

Guild at a Glance

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

May 13, 2013

www.victoriapotters.ca

Volume 14 Issue 8

April's Meeting – Cathi Jefferson in Residence at Medalta

At the April 8 meeting, Cathy Jefferson took us on a tour to Medicine Hat, the location of the former Medalta Stoneware manufacturing plant.

After production stopped, the buildings were left abandoned, but declared a heritage site in 1976.

Who would have known, that Medalta was once the biggest producer of stoneware crocks, bricks, sewer pipes and chimney flues in Canada (1912)?

There were reasons why the plant was established in this location:

- a deep deposit of clay along the South Saskatchewan River
- natural gas available as fuel for the kilns
- location on the railroad line

The output at one time was enormous, 80 000 bricks/day, 24 000 sewer pipes/day (1909)!

The focus shifted slightly over the years responding to demand, i. e. gingerbeer bottles, or pots for army kits in WW I.

Eventually the demand dried up with many items replaced by glass (bottles and crocks). Also people were asking for more artistic, colourful pottery.

Then Philips found a white clay, and the production of hotel ware started. Toilet bowls was another item produced on site.

Medalta was bought by a Vancouver company. It operates under the name "Hycroft".

In the early 1970's Plainsman started making and marketing clay.

Cathy showed many pictures of the old plant. Much of the original machinery is still there

Many of the old moulds have been preserved in the "archives" of Medalta, also samples of the different products manufactured over the years.

The next Guild Meeting is

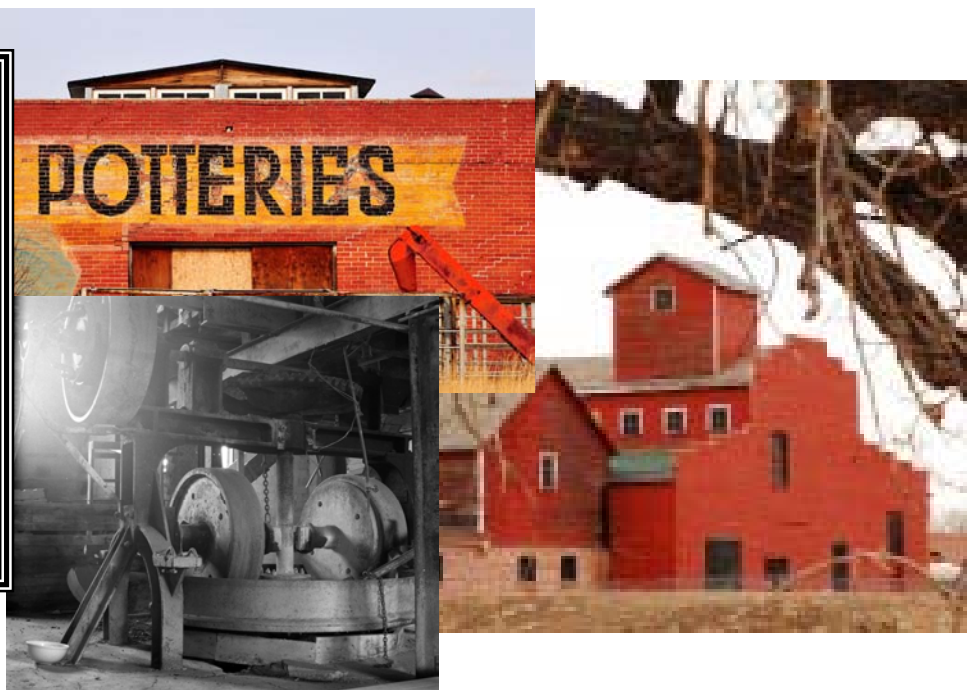
Monday

June 10th

7:30 St. Michael's
Anglican Church

4733 West Saanich Road

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



Medalta is of interest , because of the residency program for potters, which ranges from a week to one year. One can sign up for a wide range of programs from history to geology etc. Accommodation is available. There is a big teaching area, studios, kilns including a salt and soda kiln and a workshop with bleachers for observers.

More information is available at: <http://medalta.org/miair>

Another revelation were the pictures of the landscape around Medicine Hat, the South Saskatchewan River valley and sculptured rocks.

Thank you, Cathy, for a most informative talk!

*text by Heidi Roemer
photos by Tom Hamilton*



SMART (NEE WRIGHT), Patricia (Pat)

November 25, 1933 – April 13, 2013

After a long career at the University of Washington; years as a National Figure Skating Judge; countless volunteer and member positions involving the Arts and Community; Jazzercise and Dragonboating on the IBS team; Pat, Surrounded by family and friends in a circle of music and love, "judged" her final performance. She was well pleased and peacefully passed away.

