The Quarterly Publication of the Majolica International Society



Majolica Matters

www.MajolicaSociety.com

March 2009

New York City is... the destination of MIS' 21st Annual Convention

Our 'home away from home' will be the Hilton Hotel, located in the heart of the city (53rd St & 6th Avenue). We again chose this location, as all points of interest are in its near vicinity: the theatre district, shopping, museums, antique galleries...all practically within 'walking' distance.

Easily navigable and a great walking town, New York City is laid out as a big grid: all the Avenues running North/South (famous 5th Avenue being the 'central divide'), and the streets transversing the avenues running East/West. If walking is not for you, there are thousands of cabs, limo services and buses available at any hour of the day....and a good and safe subway system.

Rockefeller Center: just across the street from our hotel (from 48th Street to 51st Street), is the acknowledged center of New York's entertainment business, famous for its ice skating rink, Radio City Music Hall- home of the magnificent and never ageing Rockets (tours available Monday through Sunday 11 to 3), the NBC studios and Christies Auction House.





"in the BIG Apple"

Make your plans for New York City 2009.

Date: April 30 – May 03, 2009 **City:** New York City, New York **2009 Hotel:** Hilton - New York, 1335 Avenue of the Americas

Gabrielle Ehrenthal published, in March 2006 Majolica Matters, that the Minton Peacock was the "Holy Grail" of Majolica collecting.
Only about 11 are thought to exist in the world and less than a handful here in the US. MIS conventioneers will visit the Peacock.

This Peacock wants to meet YOU! Make your reservation, NOW!!!!!!



Inside this issue:

- NYC Broadway is your way in May 2009!
- Victoria Pottery
- Western States 2008 Meeting
- Cheese Keepers

(Continued from Front Cover)

A few short blocks South and West is the start of **The Great White Way-** aptly named so after the marquees of the beautiful old theatres (starting at 50th Street through 42nd Street and on Broadway), also known as **Broadway:** "If you can make it there, you can make it anywhere!"

Theatre reservations can be made directly through the Hilton, at the Concierge desk.



Times Square

Times Square, at 42nd Street and Broadway, probably the most photographed spot in the world.

Truly commercial, this neon-lit symbol of New York is one of the most popular and populated places in the city and is considered very safe.

Walking North, a few blocks from our hotel, at 59th Street begins the famed **Central Park**, where you can still hire a horse and carriage to take a romantic ride through the park.

Fifth Avenue is there.... anyone who has not heard of that one?

It truly deserves its fame! This magnificent boulevard with its mix of old and new architecture, proudly displays hundreds of Stars and Stripes, welcoming the world.

'Haute couture' houses reside side by side with the Gap, H&M, and even street vendors. Cartier and Harry Winston, (all within blocks of each other), satisfy every woman's dream of any kind of jewel. Trump Tower houses many known shops of shoes, silver and clothing; Henri Bendel, Hugo Boss, Fendi, Louis Vuiton, etc, are but a few in a long line of highly recognized international boutiques that line this landmark street.

The majesty and elegance of St. Patrick's Cathedral inspires us all, regardless of ethnicity.

'Diamonds are a girls best friends'.... so come to **47**th **Street** and visit an entire city block with nothing but jewelry stores and diamond dealers – What a sparkling sight!



The Statue of Liberty

Museums: no one can top ours! One block from our hotel is the Museum of Modern Art, by taxi or bus – the Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Guggenheim, The Natural History Museum, Museum of Radio and Television....and the list goes on and on.

The Metropolitan Opera House, the New York Philharmonic, the New York Ballet, City Opera and Carnegie Hall are all awaiting your visit.

Antiques: The Manhattan Arts and Antiques Center, located on 2nd Avenue between 55th and 56th Streets, hosts more than a hundred dealers of the highest quality of antiques.

The Chelsea Antiques Building: at 110 West 25th Street, (between 6th and 7th Avenues), houses antiques of various qualities on twelve floor, along with some outdoors stalls.

The finest, individual art galleries and antique stores line Madison Avenue from 65th Street and up.

For a complete list of all New York City events, theater offerings and exhibitions please visit: www.nycgo.com

The program we have prepared is rather full, but we have opted to leave most of your evenings free so that you may enjoy dining in one of the 2000 restaurants listed by Zagat, go to the theatre, a concert, or merely a stroll outside to view the magnificence of the city.

