

MAJOLICA INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

Volume 1, Number 4

Howard Silby, Editor

Spring, 1991

Next Meeting May 4-5!

The 3rd annual meeting of the Majolica International Society will take place on Saturday and Sunday, May 4-5, 1991, at the Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place Hotel, in Springfield, Massachusetts. This places us close to the start of Brimfield (May 2) and to the Stafford Springs Antiques Show (May 4-5).

Our festivities will begin at 6 p.m. Saturday with a cocktail party. There will be a table for "barter and buy" and for the identification of unattributed (or mysterious!) majolica objects. Members are encouraged to bring majolica and pictures of pieces from their collections.

The dinner meeting will begin at 7 p.m. Our speaker for the evening is M. Robert Lehr, of Paris and Biot, Cote d'Azur. M. Lehr is a distinguished French majolica scholar, author, collector, and dealer. He will discuss nineteenth century Palissy majolica and French majolica, or barbotine.

Mrs. Margaret Howland will also give a lecture on Sand Majolica with slides from her 600 peice collection. She is also writing a book on the subject.

Other members who wish to present a lecture on any aspect of majolica are invited to write to us today! These presentations are usually from 15 to 35 min-

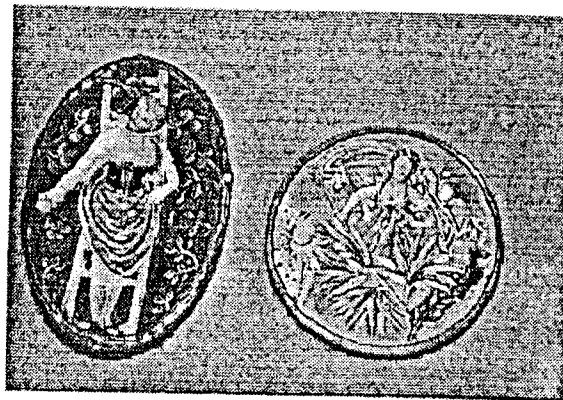
utes. Audio-visual equipment will be available.

On Sunday, the M.I.S. business meeting will be held from 9-10 a.m.

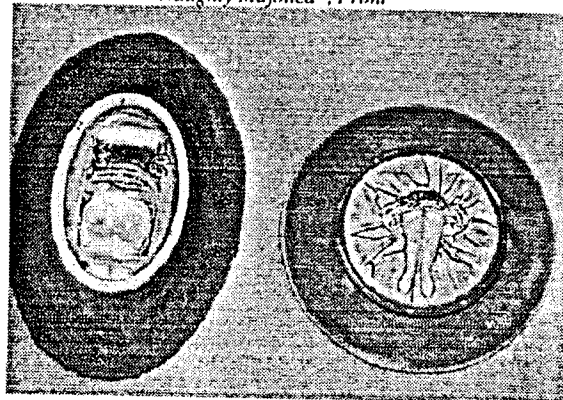
Promptly at 10 a.m., the doors will be opened to Majolica Heaven! We will browse and buy, surrounded by the wares of our knowledgeable dealers. There will be a brilliant display of English, American, and Continental majolica, including many pieces that we have not seen before.

Hotel reservations may be made by writing directly to the Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place Hotel, Springfield, Massachusetts, or by calling 1-413-781-1010. Our special rate is \$69/night for single or double occupancy. This rate is obtained by calling the hotel directly, rather than by using an "800" number. Please mention the majolica convention to

obtain the special rate. *(The above is excerpted from the Executive Committee of Marilyn Karmason, Joan Stacke, Jerry Leberfeld, and Michael Strawser, ex officio).*



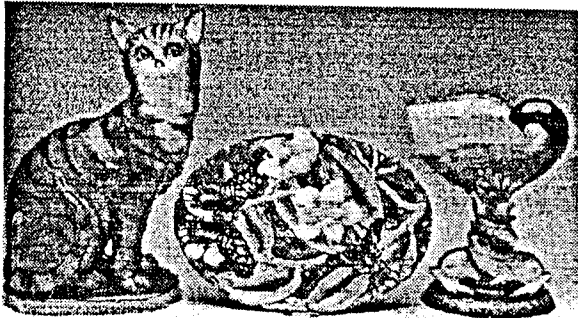
"Naughty Majolica", Front



"Naughty Majolica", Back!

Skinner Auction a Success

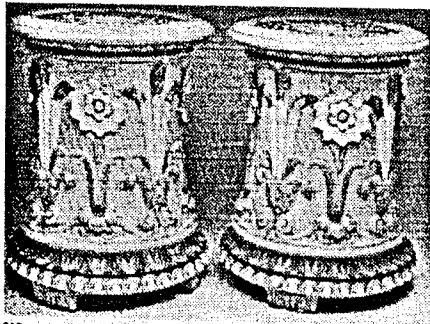
On Friday, December 7, 1990, Skinner Inc. of Bolton, Massachusetts, offered about 400 pieces of majolica in 295 lots. About 51 lots failed to meet their minimum. A good review of this auction was done by Mr. Rufus Foshee in *Maine Antique Digest*, February 1991 issue. I was not there, but am told that it was a good auction, with an excellent lecture by Dr. Marilyn Karmason and Mrs. Joan Stacke given the night before. There were several high priced items: notably, the minton cat and mouse teapot, which sold at Phillips in December 1987 for \$4750 plus 10% premium and New York city and state taxes, brought \$14,300 with buyers premium plus Massachusetts taxes. Other items sold as follows plus 10% buyers permium (all pictures from Skinners Catalogue #1358).



