

Majolica Matters

The Newsletter of the
Majolica International Society
Winter 1995/96



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And, the Beauty of Our Majolica ...

"... For most of us, home is the place where the unobtrusive, daily victories we achieve are all the more satisfying for going unremarked. They are on a small scale and concern not life and death but a hundred pleasures of body and mind that daily flood in all around us (like woodsmoke, or birdsong, or the voices of children) and make us, in our houses that are more than houses, happy."

Brendan Gill, "More Than a House,"
The New Yorker, 1995.

New Year's Greetings

Gerry Leberfeld, President

Looking back with amazement on the Majolica International Society which started in 1988 and has grown from 49 initial majolica enthusiasts to our present 530 paid members. Our members reside in some 42 states plus Canada, England, France, Hungary, and Australia, and our different interests range as widely as any group's can but with one common thread, we love our majolica. Some of us collect teapots, others animal

pitchers or maybe things with shells and fish from under the sea. Maybe we're struck by the English potters' style or favor the American potters' more country feeling or maybe some of us crazy people need to collect it all. For certain, we can say that majolica collecting is alive and well.

As 1995 draws to an end, I want to take this opportunity to wish you and yours Happy Holidays, a Healthy New Year, and, of course, a few more new and exciting majolica pieces during 1996.

Your Board of Directors is looking forward to meeting many of you personally this April in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania -- at our eighth annual meeting. ♦

Two Rare Majolica Beauties

One of the foremost collectors of majolica has allowed us to publish here for the first time photographs of two amazing recent acquisitions to his collection. Suddenly, the market has offered up two pieces of majolica furniture (see the report on the November auction at Doyle's for the second piece) -- one of which has been added to this collector's exquisite collection. Although it was known that a design for a majolica chair existed in the Minton archives, it was not known that the chair had ever been produced. Now, this extraordinary piece offers the premiere grace note to the entrance of this collector's residence.

Moreover, just around the corner from the chair, a visitor to this lovely home

encounters this truly rare majolica beverage dispenser (photo at right). Although its exact function is not known, a look at the inside seems to indicate that possibly a charcoal filter fit in the middle, with the beverage being dispensed at the bottom of the piece from a spigot (now missing) in the front. Impressed around the opening are the words: "Slack & Brownlow, Manchester." ♦

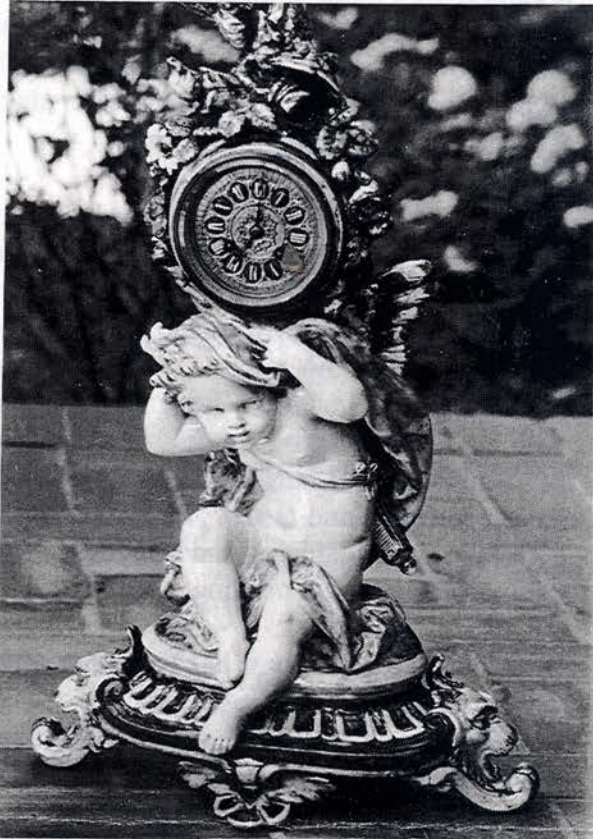
Majolica urn with filtering system.



Minton majolica chair.



