



Red Wing
Collectors Society Inc.
Founded 1977

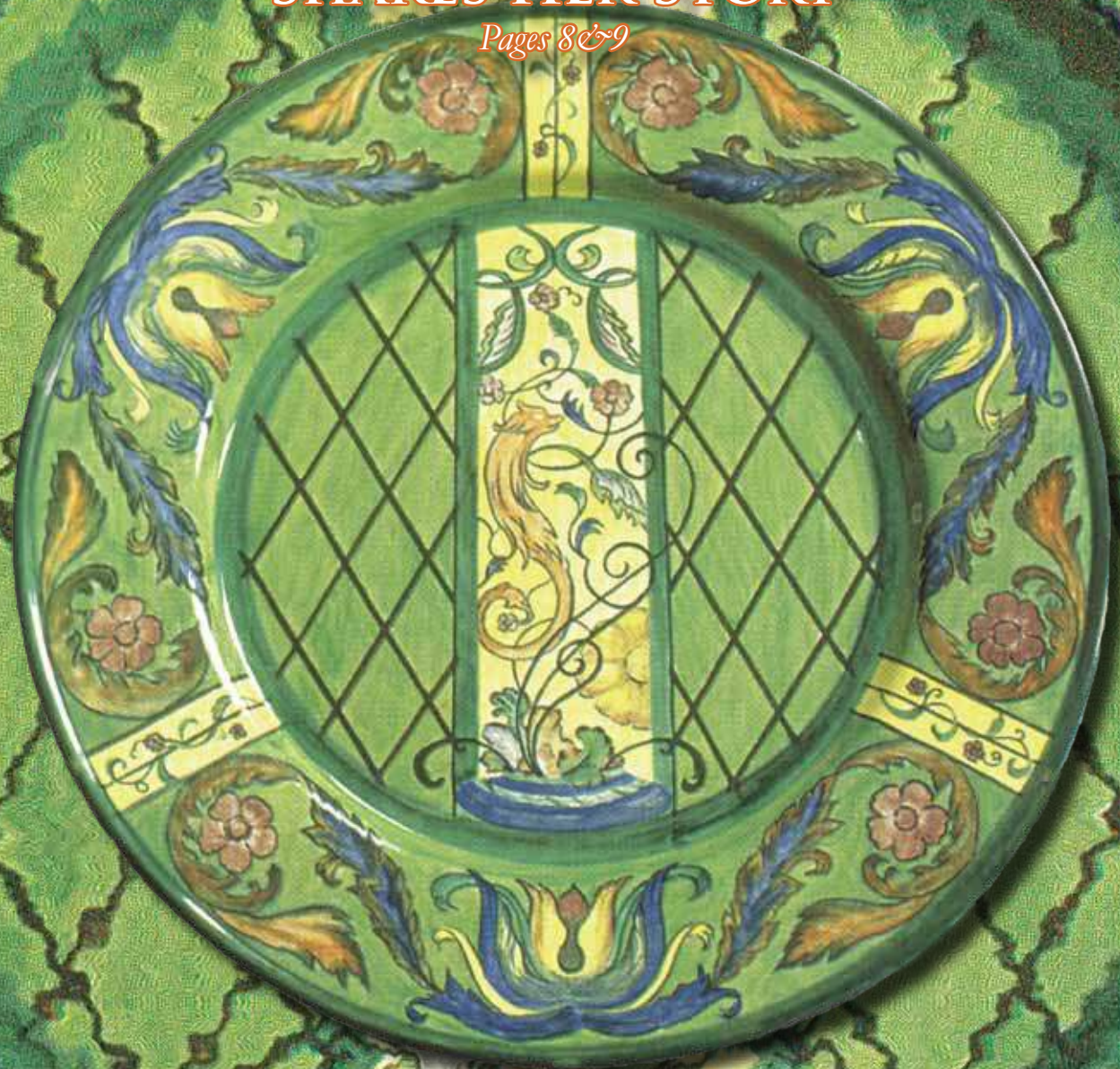
VOL. 34 NO. 2

N E W S L E T T E R

APRIL 2009

**A FORMER POTTERY EMPLOYEE
SHARES HER STORY**

Pages 8 & 9



MIDWINTER REVIEW *Pages 4-7*

WICHITA'S RAJAH RABBITRY INVESTMENT SCHEME *Page 11*

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MEMBERSHIP

A primary membership in the Red Wing Collectors Society is \$25 annually and an associate membership is \$10.

There must be at least one primary member per household in order to have associate membership. Members can pay for more than one year when renewing their membership. Contact the RWCS Business Office for additional details.

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NEWS BRIEFS

RED WING POTTERY ROAD SHOW – MAY 16

The 2nd Annual Red Wing Collectors Society Pottery Road Show is fast approaching, scheduled from 1 to 4 p.m. May 16, on the 2nd floor of Pottery Place. The Red Wing Collectors Society, along with the RWCS Foundation, Cannon Valley Collectors Club (CVCC) and the businesses of historic Pottery Place are excited to sponsor the event, which is free and open to the public.

Attendees are invited to bring their stoneware, dinnerware or art pottery to the show for an appraisal, learn about its history and have questions answered. If your piece is too big, or you're concerned about transporting in case of an accident, bring pictures and details. No piece is too small or too large. If it's Red Wing, one of our many experts will be on hand to help you out.

In addition to all this great information, there will be a 2:30 p.m. tour of the museum and the historic Pottery Place building. Once you've had a chance to enjoy the show, take time to check out the unique specialty shops and antique malls of Pottery Place. Special coupons will be available to anyone who stops by during the Red Wing Pottery Road Show. For more information about the event, contact the RWCS Business Office.

