

Majolica Matters!

THE QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE MAJOLICA INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY
www.majolicasociety.com

April 2002

Important Notice

Hotel Change for Majolica Convention

The hotel site for the upcoming May 3-5 Majolica International Society meeting has been changed to the Renaissance Waverly Hotel in Atlanta. This hotel offers our society a luxurious facility that is well suited to host our meeting activities and Majolica Heaven. Contact information for the hotel is as follows:

Renaissance Waverly Hotel

Reservations: 1-888-391-8724 toll free or 770-953-4500
(both numbers go directly to the Atlanta hotel)
fax: 770-953-0740
2450 Galleria Parkway
Atlanta, GA30339

The Westin (former location selection) and the Renaissance Waverly have told us that they will work together to transfer the existing reservations from the Westin to the Renaissance. Room rates are identical. If you are in doubt as to the status of your reservation, we would suggest you call the toll free number above.

The hotel is also located in northern Atlanta, near intersection of I-75 & I-285 near US 41.

We are also making a slight change in the scheduled start time for Majolica Heaven. We will open the doors to Majolica Heaven at 10:00 am on Sunday, May 5 and it will end at 2:30 pm. This should give those of you that need to leave early on Sunday afternoon a little more time to do your serious majolica shopping.

The officers of the society apologize for the short notice of this announcement, but we trust you will find the facilities very accommodating and that you will enjoy all the happenings at the upcoming meeting in Atlanta. We look forward to seeing you there!

Shuttle Service

There should be shuttle service from the airport to the Renaissance Waverly Hotel, however with the heavy numbers that hopefully will be coming in on Friday mid-day and going out on Sunday afternoon, they recommend that people make reservations a few days early. This could be especially important on Sunday. They do offer a round trip discount rate of around \$35 for a round trip ticket.

Shuttle reservations may be made with Atlanta Airport Superior Shuttle and Limo by calling 770-457-4794 or via email: atlantasuperior@aol.com.

Majolica Heaven 2002 Dealers:

Richard & Connie Aranosian - Newtown, PA
Carla Benhardt - St Louis, MO
Charles Carpenter, Charlie's Aunts Antiques - Rockmart, GA
Jerry S. Hayes - Oklahoma City, OK
Linda Ketterling - Toledo, OH
Nancy Kramer, Sparrows Inc. - Kensington, MD
Madelena Antiques - Essex, United Kingdom
Wilma A. Murray - Philadelphia, PA
Randi Schwartz, Raven and Dove - Wilmette, IL
Charles Washburne - Chappaqua, NY
John C. Weld, Jr. - Yarmouth Port, MA

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Please send your comments and material
for the newsletter to:

M.J. Wizenberg
1608 Elmhurst Avenue
Oklahoma City, OK 73120-1218
Phone: 405 848 4028
Fax: 405 848 4531
E-mail: moewize@aol.com

Majolica in Budapest

Carol Warner

On a recent (1995) trip to Budapest, I was directed to the Museum of the Applied and Decorative Arts (Iparművészeti Múzeum) by a New York Times travel article. The Times called the building a "1896 confection with multicolored roof tiles". Fodor's travel guide called it a "templelike structure that is indeed a shrine to Hungarian art nouveau" - which is its permanent collection. I could not wait to get there even though the museum is off the beaten path but a tolerable walk from the center of the action. Once there, I discovered even more. When the museum opened in 1896, a millennium year, it was only the third of its kind in Europe. The colorful green and gold tile rooftop was made by the Zsolnay ceramics works in Pecs. I never saw the majolica lantern that "crowns the roof". The ceiling of the porte cochere was all tiles in golden and white majolica in a very Moorish style. Upon my exploration inside, I almost fainted when I came across - and recognized !! - two incredible and very obviously Minton majolica pieces in side by side exhibits. The first was a very large urn about four feet tall in two shades of green with rams heads mounted on each side, the bowl supported by four putti and garlands of fruit tied with high relief bows. The interior was turquoise. It was gorgeous. The next piece was a 12-14 foot high stove which was the common source of heat in those big old palaces and castles - usually in a corner. What was remarkable was the beautiful urn of delicate flowers on each of the four sides of the top half who's corners were supported by mermaids - fabulous!! According to the labels on each piece, they were presented to the museum by the Minton factory when celebrating its opening. Yea! - I was right - Minton !! "No Photographs" signs were everywhere, of course, and only with sincere pleading and careful scrutiny of my museum badge and a LOT of hand gesturing was I permitted to take the TWO pictures accompanying this article. I came away from my experience pleased as punch at my discovery and at my coup of taking the anticipated pictures.