French Majolica Clock

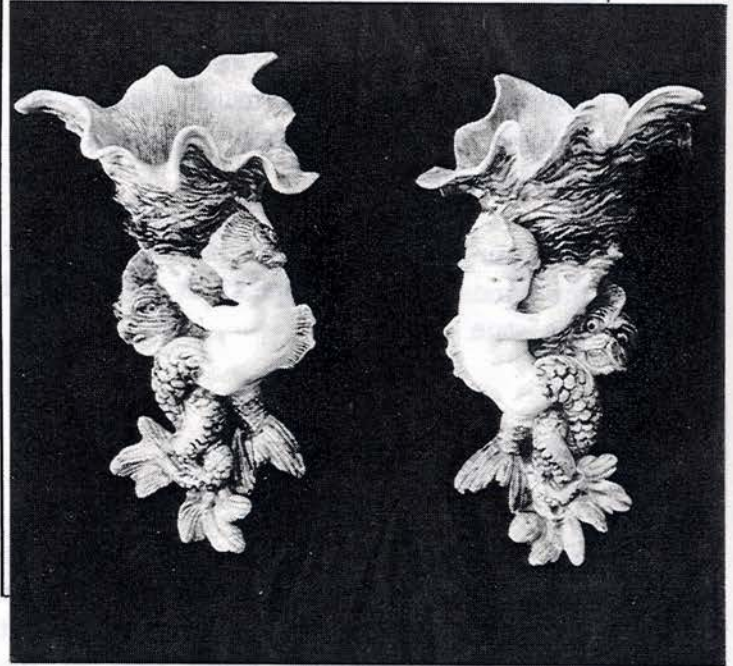


**Mid-West Collector Acquires
Unusual French Majolica Clock**

A collector of majolica in the Mid-West recently added this unusual and elaborate majolica clock to his collection and surmises that although it is unmarked it looks like Paris School. Purchased on a recent visit to France, the piece arrived home unscathed by its journey from overseas to be added to a collection which features a number of pieces by Thomas Sergent, one of the 19th century School of Paris followers of Palissy.

Also shown is a pair of colorful sconces that this collector purchased at Majolica Heaven '95 in Atlanta and which now grace a wall in his diningroom.

Pair of colorful majolica wall sconces.



Get Your MIS Kicks in '96

John Collins, Annual Meeting Chair

The Society's 1996 annual meeting will be held just outside Philadelphia at the Sheraton Valley Forge Hotel and Convention Center in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania over the spring weekend of April 26-28. Arrangements for reduced room rates are in place and those for tours, etc. are being worked out. The hotel will begin taking reservations in the New Year. Full information will soon be mailed to members.

Why Valley Forge? Well, based on a recent review of MIS membership, 43% of our members live in the 12-state area within potential driving distance of Valley Forge. It seems reasonable to bring the opportunity to attend the annual meeting within range of as large a group of our members as possible.

Valley Forge is also central to a great number -- not all, but many -- of our dealer-members. Therefore, bringing the annual meeting back to Valley Forge also assures us of a high-quality, varied, and exciting "Majolica Heaven '96" with many dealers participating.

For your convenience, a registration form for the annual meeting appears at the back of this issue. ♦

Barter 'n Buy

John Collins

An intriguing letter to the editor in the October 1995 **Maine Antiques Digest (MAD)** severely criticized the management of a major antiques show held in the Northeast. It seems that the show advertised a sale, but when several persons offered to buy the items at the listed prices an auction ensued. This greatly offended a number of participants and buyers and prompted the indignant letter to the **MAD** editor.

It has also prompted me to write about the "Barter n' Buy" feature of the MIS Annual Meeting -- an increasingly well attended and well received feature of our annual meeting under the excellent management of Phyllis Hays of Tulsa, Oklahoma. Barter 'n Buy has gotten bigger every year and that's great. But, the last thing we want is have anyone become offended by it. So I thought I'd describe it once again, in advance of its reappearance at Valley Forge in April.

Barter 'n Buy was created for the purpose of giving individual MIS members the opportunity to find, sell or buy pieces for/from member collections. It was not intended to circumvent the dealer network, rather to supplement it, and was conceived as a friendly opportunity to trade with fellow

collectors in an informal, convivial, no pressure, non-retail atmosphere. Members can bring to Barter 'n Buy a maximum of ten pieces of majolica clearly labeled with owner's name and asking price. After that, the spirit of the occasion takes over.

