

# KILN' TIME



SEPTEMBER, 2006

THE OFFICIAL CLAY ARTS GUILD NEWSLETTER

## BRINGING OUT THE ARTIST INSIDE OF ME

*by Victory Nichols*

Guild membership fee: \$100

Bag of clay: \$15

Tools: \$50? (so far...)

Bringing out the artist inside of me: Priceless

No question about it—the Clay Arts Guild here in Walnut Creek is priceless. As a beginner (I've had 1-year's worth of classes now!), it's especially valuable. Allow me to lay out for you some of the many, many aspects of our guild that are worth their weight in Ming vases:



**To me, the best benefit of guild membership is being able to work in the studio during open studio hours.** I find that I get much more out of my classes if I am able to practice what I was taught outside of class time. There are plenty of open times, so I can adjust my studio time to my schedule. I am so grateful, too, for the many times when I have run into teachers during guild hours and received advice, inspiration, and encouragement from them. They are usually happy to give us a couple of minutes to improve our current projects.

**I'm so thankful for the friends I've made in the Guild.** If the pure joy of creating in the studio weren't enough, I look forward to seeing who's in the studio every time I come in. I love how often I hear laughter in the studio as my fellow artists enjoy each other. I love looking around the studio and being inspired by the beautiful work that everyone else has been doing, too. It's so neat to experience how everyone encourages each other. There is a wonderful attitude of non-competitiveness found in this guild. I have learned that another's work being beautiful doesn't make mine any less so, and that encourages me to "just go for it" in my own work.

**The guild definitely gives me some me-time.** I soooo need me-time, when I'm not just "momma." Whatever role fits you (co-worker, instructor, senior citizen—the possibilities are endless), we all need

a chance to get away from it & relax. I always come out of the studio more sane than I went in. Yes, I realize that's not saying much...

**This may sound weird, but I love all of the service opportunities the guild provides.** It's good for my soul to help someone else now and then, and I really enjoy helping at the sales, cleanup parties, and monitoring. I always make new friends there, and it's fun to work for something I believe in.

**Last, but not least, I love this newsletter!** I always get great tips, and the book reviews make me want to learn more about this art of ours.

I definitely feel blessed to have found the Walnut Creek Clay Arts Guild. My pots, both thrown and hand-built, have improved so much during this last year—I don't know what I would have done without it.



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### *Kiln' Time Newsletter*

Published 6 times a year  
Editor ~ Ann Henderson  
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at [annadele@comcast.net](mailto:annadele@comcast.net)

Visit our website:  
[www.clayartsguild.com](http://www.clayartsguild.com)

### *A Special Thank You...*

to the folks at Tuesday Morning in Newell Plaza, Walnut Creek. The Clay Arts Guild thanks you for the many donations of bubble wrap.

## MOAR THOUGHTS ON POTS

*Bridget Moar, CAG President*



I hope everyone enjoyed the long break between summer and fall classes. It gave us a good chance to focus on other projects or just relax. Are your fingernails and hands recovering from the clay damage? Fall sessions have just begun – with interesting new classes and many familiar standards.

**Studio Cleanup:** We had an excellent turnout of helpers at the studio cleanup in August, over 30 people. Your hard work is rewarded with a clean studio to begin the Fall Session and a free bag of clay! (See Pete to receive your coupon for the clay.) Thank you to *Cynthia Dakopolos* for organizing it, providing the delicious food and the door prizes. Thank you, also, to *Clarice Judah* for keeping us all on the ball and working hard.

**Spring 2007 Sale:** The date of the spring 2007 sale has been moved from June to April 17-22, 2007. This change should increase shoppers and sale revenue. June proved to be a difficult time of year because of vacations, heat, and other factors. April will make the sale available for gift purchases, such as graduations, mother and father's days, and it is before people leave for summer vacations. As usual, the sale will coincide with the Shadelands Sale. More information about this will be available as the time gets closer.

**People News:** *Gary Pokorny* is the new City Manager for Walnut Creek. Gary has been interim city manager, following the resignation of *Mike Parness* in August. Gary knows Clay Arts well, because his previous position was director of Arts, Recreation and Community Services. *Ann Henderson* has become a Grandma once again. Ann welcomes granddaughter Avery Ann, born August 14<sup>th</sup>. Ann was thrilled to be in the delivery room to witness the blessed event.

