

Majolica International Society
Newsletter
Fall 1992

President, Michael Strawser

Secretary, Marilyn Karmason

Vice President and
Annual Meeting Chairman,
Gerald Leberfeld

Treasurer, Joan Stacke



Majolica International Society, Suite 103, 1275 First Avenue, New York, NY 10021

**Note From the Co-Editors,
Thea Benenson and Polly Wilbert**

Polly: During the past couple of months, I've been working on our membership list, which is being distributed to Society members with this issue. and I have also been working with the promised new software, which I think makes the newsletter look quite nice. (Further improvements should be noticed with each issue.) Also, it was wonderful to get notes from many Society members over the summer; much of what was received has gone into this issue. Thanks very much to all of you for keeping the Society and our newsletter in mind.

Thea: While Polly was working on her computer, I have been researching the care and cleaning of majolica for an article which will appear in our Winter issue. With the help of a number of experts in the field, I hope to disclose some valuable tips for all of us to read about in December.

London. The museum is a very interesting take on the history of the tea and coffee trades during the past 350 years and on London's 17th- and 18th-century coffee houses. Of particular interest to Society members is that the museum's collection of 1,000 coffee makers and teapots includes a number of majolica teapots, which are on exhibit, among them two versions of the Minton Isle of Man monkey teapots with the flag and rope accessories and the Staffordshire fish-eating-fish teapot. Beginning this month, 1,000 copies of Edward Bramah's book Novelty Teapots (\$72.00 including shipping) will be available through Cimino Publishing, Inc. in New York.

**Bramah Tea &
Coffee Museum
The Clove Building
Maguire Street
London SE1 2NO
Ph: 071-378-0222**

**Cimino Publishing, Inc.
Carle Place
PO Box 174
New York, NY 11514
Ph: 516-997-3721
Fax: 997-3420**

Pierre Frey Introduces "Tea Time" Fabric

This month, Pierre Frey, the French fabric house, will introduce a new design entitled "Tea Time," which features a cavalcade of teapots in full color, many of which are historically significant. Several of the teapots depicted were derived from antique majolica pieces appearing in Marilyn Karmason and Joan Stacke's book, Majolica. Pierre Frey recounts the inspiration for his new design: "In June of '91, I was having tea in New York's Henri Bendel cafe, designed by Marie-Paule Pelle, where the walls are decorated with teapots of every shape, size, and color -- well it was instant inspiration! So I went right over to the Rizzoli bookstore on 57th Street and

With this issue of the newsletter, as a separate section, members in good standing are receiving the Society's membership directory.

If you receive a complimentary issue, the directory will not be enclosed.

On The Majolica Trail

Following a trip to England earlier this summer, Marilyn Karmason alerts all majolica-minded travellers to the existence of the Bramah Tea & Coffee Museum in

Pierre Frey, cont.

inquired if they had any books about teapots. Their answer was a big stack of books, which I took back to Paris with me. In that stack was the Majolica book which became particularly helpful, a real starting point." The pattern of 18 teapots lavishly and unevenly scattered across a subtle moire background includes five majolica teapots with designs of Cauliflower, Pineapple, Wardle shell-and-seaweed, the Staffordshire fish-swallowing-a-fish, and one derived from the Minton bee-skep cheese bell and was handscreened in 21 colors. It is available in three different color ways -- pale beige, soft red, and grey -- printed on 100% cotton. The fabric is specifically designed for use in home furnishings and will be sold through professional interior designers. (For a peek at the fabric, see p. 38 of the October issue of House & Garden.)

New Majolica Book Published

Mariann Katz Marks has announced the publication of her latest book, Collector's Encyclopaedia of Majolica. A hardcover, this large volume combines the material in Mrs. Marks' first two books with 80 new photographs. She is also working on additional books on majolica which will be published by Collector Books over the next year or two. If any Society members have interesting majolica collections that they would like to have considered for inclusion in one of her upcoming volumes, Mrs. Marks would be pleased to receive your letter of interest and/or to look at any slides you may have. Her next book will feature American and English pieces and will be followed a year or so later by a volume on Continental majolica.

