

# Guild at a Glance

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

November 14, 2011

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

Volume 13, Issue 3

## October's Meeting – 'Smoke Firing at Muriel's'

Although the topic of the presentation was smoke firing, **Muriel Sibley** gave us a very clear view of a master teacher. Muriel invited her students to participate, valued all of their insights and involved the audience - eliciting many stories and helpful hints.

The challenge for her students was to produce a sculpture that illustrated a story that had personal meaning. The sculpture needed to demonstrate or evoke an emotion. The students worked with heavily grogged Plainsman clay. Once their sculpture was complete it was bisque fired to cone 06. Tinfoil was used to cover areas that the artist wanted left untouched by the smoke or fire.

Individual firing bins large enough to hold a single sculpture were constructed out of bricks. Salvaged electric kiln wiring was laid down first to form a simple platform to keep the piece off the ground. Sawdust shavings and chips were piled around and over the piece. Kindling was laid over top with shredded newspaper. Any obvious chinks were filled with grogged clay before closing the firing bin.

The newspaper was lit and once the sawdust ignited a kiln shelf was placed over top. The fires were lit around 2:00 pm and continued to burn until morning. Once cooled the sculptures were removed, admired and painted with Pledge (acrylic floor cleaner). Ideally 5 coats are painted on to preserve and 'polish' the sculpture.

*continued on page 2*



**The next Guild Meeting is**

**MONDAY**

**December 12<sup>th</sup>**

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

**4733 West Saanich Road**

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

**Smoke Firing at Muriel's** continued

The grand finale: each artist told the story of their sculpture.

**Heidi Roemer's** told the story of The Princess and the Pea - the princess being a cat! **Fern Walker's** was How the Raven Stole the Sun. **Belle Leon's** story was an African tale about a rabbit trickster and a pair of scissors. **Judie Hancock** sculpted a Greek myth of a punished couple changing into entwined trees. **Rosemary Neering** illustrated The Ark that Sank with the moral that its good to have nine lives (*I wonder if a new story will soon be published*). **Adrienne Aikens** told us about The Owl and the Pussycat. **Pam Truscott-White** told a tale of a jumping mouse, raccoon, bison and frog and **Muriel Sibley's** represented a fairytale - Rose Red and Snow White.

Thank you Muriel and your fellow artists.

*Submitted by Nancy Alexander*



**Some HINTS that came out of this discussion:**

- to produce more colours in smoking, use soda or copper (even copper wire scraps have been used). Roger wrapped his pieces tightly in Christmas wrap (apparently the cheaper the wrap you use, the better the colours).
- Epoxy Putty Repair (Repairit Quik ~\$15/tube) repaired an unicorn horn. The putty can be coloured with oxides or oil paint. Take care when handling!
- wax thin parts of the sculpture to prevent drying too quickly.

*continued on page 3*

# We Appreciate Our BETTY!

To show our appreciation to Betty Burroughs, we celebrated her Birthday with good wishes, a song, and a cake at the October Guild Meeting.

Betty has been the Guild Registrar for twelve years, as well as doing her share as President. With her emails she faithfully keeps us all informed on the coming and goings of Guild activities and the Victoria Art Community.



She is the heart and soul of our Guild and we thank her.



Photos & Text Submitted by Rachel Coward

## Your 2011-2012 Executive

President	Penny J.	1-250-715-1403
Vice-Pres	Nancy W.	250-479-3524
Secretary	Farida Mawji	1+250-733-2161
Treasurer	Linda V.	250-479-5966
Archivist	Fern W.	250-744-1096
Library	Helen P.	250-383-5808
Membership	Betty B.	250-382-0974
Newsletter:		
writer	Nancy A.	250-479-8559
editor	Louise P.	250-655-3811
Webmaster	Deb C.	dlclay@shaw.ca
Program Coordinators:		
	Helen P.	250-383-5808
	Rosemary N.	250-477-7032
	Muriel S.	250-652-5494
Raffle	Ester G.	250-658-4523
	Tobias T.	250-383-3893
Coffee	Priska S.	250-642-7422
	Nancy W.	250-479-3524

## *Hints from this month's discussion* continued

- precious metal clay can be used to add special features. Be warned it is expensive. Can be found at The Rockhound Shop (Cloverdale and Blanshard).
- your dentist may be a less expensive source of some precious clay (fillings material) and also mould making material.