Here is an abbreviated schedule of events:

- •Thursday morning: Visit Ed and Marilyn's collections in Bayshore, followed by a visit to Gabrielle and Michael's home in Woodmere, (all based on prearranged schedule).
- •Thursday 7:30 pm: Official Registration, 'Majolica Cake and Coffee', and Member Presentations
- Friday morning: Visit Ed and Marilyn's collections in Bayshore, followed by a visit to Gabrielle and Michael's home in Woodmere, (all based on prearranged schedule).

Additionally Richard and Thea Benenson will have an Open House welcoming smallish groups, 10 am to 9 pm. Light food and drink will be available.

- **Saturday morning:** Member Presentations, followed by visit to the Reis home in Westchester
- •Saturday, early evening: Cocktails and Majolica Heaven Preview
- •Sunday morning: Annual Meeting followed by MAJOLICA HEAVEN



Joan Graham's Wall of Garden Seats

****Special Note: Joan Stake Graham's fabulous Majolica collection will be accessible Friday for all that have visited the Flower and Ehrenthal homes Thursday.

Hugs to you all!

Gabrielle Ehrenthal

Auction Results By Duane Matthes

I thought you might find this as amazing, as I did. This beautiful Wedgwood majolica butter pat finished its online auction life at the hammer price of very robust \$631. It received 16 bids from six different bidders.



I have seen this pat in many color combinations as well as a common monochrome green glazing. This is the first time I've seen it in these color combinations with this perfect decoration, glazing, and modeling. A real find and at an amazing price!

ETSY.COM - Sell Your Broken Plates By Duane Matthes

ETSY.COM is an online marketplace where you can buy and <u>sell</u> items that are handmade, as well as vintage goods and craft supplies. Look



what I found for sale on their web site. It was advertized as follows.

Mosaic Tile Majolica Textured Leaves/Grapes Tiles

Description: These are amazing old plate tiles of Majolica. They are yellow colored with raised green leaves and grapes. There are 15 patterned pieces with leaves and grapes. The rest are textured yellows. There are 55 pieces.

Rare old pattern broken plate parts for \$19.00

Wow! Could this be an outlet for all our accidental Victorian ceramic breakage that we have never discarded?

Victoria Pottery

By Wanda Matthes

Whole books have been written about the ceramics of Minton, George Jones and Wedgwood, with good references to their production of majolica, but there are many fine producers of English majolica which have had very little exploration. I would like to start a series on these "Other British Potteries". This is the title of chapter 6 of the Karmason-Stake book, Majolica a Complete History and Illustrated Survey, first published in 1989 and updated in 2002. This book is commonly referred to as "the Bible" of majolica. I would like to begin this exploration with the Victoria Pottery of Stoke-on-Trent.



Two contrasting glaze examples for the Victoria Pottery Shell and Seaweed Oyster Plate

Each time I see a piece of majolica produced by the Victoria Pottery Company, I am amazed its beauty and the crispness of the mold and how pleasing the design is, and I wonder why we know so little about this company. Since I am sure that many of you own a piece or two by this fine English company, I thought we might just gather some additional information and some good photos of pieces produced by this company, if I asked you to "chip in" and help.



The quality of the modeling and design shows on this provincial Daisy Tea Set

Most of my reference books on majolica don't even list this company in their index, but I did find, in <u>Majolica</u>, by Marilyn Karmason and Joan Stacke, previously mentioned, one column on the company, as well as, a photo of a lovely Basketweave cheese dome. The authors tell us that Victoria Pottery was established in

Lonsdale Street, Stoke, by Robinson, Leadbetter and Leason, in 1882 for the production of, "ornamental and useful earthenware and majolica." They describe the mark as "VP/C" surrounded by a triangle of swords." The book goes on to say that, even though the out-put of the pottery was "more than average excellence", (according to Jewitt), the pottery was short-lived.



This Boar's Head Game Dish is another example of the quality of their glaze work.



I have never seen this well modeled and glazed Bamboo on Wicker plate is unmarked but it is attributed to Victoria Pottery

Victoria Bergesen, in her book, <u>Majolica</u>, prints an article from the Crockery and Glass, Journal, 10 August 1882. I am including the complete article from her book, p.157-158.