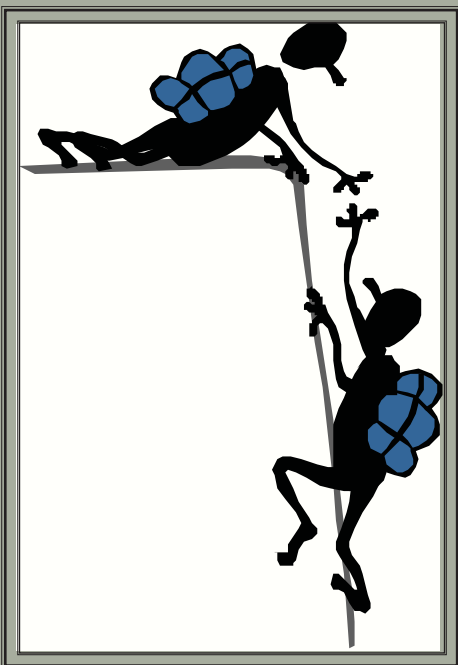
**Lost Pots:** We had an unfortunate situation at the end of the June Sale: One of our long-time instructors, Lesley Jensen, lost 10 pit-fired pots. These pots were discovered missing at the close of the sale on Sunday. If you participated in the sale, please check your boxes to see if any of her pots mistakenly got put with yours. Please let Lesley know the results of this search by the end of September. If you have any information that might help in resolving this issue, please contact Lesley or myself.

**CAG Dues:** The CAG board has approved an increase in CAG dues to \$100 per year. The dues are paid in September, so please complete the dues-envelope and include your payment.

## Helping Hand

For those unfamiliar with Pat's Fund, this is a fund set up in memory of Pat Schmidt, a fellow CAG member, who died the summer of 2003. The fund is a source of money for those longtime CAG members who are having some financial pressure and might not be able to pay fully either class fees or CAG fees.

The last few years the money sources for the fund have been raffles at the sales, pots donated and sold to increase the fund, and straight donations to the fund. Last year the CAG joined this support and now includes the fund in its budget. The fund has limited resources, but if you or someone you know, **who is a long-term member of CAG, and due to financial pressures is considering not attending classes or joining the guild**, please let someone on the board or Peter know. That person might be considered as a recipient of the fund.



## KAZEGAMA WORKSHOP



*Steve Davis monitoring his Kazegama Kiln*

Now is your chance to achieve results similar to wood-firing right here in Studio E. The CAG, along with the Clay and Glass Artists Guild, will be sponsoring Steve Davis in a Kazegama firing workshop, Saturday and Sunday, October 21st and 22nd.

Students will help in loading up to ten of their own pieces in the kiln, followed by a discussion of this special firing technique. There are very specific criteria for preparing pieces, however, so make sure to ask for a preparation handout when you sign up for this workshop. Steve will also demonstrate throwing techniques while the kiln is firing. The cost of this two-day workshop is \$125 (\$115 for CAG and ACGA Members).

The Kazegama kiln is gas-fired and achieves wood fired results without the use of wood. Steve named the kiln "Kazegama," (which is Japanese for "wind kiln"), because it obtains Anagama results with blowers that disperse wood ash throughout the kiln during the firing process. Instead of taking days to fire, Anagama results are achieved in about five hours.

Steve explains on his website (<http://www.kazegamas.com/kazegama.htm>) that, "The kilns we fire and the types of wares we produce spring from a long history dating back many centuries. Kiln designs have changed with the introduction of new technologies and demands. Today we have many issues to address such as pollution, geographic constraints, and finding the time to chase our aesthetic pursuits...the Kazegama is a tool that contributes to an ongoing tradition of the wood fired aesthetic."

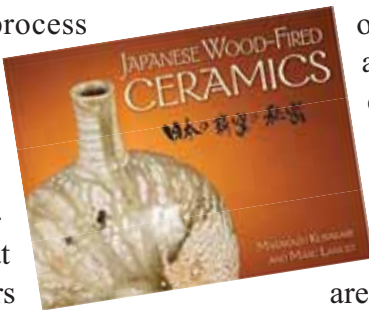
# BOOK REVIEWED

by Cynthia Dacopolas

## JAPANESE WOOD-FIRED CERAMICS

by Masakazu Kusakabe & Mark Lancet

The book is a wonderful reference and unique teaching tool. The whole process of woodfiring is thoroughly covered along with subtler areas I have not seen covered in other books on the subject. The through in valuable pieces that The authors as well as the seasoned firer.



of woodfiring is thoroughly covered along with subtler areas I have not seen covered in other books on the subject. The through in valuable pieces that The authors as well as the seasoned firer.