2009 CONVENTION UPDATES

Convention will be here before you know it, so here are some things to keep in mind: First, there's still time to secure a sellers table at the Convention Show & Sale. Contracts are available online or by calling the business office at 800-977-7927. Also, if you need a card to submit your piece to the auction, you can find the form on the Convention Page of the RWCS website or request one by calling the business office or e-mailing auction manager Todd Avery at AUCTION@REDWINGCOLLECTORS.ORG.

We're calling all members who would like to get more involved at Convention. Whether you have a few hours early in the week to hang signs or would like to help out during an event, we need you. Volunteer opportunities exist in the Auction, Commemorative Room, KidsView, Education, Registration and Show & Sale. If you have time, we need you!

The 2009 Convention button will be produced by the Wisconsin Chapter and the 2010 button will be produced by the Trails West Chapter. Chapters interested in creating the 2011 Convention should contact reps at large Jerry Erdmann or Russa Robinson. And finally, we still need "Celebrating with Red Wing" pictures for the 2009 Convention Supplement. If you enjoy creating holiday-themed displays of your collection, please send your photos to the business office so they can be used in the supplement. Photo contributors can remain anonymous if they'd like.

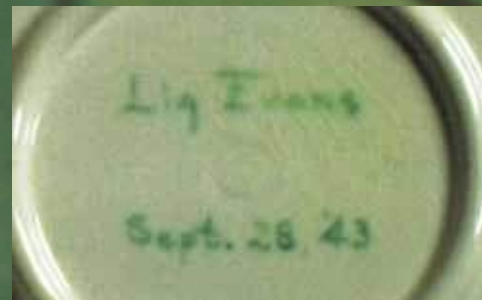
CONVENTION DISPLAY ROOM: IS 2009 YOUR YEAR TO SHINE?

It's hard to believe that it's almost time for another Convention! As always, we invite all members to consider joining us in the Display Room to take in what are sure to be some amazing displays. We also want to remind everyone that there is still time to participate by putting on a display yourself! All displayers are welcome on a first-come, first-serve basis. A few spots have been taken so far, but there is still plenty of room. If you've never displayed before, this is the perfect year to try. Remember, all displays receive a regular commemorative regardless of whether the display wins any awards or not. If your display wins Best of Show or People's Choice in any of our four categories (Art Pottery, Stoneware, Dinnerware and Memorabilia), or if your rare item wins the Dennis Yaeggi Rare Item Award, you also receive a special commemorative.

If planning on displaying, please be sure to contact the Display Chair so she can make sure you have a contract to join in the fun this convention. If interested in displaying, or have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Display Chair Laura Beall, either by e-mail at DISPLAY@REDWINGCOLLECTORS.ORG, by phone at 605-464-5941, or by mail at 215 W. 7th Street, Logan, Iowa, 51546. We look forward to seeing you at Convention 2009! -*Laura L. Beall, Display Chair*

CURRENT CONVENTION BANNERS TO FLY FOR THE LAST TIME IN 2009

Most of the banners displayed in downtown Red Wing during Convention Week have seen better days. Many are more than 10 years old and in poor condition, so they're in need of replacement. Following the discussion at the Board of Directors meeting at the MidWinter Get Together, it was decided that the current banners will be hung for the last time in 2009 and a new design will be implemented for the 2010 Convention. Whether you're a current banner sponsor or you'd like to sponsor a banner for the first time, you'll be able to order the new style in the Society's bulk print-run for \$90 for a single side and \$180 for both sides. Thanks to improvements in printing technology, these new banners will cost less than the old ones and also be of better quality. Photos can even be incorporated into the designs of new banners. For more information, contact the business office. Old banners will be available for pick-up at the MidWinter Get Together or Convention in 2010.



ABOUT THE COVER

The one-of-a-kind plate that graces the cover of this issue was painted by the talented Lia Munson, who worked at the Red Wing Potteries in 1943 and 1944 – not long after she graduated from high school and attended classes at the Chicago Art Institute. She admits the plate is more elaborate than she would like and she would do it differently today, but many collectors would disagree. In the brief period that she worked at the Potteries, she was fortunate enough to work with Charles Murphy on various projects, including a plate they painted together. That plate, along with several others, appears on pages 8 & 9 with her story.



STACY WEGNER

Executive Director

Thank you to everyone who made the MidWinter GetTogether a classic memory this year. I was excited to see so many members don their letterman sweaters, poodle skirts and saddle shoes. Special thanks to Bruce Cameron for being our Master of Ceremonies, Mike Robinson for making our "Happy Days Are Here Again" door prizes, and Richard Houghton and Mark Tlusty for offering their auctioneering talents on Friday night.

We had more than 350 members attend MidWinter. The educational seminars were great as always and the Show & Sale was a full house again this year, with something there for every collector. Thanks to Pete & Cindy May and their volunteers who make this event happen every year. Following the Show & Sale, Houghton's Auction Service put on another great auction.

Since we had such great participation at MidWinter, we conducted a 10 question attendee survey via e-mail. The questions regarded themes, Show & Sale, auction and education.

First, survey respondents chose a Mexican Fiesta for next year's MidWinter theme, so mark your calendars for February 12-14, 2010 for margaritas, nachos, sombreros and ponchos!

The majority of respondents have attended MidWinter for four or more years. Overall, respondents felt that our Crock Hop theme was a big hit and found it was easy to be involved. Members were excited to see everyone dressed up and dancing. The only major complaint was about food quality,

temperature and taste. Improvements will be made next year to ensure the tacos are tasty and the beans are warm!

As always, seminars continued to be a big draw. Respondents liked the variety of sessions, quality of presentations and learning new information. In addition, they expressed thanks to all speakers who presented; special kudos to Bob Kubes for making insurance fun and the dinnerware marathon by Larry Roschen and Terry Moe. The Holiday Inn now has the ability to air education sessions live on the hotel's TV channel. Respondents felt that this service would be an added value as an attendee, so plans are in the works for 2010.