Collector's Encyclopaedia can be purchased directly from the author.

Mrs. Mariann Katz Marks
Post Office Box 750
Honesdale, PA 18431

Collector's Encyclopaedia of Majolica
\$19.95 plus \$3.00 shipping

Dealers' Corner

Fishtrap Bay Antiques:

Joe and Helen Marie Fortune are the proprietors of Fishtrap Bay Antiques in Washington State. They will be exhibitors at The Antique Exposition at the Juanita High School Field House in Kirkland, Washington on October 10-11 (and again in April), which they note is a high-line show in existence for 28 years and the largest of its kind north of San Francisco and west of Denver. They would be pleased to see any Society members at the show or at the antique mall in which they exhibit. They are Booth No. 89 in the 150-dealer Star Center Antique Mall, 829 2nd St., Snohomish, Washington 98290. At present, in addition to 70+ pieces of majolica, they have as show pieces a 24" Continental vase with cockatoos, plus a Minton game dish and a covered cheese keeper. If you are looking for something specific, they will be glad to put it on their "want list".

For those of you travelling in the Northwest, Joe and Helen Marie also recommend the 75-dealer Centralia Square Antique Mall in Centralia, Washington (exit 82 off I-5) and the 90 dealers showing at the Lafayette School Antique Mall on Hwy 99W in Lafayette, Oregon.

Collectible Interiors

Susan and Sean Acrey of Roanoke, Texas tell us that they have been antique dealers for the past 15 years, as wholesalers initially and for the past 3 years as retailers, specializing in Georgian and Edwardian mahogany furniture. When they exhibit at shows in the Southwest, they often see Gayle Green, another dealer who is also one of the Society's regional coordinators. Susan and Sean personally collect Minton majolica, but recount that the first time they really got involved in selling majolica was one Christmas season a number of years ago when they received a container shipment from England on Dec. 15th, which had been scheduled to arrive after the New Year. In order to comply with Texas tax codes, they had to inventory the entire shipment before Dec. 31st. It took them every minute until then because, in addition to the antiques they were expecting, the container held thousands (!!!) of pieces of majolica, mostly green plates, which ultimately filled the shelves of one whole storage room from floor to ceiling and two aisles wide!

If you're going to be in Texas, the Acreys would be delighted to hear from any Society members. Their office phone number is 817-439-1026.

The Archives of the Majolica International Society

With this issue of the Newsletter, we welcome the contributions of John Fletcher and Jerry Hayes of Shell Beach, California who have generously and enthusiastically volunteered to take on responsibility for the Archives of the Society. They write the following:

Unexpected Treasures

Are you guilty of passing up a real majolica "treasure"? Perhaps all of us should enter a plea of nolo contendere. As collectors, we all know the excitement and anticipation every time we enter a new (to us) antique shop. We know the passion that makes us first in line for the opening of an antiques show, even though we are two hours early. We look forward to the rush of adrenalin through our veins as the doors are thrown open and we begin our race up and down the aisles (if clocked, we might well set a new Olympic record in the 1500 meters). And we know that, in our quest for that perfect, wonderful, new addition to our collection, we tend to ignore those pieces we already have or those we consider average. AHA! Guilty as charged!

Even what we consider to be the most mundane piece of majolica needs to be examined. While the top, sides, and interior of a piece reveal its shape, form, function, and color, all telling us whether or not it fits in our collection, it is the undersurface that may reveal its "treasure status".

Who would dream that a rather nice but unassuming bark, branch, and floral creamer (Fig. 1) upon being turned upside down would reveal the elusive "Forrester" signature? (Fig. 2)

We might well zoom past what we think is a Banks and Thorley bamboo and basketweave teapot, admittedly, with a rather unusual turquoise ground (Fig. 3) never suspecting that it is not English but American, marked MORLEY & CO./MAJOLICA/WELLSVILLE, O. (Fig. 4)

If we are already the proud possessors of the Holdcroft oyster plate on the left (Fig. 5), we would probably tend to ignore the plate on the right. We would not notice the detail of the missing coral under the shells and certainly never discover the signature of Rene et Sanejouand, Clairefontaine, France (Fig. 6).

