



Majolica Matters!

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

NOVEMBER 2002

Announcing our 15th Annual Convention

Friday May 2 through Sunday May 4, 2003.



The Majolica International Society's 15th annual meeting will be headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri in the shadows of the signature landmark, the Gateway Arch. The Millennium Hotel's central location with on-premises parking and valet services in the St. Louis business and entertainment district will provide a metropolitan retreat for our society. The hotel's Top of the Riverfront restaurant offers a 28 story revolving view of the cityscape, while down below the three-story glass lobby will provide our society with a breathtaking view the Gateway Arch as we enjoy cocktails and hors d'oeuvres prior to the gala banquet Saturday evening. The Millennium will also serve as the location for the convention highlight - Majolica Heaven starting at 10:00 am on Sunday, May 4th.

Our featured speaker for the weekend will be Richard Dennis an independent publisher from London, England. Mr. Dennis specializes in books on antique/collectable ceramics, glass and works on paper. Each title is usually the only book on that particular subject, having taken several years of research and written by an enthusiast, illustrated in great detail and published by a specialist with forty

years' experience in the collecting field. These books are standard reference works sought after by collectors, specialists, auctioneers, museums and libraries all over the world, and in themselves usually become investments when they go out-of-print.

Mr. Dennis owns The Richard Dennis Gallery at 144 Kensington Church Street, London established since 1967 and specializes in antique and collectable ceramics. Recent years have seen diversification into modern art pottery - with accompanying exhibitions. In particular, pottery designed by Sally Tuffin for the Dennis China Works.



The city of St. Louis has a lot to offer for those of you who would like to spend a little extra time in the city. Information in planning a side trip to city attractions can be found on the web at www.explorestlouis.com.

Lecture and Book Signing



Does the little "white dog" in the lower right love majolica too?

Members and authors Marilyn G. Karmason and Joan B. Stacke participated in a lecture followed by a book signing for their newly updated and expanded book "**Majolica, A Complete History and Illustrated Survey**". The event was hosted by Michael Strawser

and preceded his Majolica Auction in Hatfield, PA on October 26, 2002. Marilyn spoke to audience about the expansions to their book and shared slides of its new color photographs.



Marilyn G. Karmason and Joan B. Stacke signing books

**At the Auction
with Marilyn G. Karmason.**

Imagine what it would be like to have Marilyn G. Karmason as a guide, in the chair next to you, at a majolica auction. Every time you needed information or encouragement she would be there to answer all your needs. Here are her private thoughts concerning some of the items in Michael Strawser's most recent October 26, 2002 auction. She presented these to the onsite bidders just prior to Michael's auction and now she shares them with you.

Lot 581, the majolica of Hugo Lonitz has recently become very attractive to collectors. A monumental centerpiece with three putties riding three dolphins, more than 17" high.



Lot 492, p. 17 is a larger Lonitz monumental centerpiece, 20" high, with putties and dolphins beneath a large shell bowl.

Lot 594, a pair of French Palissy-style stork vases signed A Chauvigner, is trimmed with blue stalactite rims, and decorated with applied foliage and wading

birds. The pieces on that page, 24, could start a book of European majolica, all very strong and different, the tallest being a 21" pair of Delphine Massier floral ewers.



Lot 796, a pair of Royal Worcester nautilus shell vases, each with a base of seaweed and shell. Now we're dealing with English majolica, of the Naturalistic design. In comparing it to the Minton nautilus shell vase, the Royal Worcester has more ruddy coral and "pleated" shells streaked with green.



Lot 747 is a covered box or crate, with a Peter Rabbit yearning for the vegetables high above his head. T.C. Brown Westhead-Moore & Co produced the ever-appreciated mint condition of the piece.



In triple-rare Lot 671, we have the first of four umbrella stands. Again created by Brown Westhead, we have a bearded man with long hair, warmed by his full-length fur coat, standing on an iceberg and holding a seal, he is despite all this, in perfect condition. 39 inches high, and considered by Michael to be one of the finest large, perfect, and rare pieces

he has seen. I've put him first in line of the next three umbrella stands, which certainly belong, in the English weather.