Show & Sale attendance was great and the survey confirmed that the majority of respondents sold items in their room, the Show & Sale or both venues. Respondents said that receiving the 45 PRM records to hang in the hallway to identify room sales was helpful. Several RWCS members have mentioned their desire to change the MidWinter Show & Sale hours since buyer attendance drops off significantly in the final hour. Respondents equally supported the current hours (1 to 4 p.m.) and shorting the event by a ½ hour (1 to 3:30 p.m.). We have shared the results with Pete and Cindy May to consider for 2010.

Finally, we included a question to share feedback with Houghton's Auction Service. More than half of the respondents shared their experience with us, expressing overwhelming support for the Houghtons in terms of the service provided, sale management and variety for every collector. The only drawback of the auction was piece condition; however, respondents recognized that the Houghtons often do not have control over what is available to them.

Thanks again to all the members that participated in the survey. Your responses help us improve RWCS events. We look forward to seeing you at the 2010 MidWinter GetTogether Mexican Fiesta!

DISAPPOINTING MIDWINTER THEFT

This year's MidWinter GetTogether was a lot of fun, but many collectors left the event with a sour taste in their mouths after hearing that a fellow RWCS member's home was the target of a theft. The break-in took place between 2:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 7, which was while the Show & Sale and auction were taking place.

The most disappointing thing about this crime given the timing of the theft and the specificity of what was taken from the West Des Moines home is that a collector is probably to blame. How the person responsible can live with himself is anyone's guess.

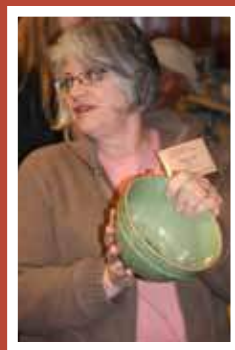
The following items were stolen and a reward will be offered for any information that leads to their recovery. If any of these items are offered to you for sale, or you see them in an antique mall or an auction, please call 515-205-2053. More photos of the stolen items can be viewed on the RWCS website.

1. Orange-banded Western Stoneware rolling pin with the following advertising: "DIGNANS DOUBLE HEADER FOR CASH AND FOR LESS Use Double Header Flour It is the Best PERRY IOWA"
2. Blue-banded Western Stoneware rolling pin with the following advertising: "STORM LAKE'S BIGGEST ATTRACTION STAPLE STORES inc. STORM LAKE, IOWA"
3. Blue-banded Western Stoneware rolling pin with the following advertising: "MIX WITH US AND SAVE DOUGH FRED LUKES & SON GENERAL MERCHANDISE PROTIVIN IA"
4. 6 gal Red Wing salt glaze single P and target decorated churn
5. Old Sleepy Eye Flemish Tankard approximately 7 3/8" tall.
6. Old Sleepy Eye Standing Indian Pitcher, approx. 7 1/2 "" tall.
7. Old Sleepy Eye Cobalt Stein, 7 3/4" tall.
8. Old Sleepy Eye #3 & 1 blue rim pitchers, 6 3/8" tall and 4" tall.
9. Old Sleepy Eye #2 blue rim pitcher, 5 1/4 " tall.
10. Old Sleepy Eye #5 blue- grey pitcher, 8 1/2" tall.
11. Old Sleepy Eye #3 blue- grey pitcher, 6 3/8" tall.
12. Old Sleepy Eye #2 blue-grey pitcher, 5 1/4" tall.
13. Old Sleepy Eye #1 blue-grey pitcher, 4" tall.
14. Old Sleepy Eye #2 blue & white pitcher, 5 1/4" tall.
15. Old Sleepy Eye blue & white mug, 4 3/8" tall.
16. Old Sleepy Eye verse mug, approximately 4 1/2" tall.
17. 1985 Old Sleepy Eye Comm., blue & white pitcher.
18. 1991 Old Sleepy Eye Comm., blue & white sugar bowl.
19. 1993 Old Sleepy Eye Comm., blue & white creamer.
20. 1997 Old Sleepy Eye Comm., blue & grey stein.
21. 1998 Old Sleepy Eye Comm., blue & grey vase.
22. 2005 Old Sleepy Eye Comm., verse mug.



2009 MIDWINTER JAW-DROPPERS

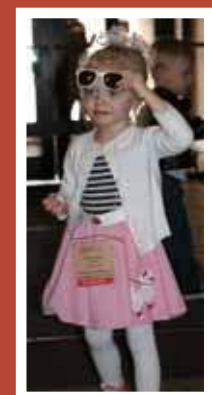




Back to the 50s!



At the Crock Pot 2009 Mid Winter Get Together



With her path to fashion artistry running through Red Wing, Lia Munson was

Destined for Greatness

Story by Rick Natynski

Long before it became more common for career-driven women to populate the workforce, Lia Munson wanted to turn her love for art into a profession. It didn't take long before she succeeded, securing a job at one of the top advertising agencies in the country by 1945. But along the way she found herself working at the Red Wing Potteries and rubbing elbows with Charles Murphy.

Lia was born in southeastern Minnesota on land that was homesteaded by her family in the 1850s. Rich in history, the Evans family traces its roots back to the 17th and 18th centuries in England and she has ancestors who fought in the Revolutionary War after arriving in America.

Lia recalls having her own "studio" in her home when she was growing up and there were always painting supplies available, as several of her aunts and uncles were artists. One even taught art for several years in the Rochester, Minn. schools.

"I remember my mother would display my portraits on the walls when I was young," she says. "Even though it was a small thing, I think her support helped spur me on to greater things."

Upon graduating from the local high school in Elgin, Minn., Lia had the opportunity to take various classes at the Chicago Art Institute to help her focus on the dream of becoming a fashion artist. When she returned to Minnesota in 1943, she heard that the Red Wing Potteries had created an art department. Not having any plans at the time, she decided to check it out. She was hired on the line painting dinnerware patterns with other girls.

