



# Majolica Matters!



THE QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL MAJOLICA SOCIETY

FALL 1998

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Joan Stacke Graham

It has been 10 years since 46 people with a passion for majolica came together at a Holiday Inn in Indiana at Michael Strawser's invitation. That was the first of what we did not know would be annual meetings of the about-to-be-formed Majolica International Society. In fact, there were a lot of firsts that weekend: the first business meeting, the first lecture, and the first all-majolica antique show – not yet known as Majolica Heaven.



Joan Stacke Graham with a few of her favorite things!

None of us would have dreamed that 10 years later, the MIS would have an international membership of over 500, with members in countries as distant as Hungary and Australia. Over the years, our annual meetings have grown in sophistication thanks to Jerry Leberfeld's professional skills in meeting planning, Marilyn Karmason's speakers at our dinners and MajoliCollege, and Polly Wilbert's organizational skills. Howard Silby created our newsletter, later to be named *Majolica Matters*, followed by 6 years of issues produced under Polly Wilbert's guidance. Today, *Majolica Matters* has grown so that we have an editorial board consisting of Chana Johnson, Anne Mock, Marcia Singman and Judy Taback with those of us on the Executive Board throwing in ideas.

Ten years on, where are we? We want to broaden our efforts from just a few people doing many things to many people doing a great deal. Therefore, I have created a questionnaire, which appears on the last page of this issue of *Majolica Matters*, for you to fill out. Everyone who responds will be contacted personally, and we will use your skills to make the MIS an even stronger society as we begin our second decade.

*"We want to broaden our efforts from just a few people doing many things to many people doing a great deal.."*

While many people are focused on the arrival of the Year 2000 as a major event, the MIS is looking forward to 2001,

the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the historic Crystal Palace Exhibit in London and the presentation of majolica in 1851 by Minton and Co.

We are eager to celebrate the sesquicentennial of these two events by undertaking a comprehensive museum exhibition of majolica encompassing examples from England, America, and the Continent including France and Portugal.

With the goal of greater member involvement, the desire to establish regional meetings to bring us all closer together, and the hope of curating a major majolica exhibit in two years, I give you the opportunity to participate in all the excitement we have in store. Let me hear from you now so that we can work together to accomplish our society's goals.

## NO TIME FOR THINKIN'

### *The Price of Friendship*

By Chana Johnson

Sometimes things happen so fast, there is no time for thinkin'. A dear, dear friend – who shall remain nameless – has taken this title to the test.



Would you pay \$400 for all this?

In her many treks over the last 40 days, she landed all of these treasures for under \$400.00!

It became increasingly difficult to get that voice mail message, "Give me a call, you'll never guess what I've found." Admittedly, I was hoping deep down she had found for her dear friend a Wedgwood grape bread tray (she has one for which she paid under \$200.00).

Imagine getting the first call, "I got a George Jones Ewer for \$100.00; you know the one at Sotheby's." To be followed by, "Oh, a friend gave me a lead on a GSH Shell and Seaweed bread tray for \$95.00, I couldn't help it, I got it." Only to be thoroughly exhausted by, "I really blew it, I missed a George Jones Strawberry tray for \$125.00. But I found the dealer and bought it from her for \$200.00."

So, the attitude I've taken is, she is definitely the "Queen of the Deal," so I'd better treasure her friendship and hang a little closer on the treks!



## ON HISTORY...

### *A Rare Palissy Ware Find*

By Marshall Katz

Earlier this year, I acquired one of the rarest Palissy ware plates (shown at right) in my collection by Armand-Louis-Henri Carré de Busserolle (1823-1909). It is only the second rustic style plate by this artist I have ever seen. The other is in the Tours Museum of Fine Arts and is illustrated in my book *Portuguese Palissy Ware: A Survey of Nineteenth-Twentieth Century Ceramists from Caldas da Rainha, 1853-1920*. (number 135). This remarkable platters, with river fish and reeds (half of one fish is missing) surrounded by an unusual blue-and-white border, is probably one of the few surviving rustic works by de Busserolle. I have seen several others by de Busserolle, but they are either Renaissance-style, souvenir-type plates, or ones with pastoral scenes. The following is a short biography:



*A rare find, a rustic Busserolle plate*

Armand Carré de Busserolle was born in Draguignan, Côte d'Azur, France, on December 23, 1823. He was the son of a military officer, and at age twenty, joined the French Army. He became a captain nine years later in 1852 and served in Africa for about a year. He was also heavily involved in the later stages of the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871). In 1870, he rose to lieutenant colonel and later was made a general in the auxiliary army. He retired in December 1885 as brigadier-general, settled in Tours, and took up ceramics as a serious hobby. He signed pieces with his name, and/or an elaborate monogram of the initials C and B. General Carré de Busserolle died in Tours, in January 1909. (Reference *Majolica Matters*, Fall 1997 for more on Palissy. Reprints are available upon request.)