Lot 672, The Brownfield figural bear of the second umbrella stand is considered equally rare. However, he may just have come out of the forest and looks very comfortable, with a height of 34". His feet may have been professionally repaired by a brave podiatrist!

Lot 674, a rare Fielding piece, is also included as an umbrella stand: the 24" piece is designed as a tree trunk with rabbit and duck dead game in high relief, and all mourned with ferns and flowers on the side of the tree trunk.



Lot 673, the French figural frog by Delphin Massier, differs from the English umbrella stands. Here we have a meticulous figure, a frog 28" tall, an appropriate water creature, and very rare. The Massiers reminds me of their ability to create woodland and floral designs with a very clear

outline, especially wide-open blossoms in pastel colors.

Lot 849, a rare fan and insect oyster plate by S. Fielding to remind us that much of Fielding's majolica was designed in the most meticulous of figures. But...sometimes we need an umbrella.



Here's a Palissy Ware platter by Joseph Landais, a very large and rare size of 19 by 15 inches. The platter supports almost every form of familiar sea life: fish, frogs, snakes, shells, lizards, snakes, and ferns. I'm not sure what the concentric circle object is, but it adds to the interest.



Now can we return to the more familiar majolica images and start with those who started them, Minton & Co. The pieces we have here represent some of the most beautiful majolica forms, of Lot 729. Here is a large 16-inch turquoise vase, decorated with light green seaweed and supported by three young tritons. It's a great vase if it's placed on a grand piano top!



Lot 493, this Minton garlanded wine cooler, similar in color and size to the turquoise vase, can manage to be supported by only two tritons. Tritons are sea demigods, partly human monster, with the bottom half of a fish or merman. Conversely, the Satyrs are sylvan deities, partly goat or horse, or a lecherous man.

Here we have Lot 815, a Minton cobalt pedestal jardinière, this time supported by three men with lions' masks above them and a Della Robbia garland of fruits, nuts, leaves and wheat. Taller than the other two Minton pieces, it's 20 ½ inches tall.



Back to turquoise: Lot 491 is named a Minton monumental wine cooler, and here again there is a conflict between wine cooler and cistern. Joan Jones has chosen the assignment of "wine cooler" to other undecided pieces. Whatever, the four putti on the panels of each side are enjoying their games in the forest.



And then to George Jones. George Jones works frequently with animal figures such as the Lot 567 rare cobalt water lily cheese keeper with a Kingfisher finial. That is most unusual, as most finials in this design are white blossoms.



The George Jones tureen (Lot 946) monitors a rough scene, with the boar's head finial, and with each side of the tureen seeing a wild boar fighting with a pack of dogs. Deer heads reach out from underneath each handle, perhaps to make peace, but that is a dangerous attempt. Although it may be an appropriate design from which to serve meat, it takes a brave host to tolerate it!



The George Jones cobalt figural monkey teapot (Lot 603) may be used independently, but the entire tea set would be great to assemble. There are several copies of a similar design without the Jones' mark, so buyer beware in other auction houses or shops!



The Minton tureen (Lot 944) with a hunting dog as the finial is very important in my home. Rabbits and pheasants on either side of the tureen have no doubt been caught by the muzzleloader and the powder flask. The sad part of it for us is that we have the ashes of our own little white dog in that Minton tureen.



Lot 568, a lovely cobalt cheese keeper by George Jones, is decorated with a small yellow-vined flower. I don't know the name of the flower, but I am impressed by the perfection of the cheese keeper; there is no mention of repair. Ditto two another Jones cheese keeper Lot 569!



Here is the fantastic, Lot 600, tri-rare Wedgwood Punch and Toby punch bowl. With four faces of Punch, all wearing pointed hats decorated by cobalt, turquoise and yellow, all the faces are clowns par excellence. Punch is accompanied by four dogs, with

feathered hats and clowns' collars. The dogs' feet have been treated by a canine podiatrist and all is quite well. Would we all like to have one Punch and Toby bowl?



And if we can't have the bowl as yet, should we start pursuing the Punch and Toby tea set, Lot 601? Nick Dawes reports that this set is one of the most rare of majolica tea sets, including Minton and George Jones. The face of Punch on the handles is very encouraging and the sleeping dogs might answer our call. Good luck!



