

WPA Press

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WISCONSIN POTTERY ASSOCIATION

PO BOX 46 MADISON, WI 53701-0046
WWW.WISCONSINPOTTERY.ORG

Welcome to those lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer, which for members of the Wisconsin Pottery Association (WPA) means our busiest time of the year! Our 6th annual "Show and Sale" is moving into high gear, as the August 25 fundraiser is now just about 7 weeks away.

The WPA's Show and Sale is held in Madison late in August. The Show features antique and collectible pottery dealers, an annual exhibit—this year providing Weller pottery for your enjoyment and educational benefit—and an opportunity to bring a piece of pottery for an informal evaluation by our experts (provided as a courtesy by WPA members and their assistants).

Show Manager **Glenn Clark** is busy lining up dealers for the Sale, as well as organizing the Alliant Center space to accommodate the exhibit and dealers. Glenn and his crew will greet the dealers as they arrive, direct them to their table locations and answer any facility questions that arise. In addition Glenn takes care of signage for the Show and Sale, and is on site until every dealer has packed and left Saturday,

after the show closes at 4PM.

This year's exhibit curator, **Chris Swart**, has collected and solicited pieces for the Weller exhibit in August. The day before the show pieces of pottery will arrive, be checked in and carefully positioned by volunteers. After the show, once every piece of pottery has been returned to its owner, the complex of boards, tables and linens that make the exhibit will have to be disassembled.

If you have missed the fun of assisting with the Show and Sale in the past please know that this annual WPA fundraiser only happens by the generous gifts of time donated by club members. **Jim Riordan** is heading up the volunteer drive this year. You can volunteer to help out the day of the show for activities such as registration, staffing the exhibit, book sales and helping at the evaluation table. In addition, on Friday, August 24 help is needed to assemble the tables that hold the exhibit, to help situate dealers as they arrive, and such.

Volunteer spots are generally two hours in length and come with a free admission to the show. Won't you help us out?

2001 WPA Calendar

July—No Meeting.

August 7—WPA Picnic: 5:30PM, Garner Park (on Mineral Point Road, 1 block west of Whitney Way).

August 25—Annual WPA Exhibit and Sale featuring Weller Pottery.

September 11—The History of Pauline and other Edgerton Potteries by Mark Scarborough.

October 9—Contemporary Native American Pottery by Ervin Publitz
November 13—Galena Pottery (or Blue & White Stoneware) by Bill Engel.

December 4—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 Community Center.*

Bring a friend as well—you don't have to be a member to volunteer.

Just two weeks before the Show and Sale, please join us at **Garner Park, August 7**, for our annual picnic. Bring a piece (or 2) of pottery for the silent auction and \$6.50 for your meal. **No meeting in July**—see you at the Picnic August 7.

- Kari Kenefick, WPA President

## In This Issue of the Press:

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## Introducing WPA Member Charlie Sanders

After being publicly “volunteered” by another WPA member for this interview, Charlie Sanders (sometimes known as Mr. Barbara Budig) agreed to submit to this interrogation regarding his pottery collection habits. Truthfully, Charlie was cheerful, quick to respond to the questions and eager to help out with the newsletter. Read on to learn more about his interest in the WPA and in collecting pottery in general.

**Q:** How did you get involved in the Wisconsin Pottery Association?

**Charlie:** My wife Barbara (Budig) signed me up. There always seemed to be a meeting going on in our house. The WPA members seemed to be pleasant, though initially I had no idea what cult was meeting in my home.

**Q:** When did you join the club?

**Charlie:** About 4 years ago, though I only recently started going to the meetings. I helped at the annual August show and I was floored by the quality and quantity of the pots.

**Q:** What do you enjoy most about the club?

**Charlie:** Definitely the members, their knowledge and willingness to share that knowledge.

**Q:** What are your suggestions for changes to the WPA?

**Charlie:** None, I like it the way it is.

**Q:** What do you collect?

**Charlie:** Actually, I collect fly fishing gear and flies. But, I like Norse pottery and may begin a modest collection soon ( is there a vaccine to protect against this?)