## AUCTION NEWS

By Marcia Singman

Jonathan Rickard's article in *The New England Journal*, "Major Magical Majolica Surprise," regarding Skinner's May 30<sup>th</sup> auction in Boston, revealed the prestige, popularity and price of OUR obsession. Mr. Rickard reported that a young buyer bought 95 lots for \$3,737.50. Then, he stated the surprise happened with lot #102, a Minton teapot in the shape of a blowfish, estimated to be sold from \$1,000-\$1,500. The telephone bidding from each side of the room was like a tennis match, and the quick pace ended when the hammer fell at \$28,000 (\$32,000 with buyer's premium). See front-page of this issue of *Majolica Matters*, upper right corner.

Within two hours, 283 lots were sold. So much money passing hands in so little time. *Amazing!* That's more action than Harrah's in Las Vegas. Instead of the slots, invest your quarters in the beautiful majolica coming soon to the auctions listed below:

- ☞ Strawser's, Hatfield, PA, October 23, 1998, 6:30 p.m. & October 24, 1998, 10:30 a.m.
- ☞ Christie's, South Kensington, November 17, 1998, 2:00 p.m.
- ☞ Doyle Galleries, New York, November 18, 1998, 10:00 a.m.

Be sure to look in next quarter's *Majolica Matters* for "Buying at Auction."

### *Auction Prices*

- ☞ Phillips, Redford, UK, March 17, 1998  
Minton Centerpiece, \$8,016
- ☞ Doyle Galleries, NY, April 22, 1998  
12 Holdcroft Oyster Plates, \$20,700  
Long Wedgwood Fly Match Box \$2,990
- ☞ Walker, Barnett and Hills, Wolverhampton, UK  
May 14-15, 1998  
Minton teapot with Cockerel spout, Monkey handle,  
Snail finial (missing its head), \$9,519
- ☞ Berkshire, MA, May 30, 1998  
George Jones Garden seat, \$9,018
- ☞ Skinner, Boston, MA May 30, 1998  
Minton Blowfish teapot, \$32,200
- ☞ Louis Taylor, Stoke-on-Trent, UK, June 15-16, 1998  
George Jones jardiniere, damaged, \$7,348
- ☞ Dawson's, Morris Plains, NJ, June 18, 1998  
George Jones drum form teapot, \$5,750
- ☞ Phillips, Highman Park, Kent, UK, June 22, 1998  
George Jones Stilton Bell with dragon flies and white lilies, \$5,845
- ☞ Halls, Shrewsbury, UK July 3, 1998  
Holdcroft Stork Umbrella stand, \$6,179  
Minton Garden Seat, damaged, \$15,030
- ☞ Bonhams, London, UK, July 8-9, 1998  
George Jones Mackerel dish, with repairs, \$3,340



## HALL OF SHAME

By David Johnson

Whether we like it or not many of us have purchased, been given, or at least "almost bought" forgeries, fakes or reproductions of majolica. How do you tell your mother – "Thank you for this wonderful piece of majolica, I trust the dealer charged you the correct price for a reproduction?" This column will show some of purchases and gifts that were called "majolica." *Your examples are encouraged.*

Before we begin, let me give you a thumbnail definition of forgeries, fakes, and reproductions. Forgeries are copies of works of art made for fraudulent purposes. This term implies the intent to deceive. Essentially, it is the desire not only to reproduce an item that appears to be an original, but sell it as the original at a high price. Fakes are genuine pieces of majolica, which have been altered, restored, or added to, so the seller can enhance the value via deception. Finally, reproductions are copies of originals sold as such.

However, if the piece is later sold as an original it becomes a forgery.

### MAJOLICA SIGHTINGS...

Here are a few places we have spotted majolica. Let us know where you have spotted a piece or two!