The Victoria Pottery Co., Stoke-on-Trent (Messrs. Robinson & Leadbetter, with Mr. Robert Leason, have been for some time preparing their new works, where they intend to manufacture not only high class majolica, but also ornamental and useful articles in ivory and colored earthenware. Their first selection of majolica fancy goods and ornaments are now ready, and if they continue to

produce articles of the same excellence as the specimens we had the pleasure of inspecting, their position as manufactures of high class majolica is assured. "The Victoria design (registered) [it was not registered by Robinson, Leadbetter & Leason or by Robinson & Leadbetter] is a combination of bamboo canes and foliage, with a groundwork of rushes skillfully interlaced. This novel design is carried out in a most through manner. The umbrella stand, garden seat and Stilton cheese stands (three sizes) are remarkable for their extreme elegance in form and the harmony of their bright colors. The background of rushes being treated in a most natural manner, showing the joining where new rushes have been inserted, or where the rushes have slit under the weaver's fingers. The same design is carries out in jugs, bread trays, sardine and sugar boxes, butters, kettles, tea pots, teas and many other articles in various styles and colorings, all equally effective. Three new sardine boxes, (in fact all three designs are new), attracted our attention-the' Lotus', having a flower springing from the very centre of a group of leaves in a rush basket; the 'Sardine', with four or five specimens of the finny tribe lying on a bed of rushes; and more particularly the 'Kingfisher'. This box has a kingfisher with open wings just alighting on a on a bed of lotus leaves with a fish in its bill. The plumage of the bird is skillfully modeled and brightly colored. A desert [sic] set [the Alexandria'] consisting of six fruit subjects, the 'Vine', 'Filberts', 'Orange', 'Apple', 'Strawberry', and 'Fig Leaves', is very pleasing. The comports and centre pieces, all varied, being an additional attraction. Some charming ornaments formed by a lotus leaf, brightly colored, with flowers and basket handles are very quaint. The same style of decoration is carried out in single, double, and triple baskets with equal success. The' Sunflower' cuspidor is a very clever adaptation of this fashionable flower in conjunction with drapery, tassels and cords. The colors are so rich that it seems a pity to hide it. A strawberry and cream set, formed by a rush basket held in the centre by handles from which panier-like loops hold the sugar and cream, suggesting the appropriate name of 'The Panier' strawberry set. The same idea is carried out in a single and double basket. An oyster set is a charming combination of oyster shells, seaweed and coral. The 'Marigold' tête-à-tête set consisting of sugar and cream bowls hexagon in form with rustic handles, having marigold flower modeled in high relief on the side is an elegant set when painted with flowers on ivory ground with rich green handles. The effect is very pleasing. The cups and saucers are the same form and decoration is quite unique, being remarkably light and graceful. We must not omit the blackberry Stilton cheese and umbrella stands, the bold foliage and delicate flower being shown up to advantage by the blue ground. The 'Lemon' trinket tray and the 'Bird' ash tray are good; and last but not least in merit the 'Darwin' jewel tray formed by a monkey seated on a cushion, is very quaint in design and brightly colored."

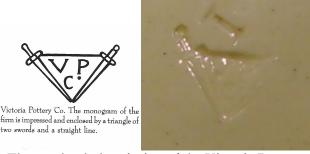
Crockery and Glass Journal, 21 December 1882, described a few more of the firm's articles.

The 'Boar's head' game pie dish (in three sizes) is quite an acquisition. The conventional flower decoration, having a rich blue ground, is very striking, and the boar-head reversed makes an appropriate handle. The 'Diamond' jugquite a new departure-is well adapted for decoration and useful. The maroon, ivory and turquoise colors on it are nicely balanced...A pair of umbrella stands with raised apples, plums, and blossoms are beautifully modeled after nature. Their single, double and triple baskets, with raised flowers, chrysanthemums, roses and pansies are feelingly treated. The 'Bird' ash tray has fulfilled our prediction of becoming a general favorite; they can scarcely produce them quick enough. We can recommend their 'Buttercup' ice cream tray, butter and salad bowl of shells and seaweeds. Good potting, new ideas, and good coloring are the special features of the Victoria Pottery Co.

Bergensen goes on to say that the company did not advertise after 1883.