Based on MIS members' feedback sheets turned in following past annual meetings, Barter 'n Buy has been successful. Members have found pieces they wanted (the lid to the teapot -- or the teapot to the lid!) at reasonable cost. Pieces have been traded with no cash changing hands. Some pieces sell, some don't. Members chat and discover similar interests and tastes. Phyllis has done a great job of organizing and bringing us this feature of the annual meeting.

One comment in the past has been that some dealers might buy majolica at Barter 'n Buy and resell it at a higher price at Majolica Heaven. It is important to remember that dealers are MIS members and that they have as much access to Barter 'n Buy as the rest of us. The MIS Board will continue to emphasize that this is an opportunity for the non-professional collector, but not an exclusive one.

Will Barter 'n Buy become an auction? No, since pieces are clearly marked with the asking price; the rule is always "first come, first served!" So, continue to enjoy Barter 'n Buy at the MIS annual meeting. Also, you may well improve your chances of success by writing to the Editor of **Majolica Matters** about the pieces you intend to bring to Barter 'n Buy or what you hope to find there. The Editor, bless her and space being available, will include the information in the '96 Spring issue which will come out before the Annual Meeting. Perhaps an MIS member out there will respond and fill your needs. (And, perhaps I will find a mint Copeland Isis pitcher for thirty bucks!) ♦

Follow Up on Whoooo Done It!

Polly Wilbert, MM Editor

In the Summer and Fall issues, we noted a number of owl tiles owned by Society members and endeavored to ascertain what pottery had manufactured them. Having had a wonderful visit with Phyllis Hays in Tulsa over the summer, I was able to personally examine the owl tile in her collection, and to see the name MAYER as it is lettered on the tile's back. As a result, when I opened the catalog for Majolica Auctions' October auction in Valley Forge, I was delighted to see Photo 33 on Page 14, depicting a large floor vase manufactured by J.S. Mayer of Trenton, New Jersey. In my opinion, the lettering for J. S. MAYER on that vase is identical to the lettering on the owl tiles. I now strongly believe that the owl tiles were made by the Trenton manufacturer and not by the Mayer pottery in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania.

At best, it seems unlikely that two potteries hundreds of miles apart would use identical lettering on their products. Moreover, to date, there is no substantive evidence that the Beaver Falls pottery manufactured majolica. In fact, it seems to have chiefly manufactured ironstone and especially tea leaf patterned ware.

We still don't know the intended purpose of the tiles, however, so the mystery is not yet fully solved, but perhaps someday we'll uncover that information, too. ♦

Majolica Reproductions and Misrepresentations

John Collins

A recent issue of an antique trade paper contained an advertisement entitled, "Who else was cheated?" The ad (for the **Antique & Collectors Reproduction News**) both

pictured and described fakes and reproductions, including new majolica. It showed and described a reproduction cobalt sunflower pitcher, marked Etruscan, and further remarked about a "...lady who read their ad and then discovered she had 30 pieces of new majolica."

The Majolica International Society has been alerting members and collectors in the pages of this newsletter that our beloved Victorian majolica is a prime target for reproduction, reportedly mostly by overseas manufacturers. These warnings continue; you must protect yourself as you continue to collect Victorian majolica.

How to do that? In several ways: First, buy only from ethical, reputable persons -- dealers or other collectors or friends. Ethical sellers will guarantee to refund your money if a piece sold to you in good faith turns out to be phony or is in any way other than as represented. Secondly, educate yourself. If you speak with other collectors and study the many good books and information sources available, you will surely train your eyes and fingers. Attend auctions, "Majolica Heaven" and antique shows and examine as much majolica as you can; you will soon learn to spot reproductions. Being an informed collector is your best way not only of enjoying your collection but also of protecting yourself. Talk, talk, talk -- to dealers and other collectors. They will be delighted to share with you all they know. ➔

Lastly, report frauds when you discover them. Tell the dealer, tell your friends -- and tell the Editor of **Majolica Matters**. We in the MIS must be ever vigilant -- sad to say -- and protect each other against the reproductions we know are out there. But please note: not all modern majolica reproductions are manufactured with fraudulent intent. Tiffany, Mottahedah, Bloomingdale's, Horchow and other quality retailers are marketing modern majolica that are copies or take offs on original Victorian pieces. Fraud occurs only when a seller markets a new piece as an old one, as in the example of the pseudo-Etruscan cobalt sunflower pitcher noted at the outset. In that case and in others, new pieces have been manufactured with marks intended to convey the impression that they are original pieces from Victorian-era potters. That's fraud, and we must all protect ourselves against it.