- ☞ *Country Living*, September 1998, Pg. 110
- ☞ *Architectural Digest*, September 1998, Pgs. 246-252, 268
- ☞ *Better Homes and Gardens, Special Interest Publication, Country Home*, June 1998, Pg. 186
- ☞ *Better Homes and Gardens, Special Interest Publication, Decorating*, Fall 1988, Pg. 30
- ☞ *Better Homes and Gardens, Special Interest Publication, Country Kitchens*, Fall/Winter
- ☞ *Better Homes and Gardens, Special Interest Publication, Country Style*, 1998, Pgs. 50-55
- ☞ *Video, Annie*, 1989, featuring Albert Finney and Carol Burnett, 35minutes, 34 seconds, Daddy Warbuck's Dining Room
- ☞ *Video, Fairy Tale*, 1997, somewhere in the middle, country house kitchen table

### SAVE THE DATE...

Our 1999 International Conference will be held April 30th - May 2nd 1999 in Nashville. More details to come.



THE NASHVILLE SKYLINE HOPES TO SEE YOU IN '99

Enough of the technical stuff. We received this vase (pictured) as a gift. As you can see the vase is brown and green and features two dolphins in the base. The interior is not glazed nor is the bottom. The vase is 8 1/2" high and 6 1/2" wide (at the top). Unfortunately, this vase is classified as a forgery. Our friends purchased this vase at an antique auction in England, and it was represented as an early piece, 1860 or so, of majolica. The auctioneer even attributed it to Minton. On closer examination, it appears more likely that this vase is circa 1990. The green and brown lack the deep vibrant color we expect to see in early majolica. Additionally, the vase is exceptionally light and has a somewhat rough finish. I have never seen another piece like this one, though I would not be surprised if someone out there has a "real"



Fake or Forgery?

one. If you have a similar vase – though real majolica – please send a picture.

Please send the Editorial Board photos and stories of what your "mom bought you at the flea market."



## DECORATING WITH MAJOLICA

### *Pristine Majolica on a Posh Street*

By Marcia Singman



*Peter and Loey Montagne  
of Antiquaire*

The enormous Massier rooster cock-a-doodle-dooed our arrival as Chana Johnson and I strolled into "Antiquaire," a jaw-dropping majolica shop owned by Majolica International Society members Peter and Loey Montagne. Situated in one of San Francisco's loveliest neighborhoods, where parking your car is still possible, "Antiquaire"

features majolica, as well as Quimper, paintings, and "curiosities." In "Antiquaire," the customers are urged to "feel" the majolica, not just admire it behind a locked glass cabinet door. Peter Montagne's freshly picked roses from home added just the right decorating touch to a small table sporting a handsome jardiniere, a Minton oyster plate, and a George Jones "muffinette."

Peter and Loey are both from families who love and appreciate antiques. Their very first piece of majolica was an overlapping begonia leaf compote from the Norman Rockwell estate.



*A lovely vignette of Jones and  
Minton with David Austin Roses*

Fifteen years ago they sold antiques out of their home in Wallingford, Vermont. After only six months of antique shopping on Nantucket Island and the coast of Maine, they had accumulated over 200 pieces of majolica. They furnished their large colonial home, built in 1789, with many armoires and Welsh cupboards, primarily to accommodate their growing majolica collec-

tion. At one particular country auction, Loey spotted a Holdcroft ice cream tray lost under nondescript glassware. The auctioneer refused to sell the tray separately, so Loey bought EVERYTHING on the table in order to have the one true treasure. Their inventory had grown so much, thanks in part to that stubborn auctioneer that "Montagne Antiques" was born. Scouting the countryside soon became not just a weekend trek. On one day (and perhaps many more), Peter and Loey informed the secretary at Peter's law office that they were going out to lunch, but would be back in an hour. In that "be back hour," they traversed three states and hit over sixty antique shops! Loey's eyes danced as she expressed the joy of those travels and reminisced over some great "finds."

---

*"Their very first piece of  
majolica was an  
overlapping begonia leaf  
compote from the  
Norman Rockwell  
estate."*

---

Loey and Peter were the only bidders for majolica at many of the auctions until one day when "another woman" across the room kept lifting her hand to bid. After the auction, the "other woman" dared to come over to Loey to introduce herself. They shook hands and laughed and decided to go out to dinner together. It was the beginning of a nice

friendship in the small world of majolica. That "other woman" was none other than Randi Schwartz.

