

KILN' TIME



JUNE 2021

THE OFFICIAL CLAY ARTS GUILD NEWSLETTER

From the Manager's Office



Hello CAG,

I hope everyone is having a nice spring and getting ready for summer! It's going to be one to remember – just like last year, but much better I think. The return of in-person classes is really a great sign that things are moving in the right direction. Furthermore, enrollment in our classes and open studio are all nearly at capacity! It's really a testament of our community support and the love for ceramics. We're hoping this positive momentum continues into the fall and future quarters.

As many of you return for the first time in over a year, things will feel a bit different in the studio and I want to give you a heads up on a few of the bigger items:

- **Curriculum:** As you have already noticed our classes are being redesigned to enhance the class experience for both the students and instructors. We hope you find the classes more engaging. The fall quarter descriptions will be more detailed on the specifics of each class.
- **Wellness Checks:** Daily wellness checks will be administered via text messaging system to all participants in our programs. This is to ease the check-in process for our patrons and hope you find it easy and helpful to use.
- **Open Studio:** OS blocks will be limited to only those registered during that block. Students may register for multiple blocks, but may not attend other unregistered times. OS blocks are limited to 15 students.
- **Masks:** Masks are required to be worn by all participants while at our facilities until further notice.

Please continue to refer to the Arts and Rec Safety Protocol page for all updated information:

<https://www.walnut-creek.org/departments/arts-and-recreation/arts-rec-safety-protocols>

• **New Walnut Creek Policies:** There is a new Code of Conduct for all divisions across Arts and Rec. Please see here for more information:

<https://www.walnut-creek.org/departments/arts-and-recreation/arts-rec-code-of-conduct>

ON OTHER NEWS in the STUDIO

The new gas kiln should be arriving in the port of Oakland any day and ready to roll for summer! I am very excited about this and know Pete would be too! It will be the first kiln you see in the kiln room, so you'll know when it's here. Very exciting!!

On another positive note, Rana Nassar, our trusted Studio Assistant of nearly 20 years, has decided to take on bigger ventures and pursue her dreams outside of Community Arts – and we are very proud of her and support her in every way. She has been a crucial factor to the success of our program over the years and will be dearly missed. Both Rana and Hannah were so instrumental in helping me personally come into my position and I will forever be grateful for them both.

As we transition through all of the changes this summer and fall, I ask you all for your continued patience and understanding. Please remember to do your part to keep the studio and equipment clean. I'm continually trying to improve the cleanliness standards in the studio and appreciate those who wipe an extra smudge or two! We all are excited about returning to the studio and hope it's a fun, safe and creative summer all!

Cheers! Takemi

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See the latest *Kiln' Times*
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Message from the New CAG Prez ...



Welcome back to the studio!

We are so excited to be able to have in person classes again. This past year has been challenging for everyone, and I hope that you were able to sign up to join us for one of the many in person classes that are being offered this summer.

I would like to say a huge thank you to all the people that came out to support our first Outdoor Spring CAG Pottery Sale. It was a very successful sale and it gave us an opportunity welcome some new artists to the sale and see many old friends as well. This was the first time we tried having close to 20 artists selling their pottery outdoors.

With the help of our Studio Manager, Takemi, we blocked off the area in front of the clay studio as well as the parking lot off to the side. It allowed plenty of room for all artists and shoppers. We decided



to hold it on Sunday only, and we sold over \$7,000 of pottery in just five hours. The average sale amount per artist was \$375. When compared to our previous Spring Sale (held indoors), where we had an average of \$323 per artist with the sale lasting for three days (18 hours) this was a very successful sale! This sale also generated \$2,000 for CAG to put toward the purchase of our second new kiln.

Pat



Check out Zoe Levit's sale article on the next page!

NOTES from a FIRST-TIME SALE PARTICIPANT

by Zoe Levit



I've never been able to stick to a hobby. Chess books, film equipment, and sewing supplies litter my room, serving as relics of my ephemeral passions. However, pottery is the longest hobby I've ever stuck with. Starting as a quarantine interest, I obsessively watched YouTube videos, decided

to buy a five pound bag of low-fire clay off Amazon, and finally signed up for a class at the local community arts studio. Little did I know, I would meet a kind, open community of clay lovers that would help me learn how exciting and experimental pottery can be.

I hadn't planned to be a part of this spring's CAG sale, especially since I had just started pottery the summer before, but a dear friend of mine whom I met during an Outdoor Glaze Studio class had encouraged me to join (shoutout to Bette Sindzinski!). Gathering courage to participate in the sale was easy but figuring out what pieces to make in the short month I had was where most of my difficulties lay.

