



Majolica Matters!

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

Fall 2003

2004 MIS Annual Meeting set for Orlando, Florida



Orlando has been selected to host the 2004 MIS annual convention, which will convene on **Friday, April 30 and end with Majolica Heaven to be held on Sunday, May 2.** Orlando is one of the world's foremost destination cities with excellent air travel access for international and domestic society members. Although theme parks have made Orlando internationally famous, the area's appeal goes back to the 1800s when wealthy Northerners flocked to the region to spend the winter. Old-time, small-town Florida still exists in the downtown Orlando and nearby Winter Park. The host hotel will be the **Marriott Orlando Downtown.** That's in the middle of downtown Orlando adjacent to I-4 and a short distance from Winter Park.

Plans are underway to offer society members a convention program full of interest to all majolica enthusiasts. Several society members, including author and Antique Road Show appraiser Nicholas Dawes, have already agreed to share slides of their collections and their experiences in collecting majolica with those attending the convention. The program is being designed to allow members ample opportunity to become better acquainted with one another and with dealer members who will be exhibiting at Majolica Heaven. London majolica dealer and authority Nic Boston is our after-dinner

speaker for our Saturday evening gala banquet. And for the finale, doors will open for the greatest majolica show and sale on earth, **Majolica Heaven**, at 10:00 am on Sunday, May 2nd.

The Marriott Downtown is set up to accept reservations and have asked that we use their **800-574-3160 number to make reservations to get the society room rates.** The group rate is (\$99.00 per night with an optional upgrade to the two concierge floors for an extra \$20.00). Concierge floor rooms and king-size beds are on a first-come, first-serve basis. The room **block will be held until March 31 and will be extended if rooms are available**, but we need to strongly encourage reservations with the hotel and with the society (registration form enclosed) to be in by **March 30** for the best convention rates! The hotel will also honor the group rate for 3 days prior to or after the convention on a space-available basis for those who want to extend their stay to take in more of the Orlando attractions. The hotel invites you to call their concierge for help in organizing your extended stay while in the Orlando area.

Society member Randall Grant from the Orlando area highly recommends checking out the Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art (www.morsemuseum.org) while in Orlando. The museum houses the world's largest collection of works by Louis Comfort Tiffany. Besides the famous lamps, the museum showcases jewelry, pottery, paintings, and numerous large stained-glass windows. For website information on other side trip options while in the Orlando area, visit www.orlandoinfo.com or www.go2orlando.com.

Orlando excitement beckons to us all -- so fill out your MIS convention reservation form today and call the hotel to make your lodging arrangements!

Looking forward to seeing you there,
LeRoy Davis
Annual Meeting Chairman

Victorian Majolica Tile in Southeast Asia?!

By Linda LaPointe

Victorian Majolica tile in Singapore, why not? The city includes many fine examples of western architecture dating from the 1800s. Raffles Hotel for example, is probably the most famous of the colonial buildings established by the British and Dutch at that time. The interesting fact is that it was not the Europeans that used the tile to decorate the outside of their homes.

While visiting Singapore a few years back I attended the Life in a Peranakan House exhibit at the National Heritage Museum. The exhibit included a recreation of a 1902 'Eclectic Style' home that would have belonged to a Peranakan family. The Peranakans are members of an immigrant Chinese community that settled in Singapore prior to the first decades of the 20th century. The homes were traditionally described as terrace or town houses. Though maintaining many ancient Chinese traditions they adopted many customs of the land they settled in and their colonial rulers. One of the British influences is the use of Victorian Tile outside the front of their homes. A museum staff member told me the tile was used along the front of their homes as a way of making the home of a Peranakan easily recognizable. Other evidence of colonial influence in the exhibit included a gramophone and a radio and bookshelves filled with popular English books and publications of that period combined with the traditional Peranakan furniture.



Traditional Peranakan house

Season's Greetings

The Phoenixville Pats

By Duane Matthes

It's hard to write anything new about the potteries of Phoenixville, Pennsylvania that authors Karmason, Stacke, Rebert, or Dawes haven't already documented -- but I'll try to bring some interesting thoughts together and then detail some facts about a collector favorite: the "Etruscan Butter Pat" or as the 1884 Griffen, Smith and Hill catalog identifies them as "Individual Butters".

