday time out to provide this information!*

*- Kari Kenefick, Editor, WPA Press*

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## PAULINE LOG CABIN UPDATE

*Progress is being made on restoring the Pauline Log Cabin in Edgerton, Wisconsin. Ori-Anne Pagel provided the following progress report.*

To date we have raised and spent over \$25,000.00 of that \$14,800.00 is in memorials. We still needed approximately \$10,000.00 to complete the restoration of this cabin of the estate of Pauline Jacobus, in Edgerton, home of Pauline Pottery, Norse Pottery, Edgerton Pottery, Rock Pottery, American Art Clay and Pickard China, started by Wilder A. Pickard.

A stone mason is being hired to finish the chimney and fireplace. We also need electricity hooked up to install the security system, the loft and finish floor. The city will landscape Clay Pit Heritage Park but we need to provide the historical marker to place there. ( We need help on this too.)

This mini museum will be ready to open as soon as the building is complete. We have one exhibit display case, large screen VCR , and a bench to sit on to watch the videos of our local history. We borrowed a video on Norse Pottery from the Wisconsin Pottery Association and hope to get a video on Pickard China. During this coming Sesquicentennial year we plan to make other videos, such as on our other potteries and on the history of the cabin itself. We need people to help with this project also. If you are interested or have questions please call (608) 884-6787.

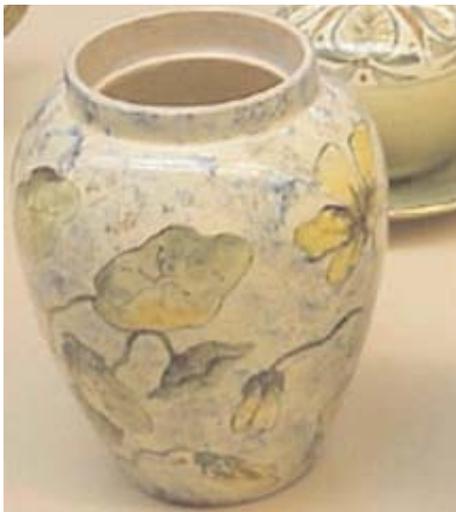
This has been a busy year for fundraising with a recent generous donation of \$10,000.00 in memory of Wilder A. Pickard, Pickard Artists and another \$500.00 the other day in memory of Alan B. Reed. There are 18 log cabin banks made and placed in local businesses by Tom Goodger of Milton. We have come a long way, but are not done yet.

*- Ori-Anne and Paul Pagel, WPA Members, and representatives of the Arts Council of Edgerton and Pauline Log Cabin Restoration Project, Edgerton, WI.*

## SPEAKING OF PAULINE...

At the WPA's November 2002 meeting Mark Scarborough was our featured speaker and provided an interesting, in depth talk about the Potteries of Edgerton, WI.

An article on Edgerton Potteries from



Mark's September 2001 talk can be found in the October 2001 *WPA Press*, online at [www.wisconsinpottery.org](http://www.wisconsinpottery.org)

Besides the fantastic slide show we were entertained with an exhibit of pieces of Pauline and Norse pottery. **Photos:** Left, center and bottom right: Pauline Pottery vase, small vase and dish. Upper right: Small Norse pot, approximately 5".



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## ILLINOIS ART POTTERY EXHIBIT EXPANDS

*As noted in the October 2002 WPA Press:*

In September 2002, the Krannert Art Museum at the University of Illinois - Urbana completed renovations on its Moore Gallery of Decorative Arts. The expansion of the Gallery quadrupled the size of its already impressive display of American art pottery. Sixty-two pieces have been drawn from storage and now join some twenty pots already on permanent display. Nearly all of the displayed pottery descends from a study collection that was assembled in the mid- to late-'teens by the University's Department of Ceramic Engineering.



**Cornwall Kirkpatrick, the "Chicago News Paper directory jug, 1879.** 22" H, hand-thrown, incised stoneware with cobalt worked into incising prior to receiving a light salt glazing. Signed with two squares at bottom edge: "C & W. Kirkpatrick/Anna Ill/August 10 1879//Anna Pottery/Anna Ill" and on the lip: "C & W Kirk."

For those wishing to visit the Krannert Art Museum in Urbana IL, regular hours are:

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Sat.  
9am-5pm  
Wednesday 9am-8pm  
Sunday 2-5pm  
Closed on Mondays.