Got a story to share on this matter? Drop a line to the Editor, **Majolica Matters**. ♦

World-Wide Auctions Results

Compiled from information sent in by John Collins, Joan Stacke, Michael Strawser, and Gerry Leberfeld.

Gorrings's, Bexhill, England:

September:

A pair of Isle of Man majolica teapots together brought £520.

October:

A pair of "Minton-style" barrel-shaped garden seats, with birds, dragonflies, water lillies and other aquatic plants on a cobalt ground with registration marks for January 9, 1874 brought fierce competition and went to a London dealer for £4,500.

Modern majolica from Bloomingdale's



Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury, England:

October:

Minton game pie tureen with a hunting hound lying across a shotgun -- with minor imperfections sold for £3,400. A George Jones sardine dish with cranes in flight and fish amid water plants in poor condition sold for £1,100 (five times the upper estimate).

Dee Atkinson & Harrison's, Driffield, England:

October:

A pair of large Minton floral and trelliswork jardineres on stands with green wreath rims and fluted bases with four yellow scroll feet in mint condition brought £7,500 from a local collector despite nationwide interest.

Christie's, South Kensington, England:

October Wedgwood Auction:

A basket 20 3/4 inches wide of shaped oval outline with twin scroll handles, pierced all over with fleur-de-lys designs and molded to each side with oval ribbon-tied panels printed and painted with birds in flight, set on four scroll feet and featuring pink, blue, yellow, and green glazes, with the date mark for 1872. Estimate £500-800, went for £1,380.

A pair of candlesticks modeled as putti clinging to slender leafy oak trees below shaped nozzles set above spreading scroll bases, with green, brown, and other glazes with the date mark for 1862 or 1888. Estimate £400-600. Sold for £1,495.

Jardiniere, 12 1/2 inches high, modeled as a hollow tree trunk, base molded with scrolling, blossoming, and fruiting blackberry branches and set on branch feet, with brown, green, yellow and purple glazes. Restoration to the rim and base. Date mark for 1868 or 1894. Estimate £400-600, brought £805.

Bonhams, Knightsbridge, London:

November:

(Prices converted using \$1.50 to the £1) Brown bear water pitcher with a drum on his back, unmarked but attributed to Holdcroft, sold for \$828. A Minton dead game tureen with cover and insert in very poor condition sold for \$1,553.

Majolica Auctions at Valley Forge, Penna.

October:

A thousand piece auction, attended by buyers from throughout the U.S. and Canada, with 76 absentee bidders. Prices noted include 10% buyer's fee.

The last lot in the auction, a rare Minton rabbit centerpiece with two rabbits under a leaf, with restoration to an ear, sold for \$8,250.

Other Minton pieces included two game dishes with dead game on the lids and basketweave bases. The large sized dish sold for \$3,960; the small, for \$2,530. A centerpiece with a shell carried by two putti sold for \$3,300.

A George Jones covered salmon dish was an unadvertised late addition, which sold for \$5,500, and a pair of George Jones individual strawberry plates sold for \$1,320, each.

A Holdcroft crab sardine box with rim chip and a Holdcroft centerpiece bowl sold for \$2,200, each. A Wedgwood horse plate went for \$1,320 and the Wedgwood Tragedy and Comedy matchholder sold for \$770.

