

Majolica Matters

The Quarterly News of the
Majolica International Society
Fall 1997

<u>In This Issue:</u>	<u>Page</u>
Palissy Ware in New Orleans	1
New MM Editor(s) Sought	3
Annual Meeting and Auction Dates	6-9

Palissy Ware Collection of Brooke Hayward Duchin to Open at the New Orleans Museum of Art

On November 15th, the New Orleans Museum of Art will open "Grotesqueries: Form, Fantasy, and Function in 19th Century European Ceramics: The Brooke Hayward Duchin Collection", an exhibit comprised of French and Portuguese Palissy ware. The exhibit will run until January 7, 1998.

Mrs. Duchin's landmark collection of Palissy ware, which she began more than 20 years ago, will be represented by 155 pieces surveying the forms of Palissy-inspired majolica from 1855 to 1910. A promised gift to the Museum, the Collection features all of the important French and major Portuguese makers of Palissy ware as well as related pieces by English potters. In addition to the familiar platter forms encrusted with reptiles and marine life, the exhibition will include a pair of Minton cisterns with double serpent handles, garniture vases, an English Sphinx candlestick, a figural face by French

Sphinx candlestick ca. 1900-1910. English. Height 13.5"
Brooke Hayward Duchin Collection. Photo courtesy of the
New Orleans Museum of Art.



maker Georges Pull, a School of Paris vase formed of a serpent rising from a shell, and a wonderful canapé server in the shape of a cabbage head resting on shells.

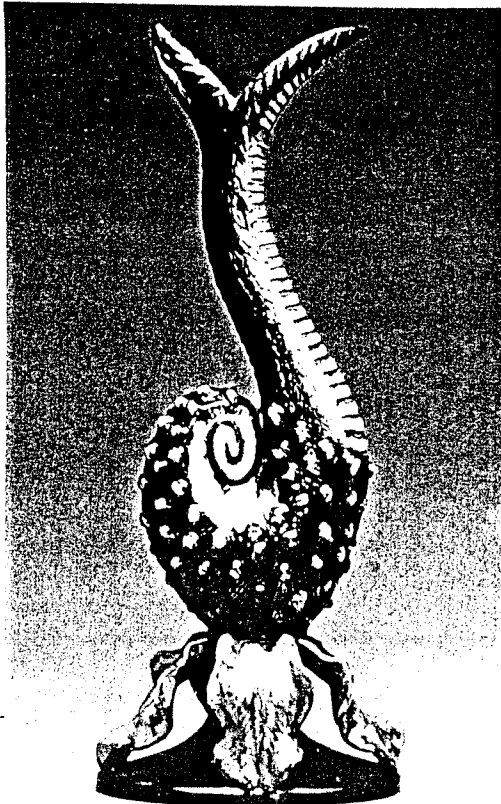
Platter: Langouste with Fish. ca 1875. Battaglia Pottery. Ht: 17". Brooke Hayward Duchin Collection. Photo courtesy of New Orleans Museum of Art.



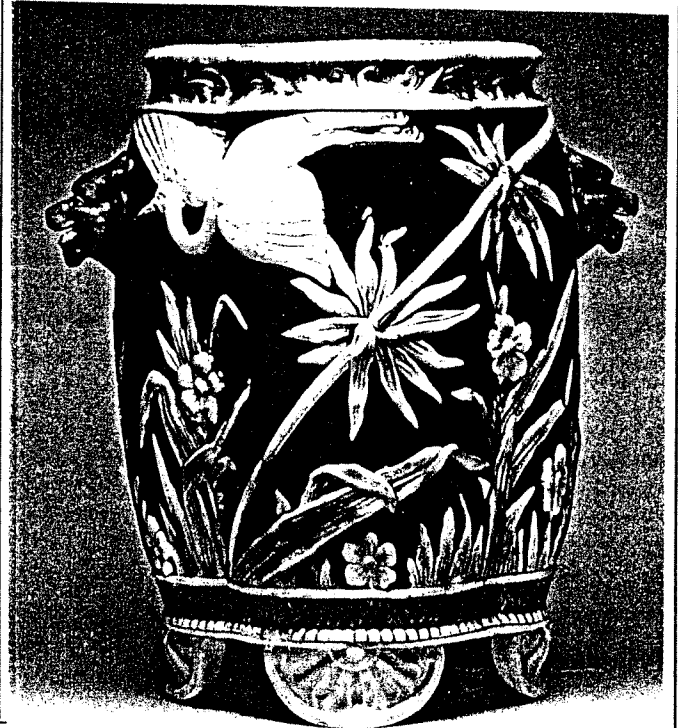
Coquiform Footed Vase. ca. 1865-75. Ecole de Tours. Ht. 11". Brooke Hayward Duchin Collection. Photo courtesy of the New Orleans Museum of Art.