Ave atque Vale! Hail and Farewell! The greatest piece of majolica to my mind today is the most rare Minton monumental mermaid steering on the handle of a magnificent ewer, 21" high, 16" wide! I cannot determine if the mermaid is that, or a melusine with the tail holding two legs. Also, if indeed my dictionary was correct, the mermaid's tail might be intertwined with a Triton's horns. The putto, the lady on the side panels and the cherubs spinning about her, all seem very happy with the setting...As for the Minton Museum in the time of Curator Joan Jones, Joan wrote the magnificent book on Minton majolica. And lo and behold, there was the listing in her book of this Monumental ewer as Shape Number 1290, titled Ewer, Relief Moulded Figures and Cherubs (M). Dimensions: H 21 3/4, L 15 3/4, W 10. I would also suspect that this is a one of a kind, wonderful ewer. Great congratulations to the bidder who brings it home....



but please remember that we all can have some great satisfactions with majolica as we keep going on.....We thank you, Michael, and your family for being so generous to you and to us, and many thanks to your staff. And when did you say we'll have the 24th auction???? Great good luck to us all.

Charming Strangers

By Deborah English



Michael Strawser sold Punch & Judy and now tries to sell fish!

At Michael Strawser's Majolica Auction on Saturday, October 26, after a heated competition between bidders, the Wedgwood Punch and Judy Bowl sold for \$30,000. None of the MIS crowd recognized the bidder, a thin young man in a yellow T-shirt. Later, after he aggressively bid on the Wedgwood Punch Tea set and emerged the dazed under bidder, I had the opportunity to congratulate him on his winning the Punch Bowl. He was with his wife, a very attractive and pleasant person. They are from Stoke-on Trent and as he said, the Punch Bowl is going back home. The couple had come to the US specifically for the auction and was planning to take a couple extra days for "a holiday". They had arrived expecting to fail at both bids and actually were in a small panic

when it looked like they could possibly loss two lots. Fortunately, they were relieved of that worry.

I had assumed they were interested in majolica but in fact, they are Punch collectors. I asked them if their collection included paper items and they said no, that mostly their pieces were ceramics and silver. What an interesting focus! Well, I'd loved to continue the conversation with these nice people but they never gave me their names.

Enter My World Of Collecting

By Roberta McDonnell

Collecting can be fun, therapeutic, reason to live some days, but collecting can have days of misdirection, obsession and downright confusion! I am here to ease the mind of the collector who thinks some days they have gone mad! I want you to know I have gone mad too! I have upgraded my collection to the point I ask myself, why did I sell that piece I LIKED IT!!! The over the top upgrade is to realize you need to have that piece back and re-buy it! I have done it.... have you???

Then there are the questions that haunt the collector. Let's first deal with the question of condition. Most of these pieces are over 140 years old and I don't know about you, but at 49 years old I could use some major museum quality restoration myself, so a ding, a nick, a small hairline or two or great quality restoration do not send me packing especially if the piece is rare or hard to come by. Twenty-two years ago when I began collecting and was a little more perfect myself; I was less tolerant of imperfections. If the glaze and color are good and the condition reasonably good I can live with it. (I hate wear and tear look though) I can see enough of that for free in the mirror so I don't want to pay for it and see it on my shelves too! I also like to know if the piece has had restoration even if it is virtually undetectable because it still factors into the price I am willing to pay for it. It is kind of like wanting to know the reason your friend looks ten years younger than you do. It doesn't hurt as much if you know she paid for it!!

