



Majolica Matters!

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

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Announcing the 2005 Annual Meeting

by Gabrielle Ehrenthal



By a nearly unanimous vote, the attendees of the 2004 MIS convention in Orlando have selected New York City to host the next convention. An unparalleled choice, when you consider all there is to do and see in the Big Apple. Many of the hotels I have contacted are more than willing to host us, but we are currently working out the final

details with the Hilton. Their bid and space seem to be the most appropriate for our needs. For a virtual tour of the hotel go to www.Hilton.Com and select Hilton New York.



All of us here in New York are working together in planning a fun, diverse and very exciting program.

The Hilton is located on 6th Avenue and 54th Street. Just think... 5 blocks north is Central

Park, 5 blocks south begins the Theater District, and 2 blocks away is Radio City Music Hall with Rockefeller Center right in back of it. The main Antique Center is about 7 blocks away, Madison Avenue with all the antique stores and high end boutiques is only 2 blocks away.... and ladies, Saks is only 5 blocks away.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Modern Art Museum, The Guggenheim, The Museum of Radio and Television, Greenwich Village, Tribeca, Soho,

etc., are just a few of the many wonderful places New York has to offer. Drop by and see the Dahesh Museum on Madison Avenue. It specializes in Victorian Academic painting. Plus, there's the American Museum of Arts and Crafts in the old Crafts Museum spot on 54th Street, across from MOMA. We also have Central Park, 1900 restaurants in New York City, numerous nightclubs and hot spots.



So bring your walking shoes, plan to stay a few extra days; we have a lot to offer you...besides, I already sent the red carpet to be cleaned!

2005 Annual Meeting Programs

by Ed Flower

Our 2005 convention will be held in New York City commencing with Majolica coffee and cake on Thursday night, April 28th and running through Majolica Heaven on Sunday, May 1st. We have thus extended the formal convention time by one day. There is so much to do in New York. How could we not do so?

We have reserved meeting space and display areas and made arrangement for hotel rooms for conventioners at the New York Hilton at 53rd Street and 6th Avenue right in the heart of midtown New York; and have obtained a room rate of \$169 per night plus tax, not only for the Thursday, Friday and Saturday night dates, but can have this rate, which is an incredible bargain in terms of major New York hotels and especially at that time of year for several days before and several days after. Because there is so much you may wish to do in New York, we are, of course, encouraging convention goers to come early or stay late or both and your convention committee will be working hard to make it interesting.

While much is still in the planning stage, the program as it is tentatively shaping up can include the following:

Majolica Coffee and Cake will be Thursday night. We believe that this program should involve presentations by members dealing with their own collections and the whys and wherefore of such collections and are seeking members who would like to participate. Contact Ed Flower.

We will have breakfast together on Friday morning with perhaps another member presentation (although we are also in touch with representatives of Sothebys and Christies who might wish to make a presentation at that time.)

Friday will be a day on which the members can participate in many of the things that visitors to New York enjoy and/or in Majolica related events. Included will be visits in small groups to one or more homes of prominent New York City Majolica collectors and an opportunity to see some really fabulous collections. Joan Stacke Graham for one has graciously volunteered.

We do not know as yet but are hopeful that Sothebys and/or Christies may be having auctions of 19th century arts immediately following the close of our convention which would include a number of Majolica pieces and which can be viewed by the members over the convention weekend. It is also possible that these institutions will offer Majolica related programs, which our members can attend.

We are hopeful of organizing one or more theater parties for Friday night. Even at this early stage it would be useful if interested members contacted Gabrielle Erenthal and indicate some of their preferences. Obviously, arrangements for this must be made long in advance of the date.

Saturday will involve a brunch meeting (in place of our usual Saturday night dinner meeting, since New York City is a place in which many members may wish to sample the wares of different restaurants). The program for this brunch meeting will be a seminar headed by David Revere McFadden, Chief Curator of the Museum of Arts and Design and who was formerly involved in the 1982 exhibition of Majolica at the Cooper Hewitt Museum and was a contributor to the Karmason Stacke Bible of Majolica. Rather than have Mr. McFadden merely lecture, we are attempting to organize a seminar with four or more collectors who will be prepared to answer tough questions from Mr. McFadden as to how and why they collect, with an effort to demonstrate different collecting points of view. This will also involve questions from the audience.

Saturday night will be a really new feature-- a Majolica Heaven preview cocktail party. While nothing will be offered for sale, members will have an opportunity to preview what will be offered on Sunday morning. Sunday morning will be our annual meeting and Majolica Heaven in the manner in which we are accustomed to it.