Vase: Snake Emerging from a Shell. Ca. 1875-80. Paris. Ht. 15". Brooke Hayward Duchin Collection. Photo courtesy of the New Orleans Museum of Art.



Umbrella Stand Japonese. ca 1885-90. Minton. Ht. 22". Brooke Hayward Duchin Collection. Photo courtesy of the New Orleans Museum of Art.



In a recent telephone conversation, John Webster Keefe, Curator of Decorative Arts at the Museum, expressed how delighted they are to have Mrs. Duchin's fantastical collection in New Orleans. He spoke with great admiration of Mrs. Duchin's "immaculate eye", which he believes is the key to the exceptional quality and unique character of her collection. To give a special splash to the exhibit, the Museum will celebrate its opening with a fabulous Odyssey Ball, the annual fundraiser for the Museum, which will take for its theme the exotic forms of Palissy ware.

In the exhibit's catalog, Mr. Keefe writes that "author and writer Brooke Hayward Duchin is no stranger to the joys, quirks and occasional frustrations of collecting." "A collection of Pop Art paintings, which she had assembled with her former husband Dennis Hopper, was destroyed in a 1961 fire in California. Despite that loss, Mrs. Duchin refused to mourn and never balked at 'starting over'. She began acquiring 19th-century French butcher shop signs in the form of bovine, sheep and equine heads that she credits as beginning 'the animal phase' of her collecting." Mr. Keefe reports that after "she moved to New York in 1977, Mrs. Duchin was attracted to the brilliant colouration, technical virtuosity and originality of Palissy wares as pleasing decorations for the kitchen splashboard. Such ceramics were then relatively plentiful and her burgeoning collection soon spread to the bar area, living room, study, and bath. She found that she was instinctively drawn to 'objects that work', meaning objects that fulfilled the Palissy, or rustic, ware category in their decorative vocabulary but also functioned as canapé holders, umbrella stands, pitchers, vases and cheese covers." Mrs. Duchin is the author of Haywire, a book about her years growing up in Hollywood as the daughter of agent Leland Hayward. She is married to society band leader Peter Duchin.

On Sunday, November 16, at 2 p.m., Marshall Katz, who has done pioneering research on the French and Portuguese followers of Bernard Palissy, will give the exhibit's keynote lecture. Mr. Katz's research on Portuguese Palissy

makers was featured in the August 1997 issue of *The Magazine Antiques*.

The show in New Orleans is only the second exhibit of Palissy ware to be held in the United States. The first was drawn from Mr. Katz's collection and was held at The Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh.

The New Orleans Museum of Art will publish a full-color semi-hardback catalog of the "Grotesquerie" exhibit. Closer to November 15th, the catalog can be ordered from the Museum Gift Shop by calling 504-483-2302. It will cost \$20 plus \$4.50 shipping and handling.