Following are some of the more subtle areas that were addressed:

**First, wabi-sabi**, the making of art while letting natural forces take place.

**Second**, is what I feel is the search for the firing *nirvana* experience. The authors are humble and indicate even with much experience they have come to see the search is just beginning. Many times I've seen artists stuck in ego plateaus about what they have done.

**Third**, the chapter on community of spirit and work ethic needed to make a successful firing is an area not discussed in such depth in other books.

**Fourth**, the Appendix on *Safety* and chapter on *Alternative Pit Firing* are both good.

**Fifth**, the chapter in *Glazes, Slips and Application* is a guide to how to make one's pieces work in an anagama.

For the Shino lover, they offer an array of formulations. They cover many loading possibilities with diagrams, and use of bag walls, flues, chimney, firebox, etc. for loading work and what results can be obtained.

A drawback of the book is that it may be too technical and the use of referencing with Japanese words may make the reading cumbersome for some readers. The photos are beautiful, but only the author's work is used. There is no overview of Japanese wood fired ceramics or history. It is more a personal history of the authors. For me, this is fine, because the mysterious process of wood firing is made very accessible. I wish this book was around when I was attending so many anagama workshops.

## WEBMASTER EXTROADINAIRE



Meet John Harned. John is a master and an artist from many perspectives. He designs and makes jewelry, is accomplished at martial arts, is a gifted potter, is a master at monitoring (Sunday nights), but he also is a WEBMASTER. And the best part is that he has generously taken on the task of Webmaster for the Clay Arts Guild website.

That is a huge amount of work; every time we start a new quarter, John goes into the website and updates all the class descriptions. He posts a monthly calendar of events based on what is happening in our studio, he has posted descriptions of all our monitors, posts ads about upcoming workshops and CAG sales, and posts all the issues of this newsletter *in color*. John continually tweaks and bends things making the site better and better.

Dreams for the future might include a photo gallery and possibly even using the site as a resource for selling Guild Members' work.

Visit the site and see the magic  
<http://clayartsguild.com/index.php>

## Hot Tip of the Month!

Submitted by Jean Calicura

### Product: 9x12 Sanding Screens (3 grits, for sanding plaster & dry wall)

These screens, available at hardware stores, work great for smoothing the wobbly bottoms of dry greenware. Lay one down over newspaper (to catch the clay dust) and, holding the piece level on the screen, move it in a circular motion, checking until it stands flat. The clay dust under the screen can be saved to make a really smooth slip with vinegar or water. To clean the screen, run water over it and pat dry. Can be used many times.

Note: Screens can be used before clay is totally dry, but the screen will get clogged a bit with clay and be slower to rinse off.

## Win a Free Bag of Clay!

Jean won a free bag of clay for her tip, and here's your chance to win, too. For each *Kiln Time* issue, the newsletter staff awards one lucky individual a free bag of clay to share your ideas. The staff will choose the "Tip of the Month" from the ones you send in.

Email <[annadele@comcast.net](mailto:annadele@comcast.net)> or phone (925) 828-3742 with your clever idea. We don't care where you saw it or whose idea it was in the first place as long as you're the first one to submit it to the newsletter staff. (If you get it from a book, magazine or friend, however, it would be polite to acknowledge them).

## Express Yourself

Wear a colorful CAG T-shirt and apron, available from any instructor or monitor — a bargain at half the price! Aprons only \$20, and T-shirts only \$15 each. T-shirts in many sizes and colors.



## Carol E. Levin Scholarship

by Emily Blanc

One of the important CAG events that occurs twice a year, in May and December, is the awarding of the coveted Carol E. Levin Scholarship to a deserving ceramics student or students. The scholarship fund was set up several years ago at the Clay Arts Studio and is actively supported by Carol's family with the encouragement of the Civic Arts program.

Carol was a lover of all art and pursued the creating of art pieces using clay as her favorite medium. She had some of her pieces displayed both in galleries and at the University of Judaism in the Los Angeles area. Her family has dedicated this scholarship in her memory in the hopes that it will encourage other artists in their work.



Carol E Levin

Either the ceramic instructors and/or CAG members may nominate a potential recipient..