Majolica in America

Popular demand for majolica in America reached its peak in the 1880's. Anyone that could fire a brick or mold a pot thought they'd penetrate the majolica marketplace. Cheap examples were everywhere. The genesis was during the last half of the 19th century as English potteries exhibited their well-crafted majolica wares at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibit. Then Griffen, Smith and Hill potteries (GS&H) exhibited and won a Gold Medal Award in the 1884 New Orleans World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition. To understand the total American picture you have to remember that from 1860 to 1890 the wars between whites and Indians were being fought on the western plains of America.



Kilns and potting sheds of the Griffen, Smith and Hill pottery, in the 1880's

Etruscan the Exception

To meet the majolica market you had to have quality at an affordable price or you were apt to be squeezed out of business. American majolica made by GS&H during the 1880's and 1890's did just that. They started the manufacture of majolica late in their history. The pottery was founded in 1867 and soon developed a specialty of terra cotta ornaments in the form of animal's heads for decorating taverns. In 1877, the pottery changed hands again with new owners Levi Beerbower and John Griffen. Finally on January 1, 1879, the firm became Griffen, Smith and

Hill when a partnership of John Griffen's son Henry R. Griffen, his brother, George S. Griffen, David Smith, and William Hill began operations. David Smith an Englishman from Stoke-on-Trent was probably the most skilled of the four and began experimenting with glazes, earthenware designs and bodies. Hill was the master potter.

With superb marketing and representation this new ware was so immensely popular that within one year it had become the major business of the Phoenixville pottery and was crowding all other American makers out of business. One of the firm's principal designers was an English artist Bourne. He is given credit for creating the better pieces that came from, the Phoenixville kilns, but there are very few records. Bourne kept the existing Buckeye leaves and then added the more beautiful Begonia ones.

An unfortunate fire destroyed the major portion of the Phoenixville plant late in 1890 thus ending a decade of (GS&H) majolica production.



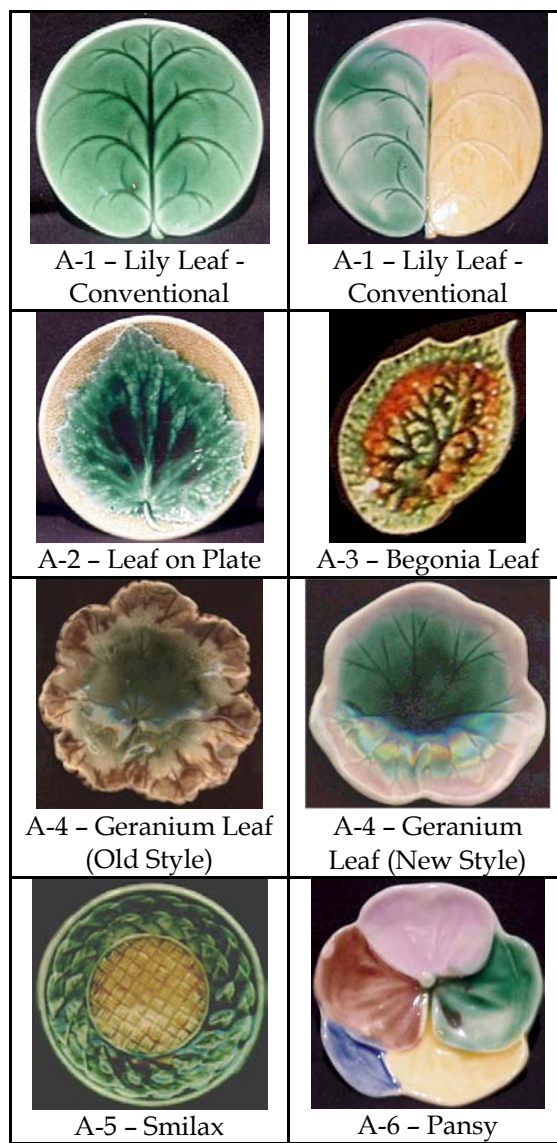
Workers at the Phoenixville Pottery






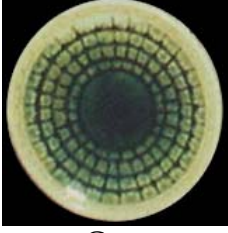
At its best, Etruscan majolica approaches, but never excels in quality the finer English wares. At its worst, it is much better than many of the world's crudely produced unmarked examples. When the mold is sharp, the glaze is artistically applied and the piece is well fired it's very hard to bypass a classic American treasure. Next time you hold a GS&H object remember it's composed of clay that was dug from the Valley Forge and/or Chester Springs clay pits.

