

# Guild at a Glance

South Vancouver Island Potters' Guild meets the 2nd Monday of the month at 4733 West Saanich Road, Victoria

February 13, 2012

[www.victoriapotters.ca](http://www.victoriapotters.ca)

Volume 13, Issue 6

## January's Meeting – 'Clay and ...'

The topic of our January presentation was adding different materials to pottery to enhance and embellish. Tobias Tomlinson and Louise Parsons provided suggestions, shared projects and encouraged the sharing of ideas from the group.

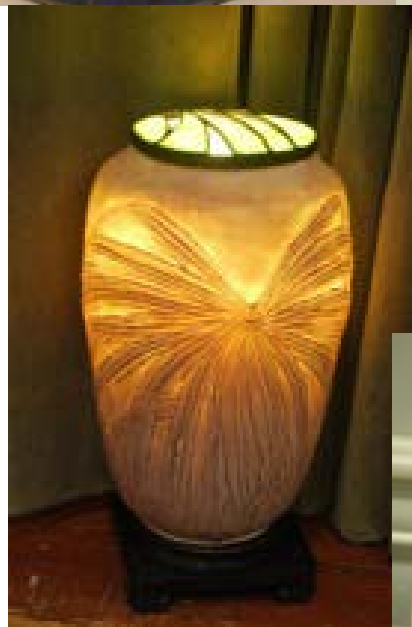
Members were encouraged to *Explore, Expand and Combine*.

**Tobias Tomlinson** enjoys working with a variety of materials (e.g., weaving, silversmith, and glass) and collaborating with a diverse group of artists.

The blue plate (pictured at right) is attached to a frame of stained glass. This is a collaborative piece.



The top of the incised and carved porcelain lamp (lower right) is made from foiled glass (in the style of Tiffany lamps). Both the clay and the glass glow when lit from inside.



The next Guild Meeting is

**MONDAY**

**March 12<sup>th</sup>**

**7:30 St. Michael's  
Anglican Church**

**4733 West Saanich Road**

***Don't forget  
the Raffle !***

To embellish the lidded pot and double bud vase at right, Tobias fused different colours of glass into a mosaic. He impressed the mosaic into the wet clay leaving a space, then once the pots were fired and glazed, the glass mosaic was adhered with grout.





Tobias' angel (shown on left) is attached to an alder base which has been dyed with fabric dye.

On the body of the angel, Tobias has glued a copper and silver piece on which is etched the tree of life (inset left).



**Louise Parsons** showed how she uses wire and beads to embellish her pieces after firing. She uses different gauge wire depending on the size of the piece and what she wants to accomplish.

Louise made the point that if you can crochet with yarn, you can crochet with wire. The only difference is that you get only one chance crocheting wire, it cannot be pulled out. To add decoration to some of her masks (such as the one at left below), she uses a 2 mm crochet hook and 28 gauge wire. All the beads that will eventually be used are strung on the wire before beginning. As she crochets the wire she slides each bead into place.



For other pieces (such as the mask below left) Louise uses beads strung on thicker wire (20 gauge). In both cases, the finished bead work is attached to the back of the fired clay piece with epoxy glue. Before the epoxy is applied the wired is formed into a spiral to provide more surface for the glue.



The presentations made by Tobias and Louise lead to spirited discussion from those attending. It was suggested that heavier wire can be pressed into the clay for further texture. **Daniel Casey** observed that springs, found or bought at hardware stores, can be stretched out to make wiggle wires.

*continued next page*

*January's Meeting continued*

A number of people responded to the programmer's request that members bring examples of 'Clay and ...' from their own work.

The beautiful treasure trove at left is a joint venture. **Betty Burroughs'** daughter makes the woodwork chest and Betty the ceramic drawers.



**Ester Galac** used driftwood and kelp to form the handle of this pot. She gathers and dries kelp for later use. After the kelp is re-wetted it is tied and needs to be dried so that it shrinks and makes a strong attachment (to do this Ester often places the pot under her kiln).

**Rosemary Neering** hand built the vase at right. To add interest to the surface she rolled the unfired vase in fine particles of magnetite.



**Kris Jeffrey** incorporates stones found on the beach into some of her pots (right). She uses grout to attach the stones to the vase and coats them with shellac to emphasize the colours of the stones.