Notes From The Editor's Desk

Well, like the rest of the world our society is also caught up in change and like others, not always of our own making. As you will note from the front page, the hotel location of our 14th annual meeting has changed. What has not changed is the date, the city, still Atlanta so your airplane tickets are fine, and our determination to make this another great success --I feel each meeting has built upon the triumphs of the preceeding and I am certain that the pattern will continue. Plan to come and spend a fantastic weekend with the similarly addicted, and our enablers, the dealers of Majolica Heaven. I do not expect any other changes...in the unlikely event that there are they will, in all likelihood, first appear at www.majolicasociety.com

The lifeblood of this society is the activities of the membership, and the dues which make those possible, including this newsletter. If you find a dues notice in your envelope, you were not a paid up member as of about the beginning of March---my apologies to those who have since re-upped. The upper right corner of the address label on your envelope has a date in red which is the date through which your dues are paid up; for example 3/2001 means your dues are paid through March 2001 (shame on you.). We have continued to send you Majolica Matters because we know your heart is in the Majolica International Society; how about sending your renewal dues along to keep it company. Please notice also, the discount when renewing for more than one year.

Finally, being editor gives me the liberty to express myself ad lib, a liberty I would gladly share with whoever would like to do some writing. I cannot speak on behalf of the whole society although I suspect that what I am going to say is felt by others. I am sure you have all heard by now, and read in the February 2002 issue of *Majolica Matters* and elsewhere, about an upcoming auction of the Majolica Collection from the Minton Museum, Stoke-on-Trent, which has actually been closed to the public for the past five years. Minton is now owned by Royal Doulton who have, for their own reasons, chosen to dispose of the collection. They have every legal right to do so, and the sale will no doubt be a boon to collectors, especially affluent ones, seeking to add certain rare pieces to their collections. What saddens many of us is the dispersal of a great collection in its historical milieu. It is an invaluable resource for all collectors and for scholars interested, not only in majolica and ceramics, but also in a vital component of Britain's industrial and artistic history. Regardless of the reasons, it smacks of selling one's patrimony. If Royal Doulton cannot afford to keep the collection or does not have the space to properly house and protect it, let us pray that some other appropriate institution or benefactors come forth to provide the collection with a more fitting end than what is currently planned.

My deepest thanks again, to my fellow editors, and to those of you who have taken the time and effort to write for *Majolica Matters*---the others have temporarily lost their chance for literary fame! Moe

Upcoming Sales And Shows

Michael Strawser's Majolica Auctions will be conducting their Spring 2002 Majolica Auction on April 5 & 6, 2002 in Hatfield Pennsylvania. For more information contact Michael at www.majolicaauctions.com or at 219-854-2859

Member Simon Cottle, Director at Sotheby's is giving us an early warning that you may be interested to know that Sotheby's has a major sale of British Ceramics in London on the July 2, 2002 with numerous majolica pieces. It includes an extremely rare and probably unique pair of Minton 'Blackamoor' figures holding touches estimated at £150,000-200,000.

Member Marilyn Karmason, has been tracking the Minton Museum auction at Bonham's for us. She wants to alert you that the April 30 date and place is being modified. The word has it that the items have been moved to Bonham's in London, but the date has been postponed, although not settled.

Majolica Heaven, May 5th 2002 at the 14th Annual MIS Meeting, Atlanta, Georgia at the Renaissance Waverly Hotel.

The Historical Society of the Phoenixville Area in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania is planning a special showing of Etruscan Majolica for later this year, and we will provide further details as they become available. The show curator, Becky Manley, hopes collectors would consider lending or donating articles for the show. She can be reached at 610-935-7646.

The Palissy Exhibit in France is still scheduled for October 15th, 2002 to January 15th, 2003 at the Museum of Fine Arts in Tours, and February 1st to March 31st, 2003 at the Adrien Dubouche' Museum in Limoges. More information in the next issue or see complete information in *Majolica Matters*, December 2001.