This Cheese Dome example is reprinted from Karmason-Stake book, <u>Majolica</u>



The text book description of the Victoria Pottery mark along side what we found on a plate

Now please help me discover..."the rest of the story."

Western States Luncheon - October 2008 By Denise Buysse & Maryanne Leckie

The third meeting of the Western States members was held on October 5, 2008 at the home of Denise Buysse and John Brinker in Oceanside, California



Lt to Rt -- John Brinker, Denise Buysse, Dolores Miller, Marti Marx, Maryanne Leckie, Susan Furchtenicht, John Lyddon, Loretta & Gary Graham

A tour of the 2 story home, which was remodeled from a single story by John, was given.



Sarreguemines fountain

Majolica is scattered throughout the house, with focal points being the Minton stork and heron walking stick stands, hutch featured in Majolica Matters, wonderful



Minton stork and heron walking stick stands



English art nouveau tiles, ring a bathroom window



Denise and John's white selves are laden with some of their colorful collections

Sarreguemines fireplace satyrs and Sarreguemines fountain with antique spigot. English art nouveau tiles, the newest addition of majolica, ring the bathroom window. They were completed in time for the party. Denise said that she has had the tiles for 2 ½ years—having the party was a great motivator for actually hanging them!



Susan Furchtenicht and Denise Buysse are flanked by a the pair of Sarreguemines fireplace satyrs, that now creatively act as pedestals for Denise



A cuddly English bear umbrella stand greeted and enjoyed all the MIS members

Luncheon was served and members chatted and shared pictures and stories. We had one new member, Nancy Bloch, from Rancho Santa Fe, California. We were delighted to have her join us! Members came from Northern and Central California as well. Denise created a cake which looked like the cheese keeper on the back of Strawser's Catalog—complete with a handmade goat fashioned from "Super Sculpey" and candle wax!

Everyone seemed to have fun. Denise said it was a joy for her to have people who appreciate and love majolica to see her collection.

Susan Furchtenicht has very kindly offered to have the next event at her house in Santa Maria, California, next year, The exact date is yet to be determined.

We'll see you then!

<u>Victorian Shapes - The Cheese Dome</u> By Duane Matthes

Cheese has long been a staple in man's diet. It is rationalized that cheese probably evolved from ancient herdsmen. Cheese is an ancient food whose origins predate recorded history. There is no conclusive evidence indicating where cheese making originated, either in Europe, Central Asia or the Middle East, but the practice had spread within Europe prior to Roman times.

The first factory for the industrial production of cheese opened in Switzerland in 1815, but it was in the United States where large-scale production found real success. Credit usually goes to Jesse Williams, a dairy farmer from Rome, NY who in 1851 started making cheese in an assembly line using the milk from neighboring farms.

By the 18th century, cheese was served as a course at the end of the meal, so appearance was important. All sorts of tableware, such as fancy flatware and exquisite serving dishes, were created for that presentation.

As the Victorian era presented itself, cheeseware became an art form.

Victorian cheese keepers, or bells, came in a variety of shapes to accommodate the style cheese it was protecting. Their keepers might be rectangular, wedged or round, often resembling miniature cake covers with matching plates. By the mid 19th century, the popular Stilton cheese was being presented on a plate covered by a dome and sized to accommodate the cheese.



George Jones' Apple Blossom came in two sizes this is the tallest.

One method of telling if a covered dish is a cheese bell is to look for the small hole in the cover. The hole was to allow enough air to prevent mold from accumulating.



Samuel Lear's Lily of the Valley with Ropes & Knots

It is interesting to note that the cover's utilitarian purpose was not only to keep the cheese fresh but to control the cheese's odor. Worldwide, these cheese keepers came in an assortment of pottery and types of glass. Those made of glass are interesting and beautiful, but some might think that those made of pottery were the real head turners, particularly Majolica.



Wedgwood's Primrose and Fern

Majolica offered a bit of whimsy in its designs that appealed to the Victorian Era. The unique designs were not only colorful but had intricate detail in the molded relief of the pottery.

By sheer numbers most of the Victorian majolica cheese keepers came from English manufacturers but Continental and American versions also exist. The United States, manufacture Griffen, Smith and Hill of Pennsylvania made some marked fine majolica cheese keepers.