For more information about exhibit, contact:

*New Orleans Museum of Art, City Park,
PO Box 19123 New Orleans LA 70179-0123
Ph: 504-488-2631.*

Pitchin' In

by Polly Wilbert

Back in the spring of 1992 at our annual meeting in Springfield, Mass., I volunteered to help with the Society's newsletter, which was subsequently named **Majolica Matters**. Next year, following publication of our Spring 1998 issue, I will be stepping down as editor. While there are several reasons for this, the primary one is that I have pretty well exhausted my creative editorial and production energies. With the 1998 Spring newsletter, I will have prepared 24 issues of the newsletter over six years, which I believe will have been a pretty fair contribution to the Society's efforts. I only wish that along the way I had been better able to engage more Society members in sharing the overall undertaking of the newsletter and its editorial content. That has not, however, been one of my strengths.

It is time for a new team to step up to take on **Majolica Matters** and to give form to it as our organization enters its second decade. From my experience as editor, I would recommend that, in fact, it be a team that takes over this work -- perhaps a representative from each region of the

country. Or, perhaps each team member could take on editorship of one quarterly issue a year. In fact, there are many ways in which the responsibilities of the newsletter could be shared, but going forward, I believe it would be best if they really were shared. It may be an aphorism that "Many hands make light work," but aphorisms contain simple wisdom. Or, perhaps things will continue as they have and one person will take on the whole ball of wax on their own! (Or, duos, trios, or whatever!)

Over Labor Day weekend, I chatted with Bev and Ernie Dieringer at the Farmington Antiques Show in Connecticut. The Dieringers are the husband and wife co-editors of **White Ironstone Notes**, the newsletter of the White Ironstone Collectors Association (WICA). **Notes** is a super publication with lots of input from WICA's members. They recounted to me how four times a year a number of members of WICA gather at the Dieringers' Connecticut home to help put out **Notes** and how much fun they have doing it. (Some people even come from as far away as Pennsylvania!) Moreover, they have been able to foster energetic regional participation across the country, which regularly generates editorial input for **Notes**. Certainly, if they can do it, we could too.

There is much about the newsletter production process that has been streamlined and improved over the past 5 years. We have moved beyond folding and stamping each copy by hand ourselves (actually, that should read "myself") to using a mailing service. Maintenance of the database and production of mailing labels and membership reports has been expertly taken on over the past year by Cheryl Smith of Scituate, Massachusetts. So these tasks are no longer part of the newsletter effort. As a result, I would suggest that what needs to be taken on by the next editorial team is the creation of an advance yearly editorial schedule and coordination of the development of special topics for each issue. This could be set up over the annual meeting weekend. Identification of Society members who would be willing to write articles once or twice a year would be especially helpful to this new group. Several "house" photographers would also be a great addition! As to tools: the

Society will make available to whoever produces the newsletter a computer, appropriate software, printer, fax, etc. We have already earmarked funds for any or all of these.

There are many benefits to working on the newsletter, not the least of which is getting to know the Society's members as well as learning about their collections. In many ways, it is a great opportunity for someone who is a relatively new collector in that one's strong desire to know more about majolica and its history mirrors that of many of our members and is reflected in the articles that would be developed for the newsletter. Over the years, it has been great fun to attend the annual meetings as the editor of **MM**, to re-connect with long-time collector friends, to make new ones, and to actually lay eyes on people with whom I've been corresponding.

It is important that over the next couple of months those of you who would be willing to pitch in make yourselves known to me (508-745-1017) or to Gerry Leberfeld (212-371-1738). Otherwise, the newsletter will be in jeopardy beginning with the Summer 1998 issue. By giving several months of notice now, however, I hope we can have a smooth transition. More than that, I look forward to our having more volunteers than we would ever have expected. As the Dieringers have made clear to me, this can really be a lot of fun.

Some of you may ask, "Is Polly abandoning ship?" No, that is not the case; but in an effort to re-charge my batteries, I need to take a bit of a break and then plan to work in other areas of the Society's endeavors. Of course, I will be glad to help get the new editorial bunch launched!