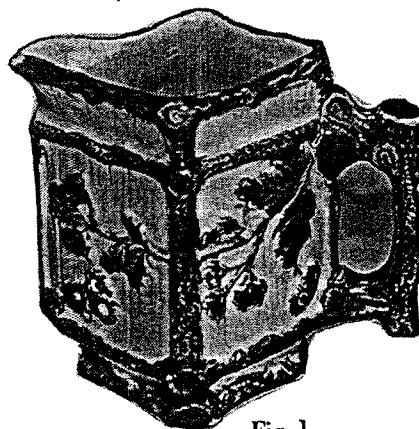


Fig. 1

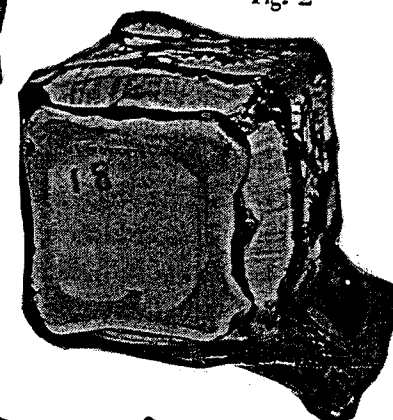


Fig. 2

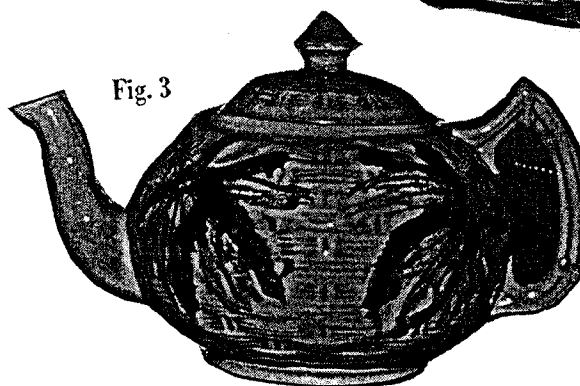


Fig. 3

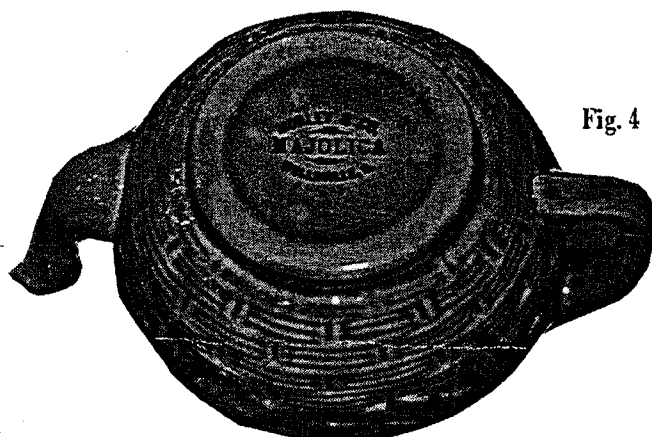


Fig. 4

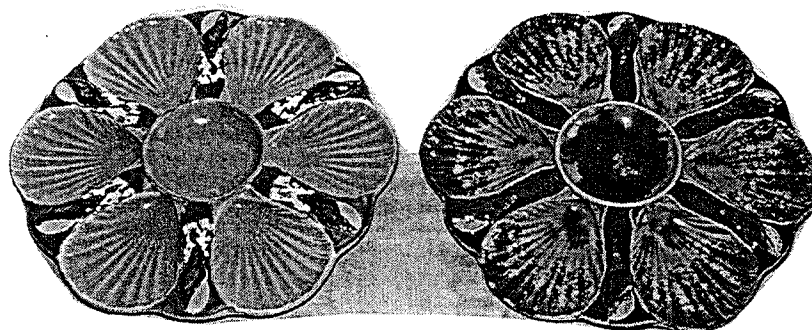


Fig. 5

Unexpected Treasures, cont.