**The criteria are an obvious love of clay and evidence that there is a special talent emerging.**

The Committee is looking for budding artists and wants to encourage these students to "press on". If you care to nominate someone, the nomination forms will be left in the instructors' boxes and are also available in the library in a green folder on the table. We encourage all CAG members and staff to think about someone you have observed showing potential. Please return the completed forms by **November 10<sup>th</sup>** to one of the scholarship committee members, Ann Henderson, Laura Morris or Emily Blanc (see the locker signup sheet for the committee members' lockers). Pete will accept them also. There are four forms in the packet:

- 1) a brief statement about Carol E. Levin,
- 2) application form,
- 3) explanation of the award itself and
- 4) an appraisal form.

The nominee receives forms 1) through 3) and the nominator fills out 4), the appraisal form. Please help us with this very worthwhile project.

## MEET YOUR MONITOR

*Tamara Selvig*  
interviewed by Laura Morris

Tamara's name was one of the first things about her that interested me. *Tamara* comes from her Russian background and the *Selvig* from her husband's Norwegian background. She has a 17 year-old daughter and this mother-daughter duo even takes ceramic classes together. They're into hand building and have been enjoying classes together for a few years. This definitely says something about her enthusiasm for clay.

Tamara grew up in New York and got a nursing degree at NYU. She moved to the Bay Area in 1982 and decided on a different career path, working at UC Berkeley and also running her own word processing company.

Over the years, she involved herself in different forms of art including painting and drawing and about 10 years ago she discovered clay. It has held her interest ever since. She mainly focuses on hand

building and sculpting, but also enjoys the wheel. Her approach to clay is her way of expressing herself. She essentially goes with the flow and enjoys

the process of creating something. What comes will come and the process itself brings her fulfillment. She says it doesn't matter what the project is because "holding clay makes me happy."



*Tamara Selvig with her pet panther, a sculpture she recently finished.*

Being a monitor is her way to give back and be involved. She loves being here and really appreciates the quality of the studio and all the people involved in it. She espe-

cially appreciates Peter and Roger's efforts to make it a great place. The quality of the teachers as well as the openness and friendly attitudes of all the members are additional pluses. She has had some health issues and considers the studio a form of healing.

Tamara's most recent work is a gargoyle she made in the 5-day workshop this summer. It was the biggest sculpture she's made and really made her stretch her abilities. She liked coming every day and working on a continuous basis. It generated enthusiasm in her as her piece took form along with a sense of joy in what she was able to create. This gargoyle, a panther-like creature descending steps, is two feet long and two and a half feet tall. She learned all sorts of new skills in order to make it, and especially enjoyed all the new challenges.

Ceramics is a part of her life now and one she would not give up. If you want to meet her, she monitors every other Tuesday evening from 4-7PM or you can catch her in the studio during open workshop hours.

## Wanted!

### Images of Your Ceramic Art for Clay Art Sale Postcards

*that represent work currently being done in the CAE Studio.*

**We especially want images of work  
by members who have never been  
published on CAG Sale postcards.**

For further information or to arrange submission,  
contact Robert Shelton at [sansspam@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sansspam@sbcglobal.net)  
or 925-935-5858.

**The details:**

Good quality color images, plain background.  
300 dpi or more when smaller than 2.5 inches.  
Digital file on CD, photo print, slide or negative  
(will return prints, slides and negatives).  
Your agreement that CAG and City of Walnut  
Creek may use the images for promoting art sales  
and classes without remuneration to you.  
Acceptance does not guarantee publication, selection  
based on image quality and how well they group  
with other images to complete a post card design.



# MENDOCINO MEMORIES

## Taking a Workshop with Lana Wilson

By Mary Leigh Miller



*Lana's Teapot in a recent show at the MudFire Gallery, "Teapots-A-Go-Go 2006"*

An innovative hand-builder from Southern California, **Lana Wilson** is known for her distinctive teapots and spirit boxes. Unfortunately I missed her Master Potter Workshop when it was offered four or five years ago at our studio, so you can imagine my excitement when I found that the Mendocino Art Center was offering a five-day class with Lana last July.

Former CAG members, Ann Testa and Jackie Nelson joined me for the trek north. Although the three of us are mostly wheel-throwers, we each hoped to pick up some valuable lessons in creating texture and applying designs using stamps, two of Lana's specialties.