A discussion of firing glass onto pieces followed (rather than gluing glass after firing). The results are often beautiful but unpredictable and the glass may dislodge unexpectedly, even a long time after firing. To increase success, it was agreed that the glass needs to be in very tiny pieces (hammer glass between sheets of paper) and used primarily on the interior of a piece. To hold the glass in place hairspray or glue was suggested. Caution: ***The resulting pot is not food safe!***

**Muriel Sibley** described the initial woes of working with silver clay, the persistence and her eventual success. Louise suggested that dental amalgam is a less expensive alternative to silver.

Even common nails as in Maya's piece (seen right) can embellish and enhance ...

***So explore, expand and combine!***

*submitted by Nancy Alexander*





## At March's Meeting – Layered Glazes

The speaker at the March Guild meeting will be **Gord Reisig**, who will talk about--and show examples of--glaze layering. Says program organizer Judie Hancock, "I really like his loose style of surface design and how he lets the glaze layering go in whatever direction it will (one glaze runs over the other and, to me, enhances the effect of the glaze layering.)"

I often think of Gord's work when I am working on my pieces as he inspires me to be less concerned about precision in my work and more open to the vagaries of the chemical reactions. I also have quite a few of Gord's mugs as I really like the size of them. I often joke with him that his mugs must start out the size of beer steins to end up so large after 2 firings!"

Outside the Studio

### First Impressions:

### You = Your Website

Your website creates a relationship between you and the viewer. You "show & tell" and the viewer gets to know a

little about you and your work. That's why the first page of your website is so important. It must capture the attention of the viewer and bring them deeper into your site. If you can do that, you will begin to develop a relationship. This is especially important if you have something to sell whether it is your art, a book, your teaching skills etc.

The opening page of your website should show you and your work and invite the viewer to look further into the site. How to do this? Though some people hesitate to reveal themselves, a headshot is a good way to establish a relationship. It gives the viewer a friendly figure they can relate to. A good photograph is essential. It doesn't have to be a professional headshot, just a clear photo of you, well lit and natural or a shot of you in the studio at work. Of course photographs of your work are very important and should be of high quality clearly showing off the shape and color of work. Put a few images on your first page with a story/explanation and then invite people into your virtual gallery.

Though "gallery" is an obvious choice for the name of the page to show your work - it helps to explain more. Some other possible terms "present work", "past work", clay work, paintings, sculpture, pottery etc. The stronger the description the more the person will be enticed to enter into viewing.

As the person goes deeper into your website they will be able to form an idea of who you are including your philosophy, your work style etc. so don't neglect your "about" page. This is a traditional page found on most websites. It can be called "about" or "artist" or "history" but the contents are the same - this is the page the viewer goes to when they want to know more about the artist. Start with a short description about you, your body of work and how you created it. Say it in a personal voice (use "I" statements) and have someone you trust help you with the editing. Check for spelling, repetitions, clarity and tone of voice.

An artist statement is also crucial and invites the viewer into your creative mind. Why make what you make? Are you exploring a style? Experimenting with various forming techniques? Check on the internet for how to create an artist statement and also check out other artist's statements for inspiration. Again, have someone go over what you've written for clarity, tone of voice and spelling mistakes.

Whatever you choose to say and show on your website remember to keep it simple and short. Don't show 300 images when 25 will do and don't have a 5000 word essay about yourself when 800 words will do. In creating your relationship with an unknown viewer keep in mind that your website is essentially "you" - be welcoming, show your guest around and connect with them by sharing what you do and why you do it.

Thoughts? Questions? - If you have any questions you would like answered here please email them to [design@earthwordcreative.com](mailto:design@earthwordcreative.com) - **Deb Clay**

## One Member's Experience: **ARTISHOW** – *Nancy Alexander*

Artishow, the brainchild of Barbara Adams and Kerry Liggins, is a collaboration of local visual artists and five inner harbour hotels. I participated as a result of responding to the invitation to be juried that was circulated to Guild Members by Betty Burroughs (*note from Editor - one good reason to read ALL the emails Betty sends*). The hotels provided a venue where the artists could showcase their work. Forty local artists took part in Plein Air events from June to September. The artists set up at tables stationed around the hotel grounds. On windy or rainy days it was best to be a clay artist.

Many of the artists spent time in a hotel as an Artist in Residence (this program ran from May to December and the artists would spend up to a month in the hotel). I spent November and the first week of December in the lobby of the Grand Pacific Hotel. The hotel provided space, a poster advertising my residency, storage, parking and a good deal on lunch. Staff helped me with setup and take down.



