

Guild at a Glance

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

March 11, 2013

www.victoriapotters.ca

Volume 14 Issue 7

February's Meeting – Michael Giles

Esther introduced us to Michael Giles, a new member of the Potters' Guild. If you want to see what Michael is doing and creating in his studio, go to his website: <http://www.michaelgilespottery.com/>

It is loaded with information about his pottery and his pots. There are beautiful pictures, which explain the many techniques he uses.

We were very lucky that night to meet Michael, the person. Michael is not only a potter, but also a poet and philosopher. It was enlightening to listen to him explaining his approach to making pots.

How do you become a potter?

It helps to have talent and luck in the first place.

But according to Wayne Ngan, "art is practice".

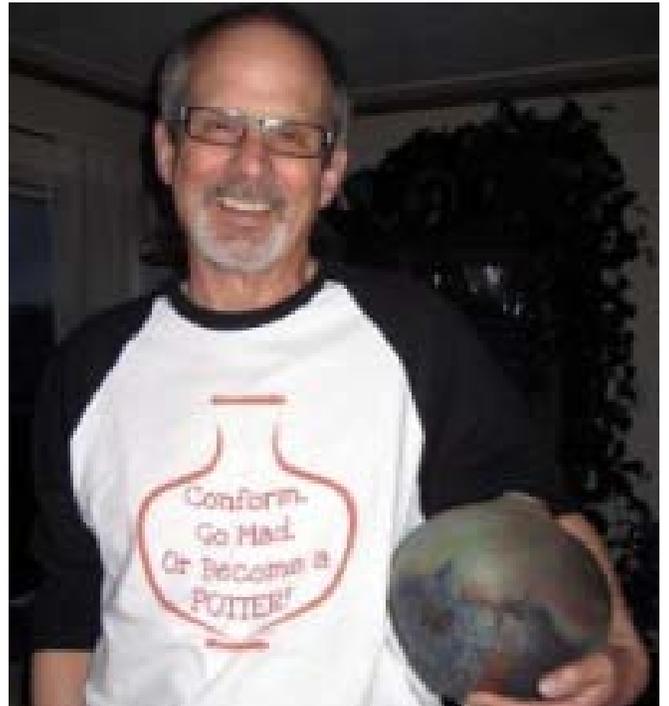
Michael told the episode of his first experience as a potter's apprentice with Wayne. He, Michael, had laboured all day long to produce 50 tea bowls, only to have them smashed (inadvertently?) by the great master at the end of the day.

How do you start to make a pot?

Identify what are you trying to say. Take a meditative approach, take a deep breath and observe what comes to mind.

Be a careful observer of your environment! Make a note of what you notice! For example, Michael told us he notices: the visual impact of graffiti; written languages like Arabic, Japanese or Chinese, which are beautifully graphic, although most of us don't understand the meaning; textures of any kind. Michael calls them "remnants of touch", i.e. natural, industrial, human.

continued on page 2



The next Guild Meeting is

Monday

April 8th

7:30 St. Michael's

Anglican Church

4733 West Saanich Road

Don't forget the

Raffle !

Give your art purpose to have a positive effect in every relationship. It can be achieved, for example, through humour, mystery, touch .

Relationships matter, not only on a personal level, but also with the material you work with clay! Relationships can be:

- informal
- spontaneous
- inquisitive
- risk taking
- discerning
- reciprocal "give and take"

Michael mentioned many artists, mainly potters, who influenced his life and approach to pottery. Besides Wayne Ngan, they were: Simon Henson, a photographer; Hans Coper; Yanagi; Leach; Hamada; Warren McKenzie; Lucie Rie; Phil Rogers; Robert Archaemia; Kayo O'Young; and Harlan House.

There are two phrases, which I want to commit to memory:

- informality of profiling
- perfect imperfection

I shall recall them every time I desperately try to erase my finger prints and accidental marks from my work. I shall look at those irregularities again in a different light. They might be what brings my art to life and provides it with a unique touch.