**Q:** When did you start? Why this particular type of pottery (what do you like about this particular pottery)?

**Charlie:** I like the straight simple glaze on Norse pottery. Also, I always fancied myself a Viking. Leaping from a boat wearing animal skins and swinging a battle-ax, intent on mayhem. It would be quite an entry at an auction. Who would out bid me?

**(Editor's Note:** Hmmm, not a pretty picture(?) but he may be right about the bidding aspect...)

**Q:** What was the first thing you collected?

**Charlie:** A McCoy with a hairline.

**Q:** Was there pottery in your childhood? Perhaps a grandparent or someone else had a

cherished piece of pottery?

**Charlie:** I'm afraid not. I had a typical Tupperware childhood.

**Q:** Did anyone influence your collecting?

**Charlie:** My wife (Barbara Budig), Nicol, the Tims, Terrance, Jim, Barb, Betty and Dave, etc. They opened my eyes to a form of created beauty I had not noticed before and I appreciate it.

**Q:** What do you do when you aren't collecting - to support your habit, so to speak (i.e., what is your day job, if you don't mind us asking)?

**Charlie:** I am retired from the Wisconsin Legislature after 30 years.

**Q:** Where do you like to do your shopping: online? in malls? at estate sales?

**Charlie:** I get around to many estate sales, auctions and antique stores and malls as an employee of Tabby antiques and the Artful Garden.

*Thanks so much* to Charlie for his interesting and entertaining answers. We look forward to more of his delightful perspectives - perhaps at a WPA presentation sometime in the next year??

*K. Kenefick, Editor, WPA Press*



Left: Kevin Hicks hand throws almost every piece. Center: Example of a finished Ephraim pot. Right: Scott Draves decorates a Saturday Evening Girls-inspired piece. (Photos courtesy of Ephraim Faience Pottery.)

## Ephraim Faience Pottery

By Michelle Gringeri-Brown

"I grew up on a farm and wanted to get as far as possible from clay and dirt," says Kevin Hicks of Ephraim Faience Pottery. Yet here he is, five miles from civilization on a soybean farm in rural Wisconsin, with deer, pheasants, woodchucks and other sundry wildlife all around. The twist is, the barn houses an Arts and Crafts pottery that represents Hicks' own mini rebellion against industrialization.

He and partner Scott Draves met while working in a commercial pottery turning out salt-glaze wares at a frightening rate. Hicks had held several positions at the pottery while completing his art and business degrees, but it wasn't until he became a potter there that he really felt the full effects of commercialization—the same mind- and body-numbing automatization that led to the Arts and Crafts movement.

"I was being turned into a machine," Hicks says, "throwing a coffee mug every minute or two, all day long. We'd turn out hundreds a day. We couldn't make anything that would take more than five or ten minutes to throw. Scott and I would talk about how we longed to work on art pieces like the turn-of-the-century ceramics he collects.

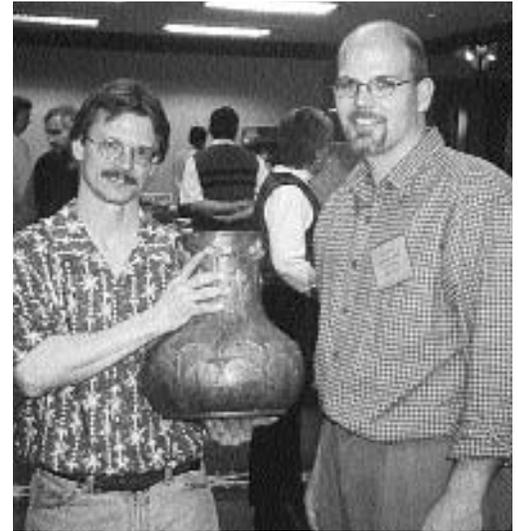
Scott Draves came to ceramics from an even more circuitous route. He'd worked as a test-equipment designer in the avionics field until he knew it was time for a career switch. Decorating art pottery seemed like an odd segue, but he found that his precise technical skills were well suited to the new profession.

"I was the fastest decorator they had," Draves says. "I could paint on blue or green slip flowers or birds in 15 seconds. By the end of the day, there'd be 450 mugs done in different patterns. I did that for 10 years.