This is a preliminary overview only; subject, of course, to modification as a result of members' suggestions and responses of various organizations principally museums and auction houses who have indicated a desire to participate. Please let Gabrielle Ehrenthal and Ed Flower have the benefit of your thoughts. Their email addresses are:

Gabrielle1@Optonline.Net
FlowerBulldog@Aol.Com



Orlando '04 Keynote Speaker - Nic Boston

On Saturday night, Nic Boston gave the keynote speech. We who had been at the meeting in Baltimore (where he gave a wonderful talk on the importance of the sculptors who modeled majolica) were full of anticipation for Nic's latest presentation. What followed was a fascinating and convincing argument that good, interesting collections can be built using pieces from potters who are currently less expensive than Minton and George Jones. It's an approach that most of us can appreciate, as the costs of collecting continue their upward climb.

He illustrated his point using photographs of many pieces that were to be shown at the following day's Majolica Heaven. We didn't know it of course, but we were getting an unprecedented peek at some of the more interesting Sunday morning treats.

To start, we were shown rare and beautiful prints of the 1851 Exhibition. In spite of the premise of his talk, Nic seemed unable to resist some Minton stories. As we studied a print of the great fountain in the 1862 Exhibition, we heard about a fellow dealer at January's Ceramics Show in New York. She'd been watching Nic's booth and finally had to approach him, saying, "I never knew I liked Majolica. Tell me more about it." When Nic told her about some of the modelers, specifically Albert Ernest Carrier-Belleuse, she exclaimed, "Oh, but I've always loved Carrier-

Belleuse." Naturally, that explained everything, didn't it? Minton managed to get the best ceramists from the Sevres Company, and so, it's easy to see the French influence in Minton majolica. We are all aware of the 1851 Exhibition, and it was Nic's intent to put it into the context of what else was being made. In addition to majolica, we were to see some examples of related ceramics.



Cloisonné Vase by Christopher Dresser

Christopher Dresser, the subject of a recent exhibit at the Cooper-Hewitt in New York, contributed to the development of British (proto-modern) ceramics with his work for Minton and Wedgwood. He was also well known for his cloisonné pieces, which still are exquisite by any standard. His solid blue glaze, known as 'Persian', was a predictor of the modernist approach to decoration.

Other interesting artists working for Minton included Alfred Stevens and Henry Stacy Marks, who painted the 'Seven Ages of Man' plaque series.



"Old Age", One of Seven Tiles in the "Seven Ages of Man" Tile series by Henry Stacy Marks. Enamel and Gold on ceramic 10" x 22".

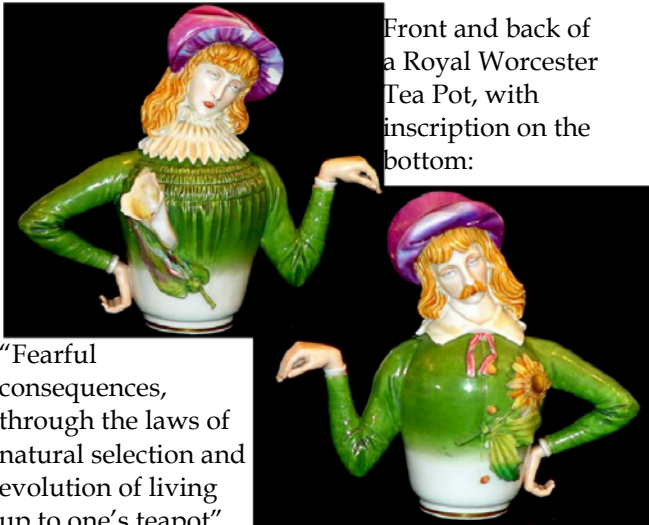
Then, we saw pieces by the French potter, Georges Pull. (An 1862 exhibition of Bernard Palissy's work was well received and the accompanying catalogue was studied at all the great factories.) Pull's aim was to make direct copies of the work of Bernard Palissy. He accomplished this so well that some of his pieces are indistinguishable from Palissy's, except by signature. He also made a version of the Palissy Ewer, which is better known in its Minton incarnation. Some of Palissy's Neo-Classical work became the foundation of George Jones Neo-Classicism. Thus, Pull was a conduit between Palissy and Victorian Majolica.



George Pull figure: Bernard Palissy. Note the sculptor's tools around the base

Copeland's 'Sloth and Mischief' (a group comprised of a monkey riding on the back of a tortoise) is a monumental and extremely well made piece that any owner would be proud to have.