Minton Cat
\$5250

George Jones Dish
\$1050

English Vase
Unknown



Pair Minton Passion Flower Garden Seats
\$3,000



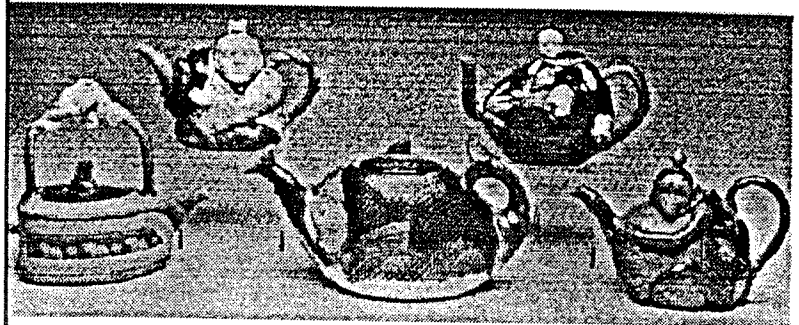
Minton Basket
\$800

Minton Jug
\$1100



Jones Nut Dish
\$725

Minton Shell Vase
\$1200



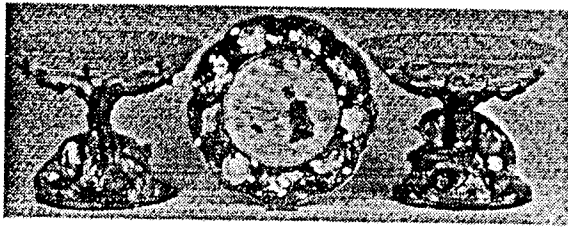
Minton Cat / Mouse Teapot
\$13,000

English Teapot
\$400

Minton Monkey Teapot
\$2400

Minton Chinaman
\$1600

Holdcroft Chinaman
\$1100



Pair George Jones
Composites
\$4600

Jones Plate
\$800

Details and full price list is available from
Skinner, 357 Main Street, Bolton, MA, 01740. Phone
number in 508-779-6241.

Chit Chat

Collector of Minton Art Nouveau Secessionist
ware interested in purchasing pieces or just chatting
with other collectors. Call Beverly Varoli:
212-398-9225.

ADS

MAJOLICARDS

Ideal for social and holiday correspondence.
Victorian majolica as seen in "Majolica: A Complete
History and Illustrated Survey." A dozen note cards
with envelopes, 3 each of 4 subjects, 5" x 6 1/2".
\$12.95/box, \$10/box for M.I.S. members. Sold in
quantities of five or more boxes. Please add \$5 for
postage and handling. Send check to Majolicards, 1020
Park Avenue, New York, NY 10028.

*(Not other ads or chit chat recieved. Come on,
guys, you've got to have something to talk about or
sell!!)*

Books

Marilyn Karmason and Joan Stacke are proud to
announce that their book, "Majolica: A Complete
History And Illustrated Survey" is now in its second
printing. Congratulations to the two of you for writing
such a marvelous book.

There's a new book on majolica called "Majol-
ica". It's by Nicholas M. Dawes, published by Crown
in New York, and is available at all bookstores.

It is hard for me to write an unbiased account of
this book since it is comprised mainly of my and Jerry
Leberfeld's collections. However, I think it's fair to say
that it is beautifully photographed, well don, covers
American, English, and Continental majolica, and is
inexpensive at \$40. It is my opinion that all three
recent books (Karmason/Stacke, Bergersen, and
Dawes) all complement each other, and you can find
new information in each in spite of the inevitable
overlap of information. All three are highly recom-
mended.

What Else?

No other info has been received from the mem-
bership. Remember, if you have questions about
attribution or identity, please send in photos. Any
gossip is also welcome.

And now to the main event. . .

THE PROFESSIONAL RESTORATION OF DAMAGED MAJOLICA POTTERY Charles L. W. (Bill) Wiebold

For the Majolica collector who has never worked
with a professional restorer, several important areas of
concern must be addressed to build confidence in the
person doing the repair work while assuring the
collector that restored pieces do, in fact, have a respect-
able place in the pottery world.

As President of Wiebold Studio, Inc., a full-service antique and art restoration lab in Cincinnati, Ohio, Bill Wiebold has provided answers to some of the more common questions regarding his specialized craft, especially as they might relate to Majolica.

DOES THE RESTORATION OF MAJOLICA OFFER CHALLENGES THAT DIFFER FROM OTHER TYPES OF POTTERY OR CERAMICS?