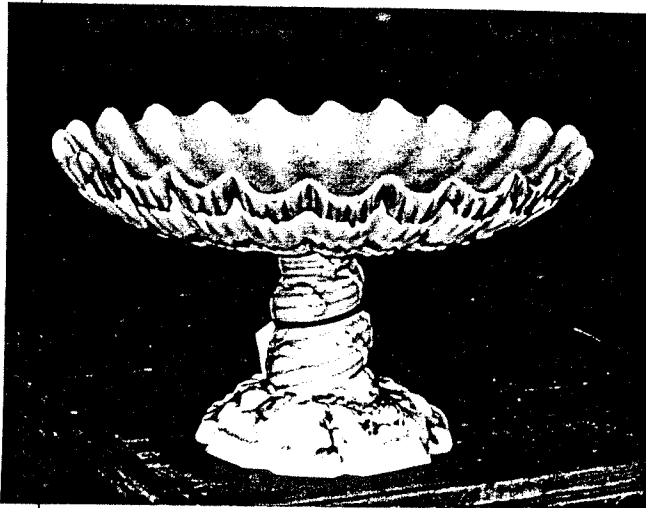
So, get your hands in the air and let Gerry or me hear from you!



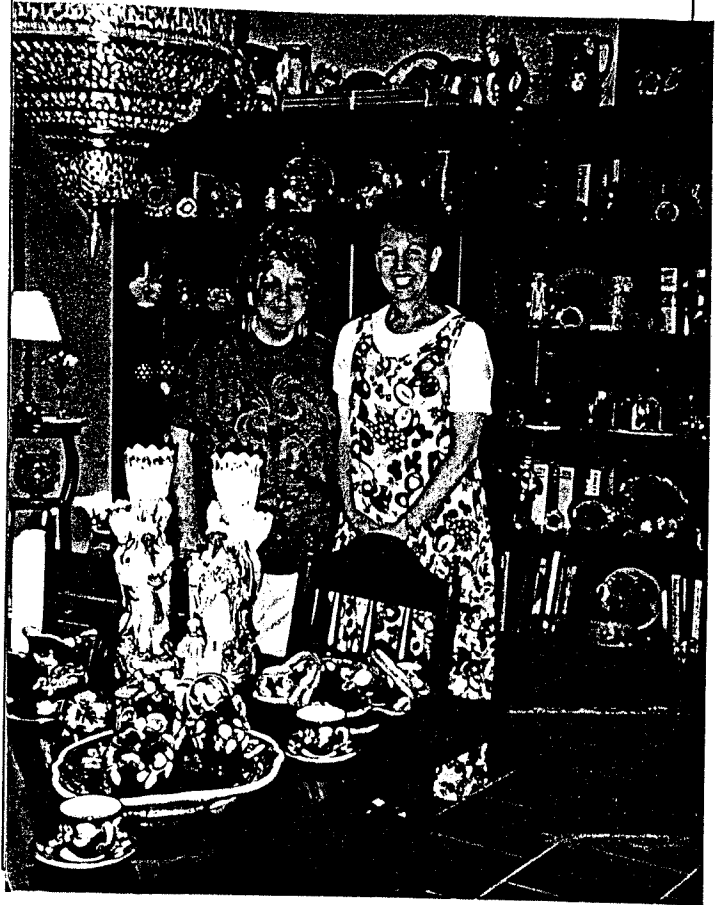
Speaking of the Farmington Antiques Show ...

The two summer antique shows at the Polo Grounds in Farmington, Connecticut are among my favorites. The first is held during the second weekend in June and the second is over Labor Day weekend. There is always some majolica to be found and this year over Labor Day weekend I visited John Weld's booth and saw an Etruscan shell compote that he had recently acquired and was now displaying for sale. In comparing notes with my experts, we have estimated that only about half a dozen of this particular GS&H piece are known to exist. The one that John had for sale was in really good condition and had exceptionally nice color. Of course, by now, he may have sold it, but I thought you might like to see a picture. You know I have a soft spot in my heart for GS&H. Must be genetic.

Etruscan shell compote, with twist base.
John C. Weld Antiques. Ph: 508-394-7376



Phyllis Hays, Tulsa, OK (l) and Marcia Singman, Oakland, CA (r) with a small part of Phyllis's majolica collection. Photo: Courtesy of Felicia Matthews and Marcia Singman.