Submitted by Nancy Alexander

### ***Did You Know?***

This is the second in a series that will present topics of interest to those of us who work with clay which may serve a number of purposes to Guild members – providing new information, reminding us of processes we learned in the past but no longer practice, or even making us feel good because the topic just isn't a problem for us.

If you disagree with the content of these – or if you have experiences of your own – please respond to [eartharts@me.com](mailto:eartharts@me.com)

Your response will be published in the next Guild newsletter.

## **This month's Focus: Minimizing Cracking and Warping – Part II of III**

adapted from a 1997 article by  
John Hesselberth

Last month some of the reasons clay warps and cracks as it dries and is fired were presented.

The purpose of John's article is to suggest guidelines that would be helpful in reducing the likelihood of this happening – ways to change our processes so as to mitigate these problems.

In October the issues of non-uniform drying and pieces with sharp corners were covered. This month we continue with issues and their mitigations.

# 3. Too Rapid or Uneven Firing or Cooling - This is analogous to too rapid or uneven drying of the clay. The potential for developing unacceptable levels of stress and the resulting cracking or warping that occurs is the same. Clay is again giving off water and/or is shrinking during the firing process. Rapidity of firing most always results in uneven firing, but rapidity is not its only possible cause.

#### Mitigations

- fire kilns full – if it is necessary to fire a partial load, place pots in the centre section of the kiln and use kiln furniture and extra shelves to 'fill' the top and bottom sections.
- check the elements of electric kilns and the burners of gas kilns to ensure they are all working equally well.
- load all kilns evenly – distribute pots equidistant on kiln shelves, keep pieces at least 1 inch away from side walls and supports, allow at least 1 inch clearance between the top of pots and the kiln shelf above them.
- the most obvious thing to try is to slow down. Double the firing time (or electronically adjust your firing schedule) and see if there is a significant difference.

#4. Bubbles of Air - can cause cracks; although they are probably not involved in warping. Bubbles result in weak points in the pot's structure. They also result in points of stress concentration. Therefore a level of stress buildup that might be tolerated in a bubble free pot can result in a crack in the area where a bubble is present. The bottom of the pot is usually the most vulnerable area and, therefore, particular attention should be paid in this area. Even if clay is wedged to a bubble free state, it is possible to trap a bubble of air between the wheelhead and the clay when the clay is put on the wheel, or between two slabs joined in a hand built piece. This is one cause of cracking that can sometimes be seen. Break the pot along the crack as carefully and examine the shards for a void that is bigger than the crack alone would have caused.

#### Mitigations

- wedge clay thoroughly to remove trapped air, particularly if you are using recycled scrap. While learning to wedge, check clay regularly by cutting it with a wire (not a bad idea to do this occasionally once you're experienced too).
- whenever putting clay on a hard surface (such as the wheelhead before throwing or when joining two slabs tabletop), do so forcefully and slightly round the face of the clay that will contact the hard surface so that air won't be trapped.
- when hand building, take care not to trap air when smoothing or adding coils or when joining slabs.

*To be continued next month*

## Library Update

I am happy to announce that we have **SEVEN** new additions to the library on order – all are expected to arrive by mid November – I've fingers crossed we have them in time for our November meeting on November 14th. Content includes handbuilding, decorating through layered surfaces, raku and a variety of technique and 'tricks of the trade', so I'm hoping all will find something for their interest – If you have any areas not covered, let me know and I'll keep a sharp eye out for future acquisition once the library is allotted further funds. I'm happy to have any help in scouting the internet for new sources, especially for discount priced items.

Those who would like to preview the content of the new additions; you can find details at the following website <http://ceramicartsdaily.org/bookstore/>. I have one 'hold' on # 7 on the list (if you make a suggestion that results in an order, you get first 'dibs' on the loan!). I'm happy to create hold lists – I'll have a hold request list at the library table for others who would like to be sure to get a look at these new additions. Holds will only be for the meeting the book is returned, so if you can't make the meeting, be sure to ask a friend to check for any holds you may have on library items.

1. *Lively Forms & Expressive Surfaces with Mark Peters (DVD)*
2. *The Potter's Encyclopedia of Colour, Form and Decoration*
3. *Slab Techniques*
4. *Hot Damn! Pottree by Don Ellis and Randy Brodnax (DVD)*
5. *Electric Firing: Creative Techniques*
6. *Variations on Raku - Gordon Hutchens (DVD)*
7. *Layered Surfaces with Erin Furimsky (DVD)*

As well as these new items – we have over many other great DVD's, Books and for those who kept their VCR players, lots of videos. You can scan the collection inventory by book title, author or category on the Guild website and then once you know the registration number you can locate the item in the baskets on the stage.