This was my workspace where I went 5 days a week. I set up my wheel, threw, turned, trimmed and decorated pots. AND I talked to lots of people. Small children and often their parents would sit cross legged in the middle of the lobby to watch the clay transform.

A surprising number of people have had some experience with the wheel, thus appreciate the difficulty of throwing and still have the desire to play with clay. Wood carvers loved to compare their techniques to mine. I met people from different cultures, the regulars from the health club and of course the hotel staff.

All of these were interested, asked questions, shared suggestions and appreciated my efforts. That doesn't happen working alone in my home studio!

I was stationed across from the conference rooms and would have expected that participants would come over when they had a break but I was pretty well invisible to this group as blackberries and iphones were taken out or small groups formed for networking.

The residency took time and some planning but also, provided a great opportunity to have a conversation about making pottery and to meet many fascinating people.

Nancy Alexander

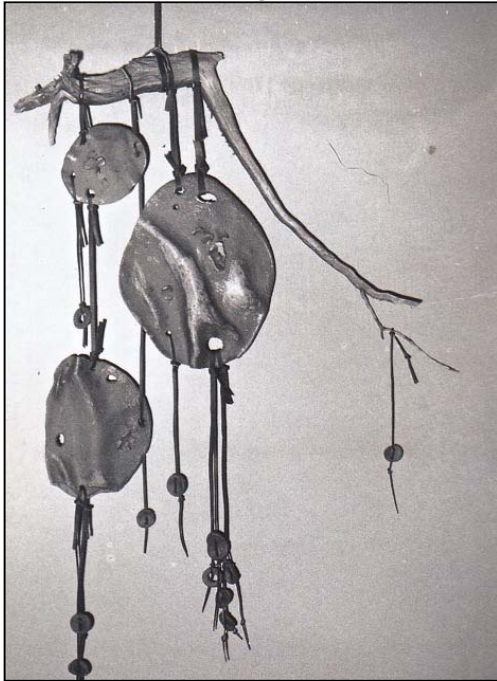


### **A Timely Tip – Healing Cracked Fingers**

For those of us who suffer from cracked finger tips during the cold weather, Dr. Paul Donohue in the Times Colonist gives a couple of remedies: Cover your fingertips with petroleum jelly, then wrap them firmly with adhesive bandage. Apply a second bandage at right angles to the first and be sure the bandage is firmly in place. Do this at night and in daytime, too, if you can. It should be done for three consecutive days. Another method has been suggested by a reader who had experimented with different creams. She found that Nexcare medicated bandages solved her problem.

*Betty Burroughs*

## More – ‘Clay and ...’



The program in January has struck a chord with Guild Members. **Sophia Morrison** sent the following photos of her work in wood, clay and leather.



### Poem of the Month - Feldspars

Feldspars are full  
of alkali flux,  
plus silica and alumina.  
Oh what luck!

They're already joined,  
those main three –  
melter plus glass former  
and stabilizer, I see.

All three components  
that make up a glaze,  
found together in one.  
Are you amazed?

This makes them special  
since they have all three . . .  
“glaze cores” we might call ‘em,  
so important they be.

For alkali flux oxides  
we do have three –  
lithia, soda and potash,  
as you will see.

Those alkali oxides,  
it has been told,  
if used as carbonates  
are quite soluble.

But feldspars and frits  
provide *insoluble* ways  
to add alkali oxides  
into the glaze.

Feldspars have alkalis  
already combined  
with silica and alumina,  
which makes them so fine.

Four more feldspathoids  
from which to choose . . .  
With so many options,  
which one do I use?

**Cornwall stone** has soda,  
potash and calica too.  
While **nepheline syenite**  
has LOTS of soda for you!

Pair number three  
has lithia galore –  
**petalite** has some,  
but **spodumene** has more.

Feldspars come from nature,  
while frits are man-made:  
both can supply alkalis  
which make the grade.

The feldspar family  
is such an important one . . .  
there is hardly a glaze  
that doesn't have some

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## Two Members' Experience:

### Somerset House –

#### *Joy Finlay & Louise Parsons*

The very last day of November, Joy and Louise brought the fun of playing with clay to residents of Somerset House, a retirement community on Dallas Road in Victoria.

After listening to a brief presentation about the South Vancouver Island Potters' Guild and each of the presenter's work, attendees were given the opportunity to get their hands dirty making small slab forms decorated with impressed designs and coloured clay.