Now a question on choice - what's your next conquest? As you travel further up the dollar scale to find the things that give you that undeniable "fix" how do you pick and choose?? Is it the maker? Is it the color, form or motif?? Is it because it is signed? Is it because it is in one of the books or catalogues that you stare holes through? I agree that seeing a piece in print makes you want it more. Seeing it in someone

else's collection gives your good taste validity. This is what I have noticed in my years collecting. Male collectors are so directed; as are spouses of male collector's who collect together. They buy an item simply because it is great. God knows I have tried to follow that collecting formula! I cannot do it. I simply cannot! I cannot live that way...it is too uncomplicated! I have to buy pieces sometimes because I know they will "go with" other pieces. I have tried to make my collecting criteria this: "if the piece can stand alone in greatness buy it!" I once again see that standard I have set for myself is too high and still find myself buying pieces because they will look well with other pieces! My entire life as a woman I have been trained to match shoes with handbags, skirts with tops, jewelry that will flatter an outfit so I cannot stop with majolica! I have decided it is ok to buy a smattering of so-so pieces just to accent the great pieces. I mean, even a Minton Nyiad can benefit by two pink plates flanking its sides! I have come to think of my great pieces of majolica as performers on a stage and the lesser pieces as the scenery and back drop for the performer to lend the performer some atmosphere and enhance creativity so in this way I can now justify and feel less guilt for my less than wonderful purchases. So now when you see me purchasing something on eBay that makes you wonder "has she gone mad?"???? I probably have a perfect spot for the nothing piece that will make a great piece look greater and come alive! I hope this has helped others in this battle with oneself over the same issue! Those who are very controlled, buy only the best I am sure cannot relate to this and maybe are missing out a little of the fun of collecting...it has to be an expression of creativity not purely investment (which I have been told on several occasions over the years I know nothing about!)

Now my next perplexing thought as a collector. Shall it be aqua or cobalt? Which color is better? Is there a better or best? Classical? Sea motif? Naturalistic? Figural maybe? Plates? Chargers? Oh mercy such decisions! I have decided for me the softer pinks and aquas with sea motif or putti and classical design prickles my fancy. This is why my living room is home to all the classical pink and aqua and probably my best pieces by industry standards. I also have decided I am tickled by naturalistic owls, and lizards, and birds and bunnies and frogs and monkeys in the rich earth tones of green and brown and mix of some yellows and they occupy my family room. Cobalt though dark lends a richness a royalty and a depth that 20 years ago fellow collectors felt superior and they have not escaped my notice...not to worry I have at least 16 shelves of cobalt! I find for me what works

best at satiating my majolica desires is a little of it all! But still we have not even discussed the topic of makers! I am going to borrow a friend and fellow collector's expression who says "George Jones were he alive would be the father of my children!" Well I guess I am going to have to say Minton would have been mine! I simply love Minton! Of course that is not to say Jones, Brown Westhead & Moore, Royal Worcester, Holdcroft, Wedgwood, Brownfield to name but a few have also sent me places my checkbook visits often as well! There is a place for some great French, German, Austrian, Portuguese and American too so you see if you are a piece of majolica for sale sitting somewhere on eBay you are never safe with me at the computer!

Well, I have to get going because I was recently told by one of my favorite dealers there is a local New England woman whose collection puts mine to shame. Some might have been offended a little? Not this gal; I immediately asked the dealer relaying this offense." How old is this woman?" The dealer replied, "Oh she has to be at least 70 years old...." Ah I said, I have 20 years to catch up!!!!

I leave you with this thought --- You can own the world on layaway!!! Happy collecting!

Translation Resources by Duane Matthes

There you are researching your recent purchase of a piece of French majolica?

Maybe you're referencing Les Barbotines, or one of Maryse Bottero's books in the Barbotines series! You're enjoying the wonderful photos but you understand very little of the written French. You're in a chapter "Anciens ou modernes?" and you think there are details you want to know beyond just photos and the manufactures names that you've already discovered. That chapter's name is an easy translation to "Old or modern?". But the details in the chapter may stump many of us that don't understand French.

For example the book's French text reads: *il n'est pas rare que des faienceries aient conservee des moules anciens et certaines d'entre elles sortent encore des pichets qui ne se distinguent des pieces anciennes que par la finition, souvent moins bien soignee, et le plus souvent sans rapport avec l'apparence originale.*

The Society has a translation solution for you! Go to the our Majolica Society resource web page at:

www.majolicasociety.com/resources.htm. Near the bottom of the resource page you'll find a link to an online "Babel Fish Translator". This translation site allows translation into and out of English to about 8 different languages. Just type or paste your foreign text into the first box and the translation comes back in the second box.