What She Did On Her Summer Vacation

Marcia Singman of Oakland, California dropped us a line at the end of the summer to report on her vacation travels. While on a 10-state tour across country to visit relatives and see national parks, Marcia and her husband Bill stopped in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Marcia took that opportunity to take her cousin Felicia Matthews along for a visit to the "Midwest Queen of Majolica" Phyllis Ann Hays. Felicia took this great shot of Marcia and Phyllis with some of Phyllis's 750-piece collection. Marcia said that it was a great treat to see Phyllis's wonderful majolica (in Jack and Phyl's neat new house).

In her letter Marcia also writes,

"... I hope there is some way to encourage more members to use their membership lists to form small local groups, and also to visit each other when travelling nationally and internationally.

I started collecting majolica two years ago. Unfortunately, I started late, but ... I am so obsessed and possessed that already I own over 100 pieces. I wish to share my obsession with other members of the Society, especially since most of my friends do not understand this fairly recent passion of mine. Fortunately, my husband does understand and he built a pine hutch to house some of my collection. If any Society members visit the lovely San Francisco Bay area, please call us northern California collectors and come for a visit and we'll share majolica stories and collections."

Our thanks to Marcia for her report, for connecting with other Society members, and for reminding us to get together more and to be in touch with fellow members and collectors when we travel. Won't you lead this effort in your area? Nuf said.

If you are in San Francisco, Marcia can be reached at: Ph: 510-644-6052.

And, Speaking of Phyllis ...

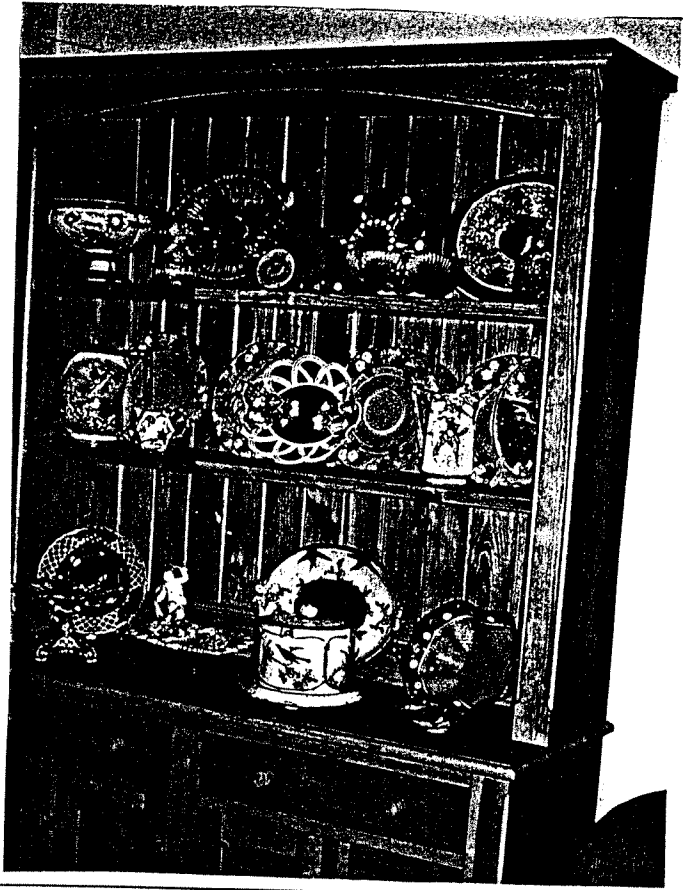
Remember the article about the similar Zsolnay and Wardle pieces in the Summer 1997 MM issue? There were photographs of the very definitely related pink Wardle creamer and Zsolnay teapot. Well, Phyllis sent along this photograph of her creamer (See page 10) -- most likely the very one made by Zsolnay to go with his lotus pattern teapot. (Or, is this still another manufacturer?)