Between terms and during holidays the hours change. Please check their website for the most up-to-date information:

[www.art.uiuc.edu/galleries/kam](http://www.art.uiuc.edu/galleries/kam)

Thanks to Richard Mohr for providing this text and the museum information.

- K. Kenefick

## "MEMBERS FAVORITES" PRESENTATIONS FROM JANUARY 2003

At the January 2003 WPA meeting, members Jim Tyne, Tom Tompkins, Nancy Spitzer and Steve Dana talked about some of their favorite potteries. Here are some notes and photos from their presentations.

Jim Tyne talked about 'California critters' made by various California potteries. He brought along several pieces of Winfield Pottery including a child's plate and cup whimsically decorated with bears (see photo, below). The Winfield Pottery of Pasadena, CA, was started in 1929 by



Lesley Winfield Sample. A designer, Margaret Mears Gabriel, joined the pottery in 1935, and Gabriel and her husband became owners of the pottery in 1939. Winfield made pottery until 1962, and in addition to dinnerware, was known for their art pottery pieces in the 1930s. The pieces are characterized by square bodies with rounded edges and are sturdy and attractive, with simple patterns, a few featuring Oriental motifs. Almost all are marked, some as "Gabriel" and others are marked "Winfield". The pottery was available in fine department stores such as Marshall Fields.

Jim also brought some animal figurines from Delee Art, a company started by



Delee Art bear in a raccoon skin cap.

Jimmy Lee Adair Kohl. Kohl was an artist and school teacher—she started the company in 1936 with \$160 she was awarded after an auto accident; her attorney became her partner. As many as 20 people worked for the company at one time.

Jim noted that one can find pieces of Delee pottery in almost all antique malls. The Delee pieces are easily recognizable by their characteristic elongated eyelashes. Most pieces are marked, although the bottoms are sometimes glazed, making the marks hard to read. Delee also has silver labels. The company survived into the 1950s.

If you care to read more about them, Schneiders' California potteries book covers the Winfield and Delee potteries, Jim advises.



Winton animal figures. Note the exquisite expressions. Marked as Winton.

Finally, the Winton Brothers, Don and Russ, twins born in 1919. The Winton twins were considered boy geniuses, and were known for their art and ceramics. They made figurines based on Disney characters (until Disney discovered this). Helen Burke was their designer (1938-39), hence a Burke/Winton mark. In 1946 the twins joined the army and their brother, Bruce took over the pottery, continuing into the 1970s. Many items were marked "twin-Win", such as cookie jars, salt and peppers, and were very popular.

Another mark for the Winton Pottery is "Don Winton Designs". Twin Don was their main designer; in fact, Don did design work for several other companies as well.

Jim feels that the pre-war figures, 1936-41, are the best produced by the Wintons. One of the Winton's most popular and collectible pieces is the "Hilter skunk", but all the figurine characters have very expressive faces, showing emotions such as surprise and bewilderment.



Tom Tompkins talked about some of his favorites, found during a trip to North Carolina (one piece pictured above). Tom and Nancy visited the Seagrove area where many potteries are found. Tom talked about the Pisgah Forest Pottery, Arden and pottery made by Evan Brown, whose family is still producing pottery where he first opened shop in 1961. Evan's father Jay

Van Brown worked at this shop and his daughter Cherry and wife Mercedes currently work there. Evans' pots occasionally show up in antique malls in Wisconsin.

Pisgah Forest Pottery is just down the road, sitting in a picturesque valley. The pottery opened in 1926—Walter Steven was an early potter there. Some of the pieces are marked with dates.

The Seagrove area includes some 90 potteries, including Jugtown Pottery, opened 1917, started by a couple educated in art. The wife kept a job in New York City and sold pieces there. Ben Owens started at the Seagrove pottery as an eighteen-year-old, and continued until 1959.

A nonprofit organization, Country Road, bought Jugtown in the 1960s and redeveloped glazes to remove lead. Jugtown is now owned by Vernon Owen.

Ben Owen started his own pottery in 1959—he has since died but his grandson Ben Owen III now runs the pottery.

Nancy Spitzer counts among her favorites, Restaurant china, something most of us have enjoyed eating from at one time or another.

Buffalo, Sterling and Shenango, Syracuse and Jackson are some of the chinas known as restaurant ware. If you wish to consult a text, Nancy mentioned Conroy's book on restaurant china as a good resource.