"The plates came down the line with the designs already imprinted on them, so we were usually tasked with painting one particular color or portion of the design," Lia explains. "It was tedious work at times."

Heads above the rest: Lia posed for Charles Murphy when he shaped the head for this one-of-a-kind 19¼-inch statue. (Photo courtesy of Ray Reiss.)

it was, we seemed to hit it off and working with him were the bright moments of working at the Pottery.

Painting in the cookie jar room was quite different than painting plates, as the jars came to the room in plain form after they had been sprayed and fired. She and the other artists hand-painted by memory the "design of the day", which usually consisted of roses, fruits, flowers and other designs applied with enamel paints.

"These paints were sometimes mixed with a heavy white paint to get the right consistency and color," Lia explains. "For that reason, they were not fired in the kiln afterwards, so there are few in existence today in their original painted form in perfect condition. I've seen some with attempts to repaint them, but not with much success."

One of Lia's more enjoyable roles in the cookie jar room was to work with the Potteries' chemist, Tom Arnold. Using a slide rule to determine various proportions of paint, firing results, and other figures, she was introduced to experimenting with ceramic paints both before and after firing in the kiln. She still owns some of the powders used for the paint and several heavy 14½-inch plates that she painted. One of them she was lucky enough to paint *with* Murphy, which isn't something many people have the privilege of laying claim to.

"He designed the central flowers, painted some of them and told me that if I would finish them and also design a border, I could have the plate," Lia says.

Two of Lia's original pieces are shown on pg. 195 of Ray Reiss' *Red Wing Art Pottery Two*. But interestingly enough, she doesn't consider them to be the "lunch hour" pieces that everybody refers to.

"I have to admit that I had a lot of special things I was able to do, and I didn't do much of it during my noon hour," Lia explains. "I had a lot of free time during my day, so I could do what I wanted. Looking back on it, I guess I was kind of spoiled maybe."

Another piece Lia owns is the one-of-a-kind 19¼-inch nude turquoise statue, at far left, pictured in "A Tribute to Charles Murphy" on pg. 205 of Reiss' second art pottery book. She believes the statue was never mass-produced because of its fragility in firing. Plus, the feet were broken off at one point due to the weight of the piece. It's special not only because Murphy created it, but also because Lia "helped" him do it.

"I posed for the head, but I didn't pose for the body," she laughs. "It was my one moment of fame."



Photos courtesy of Ray Reiss, these pieces of Lia's appear in *Red Wing Art Pottery Two*. "I like the bowl well enough, but I think I overdid the green plate. I would probably do it differently now," she says, critiquing her work.

"I like the bowl well enough, but I think I overdid the green plate. I would probably do it differently now."

Considering what she accomplished in the short time she was there, one can only wonder that if Lia had stayed at the Potteries and continued to learn under Murphy, her name might have become synonymous with those of Murphy, Kogan and Zeisel. But it wasn't in the cards. Pottery was her stepping stone and fashion was her passion.

Lia's move came shortly before she was to celebrate her first anniversary at the Potteries. World War II was changing people's lives, and she wasn't immune to it.

Lia had been renting a room at the home of Frank Seiz, who worked at the Potteries for many years. In 1944, the Seizs lost a son in the war and decided to move to St. Paul to be closer to their two children who were attending college. Enjoying her company, the Seizs asked Lia to move with them, and so her dream of becoming a fashion artist in the advertising world was back on track in the Twin Cities.

There Lia took classes at the Minneapolis Art Institute studying the human figure and accepted a position at the world-renowned Brown & Bigelow Remembrance Advertising Co. There she met well-known artist K.O. Munson, who she eventually married. But first, her friend from the Potteries, Elaine Anderson, invited her on a six-month trip to New Mexico to visit an aunt that moved there from Red Wing. Lia remembers it as one of the best times of her life.

Upon returning from New Mexico, Lia was hired as a fashion artist in the art department of the Dayton Co. store, which was known at the time as the Marshall Fields of the Midwest. Shortly thereafter she and K.O. moved to Chicago and she worked in several fashion studios where her sketches appeared almost daily in the Chicago newspapers. At this time, she was also asked to teach fashion illustration at the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts.

Then Lia and K.O. got married and purchased a large four-story Queen Anne-style home on the north side of Chicago near Lake Michigan. A large room on the second floor served as their combined studio for many years. Sadly, K.O. died in 1957 and Lia never remarried.

After her husband's death, Lia continued her position as artist and advertising manager for three different clothing stores. She also became interested in PLEIN-AIR outdoor watercolor painting and joined several other Chicago artists who regularly painted outdoors. She eventually won "Best of Show" for one of her paintings in an artist guild competition.

"It was a new experience having passersby looking over your shoulder and making comments," Lia recalls. "I'll always remember one little old man who encouraged me to keep trying, as he had a brother who could paint 'really good rabbits'."

Working outdoors sparked an interest in photography and Lia became a member of the Photographic Society of America (PSA). Soon she was winning photography awards, teaching and presenting photography composition lectures in Chicago and other parts of the country. Her photographs were sold and appeared in books and on TV. She received several honors from PSA for her work, including associate and fellowship titles after her name "for involvement in and outstanding contributions to the advancement of photography through lecturing, judging and publication of articles."

After much traveling around the United States and other countries, Lia's now back in Minnesota where her enjoyable art career started at the Red Wing Potteries so many years ago. She still enjoys photography and looks forward to picking up her paint brush again sometime soon. From time-to-time she reflects on the brief time she spent working at the Potteries and she still keeps in touch with two of her Pottery "girls", Elaine Anderson Kayser and Dorothy Wold Arneson. She's been a member of the Red Wing Collectors Society for many years, and she hopes to attend the Convention this July.

Incidentally, if you see Lia there and strike up a conversation, you're better off not asking about her age.