Phoenixville Individual Butters

A legacy of GS&H marketing abilities is their **1884 Catalogue of Majolica** that has survived through the wonderful 1960 reprint by Brooke Weidner. It documents 11 pages of drawings and 2 pages of "pattern numbers" or codes that were impressed in most GS&H items to document the pattern design. The code "A" identifies "Individual Butter Dish" and is documented to include A-1 up through A-6 and A-

7-2. In the 1978 Schiffer book **Potters and Potteries of Chester County, Pennsylvania**, by James, three additional pages of drawings document the complete shell and seaweed service and some addition miscellaneous items and this index includes pats A-7-1 and A-8. A Corn pattern butter pat exists but so far I haven't found a documented pattern number to correspond to it. Maybe it's inconsequential since the butter pats didn't always have room for the GS&H mark let alone the pattern number. I've found several A-7-1 Wicker pats that have no marks at all, just as many of the Cauliflower cups were never marked. The following photos document the span "A" pattern numbers. Additionally, a few photos do show some of the glaze variations; that if we attempted to document them all - would carry on for pages.



	
A-7-1 - Wicker	A-7-2 - Wicker & Begonia
	
A-8 Shells (with Seaweed)	A-8 Shells
	
A-8 Shells, Albino	Corn
<p>1884 catalog wholesale prices for a gross: Individual Butter Plates A-1, A-2, A-4 (old), A-5, A-6, and A-7 all sold for \$6.00. Plates A-4 (new) and A-8 sold for \$6.00. Plate A-3 was \$8.00.</p>	

If you know of GS&H butter pat patterns that we have overlooked please notify us so we can update these facts.

Hint to the wise: Many majolica items used for butter, milk and cheese service are stained with embedded oils that can be removed by thorough cleaning.

*Happy
New
Year*

A Disney Quote - about Orlando, FL

Follow your dreams to a place where majolica fantasies come to life. Seek out majolica, create magical memories with beloved authors and discover the place where whimsy reigns. Most of all plan a gathering with the people and the majolica you love.

OK, we altered some of the words.



Make your 2004 Convention reservations, TODAY!

Decorating Around Majolica

Roberta McDonnell is still painting her house. Our last edition had her applying light lavender to the exterior siding of her house. Now she's working on the interior and has decided that raspberry was the perfect color to enhance and set off her wonderful majolica collection.



Holiday Season

We're trying something new! We're celebrating by being playful with our Majolica. Our editors and several other members have put on their elf caps in September, gone out and dug up the materials needed to create a playful new world. They've invented December in October. Our assignment was to dress up some majolica for a holiday: Thanksgiving, Hanukah, Christmas or New Years. As you can see, every person had a different take on the job and the variety is really worth a celebration in itself. If you like this issue, please think of doing the same in your homes. Take pictures of your projects and we'll publish them next year. It could be the beginning of a new tradition. Many thanks to: LeRoy and Sally Davis, Roberta McDonnell, Elizabeth Kropf, Jerry and Aviva Leberfeld, and Jim and Gerri Trout.

All our ceramic friends are definitely in the holiday spirit.



Presenting the potato latkes (pancakes).



On Dancer!



A cup, saucer, and name makes a place card at dinner



Fa, La, La, La La, La, La, La . . .



Season's Greetings



Jingle Bell Punch



These 21st century rooster are even in the spirit!



Auction Calendar

Sothebys Results



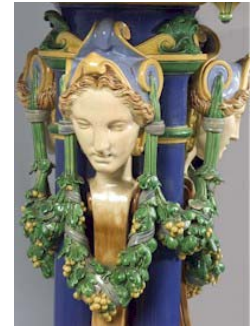
On July 3rd, a Minton Life-Size Peacock was offered by Sothebys at Olympia in London. It was one of possibly twelve manufactured by Minton in the late 1870's. Designed by Paul Comolera, an example was shown at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876. Another was seen in the Paris Exhibition in 1878. This particular example was acquired in 1966 by the Peacock Hotel near Matlock in the Peak District National Park, a favorite vacation

destination for hikers and walkers. There it stood in the reception area, protected by a brick partition, until 2002, when it was removed. Sad to say, this peacock failed to make its reserve of 110,000 GBP.

Maybe we can all buy it together and share. We'll take it for one day, and then someone else can have it for a day...