The next time you're out west, stop by "Antiquaire."

You'll be greeted with friendly smiles and "knock your socks off" majolica. To quote a new collector and a recent member of the society, Susan Daniels from San Ramon, California: "I had heart palpitations. I jumped up and down like a little kid, clapped my hands, and said, 'I can't believe it!' I've never seen so much beautiful majolica in one place. Am I really here, or am I dreaming?" What an enjoyable afternoon in gorgeous San Francisco, admiring pristine majolica and chatting with a delightful couple, Peter and Loey Montagne.



*A commune of talking animals  
greet you!*

### *Antiquaire*

*3489 Sacramento Street  
San Francisco, CA 94118  
(415) 292-7500*



## WHAT'S HAPPENING IN...

### *Have a London Experience*

*By Anne and Joe Mock*

If you are planning a trip to London to attend the Christies' majolica auction on November 17<sup>th</sup> or are visiting England for any reason, you might be interested in the many tried and true majolica "sites" which we have visited.

- ☞ **The Victoria and Albert Museum** has a treasure trove of majolica. The Della Robbia styled Minton wall fountain, circa 1855, is in the west wing restaurant. Many of the earliest examples of majolica are in the European ceramics gallery. The 19<sup>th</sup> Century gallery also has many wonderful pieces on display.
- ☞ **The Wallace Collection** is located in the Hertford House on Manchester Square. It is "behind" Selfridges. While there is not a great deal of majolica, the early pieces of maiolica ware are superb. It is the setting, however, of the collection which makes the visit worthwhile. In addition to the majolica, the Wallace Collection contains some of the finest examples of European armor.
- ☞ While walking through Mayfair you are bound to pass **Thomas Goode & Co.** on South Audley Street. The elephants in the Thomas Goode windows are the largest single pieces of Minton's work. These seven-foot high pieces were produced in 1889 for the Paris exhibition. They are truly spectacular and are easily seen through the store's front windows.
- ☞ **Portobello Road, Camden Passage and Bermondsey Antiques Market** are favorite streets for shopping. The permanent shops on Portobello Road are open most days but Saturday is market day. The stalls are open from 6:00am until 5:00pm. All day on Wednesdays and Saturdays are the days to visit Camden Passage. Fridays from 5:00am to 2:00pm are the hours of the Bermondsey Antiques Market. Although the dealers attend market days and usually pick over all of the newly presented items, there is always the chance that you will find something for your collection.
- ☞ In **Alfies Antique Market** (10:00am - 6:00pm Tuesday through Saturday) at 13 - 25 Church Street there are over 200 dealers selling a huge range of antiques and collectibles. On King's Road from Sloane Square west to **Chelsea Antiques Market** at 253 King's Road, there are numerous antique dealers. Don't miss **Chenil Galleries** at 181 King's Road and **Antiquarians** (10:00am to 6:00:pm Monday through Saturday) at 131 King's Road.
- ☞ **Nicolaus Boston Antiques** is located in The Antiques Centre at 58 Kensington Church Street. Nic specializes in majolica. He travels a great deal, so it is advisable to telephone the shop (171) 937-2237 before visiting it. There are other interesting shops on Kensington Church Street so, if you miss seeing Nic, you won't be disappointed walking through the area.
- ☞ **Britannia**, the shop of Rita and Ian Smythe, is located on the lower floor in Grays Antique Market, 58 Davies Street. The Smythes' also specialize in majolica and the shop is open on most days. The telephone number is (171) 629-6772. There are other interesting shops in Grays Market making a visit worthwhile.



*Ian Smyte of Britannia (left), with Hamarabe (center) and Nicolaus Boston of Nicolaus Boston Antiques at the English's Estate in Baltimore*

A good reference guidebook with addressees, telephone numbers and location maps is *The Collector* published bi-monthly by Barrington Publications. It is available through antique shops and galleries or you might find a copy at your hotel. It is well worthwhile to try to find a copy as it gives you the most current information on antique dealers and their wares.