Volunteers to help with displaying the books, putting them away after the meeting and keeping them in registration number order are always welcome.

Helen Pedneault ([Helen.pedneault@shaw.ca](mailto:Helen.pedneault@shaw.ca))

Guild Librarian



**IAA**

*Island Artisans Association*

*Presents:* **Gifts** for myself and others











Fri Nov. 18	Noon - 8pm
Sat Nov. 19	10am - 6pm
Sun Nov. 20	11am - 5pm

**da Vinci Centre**  
195 Bay Street, Victoria

event pass \$4,  
\$1 off with foodbank item

# Belle Leon at the Coast Collective Show



a celebration of  
fine crafts, artisan food  
& the decorative arts

at the Crystal Gardens  
Victoria, BC, Canada

**OUT**  
*of* **HAND**

*the 23rd annual artisan fair  
november 25th thru 27th, 2011*





" This one is for Souper Bowls",  
announced Annie, Rachel Coward's  
Granddaughter visiting from Calgary !

## 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@me.com](mailto:eartharts@me.com)

### 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.**

## TIPS

From Alan Burgess at the 2011 MISSA course:

1. To repair or add additional glaze on an already fired pot – add acrylic medium (purchase at any art supply store) to a small amount of glaze – ½ to 1 teaspoon of medium to 3 oz of glaze. The glaze will instantly thicken and can be brushed on to the pot. Apply 5 to 6 layers, allowing time to dry between layers. Be careful not to brush second and subsequent coats more than once on one spot or the underneath layer will begin to shift.
2. To stabilize unfired glaze to make it more accepting of added decoration, spray the surface of the raw glaze with hair spray before attempting further decoration.
3. To clean wax off brushes (which are only used for waxing), keep the brushes in water while waxing, when done waxing, put small amount of baby oil in palm of hand, shake excess water from the brush and then work brush into baby oil till you can see wax coming through.

Shared by Helen Pedneault

## Earthword Creative

— development services —  
for artists & writers —

⇒ custom website design and  
implementation including WordPress

⇒ social media assistance

⇒ print design & formatting from  
postcards to books and eBooks

⇒ consultation and information to  
create a presence on the web

— contact Deb Clay —  
[design@earthwordcreative.com](mailto:design@earthwordcreative.com)  
[www.earthwordcreative.com](http://www.earthwordcreative.com)



# Victoria Clay Art

654 Burnside Road W.  
Victoria BC V8Z 1M8  
250 384-3831

As of June 1st, 2009  
**VICTORIA CLAY ART**  
Will be in its new location at:

**654 Burnside Road West**

Please visit our new store where we  
Will continue to offer:

- A wide variety of Clay
- Glazes
- Pottery and sculpting tools
- Kiln and wheel sales/service
- Kiln firing
- Chemicals, and
- Other art supplies.

## ADVERTIZING RATES

Business card size (2" X 3 1/2") :  
\$10 per issue  
or  
\$75 for 10 issues

Quarter page ad (3 1/2" x 4 3/4") :  
\$20 per issue  
or  
\$150 for 10 issues

**Sale announcements, events,  
classified ads:**

**FREE**

contact editor at:  
[eartharts@me.com](mailto:eartharts@me.com)

*When you shop*

**PLEASE MENTION TO  
OUR ADVERTISERS**

that you saw their ad  
in the  
**Guild  
Newsletter!**

## Vancouver Island *Potters Supply*

*Your top source for pottery supplies on Vancouver Island*

**Now 4 convenient ways to shop!**  
In person Monday to Friday 9 am- 4 pm  
By Phone 250-248-2314  
Email [vipsclay@hotmail.com](mailto:vipsclay@hotmail.com)  
Fax 250-248-2318

*Special Offer*  
50% Discount on Shipping Charges  
for orders over 450 lbs  
now only \$40.00 for SVIPG members



Visit our website at:  
[www.pottersupply.com](http://www.pottersupply.com)

#2 1009 Herring Gull Way  
Parksville, BC, V9P 2N1  
**Open Monday to Friday  
9 am – 4 pm**