Save These Dates in '98: May 1, 2 & 3

Gerry Leberfeld, Baltimore resident Phil English, and Joan Stacke are working on arrangements for our 1998 annual meeting -- the Society's 10th -- in Baltimore near the Inner Harbor. We'll keep you posted as we finalize

details, but it now looks like we'll be gathering in the mid-Atlantic area for our Spring Fling in '98.

Part of Marcia Singman's majolica collection in the pine hutch her husband Bill made for her. Photo: Courtesy of Marcia Singman.



Part One of the Anna M. Stern Collection to be Auctioned: October 24 and 25, 1997

Michael G. Strawser of Majolica Auctions is conducting his Fall Majolica Auction on October 24 and 25, 1997 in Hatfield, Pennsylvania at the Alderfer Auction Center. Hatfield is 30 minutes north of Philadelphia.

Included in this auction will be a portion of the Collection of Mrs. Ellis E. Stern. Mrs. Stern was well known for her unrivaled collection of majolica, which grew from just two unmarked examples to over 2100 pieces. With her

husband's assistance, Mrs. Stern's collection came to include complete sets and individual pieces of almost every majolica pattern by Griffen, Smith and Hill of nearby Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, with the Shell and Seaweed pattern being prominently represented. Among her rarest pieces are the Etruscan Holy Water Font, the Dolphin-base Shell nut dish, Star of David soap dish, corn bud vase, multi-color Soccer jug, and the Etruscan oyster plate, all of which will be in the October auction.

The Stern Collection has been featured in many books written on majolica. Pieces from the collection were featured in: Majolica, A Complete History and Illustrated Survey by Marilyn Karmason and Joan Stacke, Majolica, It's Fun to Collect by Wildey C. Rickerson, and Majolica: American and European Wares by Jeffrey B. Snyder and Leslie Bockol and others.

Mrs. Stern also wrote several articles on Majolica for publication including an article entitled "Phoenixville Majolica", which appeared in *The American Antique Journal* of August 1947.

This October event will be the first of three majolica auctions of the Stern Collection. We will be selling 700 pieces on April 3 and 4, 1998 in Fort Wayne, Indiana. That auction will include many Etruscan pieces as well as the English portion of the Stern Collection which included the George Jones Punch bowl, a pair of George Jones horse cornucopia vases, a Copeland tri-handled eagle Centennial pitcher, a Minton cat figural pitcher and other fine English majolica.

Also included in this October's auction in Pennsylvania will be the complete private collection of Mariann Katz. Ms. Katz authored The Collector's Encyclopedia of Majolica, which is one of the most used reference books on majolica. Most of the pieces in her collection were featured in her books.

Majolica Auctions invites you to attend our October auction. It will be a great opportunity to see many rare examples of majolica and a chance to purchase some as well. The items in

this auction will be of interest to beginning collectors as well as to the very advanced. We look forward to seeing you on October 24 and 25 in Hatfield, Pa.

For more information on the auction, call Michael Strawser at 219-854-2859.

Etruscan Dolphin-base Single Shell Nut Dish, Stern Collection.
Photo courtesy Majolica Auctions.



Etruscan Holy Water Font. Stern Collection.
Photo courtesy Majolica Auctions.



**Now It's Furniture
to Go With the Majolica!**

Karen Cox dropped us a note from out west where she's in the midst of decorating and updating efforts on her and Ed's new house in Dallas. Actually, she wanted us to see the sofa and chair she bought for the new place which will go so well with her majolica. Who else, she wondered, would have bought this wonderful ensemble upholstered in a lush pattern of majolica-like begonia leaves?

Karen Cox's begonia leaf pattern sofa and chairs, Dallas, TX.
Photo courtesy of Karen Cox.



**November 19th Auction
at William Doyle Galleries**

William Doyle Galleries' fourth annual auction of Victorian majolica on November 19th at noon in New York City will feature over 200 lots of English, Continental and American origin, mostly from two private European collections, both assembled over 20 years ago. Highlights will include an impressive Minton heron floor vase, a monumental Minton wine cooler with merman handles, a George Jones "Punch" bowl, a pair of George Jones swan garden pots, and a fine selection of Minton and other teapots, cheese stands and oyster plates. A small but

fascinating collection of pottery in the style of French Renaissance master Bernard Palissy will also be offered.