Thank you, Michael, for your intimate view on making pots from "the inside out"!



text submitted by Heidi R.

photos unabashedly stolen by the Editor from <http://www.michaelgilespottery.com/>

Coming in April – Cathi Jefferson

In April Cathi will talk to us about her experience at the **Medalta Clay Residency Program**. She'll be talking about what it was like to work on a creative project over a focused period of time. (Sounds like Heaven to the Editor)

Cathi is 'one of us' a SVIPG member – but one of the BEST of us – a full time professional potter and a wonderful presenter.

The topic of Cathi's presentation is timely. The deadline for applications to Medalta's 2013 Residency Program is April 15th (see 'Upcoming Events' later in this newsletter). Please consider applying.

NOTE: To enhance her presentation Cathi needs to use a digital projector. Would anyone who is willing to provide one for the April meeting please contact Muriel Sibley at 250-652-5434.

Members 'Away' – Joan Kagan



Hola from Puerto Vallarta Mexico

This was a fascinating visit. The family of Dona Rosa, one of many in this village, has been making black pottery (Barro Negro), and the pots reflect generations using the same methods and absolutely no manufactured equipment. This pot was made very quickly! (and he spoke no English, so although we had an English speaking guide, I couldn't ask all the questions I had) It's fired once and the pots are all very inexpensive.

Joan Kagan



Barro Negro pottery, San Bartolo Coyotepec, outside Oaxaca Mexico

Sometimes We Just Need a Little Encouragement

And, thanks to Betty, we'll have it this month. The poem at left is called *"It Couldn't Be Done But He Did It"* and is by **Edgar Albert Guest**. As Betty says it 'could well apply to potters' (the Editor agrees).

Somebody said that it couldn't be done,
 But, he with a chuckle replied
 That "maybe it couldn't," but he would be one
 Who wouldn't say so till he'd tried.
 So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin
 On his face. If he worried he hid it.
 He started to sing as he tackled the thing
 That couldn't be done, and he did it.

Somebody scoffed: "Oh, you'll never do that;
 At least no one has done it";
 But he took off his coat and he took off his hat,
 And the first thing we knew he'd begun it.
 With a lift of his chin and a bit of a grin,
 Without any doubting or quiddit,
 He started to sing as he tackled the thing
 That couldn't be done, and he did it.

There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done,
 There are thousands to prophesy failure;
 There are thousands to point out to you one by one,
 The dangers that wait to assail you.
 But just buckle it in with a bit of a grin,
 Just take off your coat and go to it;
 Just start to sing as you tackle the thing
 That "couldn't be done," and you'll do it.

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Upcoming Events

CLAYWORKS

5-8 pm **April 5**, 10am-4pm **April 6-7** at
Mary Winspear Centre,
2243 Beacon Ave, Sidney

Annual pottery show and sale featuring functional, decorative and sculptural work by Tony Mochizuki, Beth Mcmillin, Meira Mathison, Linda Vigliotti, Debbie Elkins, Sandra Dolph, Andre Gogol and Ester Galac and their guests Julie MacKinnon, Melissa Searcy, Kasumi Lapitoc, and Jane Murray-Smith.

Free admission, wheelchair accessible
for more info: [250 658 4523](tel:2506584523)



Medalta Artists In Residence 2013 - Deadline April 15th

At its core, Medalta's residency program is about bringing artists together in an environment that promotes creativity through community. The residency concept creates an opportunity for ceramists – who, for the most part, work individually – to re-enter a community atmosphere and take part in a rejuvenating dialogue, while working with like-minded artists. Our program seeks to benefit artists at all stages of their career, from students, to established artists. Each resident brings a wide variety of technical and aesthetic skills to the experience.

Applications can be found at: <http://medalta.org/miair/residency-application>

CLAY IN MOTION A Guild Workshop with James Hibbert

10 am 'till 4 pm

Saturday April 20 & Sunday April 21

at the Strawberry Vale Hall

(11 High Street View Royal – off Burnside near Helmecken)

**Guild members \$70, Non-Guild members \$85
(or \$100 to include a membership to the Guild)**

Pot-luck lunch each day

For more information or to register, contact:

Linda Vigliotti

Make cheques payable to SVIPG - pay at the meeting or send to
345 Hector Road, Victoria V9E 2C3
For more information phone: 250-479-5966



Vasefinder International 2013

Tobias suggested we take note of the announcement of prizes for the 8th Annual Vasefinder International competition – and I’m really glad I took a moment to check out their site. Pieces not only displayed an incredible range of technique and aesthetic, but were made by potters from around the world. Vasefinder is an interesting phenomenon, an ‘altruistic’ forum for marketing clay work. Three entrants are well known by SVIPG folks – Judy Weeden, Robin Hopper and Judi Dyelle. Go to <http://vasefinder.com/vi.2013.home.html> to see who won prizes and check out the entries.