Pat is survived by her son Loren and gransons Kent & Aaron & great granddaughter Emelia. She will be sadly missed but always remembered with much love and respect by her loving extensive family and friends.

"We watched her go through the gateway wide, as she passed in peace to the bright side."

=====
Guild members will be sorry to hear of the death of Pat Smart. She had been an enthusiastic and supportive member of the Guild when she was in good health. She helped on one of the first guild sales held at Horticulture Centre of the Pacific, and was always interested in the clay process. She was involved in many of the first workshops held by the Guild.

Penny Jones



Celebrating Local Artists: Belle Leon, Ceramic Artist

It seems a long journey from being a lecturer in zoology and medical physiology at the University of Cape Town in South Africa to being a ceramic artist in Victoria with a studio close to Esquimalt Lagoon and a house in Gorge Tillicum.

This, in any case, is Belle Leon's journey, and it's a journey with some very interesting stops on the way.

Belle was born in Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. Early in life she developed a love for expeditions into the bush, and it was this love that led her to South Africa to earn a PhD in zoology and a degree in medical physiology and then to a career as a lecturer and scientific researcher. A different impulse—an impulse for social justice during the era of apartheid—led her also to work in an academic support program for black students in UCT's Medical School.

When she married Gabe Epstein, and moved to Toronto, it was her work in this program that led her to work at the University of Toronto in the Transitional Year Program, an access program for marginalized students who had left high school without university qualifications. While she was working in this program, she was also working with ceramics in a cooperative pottery studio. Her love for clay and artistic creativity prompted her to shift careers into becoming a full-time potter. Inspired by an intensive ceramics course at the Haliburton School of the Arts, she did make the shift, and when she and Gabe arrived in Victoria four or so years ago, she immediately sought a space where she could set up a ceramics studio. This she found at the Coast Collective Gallery in Colwood.

I was curious about the seeming distance between lecturer in zoology and full-time potter, but the more I talked to Belle about her work, the less this distance seemed to be. For, it was being in nature that originally drew Belle to zoology, and her pots are full of references to nature,



to the animal and plant kingdoms. These references sometimes appear as abstract designs such as seascapes, a tree or mountain design on a set of dinner plates, or they might appear as representations of animals directly painted on a bowl, a sculptural piece with free standing elephant and hippo, or versions of seed pods.



I'm about to ask my usual local artist question about the significance of Gorge Tillicum for her, when seeing a set of bowls with painted seals and waves, and a jug with a blue-green marine pattern starts to answer the question. Belle says she's always inspired by nature, and it's the Gorge that has provided the inspiration for a number of her pots.

I ask a question about how one of these marine painting effects was achieved, and am immediately deluged with references to underglazing, multiple glazings, low firings, naked raku and the like. Belle takes the technical component of pottery extremely seriously. A large part of her work is functional pottery—bowls, cups, plates and the like—but she plays with how such forms can be decorated in exploratory ways. So she describes herself as a ceramic artist with a decorative focus. But I see another way of describing her, because I suddenly see that the scientist she was earlier in life hasn't disappeared at all, but has become transmuted into a researcher into the use of glaze chemicals to achieve varied surface effects.

And so, if the scientist hasn't disappeared, I wonder, as my final question, whether the big city dweller in her is still there, and if so, how that part finds living in the distinctly small city atmosphere of Gorge Tillicum and Victoria. And what about the part of her that was so interested in equality in a multi-ethnic society? Her answer is a mixed one. She does miss the multi-ethnic diversity of a city like Toronto. So, one of her strong wishes for this area is that the various ethnicities here have more of an overt presence. But, on the other hand, the close presence of nature in Gorge-Tillicum and Victoria in general is an important advantage of this part of the world, in her view. And so the animals, terrestrial and marine, and trees and bushes will continue to flourish on her pots, to the pleasure of people like myself (who have several of them) and many others.

— Chris Bullock

THE 14th ANNUAL LOOK SHOW

Community Arts Exhibition, April 11- 27, 2013

The Bay Centre, 1150 Douglas Street 3rd Floor

Featuring over 420 pieces of original works by local artists in two large galleries.



And some of the winners were:

Island Artisan Association – “Excellence in Craft”
TOBIAS TOMLINSON ‘Quilted Blue’

South Vancouver Island Potter’s Guild
LIBBY WRAY ‘Untitled’

CONGRATULATIONS!

They Did It! – We Helped!