To order a catalog or for more information about this auction, please call the William Doyle Galleries at 212-427-2730.

Pair of Minton Garden Pots to be auctioned at William Doyle on November 19th. Est. \$8,000-12,000. Photo: William Doyle Galleries.



Membership Directory

Very shortly, under separate cover, you will receive the Society's 1997-98 membership directory, which we hope will be a useful tool for contacting fellow collectors and dealers of majolica. We thank Cheryl Smith for all of her very hard work in constructing the new membership database on Microsoft's Access and for updating our records all year long as changes and additions come in.

**Article on Portuguese Ceramics
by Marshall Katz in
August 1997 Issue of
The Magazine Antiques
by Polly Wilbert**

In case you missed it over the summer, get your hands on a copy of the August issue of *The Magazine Antiques*. The issue featured a wonderfully informative article by Marshall Katz on Portuguese ceramics and received the honor of the cover photograph. The article was

richly illustrated with pictures of historical Portuguese earthenware and terra cotta objects as well as of products currently being manufactured at Faianças Artísticas Bordalo Pinheiro in Caldas da Rainha, Portugal using designs created in the late 1880s by Rafael Bordalo Pinheiro.

In fact, it was with some delight that this collector (having read Marshall's article) encountered a lovely ceramic box from the Pinheiro factory in Boston's Neiman Marcus in early September. The beautifully executed piece uses an 1889 tile design by Bordalo Pinheiro for its cover. The experience felt very much akin to that of the Victorian woman who found majolica for sale in the local emporium of her day. It was quite delightful to purchase my contemporary box at NM and take it home to add to my slowly growing majolica collection.

Nominating Committee Requests Input from Members

The Society's Nominating Committee asks for your input as to nominations for officers for the coming 1998-2001 term. It's fair to say that it should be a pretty special group that takes the Society into the new Millennium. The key to the future success of the Majolica International Society is the participation of enthusiastic and energetic collectors and dealers of majolica. We are looking for volunteers and/or nominations for the following positions:

President
Vice President
Treasurer
Secretary
Newsletter Editor
Membership Chair
Regional Activity Coordinator
Regional Representatives:
East, South, Mid-West, and West

The present holders of these offices may, of course, run again for these slots. To have more than one candidate for any of the Society's offices would be reflective of enthusiasm about majolica and the Society's efforts. Also, the

membership would have a choice for whom they would vote rather than a seeming "mandate".

To place nominations, to volunteer to stand for office or to get more information, please be in touch with one of the members of the Nominating Committee. They are:

Michael Strawser	Ind.	219-854-2859
Mo Wizenberg	Okla.	405-848-4028
Donna Reis	Ct.	203-397-8585
Polly Wilbert	Mass.	978-745-1017
Chana Johnson	Cal.	510-635-5689

Elections will be held at our 1998 annual meeting.

December Auction at Skinner in Boston

Just as this issue was going to press, we received late word that there will be 40 pieces of majolica in the December 13th Fine Ceramics Sale at Skinner's Boston salesroom at The Heritage on the Garden in Back Bay. The items are from collections from California and Michigan and feature chiefly Wedgwood majolica with a number of pieces also being from Minton. A highlight of the sale (see photo elsewhere in this issue) will be a Wedgwood Argenta ware pillow form Rubens garden seat with scroll feet, estimated at \$1,000 - \$1,500. Among other items in the sale will be a George Jones strawberry basket and a pair of Minton tree trunk form vases with foxes looking at grapes

Catalogs will be available in mid-November by calling Skinner's Subscription Dept: Ph: 978-779-6241.