At the same time, Draves was collecting Arts and Crafts pottery, none of which costs more than \$80 in those good old days. "I also had a business buying, repairing and selling oak antiques—oak is king around here—including quite a few Mission-style pieces. And I saw how Arts and Crafts pottery was appreciating: an \$80 vase was now going for \$300, and I knew that working in that style was something Kevin and I could do.

So in 1996, Hicks and Draves began developing the forms, designs and glazes that would become Ephraim Faience's pottery line. They lived off their savings in order to be able to work full time on the pieces, and enlisted a knowledgeable friend with an extensive Arts and Crafts collection to function as a design critic. They'd take their latest designs over for his inspection, and tweaked their products until he agreed that they'd really captured the essence of the style.

The pairs' big break came in



Left: A sample of one of one of Ephraim's yellow pieces, for which Scott Draves professes a fondness. Center: Ginkgo tile designed by Ephraim's Kristin Zanetti. Right: Scott Draves and Kevin Hicks with one of their wares. (Photos courtesy of Ephraim Faience Pottery.)

Asheville at the 1997 Grove Park conference. "Lee Jester [of Berkeley's The Craftsman Home] suggested we bring some pots down to show him," Draves remembers. "It was 14 hours away from Madison, Wisc., but we were game so we loaded up the car and drove down. We had a general description of Lee, so we sat in the lobby of the Grove Park Inn watching for him. In 20 minutes some 100 people must have come up to us, wanting to know where we got those 'Grueby' pots. We went out to the car to get more, and the crowd just swarmed around our trunk."

Ephraim Faience Pottery—whose name is derived from a small town in the "thumb" of Wisconsin, and the name for earthenware with opaque glazes—took off in a big way from there. Word-of-mouth business, and catalog, website ([www.ephraimpottery.com](http://www.ephraimpottery.com)) and Arts and Crafts show sales are brisk. About 80 percent of their orders are in the matte

green glaze commonly associated with period pottery, though Draves, who is the glaze master, professes a personal fondness for their yellow pieces.

Hicks and Draves push to keep the company's line evolving. They never produce more than 500 pieces of any vase, and periodically retire items as they near that cutoff, or when they introduce new wares. Each piece is hand thrown and designs hand sculpted—usually by Hicks—then dried for 3 to 10 days, bisque fired, glazed and fired again. Excess glaze is ground off the bottom, and only then is the piece ready for the customer.

Draves estimates that preparing products for each Arts and Crafts show takes two weeks, with another week spent commuting to and from the location and actually manning the booth. This year, he and Hicks and marketing manager Kristin Zanetti have one show per month on the schedule.

Zanetti and Jesse Wolf, who takes care of shipping out products, also have creative input. Zanetti says she was given "homework" over the Christmas break one year: design a ginkgo leaf tile. She put her art background to work and came up with Ephraim Faience's popular Nostalgia and Ginkgo tiles. And Wolf, the newest addition to the group, is decorating tiles and has shown Draves some prototype pots that just might be in the next catalog.

The most important thing for us is to keep pushing ourselves to take on new creative challenges," Hicks says. "There's a huge, wide world of Arts and Crafts," Draves agrees. "After working a 12-hour day for three weeks straight getting ready for a show, we may be filthy and tired, but we're certainly not bored."

*This article first appeared in American Bungalow magazine (Fall 2000, Number 27), a quar-*

*terly publication devoted to the Arts and Crafts movement and early-20th-century homes. For information, visit [www.ambungalow.com](http://www.ambungalow.com).*

*The WPA Press thanks American Bungalow for permission to reprint this article.*

## **WPA Charter Members Sandy and John Fiscus**

At this writing Sandy and John are packing their household and preparing to move to Oklahoma! Not one to miss an opportunity, (and knowing that their resistance would be low due to the sheer exhaustion of moving), the *WPA Press* asked them if they would consent to an interview, so that those of us that did not know them well would at least now know what we will be missing with their departure. (With what I learned during this interview, I must say that I wish we'd done it two years ago!) John and Sandy have been faithful club members, regularly attending meetings since the WPA's inception/charter. Here's hoping that they occasionally find a reason to visit Madison or at the very least, keep in touch.

**WPA Press:** We understand that you are charter members of the WPA. Would you tell about how you first heard of the club, and approximately when you joined?