Cathi Jefferson wrote recently to tell us about successful work on The Clay Hub in the Cowichan Valley:

“A recent provincial grant that the SVIPG so kindly supported has changed everything! We were awarded the grant for the total amount we requested: \$50,000. We can now get plumbing, electrical, walls built and the floor resurfaced all to local code standards. It’s hard to believe but the hope is that come this Sept. we will actually be able to start functioning as a real local clay center with lessons and people dropping in to make their own work.

Over the summer we will be volunteering to build shelves and do whatever we can to make the space in to a functioning studio. We have been collecting used clay studio equipment and materials but still in need of many things and hope that you can help us further. We still need to raise some funds for some equipment and we are hoping to receive equipment/material donations from anyone that can help. Donations \$1,000 and over are able to obtain a tax-deductible receipt from The Hub.”

There is a list of things they still need (on the web, or from Penny or Louise). If you can help or know someone who can we’d sure appreciate your assistance.

“It’s great to be a part of a community that supports each other so much.
Thank you everyone.”

excerpted from a letter from Cathi Jefferson

Full text of letter is available online (at www.victoriapotters.ca) or from Louise Parsons or Penny Jones

Twenty potters were fortunate to spend a weekend with Naramata potter, James Hibbert. His skill and passion for clay was clearly evident as he demonstrated how to throw a wide range of vessels, alter the form and provide some decorating techniques.

James began his love affair with clay early, an eight year old digging lakeshore clay, shaping and firing his first pots. As a teenager in Winnipeg, he had a wheel in his basement. His teachers knew where to find him when he skipped class - in the art room at a wheel, of course. When he graduated he searched out workshops -learning from his teachers and always experimenting -a pattern established early and continues to this day.

The audience observed a master potter at the wheel - using his physical skills and mental processes to create beautiful and unique pots. James' energy was unflagging and attitude so positive -he kept his audience enthralled for an extra hour or more each day.



Lessons learned:

1. Relax "persuade the clay". Throw with a relaxed body.
2. Pay attention to details along the way – less grief later. As James puts it, "Tidier off the wheel, less monkey business later."
3. Experiment "Go to the edge of disaster and back away"
4. Monitor yourself for 'catlicking'. Know when you are done.
5. Value the heat gun!
6. Begin each session with a positive attitude. James's mantra is "I feel good. I feel strong today."

James' easy-going manner, thoughtful commentary and generosity made the workshop a pleasure.

Submitted by Nancy Alexander

" Thank you to Linda Vigliotti for organizing such a great Guild Workshop "



SHAKE IT UP!

Pre-Fired Up! Show

Eclectic Gallery is hosting a Preview for Fired Up!

May 6 -26th 2013

Artists Reception Thursday May 9th 6:00– 8:00 pm
salt-glazed salt and pepper shakers and signature pieces by each artist

"Salt of the Earth, Vessels for Tasteful Living"

The 29th annual Fired Up! ceramics show will be held in Metchoshin May 24-26
Opening Reception: Friday May 24th 6:00-9:00 pm Metchoshin Hall 4401 William Head Rd



Pat Webber, 2013



Meira Mathison, 2013

Fired Up!
Contemporary Works in
CLAY

www.firedup.ca

Contemporary Works in Clay
Salt Glazed Vessels

2170 Oak Bay Avenue www.eclecticgallery.ca 250.590.8095



...And From the UK

Here's a preview of the collects show in London, UK. The website below is the "book". The Collects show is the premiere craft show for Europe.

Individual art and craft galleries send their most promising artists and their work to this show. I went once in 2011, and spent 5 hours viewing and talking to artists, it was amazing. If you ever get a chance to see the show, do it.

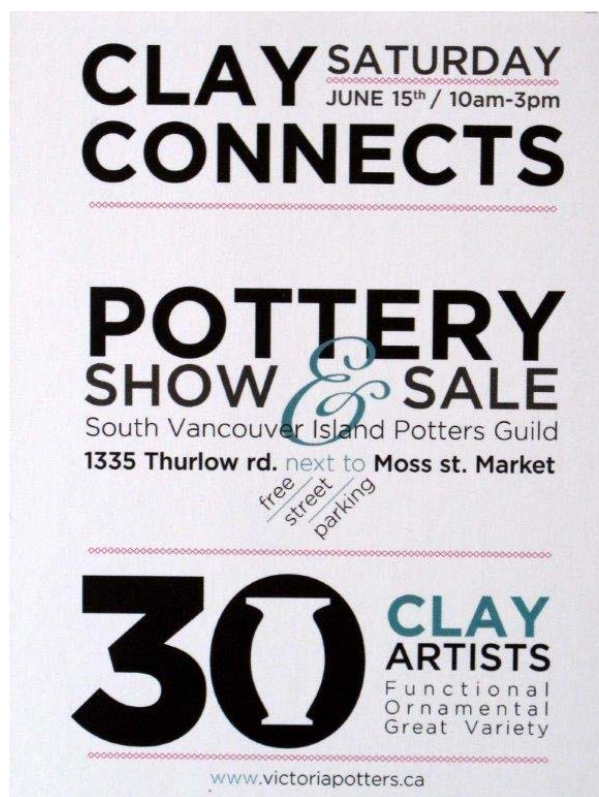
The "book" shows some of the artists work; wood, glass, metal, ceramics, jewellery, etc.

