

KILN' TIME



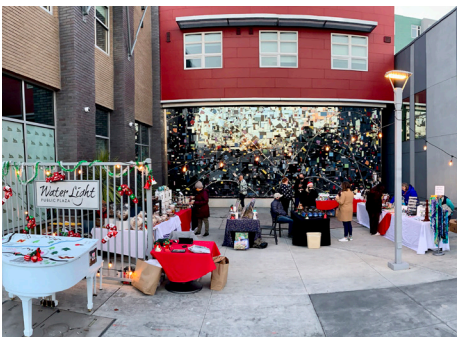
FEBRUARY 2022

THE OFFICIAL CLAY ARTS GUILD NEWSLETTER

Holiday Night Market Sale by Doug Tambling

The weather outside was frightful but the company delightful. Several of the CAG artists braved the cold weather with other local artists to share work at two evening Holiday Night Markets, held on Thursday, December 9 and 16 at the Water Light Plaza in downtown Walnut Creek.

The event was hosted by Walnut Creek Downtown, partnering with Center for Community Arts. The venue was fabulous, although local foot traffic was light despite prior advertisement and a choir performing carols on the 9th.



This was an ice breaker for me as I have not sold pottery for several years and feel as though I got my feet wet. I brought pit fired pots with a short video explaining the process, but think a live demonstration with roaring fire would have been more inviting. We were joined by **Donna**

Continued on page 4

WHY JOIN THE CLAY ARTS GUILD?

Since classes are starting back up, we are hoping to encourage more students to join CAG. **Millie Robinson** wrote up some helpful information on the advantages of joining CAG. If there is an opportunity, please share CAG membership benefits with your fellow class members.

CAG is a significant supporter of Civic Arts Education through purchases such as kilns, wheels, slab rollers, tables and other improvements. We also support the scholarship program that offers free or reduced classes to those who cannot afford to pay for classes. We work closely with the city in developing the program of which your class is an example.

Some of the benefits of membership include:

- Reduced fees for Open Studio sessions and workshops
- Participation in CAG Sales
- Reduced rate for Master Potter Workshops
- Community Outreach such as Meals on Wheels and Empty Bowls •
- Programs that help the less fortunate
- Receiving Kiln' Time, the CAG Newsletter

Please consider joining us. Memberships are prorated according to which quarter your membership begins. To join, go to:

<http://www.wcclayartsguild.com>.

We also have Instagram and Facebook accounts, so please consider following us to see the beautiful work from our CAG members and keep up to date on everything going on in the studio. 🙌

INSIDE THIS ISSUE!

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Message from Pat Alger
Page 2 | Pit-firing in a Weber Grill
Page 5 |
| • Results of the Handicrafted
Holiday Sale
Page 3 | • Empty Bowl Project
Page 5 |

MEMBERS of the BOARD

President: Pat Alger
patalger08@gmail.com

Vice President

Mary Ellen Brownell
bbmebb@mac.com

Fin. Officer: Bill Schaaf
billschaaf13@comcast.net

Secretary: Yvonne Loey
ysloey@gmail.com

Membership: OPEN

Librarian: Millie Robinson
millie.robinson@comcast.net

Social Media: Facebook & Instagram:

Nicole Collins

nicolelanguage@aol.com

Hospitality: Betty Medwedeff
bmedwedeff@gmail.com

Monitors: Erika Goldstein
ebgoldstein@comcast.net

Newsletter Editor: Mary Leigh Miller
mlmiller602@gmail.com

Curator: Florence McAuley
fbmcauley@comcast.net

Data Base Manager:

Gary Guglielmino

garyg@astound.net

Web Master: Brad Krebs

bradkrebbs@berkeley.edu

CAG Website: Colleen Whitman

whitman.colleen@gmail.com

Educational/Social Event Coord:

Michele Browne

michelebrowne@astound.net

Community Outreach:

Bette Sindzinski

bettesindzinski@hotmail.com

Empty Bowls: Mona Moxley

monamoxley@yahoo.com

Visit our website:

www.wcclayartsguild.com

See the latest *Kiln' Times*
in full color!