**Sandy and John:** We are charter members and were invited to join the club by Dave Auclair.

I believe we were at the first or second meeting at Dave and Betty's house. We really liked the people that belonged and enjoyed hearing and seeing their pottery. It was and still is a great learning experience and still a lot of fun. Dave was responsible for our becoming "serious" collectors. He knew a lot about everything and was kind enough to share some of

his knowledge.

**WPA Press:** Would you mind telling a bit about yourselves? What do you do when you aren't collecting?

**John and Sandy:** We are retiring soon, but prior to that we both worked full-time and spent weekends looking for pottery. John was born in Madison and Sandy in Stoughton and we have lived on Raymond Road for about 37 years. Our son is living in Flagstaff, AZ.

**WPA Press:** Now on to pottery business: What got you started collecting?

**Sandy and John:** I (Sandy) followed a stranger at the Flea Market at the Dane County Fairgrounds. She was asking for Frankoma pottery and since I didn't know what Frankoma was, I trailed along behind her 'til I found out. My first purchase was a coffee cup and I really didn't think it was anything special, but I guess I was hooked. The next month I bought a honey jug that I could have bought at the Frankoma factory for half what I paid for it at the Flea Market. From then on we collected it and found that there were some very lovely pieces out there and we had a great time finding them. We have also collected Rosemeade, syrup pitchers, banks, etc. Some of the collections are packed away because there just isn't room to display all of it. The Flea Market was where we first met Dave Auclair.

**WPA Press:** Who got you inter-

ested in collecting?

**John and Sandy:** The stranger at the flea market (started it all). I have no idea who she was, but it is all her fault.

**WPA Press:** Did either of you grow up in a family of collectors or antiquers?

**Sandy and John:** We each grew up in a family where one parent was a “Junker”—John’s Mom and Sandy’s Dad. They both enjoyed auctions and picked up some interesting stuff, but nothing really worth much, at least at that time. A few “not quite” antiques, but really neat stuff—pictures, end tables. All four of our parents would have thought we were more than a little balmy to collect all those knick-knacks that just sit around and collect dust—not to mention the nudes!!

**WPA Press:** What do you like to collect? Maybe you would tell us about your first piece and how your collecting has changed over time?

**John and Sandy:** We have collected everything from pottery to fairy lamps to beer/pop can and bottle openers. Mostly we collect pottery. It only has to catch our eye and then we’re off. It is said that three items constitute a collection and maybe that’s true, because when we have two or three of anything, things start getting serious and we look for it everywhere and anywhere and sometimes we are lucky enough to find it. Sometimes we find a piece of pottery or even glass that catches our eye, we don’t know who made it, we just like it and it is prob-

ably the only piece we will ever see simply because we don’t know what we are looking for. But that’s all right because it is a pretty piece regardless and we enjoy it for that reason alone.

**WPA Press:** Where do you like to shop: antique malls, garage sales, St. Vinny’s, estate sales?

**Sandy and John:** All of the above. We don’t go to many garage sales or estate sales anymore. We have a few favorite shops that we get to occasionally. Flea markets are also a favorite place to shop and meet friends for a cup of coffee.

**WPA Press:** Do you have any really exciting finds that you’d like to tell about? Or any good antiques stories that you’d like to share with us?

**John and Sandy:** The only really exciting finds we can think of is finding two small Lawrence Rabbitt vases at the same mall in booths about 20 feet apart. One sold for \$3.00; the other for around \$25–30. We bought both of them and were very pleased with ourselves. That was more than ten years ago.

*To Sandy and John, thank you for filling us in on your collecting adventures and giving us a little insight into how you got started (and/or how you keep going). Our sincerest good wishes for a safe and easy move. Please keep in touch!*

- KK

## **Wisconsin Pottery Association’s Sixth Annual Show and Sale to Feature Weller Exhibit**

The Wisconsin Pottery Association (WPA) will host its sixth annual Art Pottery Exhibit, *Weller and Company*, on August 25, 2001 in Madison, Wisconsin. This year’s Exhibit will display over 200 vases and figurals made by the Samuel A. Weller Pottery.