## WANTED...

- ☞ Lid to George Jones Covered Jug. Molded on the front and reverse of the cylindrical body with two oval panels depicting a hunting dog catching a bird or a fox preying on a rabbit. This jug has a hinged pewter-mounted cover modeled with a recumbent fox. (see at photo right)



Contact Marcia Singman, (510) 339-1607

- ☞ Minton Mushroom Cover for Fox Chasing Duck Game Pie dish (see at photo right)
- ☞ George Jones Pineapple Cream Pitcher



Contact Gerry Leberfeld, (212) 371-1738

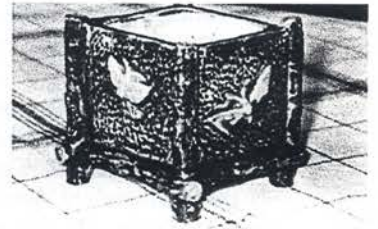
- ☞ Lid to blue sardine dish. Markings at bottom of box are H and c. Box measures 6" x 5" and is 2" deep

Contact Adrienne Ryder-Cook, (804) 693-7422

## DO YOU KNOW WHAT I AM...

Nancy Parks of Aaronsburg Pennsylvania would like to know if any of you mavens can tell her about her box. There is no mark other than the T.S.

Contact Nancy Parks, (814) 349-5151



## SMILING FACES...



*Designer Susan Zises Green of New York (see her country home featured in September's Architectural Digest)*



*Anne Mock, Harriet Thompson and Dodie Lake (L to R) enjoying the grounds of the English Estate*



*Bob and Marilyn King of Cliburn, Texas*



*Connie Aranosian of Cara Antiques, enticing Dr. and Mrs. Howard Silby*



## JUST A FEW NOTES...

### PLEASE SEND MATERIAL FOR THE NEWSLETTER TO:

Chana Johnson  
645 Begier Avenue  
San Leandro, CA 94577  
Voice (510) 635-5689  
Fax (510) 636-0613  
or email to:  
[fmagoo@ix.netcom.com](mailto:fmagoo@ix.netcom.com)

The deadline for submission for the Winter Newsletter is  
December 15, 1998

### A NOTE FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD

We believe that the newsletter represents the entire society. As Joan Stacke Graham stated in the cover page article, our efforts should include "many people doing a great deal." Please send your pictures of how you decorate with majolica, your best finds, your first piece or article on any of our regular features. We want to include YOU in the newsletter.

### SPECIAL THANKS

Due to Anne Mock's recent hip surgery and recuperation, this quarter's *Majolica Matters* was created by Chana Johnson, Marcia Singman and Judy Taback.

Get well soon Anne.

### MAJOLICA MATTERS IS PUBLISHED QUARTERLY FOR ITS MEMBERS BY:

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

#### President

Joan Stacke Graham

#### Vice President/Annual Meeting Chair

Philip D. English

#### Vice President

M.J. Wizenberg ("Moe"), MD

#### Treasurer

Cheryl Smith

#### Secretary

Marilyn G. Karmason, MD

#### Editorial Board

Anne Mock

Chana Johnson

Marcia Singman

Judy Taback

#### Delegates at Large

Karen Cox

Chana Johnson

G. James Trout

Polly Wilbert

### EXCERPTS FROM MEMBERS' LETTERS

#### MRS. E. AUDLEY-CHARLES OF VANCOUVER, BC WRITES:

... "My majolica collection began with two leaf plates given to me in England as a going away present when I emigrated to the U.S. in 1946. While I no longer collect plates I will have them along with a few I couldn't resist buying. ...

Recently I was very tempted by the brilliant colours and careful modeling of a Palissy ware plate, but decided to buy a couple of swimming suits instead. Imagine my chagrin to read in the newsletter that Maфра marked pieces feature "the best damn bugs and the ugly bugs are the best!" ...

#### CATHY-JUDE CARACCIOLO OF ST. JAMES, NEW YORK WRITES:

... "I am not an expert, but have been collecting majolica for over 15 years. I inherited my first piece from a neighbor that passed away. She had a lovely collection and I was so taken by the colors and raised relief style. After she died, her husband gave me a piece, as per her wishes. I am hopelessly hooked. I read everything I can find on the subject.

I cannot attend the Annual Conference, since I have small children, but I love hearing all about it. ... I do hope someday [that] I will get to attend. It sounds like so much fun. I couldn't imagine being able to talk about majolica with other people. (My husband tolerates my collection, but doesn't share my passion.) ...

Just a suggestion, do you know anyone [who] could write an article on "Fake" Victorian Majolica? ...

*Cathy, see the "Hall of Shame," page 3*