Syracuse china is a favorite of Nancy's. It is a highly fired, vitrified china. Syracuse is a very old company and at one time made china for all of the major railroads and steamships.

Onondaga Pottery Company became the Syracuse China Company. Nancy mentioned that Guy Cowan, founder of Cowan Pottery, designed for Syracuse china during the depression. In fact, Guy Cowan's father also worked for the company.

Guy made a number of design improvements to Syracuse China that were patented. One was called the dart and egg design. Another, the Econorim, was invented by Cowan to help make the plates fit together when they were stacked, taking up less space when stored in the railcar kitchens, while still holding a satisfactory amount of food. The Mark Bassett/Victoria Naumann book on Cowan Pottery has a chapter devoted to restaurant china that describes the patents awarded to Syracuse China, due to Guy Cowan's inventiveness.



Last but not least was Steve Dana's talk on designer Paul E. Cox (1879-1968). Cox was born on February 8, 1879 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He grew up in Gas City, Indiana, the son of a stoneware manufacturer, and very interested in art pottery. As a youngster he worked with his father in many aspects of manufacturing stoneware, and when he entered Alfred University's School of Clay-Working and Ceramics he had con-



siderable practical knowledge as well as appreciation for art pottery.

On April 12, 1900, Governor Theodore Roosevelt signed legislation establishing the New York State School of Clay-Working at Alfred. The school had opened in 1836 by Seventh Day Baptists. Charles Fergus Binns was hired as the director around 1900. Cox joined the student body around the same time and became the second graduate of the new school in 1905 with a degree in Ceramic Engineering and Technology.

After graduating, Cox held a number of positions in Indiana and Illinois.

In 1907 Paul Cox married Jean Marie Fortier in New Orleans, LA and in 1910 was hired at Newcomb College, New Orleans, as head ceramist. He was Newcomb's first professionally-trained ceramist. Aside from teaching he was also the glaze technician.

While at Newcomb he improved the clay processes and worked on making matte glazes. He developed the semi-opaque, matte glaze used over relief renderings. This became the moon-over-moss (or moon-and-moss) motif and replaced the standard Newcomb gloss glazes. Moon-over-moss continued to be the main glaze until Newcomb closed in 1940.

In 1918 Cox left Newcomb to assist in the war effort. He went to France and helped set up a grinding wheel factory outside of

Paris. While in France he visited the Sevres factory, where he learned about their techniques.

Sometime around his return to the U.S. Cox was hired by Iowa State College (1920-21) as an associate professor, eventually becoming acting department chair, and in 1926, department chair. Cox traveled about Iowa educating the public about ceramics and its importance to industry. He emphasized both art pottery production and the technical aspects of ceramics.

In about 1924 Cox hired Mary Yancy, a Newcomb graduate, as an instructor at Iowa State. Yancy's strengths were decorative design. Circa 1926 Cox and Yancy began selling art pottery that they pro-

duced, using the proceeds for the purchase of school equipment. Cox threw the pieces and created glazes while Yancy did the design work. Their collaboration ended in 1930 when Yancy left to get married.

Cox left Iowa State in 1939 to pursue his own company—all student production at Iowa State ceased at that time. He returned to Hanrahan, LA, outside of New Orleans and started his own pottery plant. His idea was to use the plant for pottery for the home, such as dinnerware and utilitarian ware and Newcomb-styled pieces, as well as certain types of unusual building material. The plant was to serve as a research laboratory as well as for pottery production. Production ended in 1942 as Cox again joined the war effort as a ceram-

ics engineer.

During his lifetime Paul Cox received numerous awards and metals, including an honorary doctorate degree from Alfred University (1936) and the Charles Fergus Binns Medal for Excellence (1952). He was recognized as a prolific writer and spent time assisting others with their pottery ventures.

Paul Cox died in 1968 at age 89.

*Our thanks to WPA members Tom Tompkins, Nancy Spitzer, Jim Tyne and Steve Dana for these excellent presentations!*

*The WPA Press is the quarterly newsletter of the Wisconsin Pottery Association. It prints approximately January, April, July and October of each year. Your contributions are welcomed. Tell us about a museum or antique shop you visited, trips you've taken, or a good pottery book you've read. Send your contributions to:*

**WPA Press  
P.O. Box 8213  
Madison, WI 53708-8213**

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