Several pieces of Etruscan were sold: a shell and seaweed compote with repair, \$1,760; a waste bowl for \$770; and two 9 1/4 inch plates averaged \$560, each. A cobalt sunflower syrup went for \$550 and the multi-colored soccer jug with hairline and rim repair for \$1,360. Opportunities for Etruscan collectors included a wild rose creamer and covered sugar which sold for \$99, a daisy compote for \$440, and several cauliflower plates which, depending upon condition, ranged from \$275 down to \$83. A shell and seaweed bread platter with rim repairs and hairline brought \$330.

A hard-to-find well-marked Tenuous majolica plate brought \$440.

There were several figural pitchers which included a frog on a melon, cat with mandolin, and a bull dog which each went for \$770. Another bull dog and a pelican pitcher with repair each sold for \$605. Figural tobacco jars also sold well, with a hippo humidior going for \$660, and an alligator and a monney for \$605, each. The fish with cigar and the frog with pipe went for \$495 a piece. Other figural pieces included the elephant candleholder, \$467.50, the frog candleholder, \$412.50, and a pair of monkey candleholders were sold for \$660.

Majolica Auctions' next sale will be held on Saturday, March 23, in Ft. Wayne, Indiana. For additional information, contact Michael Strawser at 219-854-2859.

William Doyle Galleries, New York City:

November:

In Manhattan in late November, noted author and MIS member Nicholas Dawes curated an auction of Victorian majolica. Given its mid-week scheduling, attendance was good with many MIS members and other collectors present. The sale featured a superb assembly of pieces, many (it was rumored) from legendary New York City-area collections. There were 273 majolica and 24 Palissy lots, comprising a total of about 700 pieces. Prices noted include 15% buyer's fee.

The high point of this sale may have been a unique majolica and mahogany table, featured on the cover of the catalog, which sold for \$14,375. The table was reported by auction personnel to have been "found" in a Brooklyn home. (Question: What else was in that house?)

A pair of Minton monkey garden seats was sold for \$12,075 to a phone bidder. An Etruscan cobalt daisy compote brought \$431. (A second did not reach its reserve at \$518.) The fish swallowing fish teapot went for \$633, and a shell and seaweed Etruscan humidior went for \$1,150 to an absentee bidder.

Another pair of Minton garden seats in the Anglo-Persian style went for \$5,175 to a phone bidder. An unmarked Isle of Man teapot with rope handle variant (attributed to Holdcroft) brought \$978. This auction also offered opportunities to add to majolica tile collections from among several choice offerings which opened the sale.

A Minton daisy and wicker cachepot with detached underplate sold for \$1,725; then, a second in better condition sold for \$3,220. A Minton figural centerpiece molded as two putti carrying a shell brought \$2,185.

One of two Minton signed Hughes Protat ewers brought \$1,150; the other did not reach its reserve at \$1,208.

Skinner, Inc., Boston, Mass.

December:

400 lot ceramics auction, including 19 lots of majolica. Prices include 15% buyer's premium.

23 1/2 inch high Minton majolica urn-shaped vase, c 1869 with light blue ground, two-handled with raised classical panels over ribbed lower body (repairs, hairlines, chips) Est. \$600-800. \$1,610.

Copeland pitcher, c 1877, square form rim with paneled sides, enamel decorated and molded with lotus and lily plants. 7 1/2 inches high. Est. \$200-250. \$1,495.

Minton monkey vase, 1872. Modeled as bamboo stalk with monkey figures playing about the exterior, 7 1/4" high. Est. \$1,200-1,800. \$2,070.

Toadstool Garden Seat, possibly Continental, late 19th century, multi-colored body with central

mushroom surrounded at the base by a snake, frog, and snails (foot rim and surface chips). 19 1/2" high. Est. \$1,000-1,500. \$4,370.

Two Etruscan Thorn pattern pitchers, c 1880, mottled blue and brown ground with colored reliefs. 4 3/8" and 8". Est. \$300-500. \$345.

Large Sarreguemines jardiniere. France, c 1880, branch molded handles with brown ground and enamel decorated relief of oak leaves surrounding the body, impressed marks. Ht. 17", Dia. 17 1/2". Est. \$900-1,200. \$1,610. ♦

Special Collectors' Insurance

The International Collectors Insurance Agency and Aetna have announced the introduction of a new insurance program tailored to the special needs of serious collectors of glassware and ceramic antiques and collectibles. The program offered is the first of its kind in the industry. The policy provides an all-risk, worldwide coverage, including protection against theft, fire, and breakage, and covers china, ceramics, porcelain, crystal, and glass antiques and collectibles.