If we already owned the George Jones centerpiece on the left (Fig. 7), we might never realize that the larger one on the right is actually signed Holdcroft.

And guiltiest of all, how many of us have been ignoring leaf-shaped pickle dishes like this one for years (Fig. 8), never to discover that it is signed Lear!

Also known to exist are a bread tray (Eat Thy Bread with Joy and Thankfulness) and a corn jug signed JH/Holdcroft and a "gurgling fish" pitcher by George Jones. And, since these pieces exist, how many hundreds, even thousands, of others are lying around, casually ignored, waiting to become not only a valuable "treasure" to an astute collector, but also another highly important piece in the jigsaw puzzle that surrounds many aspects of the production of majolica.

To bring the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle together, we have established the Archives of the Majolica International Society. It is the goal of the Society's Archives to preserve every scrap of information about majolica no matter how apparently unimportant when first encountered. Who knows what mysteries will be solved from a clue provided by the simplest of pieces! Think how exciting it was to unlock the secret of Tenuous Majolica's origin once a simple newspaper clipping was unearthed (Tenuous Majolica, Peekskill Pottery Co., Peekskill, N.Y.)

Another important goal is to fill in all the holes in the Minton, Wedgwood, and Jones pattern number listings in Victoria Bergeson's Majolica (Appendix D, p. 180). Why not spend a day going through your collection comparing it to those listings? (It's a great excuse to "play" with some pieces you may not have handled in quite a while.)

If you find a number on a piece that has not been included in Bergeson's lists, please let us know. Also, if you find a piece with a "surprise" signature or mark, please let us know. If you find any new information, PLEASE LET US KNOW! We would appreciate a snapshot of the piece and its undersurface or a photocopy of any article with information about majolica -- any local magazines, newspapers, etc. We will unveil these new discoveries in future issues of the newsletter. Meanwhile, let's all go back to our searches with renewed zest. Happy hunting!

(Archives Editors, Majolica International Society, Suite 103, 1275 First Avenue, New York, NY 10021)