Cheers Tobias

<http://www.craftscouncil.org.uk/collect/collect-catalogue2013/#/38/>

Our Guild Show & Sale

CLAY CONNECTS



Clay Connects, SVIPG's annual show and sale, takes place this year on Saturday June 15, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. This is our third year at 1335 Thurlow Road, next to the Moss Street Market. As ever, more than 30 Guild members will take part, presenting a great variety of pottery to the public. We do try to get coverage in all the major publications and shows, and this year, will be working on getting information out via social media as well. But word of mouth is our best publicity. So let all your contacts know: once a year, this special event for all lovers of ceramics, functional, ornamental, all the various shapes, styles and price points that Guild members provide.

Posters, postcards and business cards are available for anyone who wants to distribute same. Contact Rosemary, rneering@shaw.ca

Invitation to Participate



The **Island Artisans Association** is pleased to invite applications for booth space in the upcoming Annual Juried Artisan Show “**Gifts for Myself and Others**” to be held at the Da Vinci Centre in Victoria, November 15th, 16th and 17th, 2013. This event is organized by and for professional crafts people in order to present to the public a consistently high quality show in a congenial location. The venue includes free parking and is wheelchair accessible. Full information is found on their web site: <http://www.islandartisans.ca>.

Contact **Sherry Berger**, coordinator online, by email: Gifts2013@gmail.com or by phone: 250-383-787



Opening Weekend:
April 26th, 27th & 28th

Cowichan Valley Artisans Studio Tour

Year Round Studio Tour Launch Weekend - Studios open from 10 - 5

Featuring:
Mary Fox Pottery
Jennifer Lawson
Peggy Brackett
Jo Ludwig
Gloria S. Daly
Cathi Jefferson Pottery
Heartwood Studio
Michael Moore
Alderlea Farm and Cafe
Nan Goodship
Peter Spohn
Doc the Barber
Venturi-Schulze Vineyards
Karen Trickett
Leola's Studio

Experience the passion and creativity of this diverse group of critically acclaimed artists and artisans during their year round studio tour. Discover the special places where our Artisans transform raw materials into original personal creations using the specialized tools and traditional processes of their craft. Talk with Artists about their creative journey and hear the stories that inspire their work.

CowichanValleyArtisans.com



Tour maps available throughout the Island and from the following sponsors and partners:



No Tour – *'just'* STUDIOS !

studio guide so people can visit the studios of 26 different artists all year long. You just have to call ahead to make sure that they are available at the time you would like to visit. These are artists in the Metchosin and East Sooke areas.

There are several potters involved in the guide, Marlene Bowman, Alice McLean, Peggy Elmes, Ann Semple, Judi Dyelle and Robin Hopper.

A pdf, a map and list of phone numbers is online at the SF website www.stinkingfishstudiotour.com



Notes From The Library

Your 2012-2013 Executive

President:	Penny J.	1+250-715-1403
Vice-Pres:	Nancy W.	250-479-3524
Secretary:	Derek K.	250-995-2905
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:	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

The five new items purchased by the Guild have finally arrived and have been distributed to the initial requestors late in April. With luck, these busy artists in the midst of this very active month preparing for sales will have a chance to read or watch the item and return it to the library for general distribution at the May meeting. The new items are 2 new books and 3 new DVD's: Ceramics & the Human Figure by Edith Garcia, Developing Glazes by Greg Daly, Creative Tile Making with Angelica Pozo, Integrating Form & Surface with Porcelain with Lorna Meaden and Slab and Coil Building with Gail Kendel. Four listings of the library items (One each sorted by Registration Number, Title, Author or general topic) is at the library table for those who would like to look for an item of interest.

The Library inventory is also posted on the Guild's website: <http://www.victoriapotters.ca/library>

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

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

Newsletter Staff

program writer: Heidi R. 250-479-6470
editor: Louise P. 250-655-3811

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250 384-3831
vcart@shaw.ca

We're now stocking heavy duty canvas from Pakistan. Great for making wareboards or wedging 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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