"Breakage coverage is a valuable feature of this new policy," explained Tony Bucci of International Collectors Insurance Agency, "since breakage is one of the biggest risks for these collectors." While some insurance carriers may offer endorsements to homeowners policies, they don't include breakage coverage. Additionally, those endorsements are more costly than this policy.

Blanket coverage is another feature. Blanket coverage means the collector doesn't have to list each and every item in the collection for the full collection to be insured. However, items with a value above \$3,000 need to be specifically noted on the policy. The unlisted items are covered for up to 10% of the total

coverage amount the policy provides. For example, a policy with \$70,000 in total coverage provides \$7,000 in protection for unlisted items.

“Some collectors have invested thousands of dollars in their collections,” said Bucci, “and not a single item is covered by their homeowners or tenants insurance policy. This policy fills a serious gap in their insurance coverage.”

Another benefit is the automatic coverage for newly purchased items for up to 90 days from the date of acquisition (for up to 10% of the total coverage amount of the policy). During the 90-day period, the policy coverage amount should be increased to continue coverage on the new items.

This policy also includes free registration of stolen items of certain value with the Art Loss Register (ALR), a permanent worldwide database of stolen art and antiques.

The cost of this policy is \$1.00 per \$100 of coverage including breakage coverage with a 10% deductible. For example, a \$20,000 collection will cost \$200 a year to insure. There is a minimum annual premium of \$100. A check for the full annual premium payable to Aetna must accompany the application for coverage.

This program is available exclusively through International Collectors Insurance Agency and Aetna. For more information about the coverage, call the Collector's Hot Line of the International Collectors Insurance Agency, 1-800-691-1114. ♦

**International Collectors
Insurance Agency
PO Box 6991
Warwick, RI 02887-6991
Ph: 800-691-1114**

Free, Free, Free . . .

Polly Wilbert

In a recent conversation with a Society member, it came to my attention that not all of our members are aware of one of the best benefits of being a member of the Majolica International Society: Free advertising in **Majolica Matters**. As a member of the Society, you are entitled to place ads in the newsletter at no charge. **MajolicAds** offer a terrific opportunity to advertise to sell or buy majolica or to ask for assistance in identifying a piece in your collection. In fact, many members' ads have been successful, resulting in the location of missing parts (including some incredibly rare ones), matching pieces, or just in the simple purchase of a desired piece of majolica.

How do you advertise? Simply write to me at the address noted in the back of the newsletter in advance of the publication deadline of the next issue. (The publication deadlines are listed at the back of each issue.) Send me the proposed text of the ad and any photos or illustrations you wish to have used; include your name, address, and/or phone number so that fellow members can respond to your ad.

Although sometimes there are space restrictions (the newsletter is generally an even number of pages), I will do my best to accommodate as many ads as I can in each issue. Infrequently, I am required to publish a little earlier than the planned deadline to meet some need of the Society, however, in most cases the publication deadlines hold true. ➔

Keep the newsletter's format in mind. Two columns on 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper with the opportunity for one or two full or half-page ads, depending upon the editorial space required for the issue. If you send photos, please send smaller format ones (3" x 5") so that they can be fit in a column (about 3 1/2 inches wide) -- either color or black and white is fine. Try to have the majolica pictured as clearly as possible in the photo (a plain background is best). Although color copying is wonderful and enhances the newsletter, it is very expensive and we are limited in the number of times a year we can run a color issue. ♦

MajolicAds

(Ads in this space are free to Society members. Forward text and photos for your ad to the Editor. For address, see publication information at back of newsletter.)