Articles You Might Have Missed

The New York-Pennsylvania Collector, April 2002, Vol. XXVI, No.2 has an excellent illustrated article titled, "Chester County's Classic Pottery: Etruscan Majolica".

Antiques and Collecting Magazine for April 2002 features a 6 page article on majolica written by Richard V. Simpson. You can recognize it by the majolica cockateel on the front cover.

Wired Majolica

by Duane Matthes

I had to fool you to get to read this article! I want to tell you about being wired about majolica and not majolica with lamp wires or in decorative French wire baskets.

Wired about majolica is-- you having access to eMail and giving the society your eMail address. Today, 239 of our 434 or 55% of our membership have already done that. Many of them did it back in the mid to late 90's allowing. You as members could find each other's email addresses in the MIS Directory and set about communicating to one another buy eMail in a one to one basis. The society as a club never really used eMail to communicate directly to you on a one to many basis. Then we built the web site in 1999 and that changed how many of us communicated. We debuted the site to the membership at the 2000 Convention in Newark, Delaware. But that allowed us to pull information, and we wanted to push information out to you. Since then the society has spent a substantial amount of effort verifying that the eMail addresses we have and regularly publish in the directory are spelled correctly, current, and functional.

Early in 2001 I started copying member addresses from the society directory into an eMail address book so the society could broadcast messages to the MIS members that had eMail addresses. Then I actually started sending hot society news updates via eMail and formalized the effort in late 2001. This year Joan Stacke Graham helped me name these communications MajolicaMAIL. I want you to believe that they come out monthly; but actually I broadcast several times a month with no regularity, except to never let a month go by without getting something to members. So that's the evolution of MajolicaMAIL.

Now that you've read this far and you think to yourself, I want all this majolica news broadcasts, but I'll never have a computer-- let alone an eMail address. Let me share with you how one member solved this problem. She mailed me their daughter's eMail address using a stamp and the Post Office. This daughter happened to live just 3 miles from the MIS member. The member asked me to add her daughter to the MIS address book so the daughter could receive the members broadcast and then Pony Express it to mom. Of course I helped them out. Added another member to the growing list of free MajolicaMAIL subscribers.

Many of us may never own a home computer and the Pony Express version may not fit your situation but we should all challenge ourselves with how do we get timely information to 100% of the membership in an efficient manner. After September 11th and the anthrax attacks we'll start to see higher postal rates because of all the

screening that will take place in the postal systems. The Internet offers us instantaneous, quality communications to you at near zero cost and allows us to push information out to the membership. Here are some actions you can take to help:

1. If you have an eMail address and haven't given it to us - please do.
2. If you haven't received a MajolicaMAIL in 2002 we may have an incorrect eMail for you.
3. If you only have eMail at the office or shop send us that address.
4. If you can workout a Pony Express route for our MajolicaMAIL let us know how we can help.

Get wired about majolica by sending me your eMail address. Duane@emajolica.com

Direct effects of tin glaze...

It effects your writing skills.

This little ditty was published in the Crockery & Glass Journal July 4, 1878

Air: Little Brown Jug

If I had a love that would give to me
Porcelain, majolica, and potterie,
I'd 'spoon' him in the gushingest way.
And kiss him a million times a day

Chorus:

Ha! Ha! Ha! Wouldn't I hug
If he'd give me a majolica jug?
Majolica brown jug, oh, I love thee.

This is some of the following text describing the poem "...is indicative of the ridiculous heights to which the majolica craze rose from 1870-1880"

Contributed by Linda B. Lapointe

MIS Limerick Contest

Your editor, in a moment of partial madness, has decided that we should have a limerick contest. All entries must conform to the usual five line plan with the rhyme scheme AABBA. Each limerick must contain the word Majolica at least once and be suitable for reading by the innocent. All entries must be received by September 1st, 2002, either in hard copy or by email to Moewize@aol.com. Members of the editorial board may contribute but are ineligible to receive the grand prize.