"I always thought 50 was a nice round figure, so when I reached my 50th birthday, I decided to forget about age and always be 50," she says. "After all, age is just a case of mind over matter. And if you don't mind, it doesn't matter."

That's a pretty sophisticated statement for a woman who's only 50 years old. ■



Charles Murphy started painting the plate in the upper right and Lia was given the honor of finishing it. She still has all four plates.



From left to right: One of Lia's original sketches appears next to a piece of sales collateral for Gulf Stream Slacks, which she did the art for. The black & white photo of Lia was taken when she worked at the Red Wing Potteries in 1943 or 1944. Her more current photo was taken in the late 1990s.



**GLENN
BEALL**

Education Manager

Once again the MidWinter GetTogether was a great time with perfect weather. If you were in attendance, I hope you took the opportunity to go to one of the Education seminars that were held. If you did, you're undoubtedly smarter. Our keynote address was on how to insure your collection. Bob Kubes did an excellent job entertaining and educating us as to how to ask all the right questions of our agents.

There were seven different educational presentations, not including the KidsView room, which was run by Sue Jones Tagliapietra. Thanks, Sue. Presenters gave some very interesting talks on dump digging, dinnerware, stoneware, the RWCS Foundation, flower pots and the Iowa Pottery Exhibit. Many members took the chance to go to downtown Des Moines and see the Iowa Historical Society's exhibit on Iowa potters. If you were one of them, I'm sure you'll agree that it was well worth the trip.

I received no negative comments on any of our seminars and since I have met very few shy folks in this organization, I assume everyone enjoyed the seminar they chose to attend. One good sign was that I had to encourage a few presenters to finish up because the next session was ready to start and people were lined up in the hallway waiting to get in. My sincere thanks to Bob Kubes, Ron Linde, Steve Showers, Terry Moe, Larry Roschen, Rick Natynski, Dennis Nygaard, Austin Fjerestad, Michael Smith and Mike Orgler. Also thanks to Stacy Wegner for getting the rooms set up. I have had a few volunteers for Convention speakers and a few of the MidWinter speakers have agreed to give their talks again, so stay tuned. If you'd like to be a speaker or wish to suggest a person who might make a good presenter, you can find my e-mail and phone number on page 2 of this newsletter or on the RWCS website.

One last thing is for me to apologize to Steve Showers as his bio was left off the speaker handout. This was an oversight I will endeavor to never let happen again. Happy hunting and hope to see you at Convention in July.



**TODD
AVERY**

Auction Manager

The deadline for submitting your piece in the 2009 Convention Auction Lottery is May 15, so if you haven't sent it in yet, please do so soon! If you need a registration card, you can download it on the RWCS website or contact me. Postcards or e-mails will go out the first week of June to those who were drawn in the lottery. Please contact me if you'd like to check the status of the item you submitted.

Also, I'm still looking for volunteers to help out in July's auction. Any member wishing to volunteer on the Thursday of Convention can call me at home or send me an e-mail. My contact information is on page 2 of this newsletter. This is my first year as auction manager, so I'm looking forward to picking up where past auction manager Jeff Floyd left off and having a great sale!

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT YOUR MUSEUM? *Story by Ron Linde, RWCSF Board Member*

First off, thank you to the numerous Red Wingers who have donated items for the Foundation auction to support Museum expansion. The original plan for an auction in Cannon Falls last fall did not materialize because we had only about 150 items, not enough for a complete auction. Dick and Nancy Houghton have generously agreed to add all these donated items plus new items to the auction at MidWinter next year.

Some of these new items are being donated by RWCS Foundation Board member Louise Schleich. She is adding many fine dinnerware pieces to the next MidWinter auction to supplement the variety of other items. All of us on the Foundation Board appreciate her ongoing generosity.

Another big thank you to Foundation Board member Wayne Burk and his fellow Iowa Chapter Red Wingers for running the wonderful silent auction of commemoratives; the proceeds go for expansion of the Red Wing Pottery Museum. Sue Dvorak has done a splendid job coordinating the effort with the chapter presidents and setting up this MidWinter event.

Also, Foundation Board member and RWCS historian Steve Brown started the Foundation's silent auction at MidWinter and Convention. With the support and help of his wife Barb, also a Foundation Board member, they've added thousands of dollars to Foundation coffers. This money is needed as rent, security and insurance costs continue to go up at the Museum.

Barb and Steve reminded me to thank the many first-time and repeat donors who have generously given items for the silent auction and also to thank the many buyers who carefully check the silent auction table and bid on these items.

So we on the Foundation Board have a lot of people to thank! It is because of the generosity of the Red Wing Collectors Society and members like you that we will continue to move forward.

RWCS EXPANDS ONLINE PRESENCE

The Red Wing Collectors Society is working to increase its internet presence so as many people as possible can share in the legacy. In recent months, there have been quite a few developments in the web pages maintained by the Society. In addition to the club's website, pages have been created on internet encyclopedia Wikipedia and the social networking site Facebook.

The RWCS page on Wikipedia includes information about the organization and its history, and RWCS member Laura Beall recently started adding information on the potteries themselves. Members are welcome to add to the page; just remember to cite the information that you post. Because it's new information to people unfamiliar with Red Wing, it's important that we give a reference for people to look at when conducting further research.

Facebook has become a big hit among computer users, so RWCS Executive Director Stacy Wegner and Laura Beall have created a "group" and "fan page" in which anyone can join to receive updates about the Society and participate in discussions about anything Red Wing. If you have a Facebook account, just do a search for "Red Wing Collectors" and both pages will come up. We already have more than 20 members in the RWCS group!

Feel free to check out all the new RWCS developments on the World Wide Web. We're always looking for input as to what can be done to improve these resources, and any help with the development of these sites would be greatly appreciated.