Royal Worcester's Aesthetic Tea Pot may be the most humorous of all the teapots. It makes fun of the Aesthetic Movement by depicting a fop with his affectedly akimbo elbows for handle and spout. While it's not strictly Majolica, it fits well into Majolica's tradition of commentary on British art and culture.



Front and back of a Royal Worcester Tea Pot, with inscription on the bottom:

“Fearful consequences, through the laws of natural selection and evolution of living up to one’s teapot”

The zoologist and sculptor, Mark V. Marshall was best known for his work with Brown-Westhead and Moore but he also worked for Royal Doulton, and the Martin Brothers, whose fanciful character jugs and pitchers are highly prized today.

Speaking of Brown-Westhead and Moore, this factory was at least as large as Minton’s, employing many people as modelers and glaziers. Brownfield made many wonderful, highly detailed pieces. It is possible that AE Carrier-Belleuse worked with them. (The sculptors apparently moved around quite a bit, particularly Carrier-Belleuse, who also worked in France.) The charm of Holdcroft is undeniable and the quality of their better pieces rivals that of the best manufacturers. We heard a new name: George Skey. It will be interesting to learn more about him, whose characteristic red-ground pieces distinguishes him from other potters. He made a version of the bear pitcher with spoon.



Forrester’s Logs and Snail Teapot and Creamer

There is real need to start research on some of the other potters. Adams and Bromley made tablewares

“for the millions” but the quality of their work is, again, undeniably of the top rung. Many pieces are unmarked but there is often a pale yellow or brown wash on the underside. Samuel Alcock is another potter for which we need research. Simon Fielding was a poultry and dog expert. The snail log teas sets come from Thomas Forrester.



Fielding Stick Stand

On the continent Hugo Lonitz is often compared to George Jones, with the quality of his modeling and his attention to naturalistic detail, particularly of foliage and feathers. Lonitz was self-taught potter who began as a watercolorist. His story is a sad one. In 1900, he sold his factory, which was in financial decline, to his brother. Bankruptcy ensued and Hugo committed suicide in 1903.



Hugo Lonitz Centerpiece

Among the Austrians, Julius Dressler should be mentioned. His work is known for its light body and pastel colors. Tobacco jars were a specialty. French potters who deserve attention are Avisseau, Barbizet and Choisy-le-Roi.

Nic ended his talk with the recommendation that we begin an archive, especially of the lesser-known, unpublished pieces, so that we can begin to build a research bank. It's a concept dear to several hearts and we may well hear more about that idea as time goes by. Certainly his excellent talk provided a strong argument for the project.

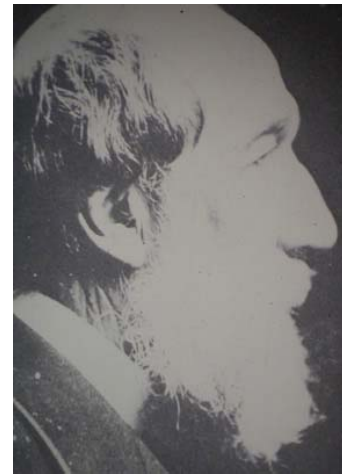
Orlando '04 Majolica and Coffee

Nick Dawes, author and appraiser, was our featured speaker. He took us deeper into the history of the art of Majolica, by linking it to the social trends hitting Victorian Britain, and making it very clear that such movements are not born in a vacuum, but feed each other and fold back on themselves in complex ways.

First, it was essential that the technical aspects of majolica making be mastered. The monumental pieces that Herbert Minton wanted to manufacture required enormous kilns to fire them. Leon Arnoux was hired to design the kilns and there followed the influx of French sculptors and glaziers whose names we've gotten to know.

Minton wanted to make these enormous pieces of majolica because there was a new market. The newly wealthy class, manufacturers and merchants, built elaborate mansions as testimonials to their financial success and to express their aspirations for social

prominence. For the first time in history, prestige attached itself to a group of people beyond the aristocrats and these people were determined to demonstrate their own participation in the new social order. Aristocrats often passed homes (complete with chattel) from generation to generation. The newly wealthy were building new homes and filling them up. As most of the 'proper' antiques still sat in the baronial estates, the objects d'art needed to decorate these houses had to be manufactured. The earliest pieces of majolica tended to be copies of well-regarded decorative arts found in European museums, especially the Victoria and Albert in London.



Leon Arnoux

Soon, however, original designs began appearing. Two main trends of design developed, one which Nick calls the 'formal', the other, 'informal'.