The English result for the French paragraph above is returned as follows: *it is not rare that faience manufactures have preserve of the moulds old and some of them still leave the jugs which are distinguished from the old parts only by the completion, often less better soignée, and generally without relationship with original appearance.*

As you can see it is not a perfect translation... but it is surely enough to get the ideas being presented so you can tell if you need more translation help. We use it when ordering French books from Amazon's online French bookstore at www.amazon.fr. Without this nifty translator we could never intelligently navigate French web sites or unlock the French reference books that are bursting with great information.

While you're at the Majolica Society's resource page you should also experiment with the Universal Currency Converter. This link will allow you to convert English pounds, Canadian dollars, Australian dollars, Euro dollars and much more to and/or from U.S. dollars. This handy tool would allow you to quickly understand auction hammer prices in oversea auctions, online prices, or even plan your next trip to Europe, Canada, or any other exotic destination that you plan to search for ceramics.

Suppose They Gave a Party and Served on Majolica?

by Ruth La Ferla

Sometimes the dress code dictates the tone of a party, sometimes the décor. But the dinner service?

"Why not?"

Susan Zises Green, a New York decorator who collects majolica by the cabinetful, sees no reason not to trot out the best for her friends. In fact, she decided that her hand-painted English ceramics, a minor fortune in antiques, were just right for the informal gathering she gave the other night. Ms. Zises Green is a chairwoman of the New York City Opera; the event was a pre-benefit dinner for the benefit dinner that takes place on Tuesday.

"Actually, the majolica was François's idea," Ms. Zises Green announced. Her co-host, the New York pastry chef François Payard, was so charmed by the saucer-size plates with the leafy pattern that he built an entire meal around them.

"The dishes were so small, so delicate," Mr. Payard said. "So we got the idea for a tasting menu — bite-sized portions, not only the appetizers, but the dinner and the dessert."

The party was a "dînatoire," an ambulatory hybrid of cocktails and dinner not uncommon in France, but perhaps even better suited to harried New Yorkers.

Once it was clear to the guests that they were free to roam — no tables had been set — they began to graze with abandon.

First came the hors d'oeuvres of tuna tartare artfully displayed on platters, salmon sushi topped with decorative gold leaves and candied kumquat stuffed with crab meat. Dinner was likewise served, canapé style, from trays.

"So unlike those boring seated affairs," said Sherwin Goldman, the New York City Opera's executive producer. "At most of these things you turn to the left, you turn to the right, and you never remember what you ate, much less what you talked about, or even whom you talked to."

Ward Landrigan, the owner of Verdura, the jewelry concern, chimed in: "At a party like this you're never stuck with the same person."

Peripatetic gatherings are Ms. Zises Green's trademark. She recalled once being host at a dinner for 49, seating guests in the living room, the bedroom, and even the library, then insisting midway through the meal that everyone switch places.

While Mr. Payard toiled in her galley kitchen, confecting temptations with the aid of Philippe Bertineau, his chef, the hostess posted herself at the door. In came the writer and socialite Brooke Hayward Duchin, the New York City Opera composer in residence, Mark Adamo, and the decorator Mario Buatta. They were ushered directly into the dining room.

"When I was young" Ms. Zises Green recalled, "I desperately wanted a dining room." Now that she has one, complete with cheerfully painted panels

depicting Hudson Valley scenes, she treats it offhandedly, as the setting for cocktails.

The hors d'oeuvres would have easily passed for the full meal, had it not been for Romain Arnaud, the evening's maître d'hôtel. Portly in his livery, Mr. Arnaud appeared in the foyer and fixed his eyes on Ms. Zises Green.

"Madame, dinner is served," he announced.

"Madame?" chided Jim Brodsky, a New York events planner and publicist. "There are gentlemen here too." Mr. Arnaud stared him down.

"It is customary," he replied, "to address the hostess, not the guests."

With that, Mr. Arnaud led the party into the living room for entrees. The first, a soothing chilled carrot and parsnip soup, was served in cocktail glasses. "It's not often you get to say cheers with your soup," Mr. Brodsky said, spooning his soup as he strolled.

The dinner, stuffed zucchini blossoms, chicken "jambonettes" and almond-crusting lamb, reached its fever pitch with the seafood. As he served the guests, some of whom were seated, Mr. Arnaud presented the plates almost directly under their noses.