Upcoming at Skinner

Minton majolica fountain at Skinner's January 24th, 2004 auction in Boston. Contact Stuart Slavid for more details: sslavid@skinnerinc.com



Mask Details



Monogram Details

Monumental Minton Fountain

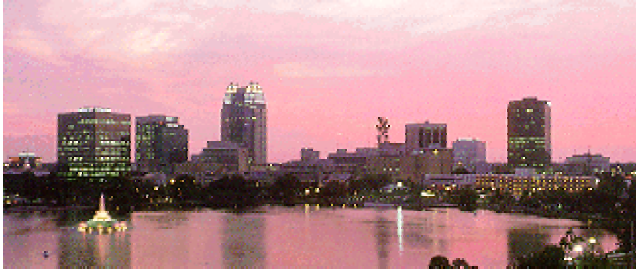
Minton Majolica Fountain, England, bearing date mark for 1862, with waisted ovoid font molded with three cat's heads conjoined by guilloche band, on cylindrical plinth set into wide basin molded with cherub's heads suspending mushroom pendants, raised on tripartite stem topped by female masks suspending and conjoined by berry vine garlands, over openwork scrolls centered by acanthus, and set with lion's mask scrolled toes, on conforming base with ovolo molded rim, and enamel decorated with three entwined monograms, full ht. 49"; full; dia. 27 3/8".

Condition:

- Upper font with date mark and MINTON mark. Font has hairline approx. 2 inches long at foot.
- Plinth unmarked, with repaired chips to edge, and smaller untouched edge chips.
- Basin unmarked, with losses to tips of the mushroom pendants.
- Stem incised "1861".
- Base unmarked.
- Toes unmarked, with multiple edge chips and repairs.

The piece comprises the above referenced five separate components, and the three removable lion's mask toes. There is a thin threaded iron rod that inserts into the center of the whole, and another metal sprinkler rod that sits in the upper front.

A Fly on the Wall



2004 Annual meeting destination Orlando, Florida

One of the great perks of being married to an Executive Committee member is that I get to eavesdrop on the conversations that go back and forth about some issues affecting the MIS. One issue that has arisen recently is the suitability of going to New York for the Annual Convention. The idea was explored and, for the moment, tabled. As it turns out, we'll be going to Orlando and I think the choice is an excellent one.

Yet, there are some very interesting possibilities raised with the New York option. At the same time, there was a great wave of dismay at the prospect. During the height of the discussion, a member emailed me, asking what I thought about it. Here is the text of the letter I sent back, edited only for a name or two. (You'll notice that it's in a very raw state.) I wanted to show it to the membership because I think it raises some questions that we should be contemplating. Our attendance numbers have been dropping and I believe that if left unchecked, that's a trend that should cause us all great concern.

The opinions here are my own; they do not in any way reflect those of the Board or any member of the Board. I was a fly on the wall, listening to the conversation. The letter also mentions Providence Rhode Island, which, in spite of Mike Foley's valiant efforts, failed to materialize. I left it in as a counter-example. I hope that we'll begin talking about this as a group and, to that end; I invite you all to respond here. We will save space in the Newsletter for your replies.

Dear _____,

Nothing has been decided. Right now, they're exploring two options.

Providence, RI - Option:

Advantages: In the North East (as requested by the membership in St. Louis) Easy to get to. Relatively inexpensive. Opportunities for side trips in art and architecture with the Rhode Island School of Design and the "Cottages" of Newport not too far away. If the meeting were to be held there, it would probably have the same format that we're used to.

Disadvantages: Timing. There are many colleges and boarding schools in the area and our weekend options tend

to fall into graduation times when the hotels are either booked or more expensive than we've had in the past. No antiques related shows or venues nearby. Majolica Heaven might have to be at a venue other than the hotel, an arrangement that no one, especially dealers, likes.

New York City - Option

Advantages: The opportunity to do something like we've never done before, thereby possibly attracting a new group of collectors and raising the numbers in attendance (our head count is getting precariously low). Some people who haven't been to New York might make the weekend part of a vacation. (I've actually heard some say that.) Because of JFK, we might even get more international members to come. (London is only 5 hours away, Paris 7.) Sothebys: **Preliminary** talks: Want to host the weekend and provide meeting space for Majolica College. They can arrange for speakers for anytime we want. Think authors and experts. They've offered space for Majolica Heaven in their building. They've even got a nearby hotel they recommend for those people who are watching their pennies or are timid about finding their way around.