Wedgwood Frieze tile in the Formal Style

The formal designs tended to be in the Neo-Classical style, already established in the grander homes as 'tasteful' décor. (Neo-Classical art had been enjoying a good long run of popularity throughout most of the 19th Century.) Previously, it had been characterized by a kind of tasteful restraint, with its polished surfaces and monochromatic (white) finish. In the hands of the Majolica makers, however, it acquired a

fully polychromatic treatment, which must have appeared to be flamboyant, if not garish, to the art-initiated. (A matter of small irony: the majolica treatment of classical material was actually more accurate, as the original Greek and Roman sculptures from which they derived had been brightly painted.)

“Informal Majolica” is the term Nick uses to distinguish the pieces made with a dedication to naturalism. George Jones’ animal pieces are the most obvious examples of ‘informal majolica’. While ‘formal’ majolica is grand, and is meant to appeal to sophisticates, ‘informal’ majolica is decidedly provincial and intimate in its appearance. George Jones was a naturalist of modest background, so it is reasonable that, 150 years later, we consider his naturalist pieces the most successful of his oeuvre. His rustic pieces surpass those of any other potter.



Holdcroft Cheese Bell in the Informal Style

Wedgwood and Holdcroft did both categories well, though Wedgwood’s ‘rustic’ pieces tend to be a little less spirited than Holdcroft’s. (“Rustic’ ware is distinguished from Palissy ware, which is meant to be a trompe l’oeil (literally: Fr: fool the eye) representation of its subjects.) That’s the thing about ‘informal’ majolica: it was made for the masses, people of lower middle class, perhaps illiterate. Often it was crudely fashioned. It was meant for everyday use, and so, even the ‘lesser’ manufacturers could make it successfully. There were two types of collector, and two types of ware.

Just as the decoding of the Rosetta Stone led to a heightened interest in Classical History, so was the quiet Victorian cloister rattled by sea changes in scientific advancement, and by the opening of the East to Western trade. With the Voyage of the Beagle,

Man’s divine status as master of the natural world was threatened. Add to that the inevitable shift from the Euro-centric world-view, which was forced upon the observant attendees at the various World Exhibitions of the 1850’s, 60’s and 70’s. Not only was England perhaps not the center of the world, and Man not the center of the social universe, the European concept of divinity was flatly challenged by the beautiful art coming from Japan. Designers such as Christopher Dresser readily understood what exposure to Eastern art meant to the western world; that all the old paradigms would soon be up for reconsideration. Aesthetic art celebrated simplicity of design and the expression of serenity in observation of the natural world.



“April Love”, by Pre-Raphaelite painter Arthur Hughes, 40x20”

People must have sensed that the old world was vanishing behind the clatter of the new world. The Pre-Raphaelite painters, who believed that no good art was made after Raphael, were the ‘hot’ painters. Their pictures illustrated the old stories familiar in European (specifically English) culture. In Majolica, naiads appeared, as did river-gods and mermaids. Perhaps this look toward mythological figures was an expression of insecurity about the new world coming.

By the 1890’s, the fad for majolica had passed in

England. It survived a while longer in other countries, but the trend was irreversible. Now, there was less of a Revivalist approach to decorative art. The nature of glaze itself gained importance as subject matter, and products such as Moorcroft, heavily influenced by Aesthetic design, came to the fore.

“Majolica Heaven” 2004 Orlando



Limerick Fun from Orlando '04

I picked up a pot at a shop
 And quickly my heart it did stop:
 A rare George Jones server
 I got up my nerver
 To ask for a discount and bought.
 I smiled with glee
 Whilst the shop I did flee,
 I paid ten whole dollars at tops!

Orlando '04 Speaker -Maryse Bottero

On Saturday morning, we had a very special speaker: Maryse Bottero from Nice, in France. To begin with,



she was nervous about speaking in English, but discovered, to our delight and hers, that her language skills were beautiful. Maryse demystified the world of Massier for us and charmed us with the wonderful wares she shows in her shop.

The story of Massier Majolica begins in 1860, in the town of Vallauris, which had traditionally enjoyed a strong Greek influence along the southern coast of France. As Northern royalty led hordes of rich tourists to the village in the wintertime, they saw there roof tiles and wall decorations scattered throughout the town. Jacques Massier, a local potter, brought in the Italian Gaetano Gandolfi, who was masterful with form; and so, a thriving business in sculptural and colorful ceramics was born. A generation later, Jacques' sons, Delphin and Clement, were brought into the firm. Jerome Massier, a cousin, joined the business and in 1850 had a son, Jean Baptiste, whose mark is "JMF" (for Jerome Massier, Fil). Jean copied Delphin's pieces, so they are easily confused. Delphin had a local following, while Jean's work was more widely known, more technical, and with flashier colors.