Part of our first day was spent drawing on commercially made tiles. Lana provided everyone with white, previously glazed and fired tiles, which we completely coated with a layer of black overglaze (Amaco's Majolica GDC1). After it dried, we used various pointed tools to scratch away designs from our own imaginations. Later, the tiles were fired to cone 06 with fabulous results. Our efforts were rewarded; they were mounted, grouted in red and installed in the ceramic studio bathroom, giving us all boasting rights! (See photo below.) We are now on permanent display at the Mendocino Art Center. *If you have your own electric kiln, this could make a wonderful at-home project – see me for more details.*



The other excitement of that first day was the chance to spend money! Through Lana's connections and a lot of phoning back and forth, most of the 13 class members purchased metal tile cutters in a number of different

sizes. The cutters arrived early afternoon on day three, UPS'ed over-night from some remote place in Idaho. Having these cutters enabled us to make professional looking texture blocks and helped in the construction of our own spirit boxes.

During the five days, as we watched her many demos, Lana regaled us with her insane sense of humor and wonderful stories of a life spent with clay. We learned the secrets of creating texture, shared each others clay stamps, made our own stamps and texture blocks and produced a lot of Lana look-alike projects. I would be glad to share, in more detail, some of the great ideas I learned during those five days.

The Mendocino Art Center, established in 1959, houses studios for painting, jewelry, and fiber arts, as well as two well-equipped ceramic studios. Each summer at least four or five five-day classes are held Monday through Friday of each week beginning in June. All studios are open during non-teaching hours, often until late in the evening. During the winter a variety of weekend classes are offered. To learn more about MAC, go to their website: [www.mendocinoartcenter.org](http://www.mendocinoartcenter.org)

To learn more about Lana Wilson, visit her website: [www.lanawilson.com](http://www.lanawilson.com)



*(clockwise from top left) forming texture; constructing a teapot; partially made spirit box; using a tile cutter to construct a box.*

# Viva Arts!

## SUPPORT THE ARTS! FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

Our Civic Arts Education programs face a serious challenge: we need to find ways to obtain long-term financial support for student scholarships, continuation of outstanding classes and the eventual completion of the new Shadelands facility.

**Friends of Civic Arts Education Foundation** hopes to help resolve these challenges by promoting advocacy and building a fundraising base to insure the success of CAE's mission.

### How can Clay Arts Guild members get involved?

- Join Friends for a nominal yearly fee of \$35
- Plan to attend our 1st Annual Fundraiser ~  
*¡Viva Arts!* for an evening of Food, Wine, Salsa Dancing and Silent Auction bidding opportunities
- Consider donating a piece of your work for our silent auction.

**WHEN:** Friday, September 29, starting at 7:00 pm  
**WHERE:** Shadelands Art Center, 111 Wiget Lane in Walnut Creek

**WHY:** To raise money for Civic Arts Education Scholarships and help support our fabulous Civic Arts programs.

**HOW MUCH:** \$45 per person

### **HOW TO FIND OUT MORE:**

- See CAG members Pitter Scanlan or Mary Miller
- Contact the Civic Arts Education office at 943-5846 or log on to: <FriendsArtsEd@yahoo.com>