They are considering putting on a 19th Century Ceramics auction on the Monday after the meeting, when the collectors are still in town but AFTER Majolica Heaven. Pieces from London would be shipped over for this auction, making it an educational event. It wouldn't be just Majolica but other 19th Century Ceramic art forms as well. (I could really get into 'compare and contrast'.) Potentially much more exciting than the auctions we're accustomed to attending. Probably the biggest and best auction since March 1997. It would be interesting even for those who aren't bidding. Major collections in New York. We might have the opportunity to visit some world-class collections if the meeting were held there.

Disadvantages: Even with Sothebys efforts to help us contain costs, it will be more expensive than St. Louis. Some people are nervous about New York's big city ways. Confusion. The format would change. Possibly an extra day would be added to accommodate the agenda. We probably wouldn't all be in the same hotel. Most New Yorkers will just stay in their apartments and other people will pick their accommodations according to their own preferences. Sothebys wouldn't be hosting the Saturday night dinner because it would be too expensive for us. If we do it, we'd have to find somewhere else to go. People who want to participate in Majolica Heaven AND the auction will have to budget ahead of time. My opinion is that they are both good ideas. I confess to being more interested in the NYC option for several reasons.

The big reason is that some of the spark seems to have been lost recently. We've started always doing things the same way and what used to be comfortable familiarity might be getting boring. Certainly, the numbers are indicating that. We only had 70 odd people in St. Louis and the Society lost money on the convention. While we're

not in business to make money, we can't continue to underwrite the convention because we just don't have the resources to do that.

There are people who show up for Majolica Heaven and never attend a collectors' function. I think the programs Sothebys is suggesting would attract a lot of those people.

One of the dealer worries is that if their clients join the MIS, those dealers will lose their clients to the competition. (If they're good dealers and treat their clients well, the clients won't leave them.) Anyway, because the dealers don't tell them, there are a lot of serious collectors who don't even know there IS a Society for them. Those collectors will be at Sothebys and they will know (because Sothebys will tell them) that there are all these wonderful talks and opportunities to meet authors, etc., etc. In the end, it could mean more members for the Society AND more clients for the dealers. So, what dilution of monetary resources that happens individually will be offset by the larger numbers of people in attendance. Remember, the new people can be at Majolica Heaven as well as the auction. AND of course we hope that all these new people stay members of the Society, giving the dealers many more clients in the future.

There will be some competition between the auction and Majolica Heaven but maybe less than we first think. A lot of people are afraid to buy at auction because they don't trust their eyes to pick up flaws. They will usually spend the extra dollars to have the expertise of the dealer they trust.

Some of the pieces at the auction will be 'Monumental'. The high profile auctions usually have monumental pieces in them to attract serious collectors. Because they are so big, our dealers don't haul monumental pieces around to the antique shows, so there probably won't be that many at Majolica Heaven. There also won't be many inexpensive pieces in the auction because Sothebys and Christies both have lower limits on the prices of pieces they sell (Overhead.) The market where there will be duplication is (I think) the smaller but expensive table wares, such as George Jones strawberry wares, English teapots, sardine boxes, etc.

Providence. I like Providence. It's very comfortable and so easy to get to. We've been there several times. If we do go there, it will be more like Wilmington than any other meeting I can think of.

If we do go to New York, it would be a one-time thing. (Advantage? Disadvantage?) There's no way we could recreate whatever turned out to be special about that meeting. The very fact that it was a first will be memorable.

In either case, another option is that the date of the meeting might change. That's a whole new can of worms that I can't even begin to contemplate.

Clear as mud? This whole letter is based on 'ifs' and 'might's' but my feeling is we've got to do something different or the MIS just going to go away.

Talk to you soon,
Deborah

Here it is...

The Real People Behind Cara Antiques!!!!!!

By Roberta McDonnell

What can be more pleasurable than interviewing the suppliers of your habit? In the first of a series of interviews with our partners in crime, I had the distinct honor and pleasure of speaking with Connie Aranosian, who we all know, with her husband Richard, is Cara Antiques. Being one of the top dealers from Majolica Heaven, as well as having a website which offers Majolica, Moorcroft, Clarice Cliff and other such eye appealing potteries, who amongst us has not drooled over her booth?

Anxious to learn her beginnings in this exciting occupation and almost lifestyle of travel and purchases, Connie shared all with me! First I had to ask how the name CARA was chosen. Very simply put, they are Connie's and Richard's initials welded together into one melodious name! While most dealers have come into selling antiques to support buying habits for their own collections, this is not so with Connie and Richard. Connie was employed as a supervisor for social services some 18 years ago, after being a social worker 23 years ago, in New Hampshire and one of her social workers was an antique dealer and convinced her it was a career she could share with Richard, pay the bills, and have a fun time to boot! One only needs to talk to Connie to know what propels her success. Her energy could be felt right through the phone lines, and since girls never tell their age, hers is off the record, but let us say she is a "senior member" who exudes "junior" energy!!! Connie as well as her husband Richard, who owned an auto dealership, left their conventional jobs to seek a living that would provide travel, adventure, and comradeship and help pay the children's college tuitions. Together Connie and Richard raised a family, and they both pride themselves in the fullness of their family lives.