These unique Victorian dishes have captivated us today as some of the prices reflect. If a keeper comes from one of the better-known manufacturers, and /or is featured in one of the majolica reference books, then the cost can reach into the tens of thousands of dollars. Reproductions abound, so be sure to check the facts of the piece prior to purchase.



Here are a few of the reproduction and fakes you can find in various market places



Let's laugh at this 2005 English auction item listing and results. The auction house states it is a Minton majolica cheese dome. Yet you and I know, just from the tiny item photo supplied that the finale and under plate are not correct. It is only fair that the bidders knew the same, and the piece sold for 150 USD. This is not a Victorian Minton version.



Here is the real Bee Hive Dome - by Minton

The ceramic shapes of the Victorian Era are interesting and exciting. Studying them allows us a glimpse of the past; and what norms existed in the Victorian home. The cheese keeper was our first adventure. A short list of other Victorian shapes that we will research in future Majolica Matters includes: Butter Pat, Tobacco Humidor, Match Strikers, Muffin Stand, Salt Dish, Sardine Dish, Syrup Pitcher, Spooner, Strawberry Server, Sweet Meat Dish, and the complexity of the various Seafood servers. If you collect a favorite ceramic shape, we welcome your digital photos and your writing.



"Jumbo" argenta cheese keeper, by Wedgwood



Floral pattern cheese keeper, by Wedgwood



Member Area "Talk" - Newsletter Archive By Duane Matthes

It's time for some helpful thoughts about the MIS growing Online Private Member Area. It is located at:

www.majolicasociety.com/memberarea/index.html



Before we get into the Newsletter Archive we need a bit of an introduction. The purpose of the member area is to act as a private online archive for all the data of the Majolica International Society and to make it available to all active members. The Member Area is our consolidated data and information; and should be available to: any member, from any place, at any time.

To access the data stored there; members just need a Username and Password. Please contact Duane@emajolica.com if you do not know yours.

The Member Area web pages all carry the Victorian tile that has the very cute little hard working putti down the left hand side of each page.

I found this photo one day and thought it looked like an MIS member working hard to keep the society's boat afloat (maybe a Convention Planner, Web Master, Membership Chair, Newsletter Editor, Treasurer, etc). I hope you enjoy the humor of that. I was a little afraid that my member area logo did not have enough clothing on, but I decided to use it, and ask for forgiveness later.

Now, on to the reason of this article.... to make the Newsletter Archive more usable for you.

www.majolicasociety.com/memberarea/newslettersa rchive.htm

Today there are over 600 unique articles published in the pages of the MIS Newsletters over the last twenty plus years. If you're keeping your own paper copies in you private closet at your house, and you been a MIS member since 1989, then good for you. You have a very nice library of majolica information. If you're a newer member, you may have never read the issues published before you became a member. So, let's try to make this Newsletter Archive as usable as we can for all of us.

Now let's suppose that you are at the family cabin in Maine for the summer and you and your spouse are nagging each other about an article which you remember from a Majolica Matters about "bears", which some member named "Trout" wrote. To settle the argument (without going home to your closet paper copies) all you have to do is access the MIS Private Area. Access it with your password from your laptop, your, iPhone, or the public library computer. The answers will be at your finger tips in no time at all. But with over 600 articles to hunt through on the MIS web, it still might be tiresome task to locate the "bear" article by "trout" looking through each edition.



I want to help you fulfill your quest quickly. For this example I will assume you are using Internet the Explored web browser on a computer.

So, logon and get to the MIS Newsletter Archive via the 3rd button

in the photo on above. The one labeled "Majolica Matters – Newsletters".

At that page you'll see an introduction and then all 600+ Majolica Matters articles listed in reverse chronological order; with the most current articles first. Thus we see in the figure below – 2008 December newsletter with two of its article titles.

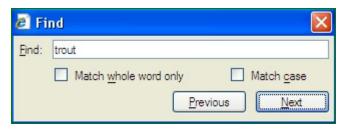


Now at the top of that window use the Internet Explorer menu command of "EDIT" to activate the drop down menu to reach the "Find on this Page" command. This command will search this entire one

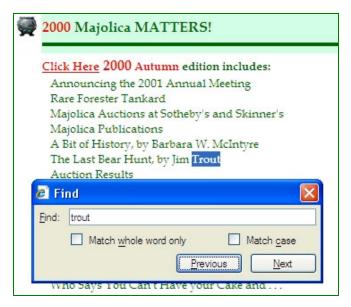
page for the character string/word you enter in the dialogue box. It is best to keep it short and one word.