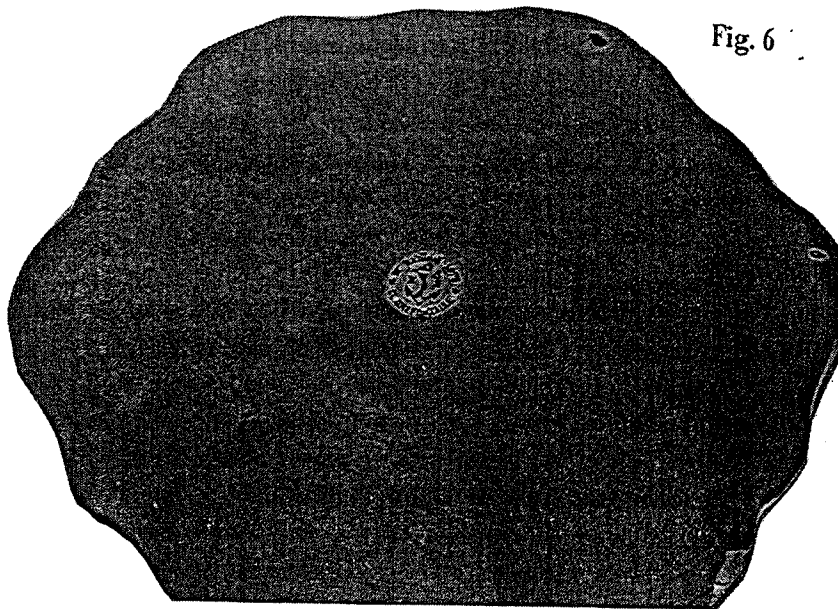


Fig. 6

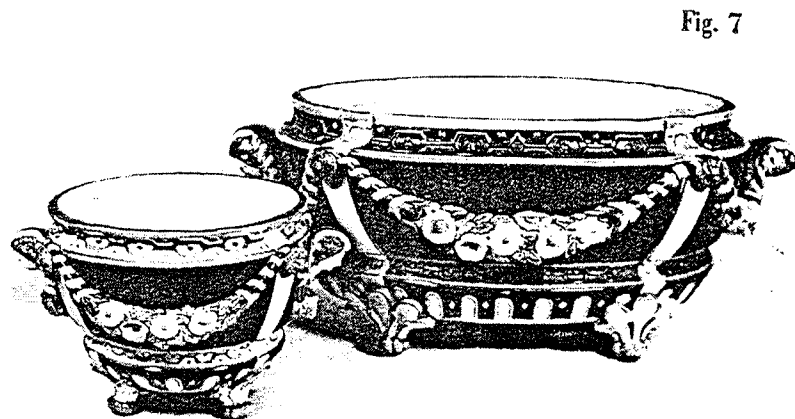


Fig. 7

Centerpieces. Left: George Jones & Sons. Length 11"; Right: Joseph Holdcroft. Length 27"

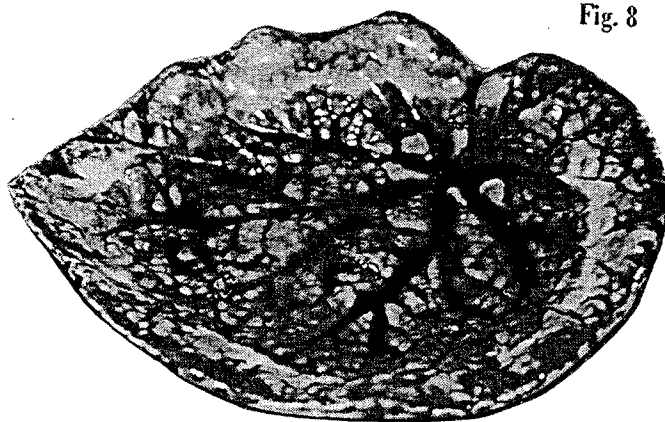


Fig. 8

Richard Dana Vunck

The Society has learned of the death in May of Richard Dana Vunck, one of our members. A Philadelphia-area resident, Mr. Vunck, 40, was a registered architect and interiors project manager in facilities planning for Thomas Jefferson University. He is survived by his parents, Sidney and Frances Vunck of Slingerlands, N.Y., who are also members of the Society. His companion was Dick Irhig. On behalf of our membership, we extend them our deepest sympathies.

Gloria Ren

In August the Society lost another friend and member, Gloria Ren. Although not a collector of majolica, she was a supporter of the Society and brought to our annual meetings her great enthusiasm and artistic skills. Ms Ren, 59, was an interior designer who lived in Manhattan. She loved majolica and purchased it for many of her clients and used it in her room settings, photographs of which were featured in well-known interior design magazines. She was a good friend and will be missed.

Cooper-Hewitt Museum Receives Donation of Majolica

Dr. Marilyn Karmason and her husband, Dr. Norton Spritz, have donated four pieces of majolica to the Cooper-Hewitt Museum in New York City. Along with other recent acquisitions of the Museum, three of the majolica pieces are now on exhibit: a Minton Palissy ornamental platter, a George Jones game dish with a fox finial, and a Minton cachepot in the Oriental style.

Tip When Using Majolica Pitchers and Vases for Flower Arrangements

When cut down to size, a plastic one- or two-liter soda container (pop bottle, tonic bottle or whatever it's called in your neck of the woods) is a very efficient liner for a majolica pitcher or vase. Enabling the owner to use the piece for displaying fresh flowers, the plastic liner protects the majolica from water damage and also prevents water from leaking through the sometimes porous or cracked body of the antique piece. In addition, because

the bottle is made of a pliable plastic, it will not damage the majolica as a hard jar or glass used as a liner might.

Notice to Members in the Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, and Arkansas Area:

Phyllis Hays of Tulsa, Oklahoma has organized a group of majolica collectors in her area to meet four times a year on a Sunday afternoon for fun and information about our mutual passion. The first gathering was a tea and the invitations on Majolicards brought 8-10 people together, all of whom had a wonderful time. Each person had questions, some of which were answered and some not. She tells us that their next gathering will be on Sunday, November 1st, when John Fletcher and Jerry Hayes, well known and knowledgeable dealers from Shell Beach, California, will give the group a lecture and presentation on majolica. Phyllis would be delighted to have other collectors from the area join the group. She can be reached at her home phone number, 918-492-0797.