Admittedly, they plan never to retire, and they enjoy the wonderful people selling has afforded them to meet, both dealers and customers alike, though selling for them is but one small aspect of their lives. Although the excitement of buying trips and finding pieces they have never seen before to offer their clients fuels their fire, this couple certainly knows how to relax and enjoy their home life and off time gardening, reclining by the poolside, and having a life outside of their sales with their children and family.

Connie explained how picking up and packing and traveling all over the country could be bittersweet. Sweet if they have had a great show, a little less than uplifting packing up after a show of low sales. The economy affects

every aspect of business, particularly one who wares are not necessities of life. Majolica, antiques, and collectibles are the extras and frills people allow themselves to indulge in and when times are tough, dealers are the first to feel the crunch. Nevertheless, Connie's attitude remains upbeat and positive and ready for "the same road taken year after year but the trip the "adventure" is always a little different."

I wondered how the Aranosiens came to sell majolica and pottery exclusively so I asked Connie. Pottery was something Connie always felt drawn to, have a comfort level with after growing up around Limoges and Wedgwood in her childhood home. After seeing majolica she began learning more and more about the pottery from shows, other dealers and eventually buying trips to England. Much like a collector, a buyer's sophistication evolves over the years and I must say "Cara Antiques" represents that evolution at its best!

I have to add a personal side note. Connie and Richard did small town shows in and around New England when I first started collecting over 17 years ago. I can remember seeing her booth in a little town hall antiques show next my own town, when my collection consisted of merely plates. I eyed her corn platters, it was the first time I saw a sardine box in the flesh, and Connie, with the "gift of gab", would patiently answer all my questions as I stared holes in her display with all the colors and glaze playing havoc with my desires! With three little children tugging at my side, Connie's enthusiasm for what she sold was so contagious I always went away with some small piece I couldn't afford! Although mostly American pieces, they were beautiful examples of pieces and I vowed one day to own and expand my collection to include such pieces and now years later I can still visit her booth and vow someday my collection is going to include a new level of fantastic pieces.

In summing up my interview, I asked Connie how she packs and gets moving from place to place. It is a business that to outsiders looks easy and glamorous but Connie explains, "it can keep you young but some days it can age you. Richard and I are the last of the new dealers on the block and I see children and the younger generations not able to keep the pace that Richard and I and my fellow dealers have had to keep. I don't see an awful lot of newcomers to this business because it can be awfully hard work."

And to that I say, hats off to the Aranosiens for 19 years of great shows and 42 years of a great relationship and marriage and doing life the right way!

2004 Society Dues Process

by Jim Trout

Please check your address label on our mailing envelope. The red date such as "2004-Jul" indicates when you owe 2004 annual dues. Some members have paid ahead and won't receive any 2004 dues

notice. If your label has a date that includes a "2003" then you are seriously behind on your dues and your membership is in jeopardy. Please send in your dues and thanks for your support and your help.

Bad Email Address

by Duane Matthes

We sent a "MajolicaMAIL" eMail out on Nov 26th to all members that have eMail addresses. It was about the French majolica web site of **The Earthenware Factory of Wasmuel**. If you didn't get that email, then MIS doesn't have your email address recorded correctly. Please eMail **duane@emajolica.com** with your correct email so we can correct our records and communicate with you. Thanks for your help!

Enclosures to this Newsletter:

First, there's the Majolica International **Membership Directory** with its **Regional Index**. We hope this helps you keep in touch with the membership especially the ones in your geographic area.

Second, there's a registration blank for the 16th annual convention in Orlando Florida. Fill it out and send it in; I know LeRoy is planning a party.

Last, if you're late on your 2003 dues you may find a late dues notice that needs to be completed and returned with your 2003 dues.

Happy New Year
and
Peace on Earth

Please send your comments and material for the newsletter to:

Deborah English
7350 Brightside Road
Baltimore, MD 21212
Phone: 410 377 7036

Fax: 410 727 1436

EMAIL: PDEnglish@comcast.net