Clicking "Find on this page" opens the "FIND" dialogue box.



This is where you would enter something about the article title(s) you are looking for. You could enter "trout" or "bear" and then click next. Internet Explorer will now jump to the first time on this page that it finds a match for the search you entered. I searched for "trout" and after clicking the "Next" button passed two "trout" articles I was not looking for; then I found the one I wanted.



The "EDIT" command had found and highlighted in Blue (see above) the article I was looking for. It was Jim Trout's article titled "The Last Bear Hunt" from the 2000 Autumn edition. On a long page like our index of Newsletters the "EDIT, FIND" tool can really

come in handy to quickly jump to something you need to find

Now that I know which edition has the article; I merely click the words "Click Here" and Internet Explorer opens the a archived copy of the 2000 Autumn edition of Majolica Matters and I'm off and ready to read Jim's article.

With dozens of Majolica Matters and hundreds of articles these search tools make it easy to find what you're looking for in the MIS Newsletters Archive.

Any time you have a problem with down loading any information from the Member Area please contact Duane@eMajolica.com. The size and rich content of many of our documents makes them difficult to download in some environments and we can always find another way of delivering you the information you're looking for.

To Buy or Not to Buy By Roberta McDonnell

UPS brown truck drives up with a large package and you know they are delivering your latest acquisition....a pair of diamond shaped Jones vases in all their cobalt glory and naturalistic greenery..... As I tear at the bubble wrap in excitement, I know this has to be what a "stimulus package" is all about, as I have not been this stimulated since the arrival of my Holdcroft swans! Economically, people are backing away from life, whether they need to or not. I say if you can find it and can afford to buy it then buy it!



The "pair theory", hard at work on layered shelves

When I place a piece of majolica on the shelf and the sun shines in on my collection in the wee morning hours, I know to stop collecting is a" bail out", big time, on something that truly defines who I am. Prices are a bit lower, pieces a little harder to find, and, if

your collection is advanced, less excites you, so to jump start your collecting, do what I have done......"diversify". I once purchased mainly the turquoise tones and pinks. Now I have expanded my portfolio and redeveloped my love affair with cobalt's. It is amazing how many pieces you can become enchanted with if you think outside the box of your ordinary collecting habits. If you are totally naturalistic; pop in a few classical pieces. Change up the color scheme, change the theme and maybe decide on sea pieces.



Newest Jones vase additions

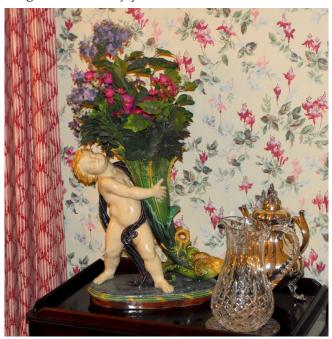
Take advantage of dealer's specialty items and buy one nice piece to collect around. One great purchase and several smaller purchases can set the tone for new meaning of "on a mission" to hunt out the perfect companion pieces. Remember your willingness to keep your collection fresh keeps the market of stock (not stock market) from your dealers replenished for finds that will excite you for years to come. Keep the passion alive... to give up the hunt and quest for those perfect pieces is to give in to being "practical" and a step closer to becoming boring! To the family of collectors out there, I say dream in color, arrange in pairs, and keep your majolica fund growing!

Show and Tell By Wanda Matthes



The lowly waste bowl becomes a star!

In the Matthes home, Saint Patrick's Day is celebrated with a dinner of corned beef and cabbage and all the trimmings, usually shared with dear friends. Majolica mania goes into full force, with every jardinière and basket holding their first breaths of Spring. Most of the plants are live and are taken from their pots and the soil is placed in plastic bags so that they do not soil the pots. When the party is over, and life goes back to normal, the plants are taken outdoors and planted in the garden, to be enjoyed for months to come.



Minton Putti



Holdcroft Basket welcomes Spring

Please send your comments and material for the newsletter to:

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