The actual repair process does not differ significantly from one type of pottery to another; however, some of the unusual colors used in making Majolica are not commercially available. The amateur restorer will use substitute colors, often missing the mark. Professionals will create their own colors to exactly match the originals. Cobalt blue is a perfect example. Nearly impossible to match with commercially available materials, it can be painstakingly manufactured and processed into a medium which can be used for restoration.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF USING A PROFESSIONAL CONSERVATOR RATHER THAN THE COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO MAKE THE REPAIRS HIMSELF?

The advantages are numerous. Proper equipment (specialized tools, grinders, polishers, stripping tanks, air brushes, spray booths) is absolutely essential, but skilled and experienced personnel is the key. We utilize two separate departments, one trained in sculpting, mold making and polishing and the other in color matching, air brushing, hand painting and glazing. Any attempt by an amateur to repair a piece of fine porcelain would certainly fall far short of the museum standard quality produced by our conservators.

HOW DOES ONE DETERMINE IF A PIECE IS WORTH RESTORING? WHAT FACTORS AFFECT THE COST OF THE REPAIR?

A professional conservator will never become involved in appraising. The collector's best source for value determination is a certified appraiser; however, books, price guides, auction records and comparison shopping at antique shows will also be helpful. Senti-

mental attachment is also an important consideration. After receiving a fair estimate of the restoration cost, the decision to restore, or not, then becomes the collector's responsibility. The cost of the restoration should not be affected by the monetary value of the object; however, this practice does unfortunately exist in the profession. Our studio has pioneered the development of a fixed price schedule, by department, with formulae to estimate the cost of most common types of conservation and restoration. This has proven to be the fairest method of offering our services to every customer at the lowest possible cost.

HOW DOES ONE EVALUATE A POTENTIAL RESTORATION FIRM? ARE THERE SPECIFIC THINGS FOR WHICH THE COLLECTOR SHOULD LOOK?

To best ensure you are dealing with a reputable, professional firm ask these questions: (1) Are you a member of The American Institute for Conservation of Historic & Artistic Works? (2) Will you stand behind your work... can I return my object if not satisfied? (3) Are you fully insured against damage to my object while it is in your possession? (4) Have your materials been age-tested for yellowing? (5) Can your finishes be washed in mild detergents without any detrimental effects? (6) Will the repairs be invisible even under ultraviolet light and do your colors remain consistent under various lighting conditions? (7) What is your normal delivery time? (8) How long have you been in business? *3 months* If the answer to the first six questions is "YES" and you are comfortable with the response to the last two, then you have chosen a very fine restorer.

ARE REPAIRS PERMANENT? HOW IS FUTURE USE OF THE OBJECT LIMITED?

Nothing on earth is "permanent", if subjected to certain elements. There are several factors affecting the restoration of art objects - sunlight, heat, strong detergents, solvents and abrasion. The best of restorations are said to last for fifty to a hundred years if kept in the proper environment. If a service piece is used and washed on a regular basis or displayed in strong sunlight, you should expect some type of deterioration in the repairs.

WHAT ARE SOME METHODS TO DETECT RESTORATION ON A PIECE?

It is becoming increasingly difficult to detect restoration which has been executed by a professional conservator. X-Ray is one of the best and safest methods of detection, but this and other forms of non-destructive testing can be quite expensive. Ultraviolet, or black light, is not always effective due to the inhibitors in the glazes used. A trained eye and good direct sunlight can sometimes do the job. Scratch and solvent tests, although highly effective, are going to scar the restoration and may even damage the original material.

WHAT TYPE OF DAMAGE CAN BE RESTORED? WILL THE PIECE LOOK PERFECT WHEN REPAIRED?

A professional conservation lab can make invisible repairs to most types of damage. Small chips, running cracks, broken knobs, finials and handles, even missing parts can be glued, cast, filled, painted and glazed to duplicate the original almost exactly. Although some slag glazes and the fine craze lines in Majolica pieces are difficult to duplicate, they can be restored to a point where only a very discerning eye can spot the repairs. Some of the fired-on finishes, especially golds, cannot be matched exactly. But even these can be simulated to a point where they are very difficult to detect. One must remember that the objective is to restore the object to its original condition, not to make it look brand new. In the hands of a professional conservator, the restoration of a badly damaged piece of pottery results in an almost magical transformation!

Wiebold, Inc. has been serving collectors, museums and dealers nationwide since 1945. Besides being extremely experienced with the repair of all types of Majolica, their staff of eighteen expert conservators restore ceramics, porcelain, art pottery, oil paintings, frames, silver, bronze, copper, brass, ivory, wood and crystal. They are represented at most major area

antique shows and they have a network of reputable dealer representatives in most Midwest markets. Items may be estimated and transported to Wiebold's lab through any of these sources or mailed UPS directly to them in Cincinnati. For more information on restoration, or to request literature on the company, you may contact **Wiebold, Inc., 413 Terrace Place, Terrace Park, Ohio 45174** or phone (513) 831-2541.



"I'm on the verge of a major breakthrough, but I'm also at that point where chemistry leaves off and physics begins, so I'll have to drop the whole thing."

(Thank God, Mr. Arnoux didn't feel this way!)