European history played an important role in the development of Massier products. The political upheavals of the mid-century had affected southern France. After a war with Germany, France lost the Alsace. Furthermore, memories of the Revolution and the Commune were still fresh in the cultural consciousness. In 1860, the Liberty Style arrived. Forward looking and youthful, it was a reaction to the political turmoil. Its charm expressed the citizen's need for joy and nature and was received enthusiastically.

Massier pieces were only signed if deemed perfect. Therefore, a good piece might well be Massier without a mark. Handling the pieces is the best way to learn about them. Delphin's pieces, for instance, are heavy with a thick glaze.

Meanwhile, there were other potters in the area. Clement Massier researched early ceramics and his work is more Neo-Classical. (He exhibited at the 1896 Chicago World's Fair.) Delphin and Jean also made a white ware, similar to Parian. Near the Italian border, in Monaco, pottery with hand-applied flowers was made. It is signed simply, "Monaco". The Menton factory, which also hand applied flowers and fruits to its wares, was nearby.

Maryse has written: [Barbotine de Cote d'Azur](#), and [Pichets en Barbotine](#), published in French and available through Amazon.Fr. There will soon be a book on coin banks. Maryse's web site address is: www.antiquaires.com/Annuaire/Provence-Alpes-CotedAzur/MGBOTTEROANTIQUITES



An extremely rare Massier Tea Set



Maryse & Gérard Bottero - Shop in Nice, France



Orlando '04 - The Collectors' Talks

Every year, one of the highly anticipated events is the 'Collectors' Talks'. This year's Saturday morning session certainly held up the tradition of a thoroughly enjoyable opportunity to get to know other collectors through their collections. Gabrielle and Michael Ehrenthal, and Michael Strawser each gave us enchanting glimpses into their collecting passions.



The history of a collection is one of the most interesting aspects of a collector's presentation. Gabrielle began the session with her tale of how they began. Evidence of a previously undiagnosed mania for beautiful things presented itself in the purchase of an oil painting at Christies in 1983. After they spent nearly every nickel they had, and the painting was delivered, they discovered it was too large to fit in their apartment. Still, she insists, "We were responsible".

Well. We can all relate to that moment. Quickly, they discovered that they exhibited great loads of responsibility in all other aspects of their lives. Collecting, however, is a passion that "transcends art forms" and special allowances had to be made for that.



JMF Grasshopper, 68 cm., the largest known

After they had sold their original Majolica collection and decided to go back to it, they found they were more knowledgeable than at first, but the prices had risen dramatically in the meantime, so they had to focus more on special pieces. When those pieces appear, the Ehrenthals still experience that same kind of “gotta have it” tunnel vision that marks true aficionados. The supreme example is the Minton Vulture Teapot, offered by Jerry Hayes at Majolica Heaven, several years ago. They walked passed it, saw it, asked Jerry to hold it for ten minutes. Then they went out into the hall and decided to sell their retirement account.



Of course, Michael Strawser should be the example of a different story. After all, he is the consummate professional. Every year, the Strawser Auctions have literally thousands of pieces of majolica go through its show rooms. Within those thousands of pieces is represented an incredible variety of wares, from the most modest to the grandest. One would have thought that so much experience would have jaded him just a little by now. Instead, we learned about a man who, after he got interested in majolica, “founded a club”, in order to learn more about it. The meeting of Michael and the grande dames of Majolica history, Joan Graham and Marilyn Karmason is a matter of legend now.



Michael’s first piece was a shell spittoon, which he found interesting, even though he’d sold other examples of it before and hadn’t particularly liked them. This time something about it intrigued him and now he has 75 majolica spittoons in his collection. Many of them are Etruscan and Holdcroft. His pride and joy is a pink Etruscan sunflower spittoon, which, quite naturally, led to a classical urn and sunflower collection, which led to oyster plates, which led to salt sellers, which led to butter pats. There is logic in

Michael’s collecting and it’s based on aesthetics. When he is attracted to a particular pattern, he pursues it vigorously.

Michael tends to “fill out” his collections. If he has one example of (say) an Etruscan pitcher in a certain pattern, he won’t rest until he has every variation, every color and every size. It’s a scholarly approach, something we might expect of the man who founded the Majolica International Society, in order to learn more about his favorite pottery.

He made a plea for several bits and pieces. Especially urgent is the need for the top to the George Jones Turtle spittoon.