Message from Our Prez ...



Welcome back to the studio! Hope you all had a joyful, safe holiday season. We are seeing many more students back this session and all the in-person classes filled up quickly! It is wonderful to see everyone so anxious to get back into clay.

First, I would like to say a huge THANK YOU to everyone that made a cash donation to CAG at the end of 2021. We have a truly amazing group of members and we will put it to good use by funding student scholarships and helping with the purchase of new equipment for the studio.

We had a very successful Holiday Handcrafted Sale in December. Please see the article about the sale, written by **Clare Macy**, for all the details, and also check out the comparison table that gives you a historical perspective. CAG artists sold more items at this most recent, two-day sale, than the three-day sale held in 2019. Also, the sale this year was only held in the big auditorium and did not include the other two smaller rooms, but the number of ceramic artists was the same from 2019 to 2021. It was exciting to see more attendees this year than we have seen in quite a few years.

We also participated in the first Night Holiday Market in December hosted by Downtown Walnut Creek. Please see the wonderful article about the sale written by **Doug Tambling** on the front page.

This year, we will be holding the CAG Spring Pottery Sale the weekend of April 30-May 1. We plan to have it out in the front of the studio again this year. More tents have been purchased so that everyone will have shade and we can accommodate more artists. Please mark your calendar and watch for the emails with all the information that will be coming out in February.

The Guild recently voted to contribute to the purchase of our second Blauu Kiln for the studio. There is a 12-18 month lead time, so it will be 2023 before you see it in the studio. We are thrilled with our first one that is now up and running, and are looking forward to having two awesome kilns for quicker, more efficient firing.

Community Arts has posted the job for Clay Arts Studio Manager, and we are hoping to have a new manager by early March. Many thanks to Takemi's dedication to making the studio a great place to take classes, and to Maile for stepping in quickly to manage the studio while they look for a new manager.

Hoping to see you around the studio soon and please feel free to contact me or any of our wonderful board members if you have any questions, suggestions or concerns.

Pat Alger



HANDCRAFTED HOLIDAY SALE

by Clare Macy



The 2021 Holiday Handcrafted Sale took place on Saturday and Sunday, December 4 and 5 at the Shadelands Community Art Center. Despite the selling area being reduced to the auditorium alone this year, handcrafters from the entire arts and rec program enjoyed a festive and friendly setting where they displayed and sold their art. 25% of all sales were donated to Community Arts Scholarship fund and the Clay Arts Guild.

The Holiday Handcrafted Sale team was extremely helpful and a wonderful resource in making this event fun and successful. The artists, from the start in the fall, were provided with logistical information about the deadlines and what was expected from the participants and what they could expect from the team. Then, the team provided more information, which included advice on how to advertise the sale, including a printed flier to send to friends and other would-be customers, and how a table can be arranged so as to provide a more pleasing display.

The Friday prior to the sale every artist was given a time slot to bring their pieces, along with decorations, to set up their 1/2 or entire table. The artists were met in the parking lot with volunteers (the artists themselves each “work” a shift) with carts, where the participants were helped in loading and unloading). Personally speaking, once I finished laying out my table, I was approached by another artist fulfilling her volunteer duties. She asked me if I needed help. I replied that I’d like another set of eyes to look at my arrangement. Lo and behold, she just happened to be a watercolor artist and teacher. She showed me some changes looking at factors such as height, like colors, size of items, among other details, advice greatly needed and appreciated!

The sale was a success to all who participated! After not seeing each other for almost two years, it was great to be able to run into our old friends from the studio. As the clay classes and open studio time have been progressing toward our “normal” (thanks to our tireless interim studio manager, Maile, and our new studio assistant, Karen), this holiday sale has continued its journey, looking toward a promising 2022 in clay. 🖐️



Handcrafted Holiday Sale Y2Y Comparisons	2018	2019	2021
Total Sales (Net) *	\$ 45,001.55	\$ 45,856.37	\$ 38,028.75
CAG (25%)	\$ 3,526.00	\$ 2,189.25	\$ 2,889.25
CAG Artists (75%)	\$ 10,578.00	\$ 6,567.75	\$ 8,667.75
Foundation	\$ 2,323.05	\$ 1,828.59	\$ 1,284.25
Total Artist Vendors	78	77	41
Total CAG Vendors	21	17	17
Attendees	1014	990	1228
Event Days	3	3	2