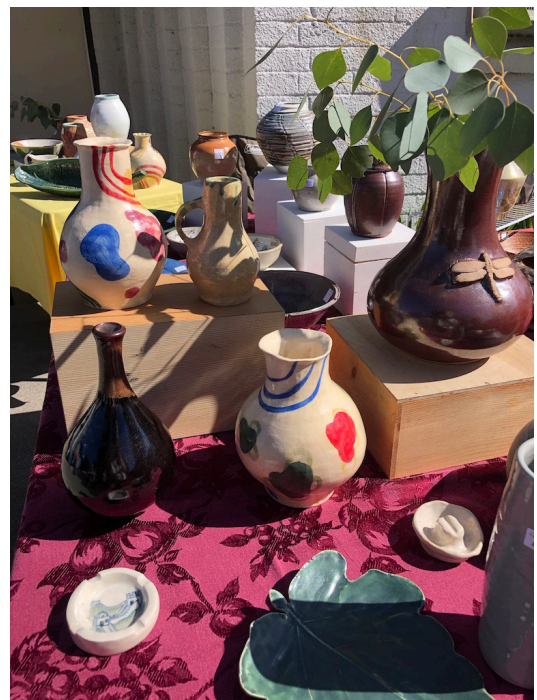


I am a sophomore university student studying Anthropology, Art History, and Indigenous Studies at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, so I must balance my time between class, coursework, and pottery – though sometimes I wish I could devote all my time to clay. I overestimated the time I had until the sale and, to my dire mistake, left a lot of glazing and firing to the last minute. As luck would have it, many pieces that I had prepared were not ready in time for the sale. I was both devastated and relieved. Disappointed that I wasn't able to share my pieces with the community but also comforted in the fact that I didn't have to

present my pieces to the world for fluttering comments and criticism.

Ultimately, I brought the few pieces I could scrounge up and enjoyed helping out wherever I could. My divine technology skills, a gift from being born in the digital age, helped reenable our payment system, I wrapped customers' pieces and made small talk with my partners, offered sanitizer and masks to everyone who came in, and gave our unwanted balloons to young park goers after the sale. And, to my surprise, I actually sold a few pieces! For a new artist and a first-time seller, being confident in my work and ability was something I struggled with. The majority of the pieces I sell are to friends, family, or those with connections to either. Presenting my pieces to a completely anonymous public was daunting, and I'm still in that phase of my life where I doubt my abilities – but realizing that my art is appreciated enough to be purchased is a liberating feeling.

While I didn't make hundreds of dollars, being genuinely involved in a community that is so new to me was a truly invaluable experience. It pains me to leave for school in the fall, but I've found solace in knowing that when I return I will be welcomed with open, clay-smear arms.



HOT TIP!

by Mary Leigh Miller

Here's a Great Hot Tip for Raku Potters!

I know that some of you are bothered by the paper scarring that often appears on the sides of your pieces after you've removed them from the post-firing container. I've come up with a clever solution.



I bought a roll of chicken wire from the local hardware store and, with my wire cutters, fashioned a cylinder

that is slightly larger than the circumference of the pot I am about to fire, and no taller than the height of the trash can I plan to use. This enabled me to stuff plenty of newspaper around the outside of the can. The chicken wire collar keeps the paper from ever touching the pot and can be successfully used over and over again.



CAG and MEALS ON WHEELS by Barbara Moreland

A big thank you to all who answered the call and donated ceramic pieces for participants of Meals on Wheels (MOW).

There are two MOW programs that we are supporting with small ceramic pieces for their participants (many of them are low income and live in small apartments). One program is part of the Health and Wellness Division and offers Bingocize – you guessed it – a combo of Bingo and exercise. They use the ceramics for prizes. The second program provides bagged groceries and included a ceramic piece with a food delivery.

On May 2, we sorted and boxed 55 pieces for immediate delivery. A special thank you to **Betty Medwedeff** for her help. We also boxed additional donations to hold as backstock for future distribution to MOW.

An email from Meals On Wheels: "Judging by how our drivers loved the idea, I'm sure the recipients were pleased too. People who are isolated are very pleased to know that others are thinking of them."

Again, thank you for your generosity in sharing your artwork, it means a lot to homebound seniors in our community.



Would you like a free bag of clay for your Hot Tip?

First, you need to try out your hot tip, then write about it and send to Mary Leigh Miller, mlmiller602@gmail.com. If you learned about it from someone else, read it in a book or on the internet, please give credit where credit is due, but the free bag of clay is yours if published. Accompanying photos are always welcome.