In addition to Majolica, Michael collects Roseville and Muncie (Indiana) pottery.

“Majolica Heaven” 2004 Orlando



Wild Life - at the 16th Convention

Photos by Aviva Leberfeld

Aviva Leberfeld captured some of the "wild life" of our 16th annual convention in Orlando, Florida.



**WILD
LIFE
at
MAJOLICA
HEAVEN
2004
ORLANDO,
FLORIDA**



Read This: Like Broccoli -- It's Good For You!

The meeting in Orlando was the best in recent memory. Not only did we have an unbeatable line-up of speakers and a wonderful location, the biggest boon to the meeting was the enthusiasm of the members. We all met new people and, I believe, came away with a renewed appreciation for what it means to be involved with a group of such like-minded folks.

There was lots of conversation and we found ourselves quickly getting past the small talk and getting down to lively conversations about Majolica and about collecting. But several times, we heard people say, "Of course, my collection isn't a good one," or "I don't know if this is a good piece". Frankly, it's a surprise. One would think that a Majolica International Society member would feel serenely assured that, by sheer virtue of its having been selected, any piece in his/her collection would be a good one. Hence, it follows that any collection held by a MIS member would be a stellar accumulation of priceless artifacts, all of profound significance. Well, maybe that's a stretch. Still, the point can be made that we have friends who are feeling insecure about building their collections. They seem to be haunted by questions of value, historical meaning and taste. We can't let this go on.

So, dear friends, a little lecture herewith: Belonging to the MIS, and using the resources the Society provides, gives a member enormous advantages over the ordinary buyer. Think about how much you've already learned: about the manufacturers, what the wares were used for, the cultural and social history that makes Majolica a relic of its time. You know what colors are authentic. You know how the modeling is supposed to look. You know the difference between majolica and porcelain. You know that if a piece has a gold rim on it, it's probably not Majolica. You know if you can see light through it, it is not Majolica. You know now about 'formal' versus 'informal'. You've probably learned what tends to be more valuable in the market place.



You know this is a fake and NOT George Jones, as advertised

We must all build the confidence to trust our own eyes and hearts. And we have to decide how to shape our collections. We've got advice from some collectors who are well known for their sure eye in the market place. They have agreed to share their hard-won wisdom with us. Thanks to Aviva and Jerry Leberfeld, Jim Trout, Wanda Matthes and Roberta McDonnell for their pearls.

Roberta McDonnell

First, let me tell you some of my fears:

1. Fear of being that I won't be able to sell a piece for what I paid for it.
2. Fear that there are too many reproduction versions of it the piece. It might be too ordinary. The Minton Bunny Compote is \$6000, but it's common. Should you buy little known pieces because you love the unusual, or play it safe and buy commonly known pieces?
3. Fear of odd parts: plates that are not chargers but indeed underplates, married and fiddled with pieces (ex: plates glued on comports), and pieces with missing parts. For example: the Minton pigeon bowl. Did they make a lidless smaller version or is the lid missing?
4. Another worry is learning which dealers to trust, especially if it's a dealer from abroad. It's worse when you don't know him, especially on eBay. How do you send \$7,500 to a dealer with 3 feedbacks????
5. Last but not least (because a seasoned collector can most always tell), is it a repro?

Well, I get beyond my fears by thinking: "If I really cannot live with my purchase, I will re-sell it." Not everything has been up to my standards and those pieces do not stay long in my collection. For trusting an eBay seller, I look for red flags in the feedback. With more than 625 eBay purchases I have been pretty lucky and for the most part, I have met honest dealers. For those I find that are less than honest, I keep a little mental catalogue of their names and locations and never bid on their things even if they LOOK great.

The truth of the matter is, I always buy with confidence and never second-guess myself because I'm looking for what tickles that crazy bone of satisfaction. I have purchased a little Jones jungle plate for \$800 that has wowed me more than opening up a piece I paid thousands for on layaway. Now for price: I always think "Gee, if I bought this from a top dealer, what would it cost me?" This always makes me shy away less. And I ask another question, "How many times have I seen this piece in 23 years of

collecting and how likely am I going to find it again in these colors and good condition?"

My regrets are never for what I have bought but for what I haven't. I have more remorse for pieces I have not gone the distance on in auction, or passed by, to return and find them gone!!!!

You know something is good if: If you keep walking to that shelf to stare at it at least once everyday. If it comes on eBay and you already own it but it excites you so, you want to bid on it again. If you sold it because you thought it was too ordinary, miss it and re-buy it!!! If it satisfies your passion like a thirst being quenched.