* This row reflects the total Holiday Sale amount

Cowan and **Rob Savre** on the 9th and **Sereen Mahmood** on the 16th with some donated CAG ware on the side. **Christopher Fortin** also shared his work on the 9th. The support staff including Maile were all very helpful with setup and takedown to enable curbside access at the outside venue. Tables were set up with cloth and holiday ornaments before we loaded in.

Overall the experience was positive and participants did a fantastic job. It is unfortunate that more shoppers were not able to take advantage of the venue, but it was a valuable learning experience for a more successful event next time. I look forward to working with our partners in future sales ...perhaps in the summer.



PLASTIC WRAP? Is There More?

by Bette Sindzinski

So many of us are looking around the studio for a piece of plastic to wrap our clay creations in to prevent over drying of the clay. AND so often the big barrel in the damp/dry room is empty. **Here is how you can collect bags for the studio:**

- Dry cleaners plastic that they put over the cleaned clothes is wonderful to use for the studio. Most of our plastic in the studio comes from them. If you have a dry cleaner business around you, ask if they could keep the discarded plastic for you to collect. Dry cleaners will often have extra bags since some people do not want to take the plastic home from their dry cleaning and these discarded bags are put aside since they can't be reused. I have also gone into dry cleaners and asked them if they would donate 20 or more plastic bags for the WC art studio when they don't have any discarded bags available.
- The Dollar Store sells thin plastic covers for when you do paint jobs. These can easily be cut up into smaller pieces. Your investment: \$1.00!

Good luck and may the plastic bags appear. Just put them in the barrel. THANK YOU



DONATION of ART WORK MADE CHRISTMAS TIME SPECIAL

by Bette Sindzinski



Thanks to the generosity of artists at the Walnut Creek Community Arts Holiday Sale, the Deacons Care Cottage was able to provide many wonderful gifts to low income residents. At the conclusion of the sale, many artists donated their unsold work. At the Cottage, low income people can come in to shop for clothing, gifts, and household items at no cost. It provides a wonderful mission to the Walnut Creek area.

**Here is the thank you note from Nan Musso,
Director of the Deacons Cottage, to Bette Sindzinski.**

Bette – please share our thanks to your artists who donated their wares to us. We appreciate your beautiful work! It was so very nice of you to think of us. As someone who is not artistically inclined, I really am impressed with the creativity! I have to confess I really like the knitted hats with the ponytail hole! I only cut my hair a few weeks ago, so I was only wearing a ponytail, so I thought that was great. Of course, now I have short hair, oh well!

We wish you a merry Christmas and many blessings in the new year!

Nan Musso, Deacons' Cottage Lead
Deacons' Care Cottage www.cottage@wcpc.church



PIT FIRING IN A WEBER BBQ GRILL

by Karen Hildebrand



Pit fired pottery creates beautiful and unique pieces, each one being a one-of-a-kind piece. In recent years, it has become more difficult to find beaches or other “in the ground” areas that allow pit fires. By following the same pit firing practices and using the same basic ingredients,

you can attain very similar results using an old Weber BBQ grill. These grills provide an alternative to an “in the ground” pit fire, allowing you to do it at a time that works for you. Just pick a “non spare the air day” and you can do it in your backyard.

This article covers the basic steps and the commonly used materials. The possibilities are endless when it comes to materials you choose to put in the pit, but for this article, I will be focusing on burnable items that are commonly used and generally easy to get.

Supplies: Weber grill (without lid and grates), aluminum foil, saw dust, charcoal briquettes, dry cow dung, rock salt, copper carbonate (powder or granules), pre-bisqued ceramic pots (preferably hand burnished or surface treated with Terra Sigillata and burnished), wood kindling (non-treated, no nails, no paint, preferably not redwood or plywood), newspaper and fire starter fluid. Gloves! Very Important! All materials need to be dry with the exception of the fire starter fluid.