**Majolica International Society
Fourteenth Annual Meeting
May 3-5, 2002, Atlanta Georgia**

Friday
5/3

Convention starts at 3:30 P.M. Friday - make plans to arrive early.
Meeting Registration.
Educational majolica round-table discussions Session I for beginners and experienced collectors includes (you should plan on attending two of the four, all sessions will be repeated again on Saturday) :

- Care, Cleaning, and Restoration of Majolica
- Insuring and Tracking your Collection
- Setting a "Direction" for your "Collection"
- Using the Internet to Source Majolica

Convention Registration at 7:30 pm
MajoliCake, Cookies and Coffee-- at 7:45 pm
Joan Stacke-Graham - "A Retrospective"
Ed Flower - "Collecting"
Everyone is encouraged to bring pictures of their personal collections including favorite and/or mystery pieces. Authors and experts will be available for your inquiries.

Saturday
5/4

Continental Breakfast at 8:30 am
Meeting Registration.

Barter 'n Buy at 8:30-9:30 am . . . in a silent auction format allowing members to bring items to sell, and an opportunity to buy from other society members. Bring your extra items, parts and pieces.
MajoliCollege at 9:30 am - Educational majolica round-table discussion for beginners and experienced collectors includes:

- Collections and Collecting
- Frances Rothschild - "Decorating with Majolica"
- Wanda Matthes - "My Favorite Things"

Educational majolica round-table discussions Session II for beginners and experienced collectors includes (you should plan on attending one of the four, all sessions will be repeats of the Friday sessions) :

- Care, Cleaning, and Restoration of Majolica
- Insuring and Tracking your Collection
- Setting a "Direction" for your "Collection"
- Using the Internet to Source Majolica

Atlanta Antique Shops at 11:30 am . . . a great chance to explore for majolica, antiques, and collectibles. To fill any "free-time" on Saturday afternoon we have optional tours of Atlanta. Dearing Antiques in the Miami Circle antique area will be on our list of stops. Lunch will be included.

Cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, and conversations with majolica lovers at 6:00 pm
Gala Majolica Society Banquet at 7:00 pm. Paul Atterbury, curator of the Minton Museum, England is our featured speaker. Mr. Atterbury has long been recognized as a leading expert in the majolica art form.

Sunday
5/5

Continental Breakfast at 9:00 am.
Meeting Registration.

Annual Business Meeting at 9:30 am.

"Majolica Heaven 2002" . . . the world's foremost majolica show and sale.

"Majolica Heaven 2002", Members Only at 10:30 am. Open to the public at Noon.

HAVE YOU MADE YOUR RESERVATION YET?

The Majolica Pot at the End of the Rainbow

by Roberta McDonnell

It all began very innocently twenty-two years ago. Having three babies under the age of three and needing a reprieve every now and again, yard sales and antique shops seemed to offer just the right salvation. The local antique shops became my refuge. They smelled like grandma's living room and the dealers would talk to anyone to make a sale and soon became my friends. It all started with a piece of Roseville, which multiplied into many pieces of Roseville, then I discovered Quimper and found the glaze and colors much more exciting and those began replacing the former. Then it happened!

A small shiny leafy plate buried in the corner of my now friend's shop with aquas, greens and yellows caught my eye. I had to have it...what was this shiny colorful plate I asked? Majolica was the response...

A response that changed the direction of my life! Soon the plate found company with seventeen others as I brought home strips of plate rack material from the local lumberyard. A carpenter and built-in bookcases soon followed. The locals began knowing me as Roberta Majolica. Every piece of majolica in a 25-mile radius found its way to my doorstep.

Jones, Minton, Wedgwood...all nameless to me at the time. I bought only by color and condition. \$75 for a Minton Protat ewer, a little high but the cherubs beckoned! \$175 for a Jones cobalt stein with a fox top, well that was a good cause for a layaway I thought. Soon a winged chair was being replaced with a china cabinet, family photos atop tables squirreled away so majolica could beam in their place. The hunt was intense, but always local. For a while it was fun, especially when yard sales yielded \$25 oyster plates. But the one that beat them all – six Jones (whoever he was) mint oyster plates offered for \$200. Seemed awfully pricey to me, but "I will look", was my reply. Two mauve, two aqua, two white...I just had to have these, but would the dealer think I was a fool paying over \$25 each? I offered \$150 and reluctantly bought all six!!

Ah, life was good.... that was until all those displays and articles in country magazines began

to appear. Prices for majolica began climbing and local pieces became few and far between. My Staffordshire cottage and figural collection took over as I was rarely finding majolica pieces I thought I could afford. I felt I was just out of control when I did find a 26" Holdcroft salmon platter with six matching plates, and put them on layaway for \$500!!!! This was sinful!