Notice to Members in the Boston and Southern Maine and New Hampshire Areas:

If anyone would be interested in gathering for breakfast before attending Sonia Paine's Antique Show at the Northeast Trade Center in Woburn, Mass. on Saturday, October 24, please drop Polly Wilbert a line with your phone number. This show usually features about 300 dealers several of whom display majolica. If there is interest, I would arrange for us to meet at 10 a.m. at the Burlington, Mass. Marriott Hotel in their Foxglove Restaurant for a Dutch-treat breakfast, sitting family style in the dining room proper. The Marriott is just an exit or so from the Trade Center's exit off Route 128/95. This would give us an hour or two to chat before heading for the show, which I believe opens at noon. Perhaps we could each bring a recent majolica acquisition or photos to show and tell about.

Member Challenge:

Let these regional notes serve as a challenge to members in other areas to propose similar get togethers!! Even if only one or two of you get together, it would be fun to share information about your collections and resources.

Hold the Date: 1993 Annual Meeting

Plans for our 1993 Fifth Anniversary Annual Meeting are in the early formative stage. Renninger's Antique Extravaganza in Kutztown, Penna. is scheduled for the weekend of April 24, 1993 and we hope to hold our meeting in conjunction with this show. Hold this weekend open on your calendars! More information will be forthcoming as we get closer to the date, but this is what a little "majolica birdie" has told us so far...

MajolicAds

51 pieces of majolica for sale. Highlighted by George Jones, Minton, Wedgwood, Etruscan, Fielding, and Sarreguemines, as well as unmarked American, English, and German pieces. For a complete price list, send S.A.S.E. to Connie VonDerHoya, PO Box 1144, Euless, TX 76039-1144 or phone 817-283-1905. 9/92

Searching for a Minton 6.5" x 6.5" Venus bowl to be a companion piece to a Neptune bowl already owned (w/salamanders and snails). Russell T. Keith, 2 1/2 No. Broadway, Peru, IN 46970 9/92

Interested in obtaining a copy(s) of any Rebert or Rickerson works on majolica. Don and Brenda Wilson, 2720 N. 45 Rd., Manton, MI 49663 9/92

Interested in collecting and exchanging information about French Palissy majolica and possibly acquiring additional pieces. Marshall P. Katz, Suite 24-A Gateway Towers, 320 Ft. Duquesne Blvd., Pittsburgh, PA 15222 or phone O: 412-471-1600 9/92

Looking for: Pouring top to Griffen, Smith & Hill unmarked Etruscan holy water font. Piece has pouring spout and is decorated with scallop shell shapes. See Karmason/Stacke p. 160. Alfred Clegg, 1129 Davis Lane, Chester Springs, PA 19425 9/92

Interested in locating for sale or trade a fish-smoking-a-cigar teapot as shown in upper lefthand corner of the frontispiece illustration of Karmason/Stacke book. Elaine Snow Moede, Unit 703, 1200 Beacon Parkway East, Birmingham, AL 35209 or Ph: 205-870-4363 9/92

Wanted: George Jones cream pitcher (no handles). Shown on p. 178 of new Katz Marks book to the left of the server. (Have all other pieces). Also collect figural vases. Send pictures to: Sally Fanning, 10 Woodlyn Lane, Bradbury, CA 91010 9/92

Wanted: Lid only for J. S. Taft 3 3/4" high bamboo-pattern teapot. Opening 2 1/8" diameter. Pictured on p. 22 of Rebert, American Majolica. Contact: Ann Knauf, 200 Pine Ridge Drive, Guilderland, NY 12084 9/92

MAJOLICARDS

Perfect for holiday greetings!
\$10/box -- 12 cards/box, 4 color photo patterns.
Wholesale rates available.
Call: 212-737-6262, Fax: 212-744-1124 9/92

The Auction Block

Regional Auction Report from Ann Knauf of Guilderland, NY:

Albany Auction Gallery, 8-23-92. Etruscan L15 coral-pattern pepper shaker (no salt). Poorly repaired on bottom rim with wear on shells and on seaweed shafts. \$650 plus 10% buyer's premium.