Please send material for the newsletter to:

Polly Wilbert
7 Cedar Street
Salem, MA 01970
Ph: 508-745-1017

Majolica Matters
1997/98 Publication Deadlines

Winter: 12/15/97
Spring: 3/16/98

We are proud to support the work of Heritage Industries, Inc., Peabody, Mass., a non-profit sheltered workshop for developmentally challenged adults, whose mailing service the Society uses to send out *Majolica Matters*.

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President
Gerald Leberfeld

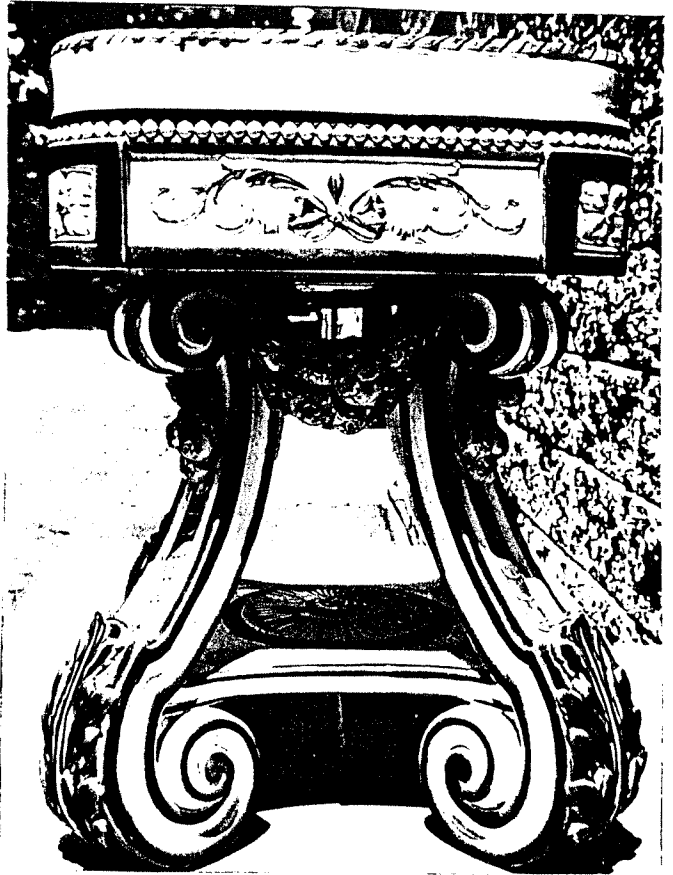
Treasurer
Joan Stacke

Secretary
Marilyn Karmason

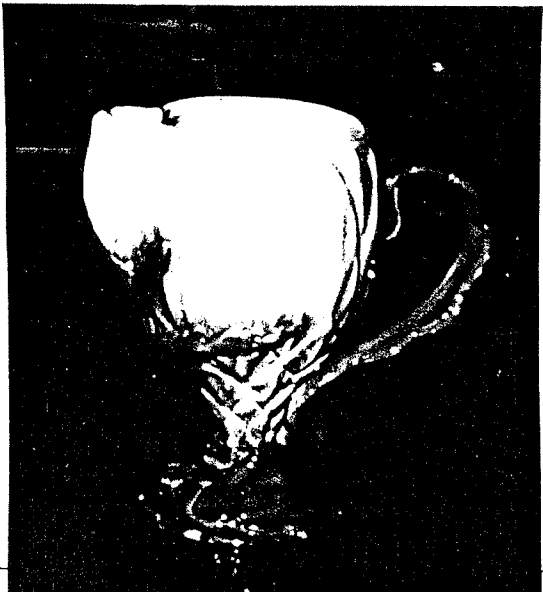
Newsletter Editor
Polly Wilbert

Founder and First President
Michael G. Strawser

Argenta ware pillow-form Rubens garden seat with scroll feet.
December 13 Skinner auction, Boston.
Photo: Courtesy of Skinner.



Zsolnay Lotus-Pattern Creamer. Collection of Phyllis Hays.
Photo: Courtesy of Phyllis Hays.



Fielding Shell and Coral Pitcher, Katz Collection.
Photo courtesy Majolica Auctions.