THE RAJAH RABBITRY INVESTMENT SCHEME

STORY BY RICK NATYNSKI



Long before Wall Street broker Bernie Madoff devised a plan to swindle investors out of billions of dollars and light years before supposedly exiled Nigerian princes sent e-mails promising loads of cash for short-term financial assistance, the town of Wichita, Kan. was targeted by a man who preyed upon the townsfolk by promising huge profits for cute little bunnies.

J.S. "Rajah" Porter's plan was simple: raise rabbits, position them as a good investment, sell them to locals, take money and leave town. In the process, leave 55,000 rabbits to fend for themselves.

Those poor little fuzzy bunnies.

Porter first opened up shop on the grounds of the old Wichita's old Kansas Sanitarium in July of 1929 and soon he was promising the locals that an up-front investment of as little as \$80 could make them \$40 to \$60 a week within a year's time. Judging by the amount of positive publicity the Rajah Rabbitry received from local newspapers in the firm's early days, Porter had reporters eating out of his hand just like the rabbits he was breeding.

Appearing in the Feb. 9, 1930 *Wichita Eagle* right next to stories that promoted his business were articles titled "Wild Rabbit Fur is Worth Nothing", "Enormous Demand for Rabbit Furs in U.S. is Unsatisfied", "Felt Hat Industry Depends on Rabbits" and "Domestic Rabbit is World's Finest Meat."

One article went as far to say "Mr. Porter knows every phase of the rabbit industry from breeding to marketing. His executive ability and his knowledge of sales development will be resultfully employed in building up a market for Rajah strain rabbits, anticipating a production running into the millions each year. It is his plan and purpose to develop at Wichita the world's greatest rabbitry."

The ploy worked, attracting hundreds of locals looking to invest. Shipping in rabbits from California, Porter sold investors a unit consisting of one male and three females for \$100 and guaranteed he would buy all the healthy offspring for 25 cents a pound. He also sold stock in the business.

The rabbits held up their end of the bargain and "did what they do", multiplying like crazy. The profits, however, did not. The market for rabbit furs and meat wasn't as strong as Porter had claimed.

By May of 1930, Porter had left town with thousands of dollars invested by locals. In an article titled "Costs \$700 Weekly to Feed Bunnies at the Rajah Rabbitry", *The Wichita Eagle* reported that the business was placed into the hands of a receiver who would try to pay creditors and operate it at a profit for stockholders. The Rajah Rabbitry owed \$32,000 in debts and \$50,000 in notes outstanding - \$6,000 of which was claimed by a man who created "motion picture films" for the rabbitry's advertising purposes.

Ten days later, new managerial staff appointed at the rabbitry announced it couldn't pay employee salaries. The rabbitry couldn't sell rabbits because it had no money to buy them and it couldn't breed enough rabbits because there wasn't any money available to buy feed. Apparently investors didn't take to keenly to being asked for more money to keep the struggling business afloat, because it sank in late October.

The property reverted to the former owner and when it looked like the rabbits were about to face starvation, the Humane Society stepped in and began to care for them. Individual investors that owned rabbits were asked to come in and pick up their animals by a certain date. Although most did so, many did not. Somehow the Humane Society was able to keep the death rate down.

For \$10 each, the Humane Society was able to recoup some of the money spent on rabbit food by selling the same units of four rabbits that Porter sold for \$100 when he opened the business.

Believe it or not, because Porter ducked behind bankruptcy laws, there was no law under which he could be prosecuted. Being the upstanding individual he was, he tried running his scheme in nearly a dozen other states, including Utah and North Carolina. The Wichita Chamber of Commerce followed his travels and did all it could to warn other cities of his shady dealings, but he always made sure to follow the law so he couldn't be prosecuted. He was finally arrested in New Jersey in 1932 for trying to start his rabbitry business there without obtaining a state license.

Porter resurfaced again in 1938, when *The Wichita Beacon* reported he had been accused of running a fraudulent knitting business in San Francisco. Apparently he lured prospective knitters by telling them they could make \$40 to \$70 a month knitting as long as they put down a \$100 deposit for yarn. He jumped town after swindling one person out of \$1,000 cash.

Come on, first rabbits and now knitting? This guy was the devil. How could anyone take advantage of cute, furry little bunnies AND nice old ladies who liked to knit? Unbelievable!

Where Porter went from there is unclear, but we can only assume from his track record that he went on to steal children's lunch money, pick on kittens and sell timeshares in Boca Raton. Ha ha.

At least a cool piece of advertising stoneware resulted from Porter's indiscretions. Believed by many to be a Red Wing piece, the Rajah Rabbitry advertising water crock was made in either late 1929 or early 1930. It weighs a "hare" under 4 pounds, making it almost twice as heavy as a 6-inch Red Wing spongeware panel bowl, which holds about the same capacity. The inside of the crock is rounded out at the bottom, just a like a beater jar. It measures 4½ inches tall and 6 inches wide. ■

Research materials courtesy of the Wichita Public Library Local History Dept. and the Wichita State University Libraries' Department of Special Collections Tihen Notes.

1929 Rajah Rabbitry photo at top courtesy of the Historic Preservation Alliance of Wichita and Sedgwick County - [HTTP://MEMBERS.COX.NET/WICHITA/RAJA/KANSAS_SANITARIMUM.HTML](http://members.cox.net/wichita/raja/kansas_sanitarium.html)



ALL WICHITA INVITED TO OPEN HOUSE HELD AT BIGGEST RABBITRY
World's Largest Institution of Kind Located in This City

The Wichita Eagle Feb. 9, 1930

PUBLIC IS GIVEN THE PRIVILEGE OF BREEDING RABBITTS FOR A PROFIT
All Young Rabbits Bought by Rajah Rabbitry for Herd

The Wichita Eagle Feb. 9, 1930



RAJAH PORTER

RABBITRY IS DOOMED UNLESS CASH RAISED IN THE NEAR FUTURE

The Wichita Eagle May 31, 1930

LAST CHAPTER NOW BEING WRITTEN IN RABBITRY FAILURE

The Wichita Eagle Oct. 9, 1930

A CHANCE ENCOUNTER

Story by Rick Natynski

When Earl Rogers and his daughter decided to have lunch at the Bennigan's restaurant at the Holiday Inn in Des Moines on Saturday, Feb. 7, they weren't expecting to dig up one of his childhood memories. But that's exactly what happened when he noticed that several people eating at the tables next to him were wearing Red Wing Collectors Society nametags.