Upcoming Auctions

Sunday, October 11, 1992

Preview: 11 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Auction: 1:00 p.m.

Hyatt Regency Houston, Downtown
1200 Louisiana St., Houston, Texas

35+ year collection of 235 pieces of Majolica: Geo. Jones dogwood tall and low cheese keepers, cobalt dogwood and basket teapot, Minton cat-handled cobalt pitcher, large statue of 2 men in vineyard, Holdcroft stork and heron vases, pond lily punch bowl, Etruscan shell and seaweed spittoon, coral shaker, Wedgwood game dish, 14 figural match holders and strikers, cobalt 3-piece tea set, oil lamp, sand majolica and many other fine pieces.

Sunday, December 6, 1992

Preview 11:00 am. to 1 p.m., Auction at 1p.m.

Holiday Inn, King of Prussia, Pennsylvania
260 Goddard Road, Exit 24 of Penna. Turnpike

30+ year collection of 400 pieces of Majolica: 100 plates incl oysters, Wedgwood cheese keeper, George Jones squirrel-on-leaf condiment dish, 8 shell and seaweed, JRL-type cobalt trout cheese keeper and pitchers, 30 butter pats, compotes, vases, figurals, and many other fine pieces.

For either auction, call, write, or fax for free fully illustrated brochure:

Michael G. Strawser, PO Box 332, Wolcottville, IN 46795
Ph: 219-854-2859, Fax: 219-854-3979

Upcoming Auctions, cont.

October 16-17, 1992

Preview: October 14, noon to 8 p.m. or by appointment
Luper Auction Galleries
Richmond, Virginia

E. F. St. Mary Wedgwood Majolica Collection amassed over 50 years. One hundred pieces, incl.: Palissy fish set, a 36" platter and 12 matching plates; a monkey plate; covered cow dish; hawthorne salt dish; pair of fan-pattern footed bowls; grape leaf platters; fruit compote and matching plates; rectangular hawthorne-pattern covered box; berry-pattern pitchers; shell and seaweed plate; and more.

For catalog or appointment, contact:
Thomas C. Luper, 804-359-2493

For Our Next Newsletter: Deadline December 15

Bits and Pieces: For a section featuring parts of majolica sets, would those of you who have lids, underplates, saucers, cups, etc. without their mates or sets with one piece in poor condition or mismatched, please drop us a line describing what you have. We will list all of these pieces in the next issue of the newsletter. We encourage trading and selling among our members.

Cover Articles: If there is a particular area of interest that you would like us to research for a cover story in a spring 1993 issue, please send us your suggestion.

MajolicAds: If you have a classified ad, please send it along. Your ad will run in several issues. We have new members joining all the time and one of them may have exactly the item you want.

Name the Newsletter: In our next issue, we'll begin the process of finding a name for the newsletter. Or, maybe we'll just decide to call it "The Newsletter." In the meantime, think about what a good name might be.

Your Best Majolica Find: Please drop us a note about your best majolica find. Have you found a wonderful piece at a ridiculous price? Stumbled across a piece of majolica in the least likely place? Share your story with us.

Please send your ideas, suggestions for subjects for future issues, and text for MajolicAds to:
Polly Wilbert, 7 Cedar St., Salem, MA 01970
or by fax to 617-227-6105

Dues for membership in the Majolica International Society are payable in January of each year and are \$25.00/year. Members receive the Society's newsletter, which is published quarterly, and may attend the annual meeting, which is held over a weekend in conjunction with a large regional antiques show in either April or May.

Letters of application for membership should be sent to the Society's mailing address:
Suite 103, 1275 First Avenue, New York, NY 10021

If you receive a duplicate of the newsletter or the address we're using for your mailing label is not correct, please drop us a note indicating which address you prefer or correcting the mailing information that we have for you. And, if you're about to move, let us know your new address!