It can be just the colors that do it, or the form, or the maker, or the fact that your friend owns one and you have coveted it for years, or the fact it is a rare piece, or just a common in an uncommon color, or an exemplary specimen of a common piece. I've had lots of good pieces but recently purchased an aqua rose and rope platter. The condition and execution was uncommonly good and the platter was undersized, which really appealed to me!!! For under \$450, I derived more pleasure unwrapping that little piece than some I have paid over \$5,000 for!

My feeling is that you have to decide whether you are collecting for sheer LOVE of the stuff, for decorating, for investment, or for a little of all of these things.

How do you display it? I have it in four rooms. My living room houses a lot of pinks and aquas, the office aquas and yellows, the dining room cobalts and aquas, the family room, naturalistic colors. The aquas and the pinks do it best for me. No matter how important the Minton goat butter dish is, it doesn't tickle my fancy. But find me a pair of vases or plates in aqua and pink and I hyperventilate! My very favorite pieces are two aqua plates, unmarked and attributed to Jones. They are trimmed with thin stems of leaves and tiny sprouting yellow flowers. The entire border is decorated in mauve ribbon. Now, I would not swap these for 10 goat butter dishes. You couldn't pry my no-name American mauve aster butter dish away from me for a dog and gun tureen.

If it tickles your fancy, (and therein is where all the enjoyment lies), if you are buying pieces because you think they "should" be in your collection, you are robbing yourself of the passion. The more you have owned, the fewer pieces you see that really rock you!!!

Collecting is like broccoli: If you eat it too much, for too long, it can be very boring. You need asparagus and even some cauliflower. As with collecting, sometimes you need to break away and buy something totally different than what you are used to. It perks up your collecting and gets you all excited again!!!!



Aviva and Jerry Leberfeld

If it feels good and fits your taste and collection, buy it. On price, how often did we agonize while bringing a piece home? Did we overpay? In almost every case this feeling went away and these items became our favorites. In collecting, let your instincts lead the way.

Jim Trout

Make up a wish list and begin work on it. Add odd pieces as you go along. (You'll discover that you wanted them without knowing it.)

Buy what you like, regardless of questionable authenticity. There are terrific fakes that you can love. One of our favorite pieces is a 13" high cheese bell with an underplate marked 'Minton', proudly displayed on a low table in the living room. Guests love it, even when we explain, "it's a fake". Everything has value, even if it's only to serve as a bad example.

Check out library books on Majolica. Buy books that are specific to Majolica. You can interchange the word 'confident' with 'knowledgeable'. The best books for new collectors include chapters on marks. Price guides are helpful, but most are outdated.

Don't be afraid to ask questions. Ask an (MIS) officer for advice. Talk to your fellow collectors. Don't be afraid to ask the experts. Have a Majolica buddy to conspire with. MIS collectors and dealers are eager to assist and advise at any time. Taste is individual. My

taste is eclectic. I try to get the best examples from diverse styles. It might not be to the taste of others, but it's me that I'm trying to please. After all, I'm the one who has to live with it. Collections are as different as the people collecting them. No approval is required other than your own.

Wanda Matthes

Shopping is a gene I was born with. I have been collecting my entire life just as many of you have. I was not always collecting things of great value, but collecting. Research is the key to being a confident and savvy shopper.

Research in the area of wardrobe builds a confident style of dress. Research might begin with a fashion magazine, a style show, or a visit to a fashion consultant. Once one finds the outfit, whether formal or informal, then one sets out to "collect" the right accessories: the purse, the shoes, and the jewelry. Research is done so that the outfit fits your body type, your style and also your budget. Research to find the place to live that fits one's life style and budget. After finding the perfect place to live, a house or apartment, then we collect accessories for our homes; we collect the perfect window treatment, upholstery, paintings and other decorative accessories to make our place of abode - a home.

In either case, much research is done. Time is spent looking at the current magazines, finding out about the latest trends. With the wardrobe, we find out the "hot" color, the most flattering skirt length. Research! With the house, again, we look at magazines; talk with friends whose decorating we admire, work with designers, visits shows houses. Research is the key to becoming confident in any area, whether one is building a great wardrobe, a great home or a great collection of majolica.

Research teaches us to trust our instincts. Nicholas Dawes, in his talk on majolica during the 2004 convention in Orlando, divided majolica into categories, classical and provincial. Research teaches one to explore these categories and find the one that fits your style the best. Of course, most of us have a combination of classical and provincial pieces.