"Sautéed rice-crusting daurade with baby artichokes and a 'Barigoule' jus," he intoned, his tongue caressing every Gallic vowel and consonant. But the evening's true climax arrived in the form of a multicourse dessert that included melon soup and phyllo napoleon with chocolate, caramel and coffee Chantilly.

The sight seemed to make Mr. Buatta giddy. One hand gripping his plate, he slid the other into his pocket and pulled out a swatch of shiny acrylic hair, which he attached first to his chin and then to his head. "Oh my God," one guest cried out. "It's Ringo Starr."

Faux beard in hand, Mr. Buatta rose and meandered toward the door. He may have been planning an exit, but if so he was foiled. Spying him, Mr. Arnaud shot forward, thrusting a green bowl toward Mr. Buatta's chin.

"Surely," he demanded, with all the hauteur he could muster, "you are going to stay for the soufflé."

Correcting Members eMail Addresses

Each time MIS sends out an email some of them come back "return to sender". That means that some members are doing without the value of getting eMail updates from MIS! We think they're missing out! And it means we've lost electronic touch with you!

Please help us find the correct eMail address for all members! If your name is on the list, then send me an email and I'll update our MIS Directory. If your not getting our MIS emails then email us and get added to the distribution. If you know someone on the list and you have their correct eMail then please eMail their address to me.

Thanks for your help. Duane@eMajolica.com

Chestnut, Christy	Kaltenbach, Henry
Creach, Sue & Dale	Kirsner, Gary
Deshaies, Judith	Moreau, Lucy
Grzesiak, T & L	Mullins, Dianne V
Hanna, Prudence	Phelps, B & K
Heidt, Barbara	Stough, Daniel R
Herchik, David	Tarble, Sara
Hoffman, Gaylene	Wright, Charles
Horn, Janie & George	

Give MIS Memberships as Gifts!

By Duane Matthes

A few weeks ago, as your web master, I received this email from a member!

"The gift of a MIS membership to a interested friend or family member seems like the perfect opportunity to broaden the base of an organization that provides intellectual stimulation, rewarding friendships, and encourages the pursuit of this historical pottery. Collecting majolica has contributed to enriching my life through humor, beauty, and an increasing appreciation of our not too distant past. Quite frankly, I can't think of a better Christmas present. So tell me how to wrap an MIS membership up as a gift and I'll send you a check on behalf of my friends."

What follows is my answer to all of you that may want to do the same thing.

A gift membership application can be done by going to the MIS web page at the link below. When you get to that page just print the page off and fill out the boxes on the printout! Use the personal information of the person you want to receive the gift. If you

have their email address please include it on the form. Then follow the mailing instructions and address on the page -- sending a check for either a US or international membership and the completed form to MIS Treasurer - David Stone. He makes sure that the new member gets added to the membership list, a password to the private area, and back copies of Majolica Matters.

www.majolicasociety.com/membership.htm

If you don't have a computer at home, then it's as simple as visiting your local library or phoning the MIS V.P. of Membership, Jim Trout.

Book Orders

If you pre-ordered the new book "**Majolica, A Complete History and Illustrated Survey**" by Marilyn G. Karmason and Joan B. Stacke at the annual convention earlier this year then your book has been shipped! Start watching your mail box and if you have any questions contact Phil English since he handled your purchases.

2002 Auction Highlights

A quick roundup of some of the highlights of the auctions in 2002 would include

April -- Strawser's - Hatfield, PA

Minton Hare Tureen at \$35,000

July -- Bonhams, London

Minton Peacock at £117,750

July -- Sotherby's, London

Minton Blackamoor Pair at £146,750

October - Christie's - New York

Minton Monkey Garden Seat at \$16,730

October -- Strawser's - Hatfield, PA,

Wedgwood Punch & Judy Punch Bowl at \$30,000

Wedgwood Punch & Judy 3 piece Tea Set at \$34,000

Minton Mermaid Handled Ewer at \$50,000



While Moe Wizenberg is ill please send your comments and material for the newsletter to MIS Associate Editor:

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