Deciding to investigate, he walked over to the hotel lobby where hundreds of Red Wing collectors were entering the MidWinter Get Together Show & Sale. Then he bumped into RWCS president, Sue Jones Tagliapietra.

Earl had no idea the event was taking place and didn't even know the Red Wing Collectors Society existed, but when he began to tell Sue about his Red Wing Potteries experience, it didn't take long before a small crowd gathered around as he told his story.

It was 1933 or 1934 – Earl can't remember for sure – when he and his parents were driving through Red Wing on their way to a cabin up north. Seeing the Potteries approaching on the right, Earl's dad pulled over and decided to see if they could look around.

"I remember seeing a lot of people working when we went in and we were directed to a supervisor's office," Earl recalls. "The office had a wall of windows that looked into the production area. My dad asked the man who was in there if we could get a tour."

The supervisor agreed, showing them around the plant and describing the manufacturing process. Before they left, he gave Earl a brown mug as a souvenir.

"I used the mug when I was a little boy," Earl explains. "I drank my milk out of it at breakfast. My mom held onto the mug and gave it to me when I had a son, and he used it when he was little."

Earl's son, Tim Rogers, who now lives on



Lend me your ear: 82-year-old Earl Rogers of Adell, Ia. shares his Red Wing story during the MidWinter event.

the West Coast, still has the mug and sent in these photos. As it turns out, the piece is a Transportation Mug that was made for the 1933 World's Fair and its "Century of Progress" theme. Other than a few nicks, it's in remarkably good condition considering it was used when Tim and his dad were kids.

The thing that makes this piece extra-special is that the mug was probably a test piece because it wasn't mass-produced in brown – probably because the scenes raised on the side of the mug are difficult to make out due to the dark color. Pictured on page 92 of *Red Wing Stoneware*, the mug is most commonly found in white, but blue & white examples also exist.

The story doesn't end there. When Earl was in his early 40s, he was driving between Pittsburgh and Denver on a sales trip when he was passing through Red Wing. When he saw the Potteries Showroom and a big sign that said it was going out of business, he was reminded of his brown mug and decided to stop to see if he could find a few more of them.

"I walked in the door and saw an older man pushing a broom," Earl recalls. "I didn't think much of it and continued on to the girl at the counter to ask if they had brown mugs left like the one I had. The girl said she'd have to ask the owner, and then she called the man with the broom over."

The man with the broom was Mr. Gilmer, the Potteries owner. When Earl told him how he had stopped in when he was a child and was given a souvenir mug, Gilmer realized he was in fact the supervisor who had offered Earl the mug more than 30 years earlier.

"I couldn't believe it," Earl says. "He invited me into the plant and we sat down in the same office I had been in when I was a kid and talked about the mug."

Gilmer obviously didn't have any of the Transportation Mugs left, but he pulled out a box and gave Earl something even better.

"He handed me two mugs with the Hamm's Beer Bear on them and told me they made them as promotional items to sell to the brewery, but Hamm's didn't buy them," Earl explains. "Only 12 were made as samples – six small ones and six large ones. He gave me one of each."

Whether it was fate that brought Earl Rogers to the Holiday Inn for lunch that day or simply his hankering for a good burger, one thing is certain – his story was destined to be told. Unfortunately Earl has searched for the two sample Hamm's mugs since his chance encounter at the RWCS MidWinter event, but hasn't been able to find them. If he does, we'll share the photos with you. ■



Mug shot:

A plane, train and automobile adorn the sides of the Transportation Mug, in addition to a covered wagon.

The mug measures about 5¼ inches tall and 3¼ inches wide.



Mug photos courtesy of Tim Rogers.

December 3, 2008

Earlier in the year, Steve Showers, Austin Fjerestad and I dug out one of the best salt glaze lid veins ever. In the process, I found the bottom to a 6 gallon crock with a partial bush and a tail to a bird. After two of my most productive digs, I was ready to look for the rest of the crock, but I was reluctant because I fully expected to find nothing.

I was surprised on this day of digging because much sooner than I expected, I reached an area that had never been dug. On the east part of the hole I hit some lid shards, which was strange because I thought we had found most of the lids in this area. I planned to dig south and west for the bird crock, but instead the lids drew me east. The lid shards started getting larger and more frequent and my bucket was filling up. It became obvious that the lid vein was opening up at the deeper level.

The vein of lids was heading right into the water. Soon I pulled out a 2 gallon brown-centered salt glaze petal lid and then a 5 gallon lid. It had one rim chip and minor clay separations on the brown center. It was a beauty! Finally, it was time to leave for the day.

As good as these lids were, it was an unglazed shard from the Crescent Creameries I dug that had me wanting to get back to the dump as soon as possible. I had dug a piece just like it several years ago and then sold it. This was my first glimpse of another in more than 10 years and I would sure like to have a whole one again.



The Analysis

My first thought on the Crescent Creameries piece was that it was a hot plate. It would function well as one, but I could also see it breaking easily. As a hot plate, it could have been a promotional gift given to customers in Christmas of 1892.

I discussed these pieces with Larry Peterson. Since there were two sizes, Larry surmised that these could be lids for the three and five pound butter crocks. Since Red Wing was not putting advertising on butter crocks in 1892, these lids could have solved the advertising dilemma. I've tried these lids on several crocks from the dump, but there hasn't been a good fit yet. Admittedly, they would be hard to handle as lids.