Research! Many dealers will even let a client take pieces home and "try them out" for a twenty-four hour period to see how the pieces fit into their homes before making the final purchase, thus avoiding a costly mistake.

Research to find a dealer or dealers whom you trust

to sell quality pieces. Even very homely pieces can exhibit quality and style. Learn how to identify quality by shopping in antique shops or attending antique shows where quality dealer exhibit their wares. You don't always have to buy. You learn much by looking at, handling pieces and talking to dealers. Much money is wasted and many collectors have their confidence shaken because they make a bad purchase before they have developed their own feel for quality and established their sense of style.

A word of advice: if you want to dress like you shop at Neiman Marcus or any fine department store, you must first shop there. Drink in the ambiance and style. Then you may be able to be confident enough to put together outfits that have the style and quality and style of Neiman's but were not purchased at Neiman's.

The same goes for buying majolica. I have many photos from magazines and books with the "look" that I aspire to. These have been collected over many years, and yes, taste changes but being able to put together a quality collection, which is both pleasing and of monetary value, takes time and research! Research is the key to becoming a confident collector.

Deborah English

After all that, I have only one thing to add. We all want to make good investments, but antiques and art make a poor choice if the real value isn't in living with the purchase. So, how do we decide what to pay? At a MIS Convention years ago in Atlanta, Nick Dawes gave a session on how to decide what to bid. He explained the principle of the "pain factor" in bidding. The theory is that you find the number that will give you personal pain, if that's what you end up spending to get the piece. You allow yourself to bid that, and no higher. It doesn't matter what the market value is; if you love it, you'll be pleased to spend more than it's "worth" to someone else. Likewise, you'll soon discover (as Roberta has) if you're not just wild about the thing, you won't feel like chasing it around the auction room. Anyway, you'll begin to develop a sense of what you're willing to pay. You are, of course, aware that \$100 probably won't get you a George Jones Cheese Bell, but if that's all you're willing to spend, then getting it for \$200 isn't going to feel good, either. Think about it.

Thanks to everyone. There is a common theme running through the submissions: Do the research and then trust your instincts. Me? I'm going to Neiman's with Wanda. Maybe she'll teach me how to shop for clothes.

'04 Annual Business Meeting

By Linda LaPointe

Phil English began the meeting by giving praise to our terrific guest speakers. **Nicholas Dawes, Maryese Botero and Nic Boston.** He also thanked LeRoy Davis for performing his usual magic trick of securing a spectacular convention site.

Mike Foley followed with his state of the Treasury report. Although it was given with much wit, the bottom line was a decline in funds from previous years. Due to the high cost of printing and mailing the newsletter, a decision was made to raise annual fees to \$50 per year. (\$60 for international members.) There will be a discount given for those who pre-pay future dues.

Prior to announcing the new officers, Phil offered kind words and praise for Marilyn Karmason, acknowledging the 16 years she has served as secretary, since the society's inception. Phil also recognized Jim Trout for all his hard work as Vice President of Membership.

Jim Trout announced the following candidates for new officers and board members:

Phil English will stay on for one more year as President

LeRoy Davis will stay on as Annual Meeting Chair for one more year, and then Le Roy will assume the role of President.

Gabrielle Ehrental - Annual Meeting Events Chair

Edward Flower - Annual Meeting Program Chair

Deborah English - VP, Editor of 'Majolica Matters'

Karen Coscia - VP, Membership

Duane Matthes - VP, Information/Web Site

Linda LaPointe - Secretary

Michael Foley - Treasurer

Wanda Matthes - Chairperson Delegates at Large

Nicolaus Boston - Delegate, England

Maryse Bottero - Delegate, France

Darci Iola - Delegate at Large

Maryanne Leckie - Delegate at Large

Judy Silverman - Delegate at Large

A vote was taken and they were unanimously elected, with many thanks to all.

With much anticipation, LeRoy Davis announced the 2005 Convention site: New York City. Plans are still being made, but one of the changes may be that the event may be spread out to accommodate facilities for Majolica Heaven and MIS events. LeRoy further announced that Sotheby's auction House might try to accommodate us by holding an event there. Final

dates depend on the findings of the Annual Meeting Committee and will be announced as soon as possible.

2004 Society Dues Process

by Karen Coscia

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 July 11th to all members that have eMail addresses. It mentioned a Jerry Hayes' new web site. 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!

Limericks from Orlando '04

There once was a potter from Stoke
A creative sort of a bloke.

When he made a dish
That was swimming with fish

His wife wished that on them
He'd choke!

Please send your comments and material for the newsletter to:

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See you in the Big Apple!