Decorating the Pots: This is an endless topic because there are so many things you can add to the pit – or apply to the surface of the pot – to create color, texture and designs. Common materials include: copper wire, copper tape, copper spray, seaweed, pine needles, red iron oxide sprinkled on, bronze wool and even dry cat food. The list goes on and on.

Setting up and firing the pots:

1. Line the bottom of the grill with aluminum foil and then put about a 1 1/2 to 2 inch layer of saw dust. Build it up about one third up the wall of the BBQ.
2. Place a pot in the saw dust (start in the middle and work out), surround it with several briquettes, sprinkle rock salt and copper carbonate around the pot and then cover the pot with dry cow dung. Proceed to do this with each pot, one at the time.
3. Once the grill is full, it should look like a pile of cow dung. At this point layer on wood kindling and scrunched up newspaper, creating a mound (be generous), sprinkle with fire starter fluid and light.
4. The pit should come to a full flaming fire, and you may need to add wood along the way to keep it flaming hot for at least 30-45 minutes. Let the pit burn down to ashes before attempting to remove the pots. They will continue to be very hot for another half an hour to one hour. If you try to take them out too soon, you take a chance that they will crack due to thermal shock.



5. Once the pots are cool, they can be cleaned with a soft cloth. Some people will wash them under water; if you do this, then you will need to let them thoroughly dry before sealing them with either a wax (such as Johnson and Johnson furniture wax) or a clear acrylic spray. You can also just leave them natural.



Continued on the next page

EMPTY BOWLS

by Mona Moxley

It's that time again!

Last year we donated 198 bowls to the project which was able to raise \$53,000 for the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano Counties.

This year there will be three events:

- Monday February 21st 3:30-6:30 pm for making bowls- throwing or hand building (we have some molds or bring your favorites). Clay will be supplied.
- Saturday February 26th 3:30-6:30pm for trimming bowls made on the 21st.
- On-going glazing of bowls once they are bisqued.

Please contact me regarding your availability to participate:

monamoxley@yahoo.com.

There is a box in the library for donations to Empty Bowls at any time.

WEBER PIT-FIRING Continued from page 5

Additional Points:

1. Plan your day around this as it takes several to many hours, from beginning to end.
2. Make sure that it isn't a spare the air day. Fall, winter and early spring are your best bet in the Bay Area.
3. You can do this alone but it's fun to do with a friend, because you can share the tasks, and while it's burning, you can have a nice lunch and a glass of wine.
4. Write down what you did with each pot. If you are decorating them differently, it will help you remember what you did. Each piece will have its own unique qualities that you might want to repeat in the future.
5. Have fun and keep it simple. Get the set-up and firing down before you start trying adding all sorts of ingredients. You want to avoid too many factors in play.

Acknowledgments:

Lesley Jensen: I had the great opportunity to take Lesley's alternative firing class five summers in a row. Our last day of class was a drive to Dillon's Beach, where we did a pit fire. I learned everything about pit fires from Lesley, along with many other ceramic techniques. I appreciate her so much!

David Shapiro: The last couple of years, I have had the opportunity to do multiple types of alternative firings with David, including Raku, aluminum saggars, ceramic saggars, naked Raku and pit firing in Weber BBQ grills. He and I together did our first Weber Grill pit fire and were amazed at the outcome. David provided the space and encouragement to try this. I honestly don't think I would have tried it on my own but I will in the future, thanks to him.

Try it! You may like it! Karen Hildebrand (Hilde)



Ceramic Pieces for Sale

If you need a quick gift for someone and don't have time to make it, here is a great solution.

In the library there are shelves of work for sale at wonderful prices. All proceeds from the sale go toward supporting our studio programs. Anyone can donate their finished ceramic items by leaving pieces on the bottom shelf of the smaller rack.

To purchase a ceramic piece, look for envelopes on the bottom shelf; you can pay with cash or check (made out to CAG). Slip the envelope through the slots in Locker #1. Please label it: "CAG Pottery Purchase"