Ann Gilbert McDonald, Ph.D., will be the WPA’s Special Guest for *Weller and Company*. Dr. McDonald wrote *All About Weller, A History and Collector’s Guide to Weller Pottery*, the most comprehensive and authoritative book on Weller Pottery to date, and is the author of over one hundred articles on pottery, lighting, and glass. She will be available during the Exhibit to sign copies of her first Weller book, and to chat informally about Weller Pottery with guests.

The Exhibit will be held with the WPA’s top flight **Pottery Show and Sale**, featuring 50 of the nation’s best dealers selling all types of antique and collectible pottery. Furthermore, WPA members will again informally identify/ evaluate pottery brought to the Exhibit and Pottery Show, limit one item per admission.

This will be the WPA’s fifth all-Pottery Show/Sale and Exhibit of American Art Pottery. The WPA is a nonprofit organization formed in 1992 by collectors interested in studying and promoting collectible pottery. Meetings are held monthly and

include speakers and informal discussions on pottery. For more information, write the WPA at P.O. Box 46, Madison, WI 53701-0046, or visit the WPA website at [www.wisconsinpottery.org](http://www.wisconsinpottery.org)

The Pottery Show/Sale, and the Exhibit *Weller and Company* will be one day only, Saturday, August 25, 2001 in Madison, WI, at the Alliant Energy Center, off Rimrock Road near John Nolan Drive. From I-90 take exit 142A, Hwy 12-18 west 5 miles to Exit 262, Rimrock Road, then north 1/4 mile. For more information (including a map) visit our website or call 608-251-1306. The Exhibit and Show will be open 9AM-4PM. Admission is \$3.

**Special Note:** There is a \$4 parking fee at the Alliant Energy Center, which will be waived **only** if an official display ad is presented. This ad can be found at many antique malls in the form of a green card, or on the WPA website, from which you can print a copy: [www.wisconsinpottery.org](http://www.wisconsinpottery.org). This special ad must be presented to the parking attendant for free parking.

- *Chris Swart, Curator, Weller and Company Exhibit, 2001*

## **Pauline Log Cabin Progress and Work Update**

The Pauline Log Cabin is in Edgerton, WI where it is in the process of being relocated and restored.

The log cabin has had a great donation of \$2,000 that will pay for the fireplace completely. As you know that is not everything: the next step is the logs (some need to be replaced or repaired) and the roof. (We've just received a picture of the original roof.)

The Chimney is down, cleaned and moved to its new location but the fireplace is not yet all there. On Sat., June 16 and June 23 at 9AM the same is planned as on previous work days; remove rock, clean it and put it in piles at the new site. Bob Davis will be there—he promised to take the chimney down and lead us on to the next step, with plans to return by himself on week days to start to put it all back up.

Call Rick 884-8888 with questions (and presumably about new work dates).

Please come and bring a friend; see if we can't get this job done. Thanks again to all the WPA members who came last time. And before.

- *Ori-Anne and Paul Pagel and all ACE (Arts Council of Edgerton) Members*

**Editor's Note:** This information was taken from a June 15 email. Please call the number listed for up-to-date information on work days for the log cabin.

## **Last but not Least:**

### **Become a Contributor to the WPA Press!!**

So you've read or skimmed the July 2001 newsletter and thought of numerous other interesting articles that could have been included. What to do?

Simply drop a line to:  
WPA Press  
P.O. Box 46  
Madison, WI 53701-0046

Clearly state what you'd like to see included next time OR **write** a piece for the October printing.

Deadline for contributions to the October newsletter are Sept. 15. We've had wonderful reports from club members on what they did during their summer vacations and visits made to pottery museums, etc. If it's worth telling about at our monthly meetings, doubtless it will be enjoyed by our readers as well. Please take a moment and write it down, then send it to the WPA Press.

Those of you going to (or that went to) Zanesville, maybe you'd give us a story about what the scene was like this year. Heck, if you've thrown a pot yourself, we'd be interested in hearing about that too!

The October newsletter, in addition to your contributions, will feature our August 2001 Show and Sale. Watch for it the first week of October.

See you at the **picnic in Garner Park, August 7!!** Please call Elaine Staaland to let her know that you are coming, if you haven't already signed up. Until then, happy hunting!

- *Kari Kenefick, WPA Press*