An Opinion AND A Quiz

Any guesses as to which year of Ceramics Monthly provided the following quote?

“I went through a metaphysical quartz inversion upon reading *****’s statement about the basic dignity of clay in the March **** ‘Letters’. Clay is only a material and not actually sacred; how we work with clay is only a method and not sacred either. And what we produce are only possibilities – miniscule variants which for the most part will become valuable only as contributions to area landfill projects. We are all on common ground; we work with clay. Art/craft, funk/functional, it doesn’t matter. What we don’t have in common is attitude. So why do some insist that everything look like it jumped off a wheel and others that objects be tripple-dipped, chrome-plated, flocked, 78 inches tall, or untitled?” *Daniel Keegan, Lamoni, Iowa*

You’ll find the answer on page 7.

When guessing, keep in mind that it seems some things NEVER change. *Editor*

Then AND Now Louise Parsons

Through the last 40 + years one thing hasn’t changed – Louise LOVES getting her hands dirty.

Another is that through

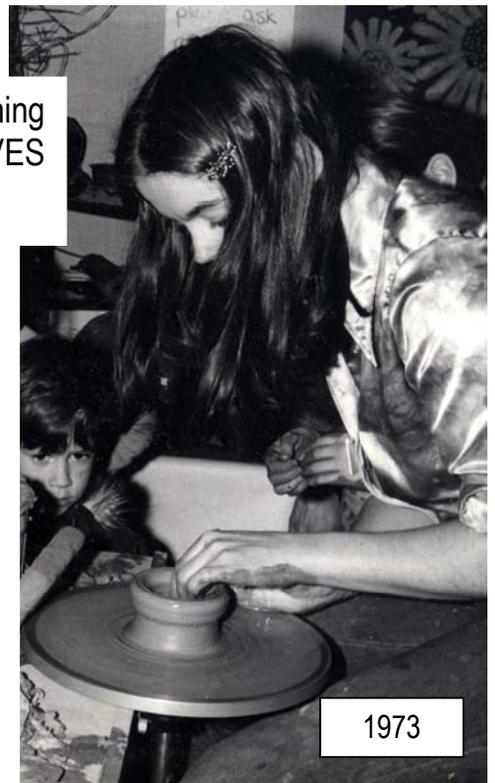
- ← thin and thick →
- ← electric or kick wheel →
- ← age and youth →
- ← oxidation or reduction →

she has continued to focus on making functional stoneware pottery.

It does seem some things NEVER change – and she says thank goodness for that!



2013



1973

Members 'Away' – Rosemary Neering

The small town of Avanos, in Turkey's Cappadocia region, is well-known for its ceramics, an art that began here with the Hittite people some 5000 years ago, and continues today in small and larger workshops. Almost every tour through the region stops at one of these workshops, for a look at how the pottery is made and decorated, and, of course, a chance to buy the product. These photographs are from a 2009 visit to Vanessa Ceramics.

The tour guide and experienced potter demonstrates the use of a traditional kick wheel.



Trimming a casserole.



Painting the black base rim on a Hittite-style wine jug.



A completed plate.



Our purchase: a ceramic goat, a reproduction of an ancient Hittite pottery piece. produced under license from the museum at Ankara



Artisans paint the intricate designs that the region is known for.



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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

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

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

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vcart@shaw.ca

We're now stocking heavy duty canvas from Pakistan. Great for making wareboards or wedding tables. \$8.95 per yard.

Custom wareboards are available as well, call for details.

Dirty Girl pottery tools available including foot fetish, wiggle wire and oak angle wood tools. These make great stocking stuffers.

We have tea pot handles from England, finest quality cane sized from 3" to 8". Great selection, priced from \$5.75 to \$12.95 each.

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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