J. Calderwood Antiques
John Weld, Ph: 617-266-4808

Wanted:

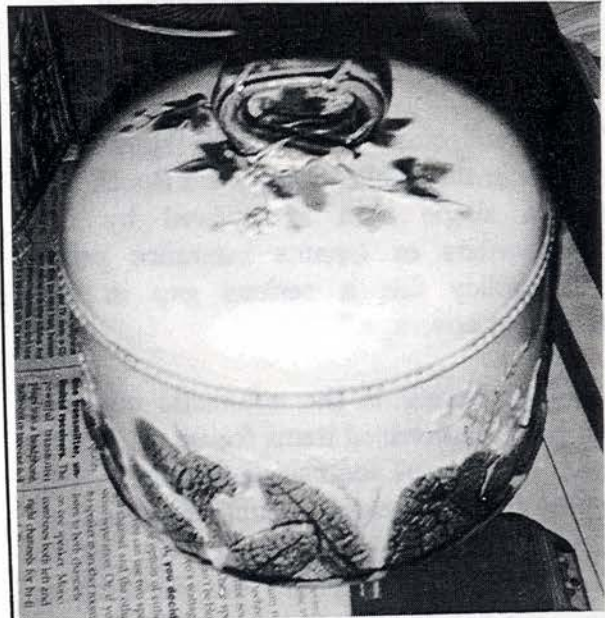
- Base for Wedgwood cheese dome, white with grey and yellow, 8" deep. (See photo)
- Cache pot for jardiniere stand (22" h, need 7 3/4" deep base. (See photo)
- Top to G. Jones' sardine box in turquoise w/leaves
- Creamer and sugar for G. Jones' strawberry server, turquoise.

Have:

- Etruscan baseball and soccer jug.
- Minton tower jug.
- Six-sided Wedgwood demitasse tea set w/2 cups and saucers, teapot, creamer and sugar in brown and yellow.
- Royal Worcester planter section.
- Samuel Lear platter and pitcher, urn and sunflower.

Displaying at
The Boston Antique Center
54 Canal Street, Boston, Mass
(Open Tuesday - Saturday)

Wanted: Base to Cheese Keeper



Wanted: Cachepot mate to this stand.



For Trade or Sale

Etruscan Bird and Iris teapot, slate blue (Karmason/Stacke, p. 158; Katz-Marks, p. 148) Beautiful condition. Prefer to trade for spooner and creamer for same set, but other offers will be entertained.

Ann Dylis-Knauf
Apt. 811, 1980 Western Ave.
Albany, NY 12203
Ph: 518-464-6461

Wanted for Upcoming Book

Author of upcoming book on majolica would appreciate hearing from dealers/collectors of figurals such as humidors, teapots, figurines, vases, or toby jugs.

Helen Cunningham
PO Box 50692
Nashville, TN 37205
Ph: 615-356-9573

The Retriever Antiques Moves to Cape Cod

Majolica dealer Ticia Robak, formerly of Canandaigua, New York, has relocated to Yarmouth Port, Massachusetts.

Please note her new address and phone number:

Ticia Robak
The Retriever Antiques
Post Office Box 12
Yarmouth Port, MA 02075
Ph: 508-362-3096

Volunteers Needed to Assist at Society's 1996 Annual Meeting

The Executive Committee is looking for volunteers to assist with events at the 1996 Annual Meeting in Valley Forge, Penna.

If you would be willing to help during the weekend with registration, information, event check-in, membership tables or other activities where extra helpful hands are needed, please drop us a note or let us know on your registration form.

None of this is "heavy lifting" and it will give you the opportunity to meet fellow members!

We look forward to hearing from you!

Majolica Matters is published quarterly for its members by:

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Majolica Matters
1996 Publication Submission Deadlines

Spring: 2/15/96
 Summer: 6/15/96
 Fall: 9/15/96
 Winter: 12/15/96

Mail to: Polly Wilbert
 7 Cedar St., Salem, MA 01970

Whenever possible, the Society's mailings are sent out through a mailing service that provides employment for handicapped or mentally challenged individuals.

Majolica Matters is pleased to use the services and to support the work of Heritage Industries of Peabody, Massachusetts, a sheltered workshop for the handicapped.

Loren and Pam Ferrazzutti, Toronto, at lower left; Harry and Sue Thurmon, Dallas, Texas, below, and John Collins, Saratoga Springs, NY and Wilma Murray, Philadelphia, bottom right.



Photos from Majolica Auctions' October Valley Forge, Penna. Event

Courtesy of John Collins



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