As you can see, the women attending enjoyed themselves immensely – as did Joy and Louise.



The morning was successful as an outreach opportunity for the Guild, engaging and teaching those attending and was a fun time for both residents and the presenters.

## Titanium Tips

*submitted by Betty Burroughs*

Titanium in the form of rutile is most refractory. When washes of rutile are used over glazes pin-holing may occur. I use a mix of Gerstley Borate (or colemanite) and rutile for washes over glazes. The mix I use is a traditional mix of 60 parts Gerstley Borate/Colemanite and 40 parts Rutile. The flux helps to prevent pin-holing.

Bill Merrill

A form of rutile was used on the bottoms of Chinese pots to prevent the pieces from sticking to a shelf. Victor Babu makes a circle of rutile in the foot area of his platters to prevent the porcelain from sticking, should the inside of the platters' foot warp and touch the kiln shelf.

Bill Merrill

I use Titanium (a purer form of rutile) and gerstley borate 1:1 all the time - it really promotes crystal growth both in electric and gas. Need to spray though and not get it too thick. I often overspray whatever glaze I am using. Also works great with all the Steven Hill glazes as another bit of overspray here and there. Great over licorice at cone 6.

Eva Gallagher

Deep River, Ontario <http://newfoundoutpotter.blogspot.com/>

## Upcoming Events

# ORTON CONE BOX SHOW

2012 International Juried Show & Exhibition

### DEADLINE FOR ENTRY JUNE 18, 2012

- maximum 2 entries per person
- work must be 50% clay
- entry fee is \$35 US
- each piece must fit in a Large Orton Cone Box (3" x 3" x 6")
- all pieces must be for sale & no more than \$200 per piece

For more information & entry form:  
<http://www.coneboxshow.com/entry/>

## Upcoming Events



Storm on the Mountain by Gail Nichols

### Winter Ceramics Workshop A Day with Gail Nichols

Australian ceramic artist Gail Nichols is known internationally for her innovative approach to soda vapour glazing and is the author of "Soda, Clay and Fire", the leading text in the field. She opens this workshop with a presentation of images and a talk about her work, then proceeds with throwing demonstrations and informal discussion. (This event is included in the fee for those students registered in the firing workshop, "Soda In The Fire" with Gail Nichols)

\$50 Early bird fee until March 1, 2012, (\$65 after March 1), 1 session  
No refunds after March 1  
Wednesday, April 4, 10am-4pm 265484

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### Teaware from the Edge Workshop

**Presenters:** Jeff Shapiro, Richard Milgrim, Inayoshi Osamu & Rob Fornell

Saturday March 31 2-8 pm &

Sunday April 1 10 am – 4pm

(Following the NCECA Conference)

Early registration \$165, after Feb. 24<sup>th</sup>  
\$190

Information & Registration: **Rick Mahaffey:**  
[rmahaffey@tacomacc.edu](mailto:rmahaffey@tacomacc.edu) or  
**253-566-5260**

Tacoma Community College, Building 5,  
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### Discussion Group with Mary Fox

**April 15<sup>th</sup> 2012**

at her studio in Ladysmith

Contact Mary for more information:

<http://www.maryfoxpottery.ca/>  
<http://www.facebook.com/MaryFoxPottery>

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Great new items in stock for texture on clay such as: Amaco rollers, Mayco designer stamps, wooden rollers, star cutters, ribs, haxe tool, paddles, alphabet and number stamps, rasps, slip trailers, etc.

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\$10 per issue  
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**Sale announcements, events,  
classified ads:**

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contact editor at:  
eartharts@me.com

### Guild at a Glance

... is the newsletter for the South Vancouver Island Potters Guild.

It is published monthly, September through June, and is available on line at: [www.victoriapotters.ca](http://www.victoriapotters.ca)

Articles and items of interest to members are welcome and will be included as space permits.

Items for inclusion are best emailed to the editor, Louise P, at: [eartharts@shaw.ca](mailto:eartharts@shaw.ca)


#### SUBMISSION DEADLINE

The earlier submissions are received, the more likely there will be room to include them. Our meetings are held the second Monday of each month. Be kind to the editor, please send items for inclusion before the

#### FIRST MONDAY OF EACH MONTH

#### Newsletter Staff

program writer: Nancy A. 250-479-8559  
editor: Louise P. 250-655-3811



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