Years went by with very few purchases, but every time a magazine would do a feature article on majolica, I would feel my passion rise! Then came the majolica books, and they took me to places I had never imagined! As I drooled over a fantasy wish list, I wondered who could have such things? I had a mission: MUST find these pieces...a Minton mermaid wine jug, a Copeland lotus pitcher. I stared holes in these pictures. Then the unbelievable happened, my son wanted a computer and ebay was born! The 25-mile radius vanished. My majolica collection rapidly doubled. Every room in my house became a theme, a collection. The half-bath became the lily pad room, the living room became home for sea motif and classical designs, the family room sprouted with earthy botanical pieces, and the office became a Sam Lear studio.

My family said I was sick...every inch of the house was occupied with a motif, a design, a color scheme! Family protests were loud as the garage became overtaken with boxes, bubble wrap, and Styrofoam chips. Books no longer in bookcases, new hutches in once empty corners. New pieces were now unidentifiable once invited into the collection... Is that a new piece? Heaven's no, I have had that for years!

Then began the upgrade...pieces coming and going at the same rapid pace, but still the family complaints. Every spot used wisely, but finally I drew the line for the family. "Look" I said, "when I use the refrigerator shelves for a majolica display, you can have me committed, OK?" The thought of no food, no more home-cooked meals must have had an impact as now they almost leave me alone. So far so good, the fridge shelves still are occupied by food, but I tell you the 35" TV looks like a big waste of space to me. "Wouldn't a big hutch full of majolica look so much better???" I think that question best be asked in another lifetime to another family!

A Small Part of the McDonnell Collection



Riccio and Carrier-Belleuse

Deborah English

Recently, while on a visit to the Walters Art Museum, I noticed a Renaissance bronze candlestick which bore a striking resemblance to the base of the Carrier-Belleuse Minton life size Blackamoors, pictured in Karmason-Stacke on page 61. The candlestick is about eight inches long at the bottom. I apologize for the quality of the photo and for the fact that I wasn't able to get it from the same angle as is shown in the book.

The basic shape of the two pieces is the same. Because bronze is less brittle than earthenware, it was possible to leave open areas in the candlestick which had to be closed in the statue base. Scale also demanded that the satyrs on the corners be put into a reclining position, thereby replacing the satyrs' heads below. Those heads were then placed in the medallions which resulted from the closing of the form. The garlands on the lower tier can be seen framing the medallions. As far as I can tell, there are no scallop shells on the statue base. All this sounds like a lot of variation but when you look at the characterization of the elements and the general mood of the two pieces, it becomes clear that the candlestick is certainly a source for the base.

The museum wall label explains that Renaissance sculptors valued their decorative arts productions as much as their fine arts sculptures, seeing no difference between the two. The artist is identified as Andrea (Briosco) Riccio .

According to Roberta Olson in *Italian Renaissance Sculpture* (Thames Hudson) pps. 138 & 139, Riccio, (a nickname which served as his professional one... a common practice in the Renaissance) lived from about 1460 to 1532 and worked in the Padua region. He was considered was of the greatest bronzists of the early 16th Century and was most well known for his ability to "endow statuettes with monumentality and charm" . His success was due not only to technical ability but also his attention to Humanist ideals. "He was able to evoke the world of Pagan mythology..." (His work) "parallels concepts found in contemporary literature such as *The Dream of Polyphilus*, a popular illustrated romance... published in 1499..." About another piece, Olson says it has a "wild mixture of Christian and pagan motifs (expressing) the Classicizing ethos. In fact, Riccio bestowed on the satyr a popularity it never enjoyed in antiquity".

When you think about the Classical elements in the Carrier-Belleuse pieces, you can appreciate the playfulness of the characters and what appears to be a general affection for the Human Race.

Carrier-Belleuse was a hugely successful, academically trained sculptor, for whom Majolica represented only a portion of his oeuvre. He came to artistic maturity during the Neo-Classical period in France and lived in England when the political climate at home was too severe.

The Walters curators assure me that since this candlestick would have been made in multiples by such a well-known artist as Riccio, it is certain that Carrier-Belleuse would have been aware of it.