## Fall Open Studio Hours

MONDAYS 4 - 7 pm

TUESDAYS 4 - 7 pm

WEDNESDAYS 12 - 4:30 pm

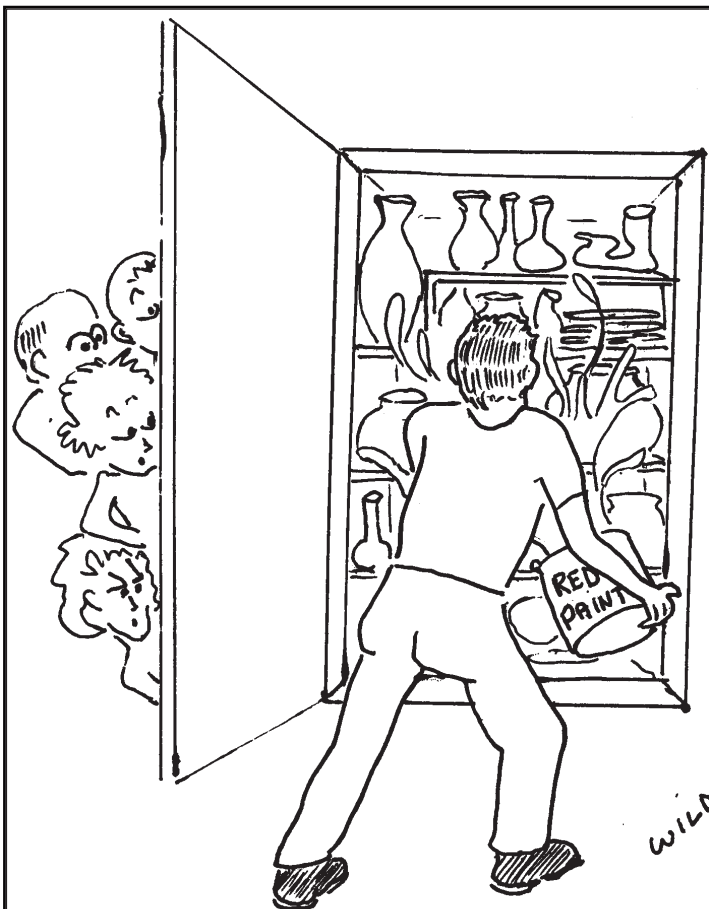
THURSDAYS 4 - 7 pm

FRIDAYS 12 - 7 pm

SATURDAYS 12 - 6 pm

SUNDAYS 1 - 8 pm

**Note:** No open studio on Saturday and Sunday - Oct 21 & 22  
Master Potter Workshop in session



A COMMITTEE WAS FORMED TO DISCOVER  
ROGER'S SECRET FOR COPPER RED POTS.



## Open Letter from Trish Kyner and her Husband David

Hi Everyone,

David and Trisha here. We wanted to share some images of our latest public project. In just three weeks, with the help of volunteers, we built this 20'x25' archway for Baltimore's International Festival. We were hired by the Mayor's Office. Soccer teams from around the world trooped through it, and a host of musicians played in front of it on August 5th and 6th. (Our favorite musical act had to be The Mighty Sparrow, the legendary calypsonian from Trinidad).

We are getting settled here in Baltimore. Trisha will be teaching at Towson State University and at Baltimore Clayworks. David has a sculpture on display in downtown B'more for a year. Slowly the studios are being constructed. We do miss all of you.



## FOR PETE'S SAKE

Notes from the Desk of the  
Studio Manager



### CALLING ALL GARGOYLES:

The exterior of the studio will have a fresh coat of paint on it soon and we would like to dress things up a bit out there....make it look like a ceramics studio....so.....if anyone wishes to contribute an appropriate gargoyle for placement on the studio or a piece to add to one of the "Totem Poles" that are planned for the front of the studio, please contact the studio manager. Should be fun to see the outside of the studio come to life.

### 21st CENTURY ARRIVES IN STUDIO:

We now have free wireless access in the studio.

### CALENDAR: DATES TO REMEMBER

Sat. - 9/16, Studio Re opens / First class of Fall session

Sat./Sun. - 10/21 & 10/22, "Kazegama" Master Potter Workshop with Steve Davis

(No CAG Open Studio)

Thur. - 11/23, Studio Closed

Thur. - 11/30, Last Class of Quarter

Fri. - 12/2, All work removed from studio and lockers cleared out by 9 pm

Sat. - 12/3, Studio Clean-up Party (9 am)

Sun. - Tue. 12/2 - 5, Studio Closed for washdown

Wed. - 12/6, Set up for Studio Sale

Thur. - Sun. 12/7 - 10, Studio Sale

Mon. - 12/11 thru Fri. - 1/5/07, Studio Closed

Sat. 1/6/07, Studio Re-opens fpr CAG open studio (12 noon - 6 pm)

Mon. 1/8/07, First class of Winter quarter 2007

## *What's Happening in the Art World*

### **EXHIBITIONS:**

*Craters from Fire*

**James Lovera**

Through October 8

Crocker Art Museum

216 O Street, Sacramento

**Bean Finneran**

October 18 - November 18

Braunstein Quay Gallery

430 Clementina, San Francisco

### **WORKSHOPS:**

*Kazegama*

**with Steve Davis**

October 21-22

Fee, \$125

(CAG/ACGA, \$115)

Walnut Creek Civic Arts

Studio E

1313 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek

### **MOTHER EARTH WORKSHOPS:**

**790 Lucerne Drive, Sunnyvale**

*Mastering Glazes*

with Ron Roy

September 16-17

Fee, \$90

*Beachball Babylon*

**with Phyllis Lee**

September 23

Fee, \$65

*Alternative Raku*

**with Eduardo Lazo**

October 7-8

Fee, \$125

Material/Participation fees \$25

*Soft Slab Building Using Tar Paper*

**with Elaine Pinkernell**

October 21

Fee: \$70

## **CLAYARTSGUILD**

**Civic Arts Education of  
Walnut Creek**

**PO Box 8039**

**Walnut Creek, CA 94556**

*To view KILN TIMES in full color: check out  
the CAG website at [www.clayartsguild.com](http://www.clayartsguild.com)*