I can't say for certain what function these advertising pieces served and I'm not aware of any other stoneware of this sort. If anyone has any knowledge about these pieces, it would be greatly appreciated.

As far as the Crescent Creameries is concerned, Red Wing made butter crocks for companies with this name in both St. Paul, Minn. and Sioux Falls, S.D. The Crescent Creameries of Sioux Falls didn't open until about 20 years after these disks were made, leaving the most obvious option that it's a Twin Cities piece. According to the book *The Bottles, Breweriana, and Advertising Jugs of Minnesota 1850-1920* Vol. 1, the Crescent Creameries of St. Paul was in business from 1889-1911. There is also information.

The smaller disk is 5½ inches in diameter and is unglazed. The large disk is 6½ inches in diameter with the outer edge and the center advertising in Albany slip. Both rims are ¼-inch thick. The first disk I dug years ago was the larger size unglazed. There were Albany shards with this one also.

December 8, 2008

Since I found the Crescent Creameries shard in the water, I waited for a warmer day to dig. Unfortunately this December was a cold month, so I had to settle for 20 degrees Fahrenheit as the warmest it would get. I told Steve Showers I'd be digging that day and he decided to join me.

When I got to Red Wing I was pleasantly surprised to see open water in my hole – no ice! I was able to open the hole and quickly get into the vein. The lid shards started coming fast and furious. I dug another shard to a Crescent Creameries piece as well as a Chicago Expo bank shard. This Chicago shard was significant in that it had the 1893 date on it for the World's Fair, so my best guess for dating the age of the vein was late 1892.

Steve arrived shortly after I did. He started dumping buckets and setting aside the good shards; the digging went faster. Then it happened. I dug out a small cave under the frozen ground and in the back of the cave I could see a whole disk, maybe an inch above the water. It is one of those snapshot moments that remain crisp in my memory. All I could see was the plain back side of the disk. Without looking at the other side, I pulled it out and set it between Steve and me. I turned it over and the raised advertising jumped out at us. The Crescent Creameries words surrounded the raised crescent moon and stars. What a gorgeous, knock-out advertising piece! I was ecstatic! I continued to dig and shortly came up with two-thirds of another disk. This one was larger and it had Albany slip over the advertising. It was stunning.

Steve came in the hole to dig, hoping to find more, but that was it for the day for advertising. I dug another 5 gallon lid and a 3 gallon lid in two pieces. The Crescent Creameries piece was the most exciting find for me. I still have not gone south and west looking for more pieces of the bird crock. I spent three more days digging for lids and Crescent Creameries pieces. Although I found some more whole lids, there were no more whole advertising pieces to be found. I have just started the massive job of washing 14 buckets of lid shards to see if I can piece some together.

Digging the Crescent Creamery Disks

by Dennis Nygaard
Red Wing Pottery Dump Digger

Classified ads are 20¢ per word; \$4 minimum charge and are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. In addition to appearing in the newsletter, classifieds and display ads are posted on the RWCS website.

Ads are divided into the following sections: Red Wing For Sale, Red Wing Wanted, Other Pottery For Sale, Other Pottery Wanted, Events, Auctions, Clubs & Publications and Websites, Announcements and Services. You will not be charged for these words, but please indicate which section your ad should be placed in. If ad is to run in more than one issue, please indicate at time of placement. (Note: the small number at the end of an ad tells when the ad expires, e.g., 12/09. Ads without dates are one-time ads.) Please type or print clearly and proofread before submission.

DISPLAY ADS

Display Ad Size	1x	6x
Full page	\$425	385
1/2 page (<i>horizontal or vertical</i>)	225	205
1/4 page	125	115
1/8 page	85	70

Display Ad Dimensions

Full Page	7 1/2 x 10
1/2 page (<i>horizontal or vertical</i>)	7 1/2 x 4 7/8
1/4 page	3 5/8 x 4 7/8
1/8 page	3 5/8 x 2 1/4

Display ads are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. The publisher reserves the right to refuse ads for any reason.

Ads must be supplied electronically as an EPS or PDF file for PC. If you are unsure about acceptability, inquire with the editor. There is an additional 10 percent fee for design and makeup if needed.

DEADLINES

Issue	Ad Deadline	Editorial Deadline
February	Jan. 10	Jan. 1
April	March 10	March 1
June	May 10	May 1
August	July 25	July 15
October	Sept. 10	Sept. 1
December	Nov. 10	Nov. 1

EDITOR ADDRESS

Make checks payable to RWCS and mail with ads to:

NOTE: New Address Rick Natynski
as of Feb. 2009 PO Box 198
Pewaukee, WI 53072

Or e-mail ads to NEWSLETTER@REDWINGCOLLECTORS.ORG with checks sent separately. Or, call Rick at 414-416-WING (9464).

RED WING FOR SALE

Handles and wooden lids. Send SASE for flyer to Larsen's Collectibles, 757 120th Street, Hampton, Iowa 50441-7555. Phone 641-866-6733. 8/09

20 gallon salt glaze crock with hand-drawn "20" and two leaves marked "Minnesota Stoneware Company Red Wing" similar to the one sold at 2008 Convention. E-mail MCDANCL@MTCO.COM for details and photos. 4/09

Are you looking for an unusual piece of art pottery or a particular 2 gallon churn? Leave a message at 952-922-9169 for Ron Linde. 12/09

20lbs butter crock with wing. Nice shape, minor chip and faint line/scratch in base. \$875 or best offer. E-mail AUSTINSODAWORKS@YAHOO.COM for more information.

Set of Red Wing Tampico dinnerware. Service for 8 plus many extras including 2 gal water cooler w/base, pitchers, teapot, bowls, platters, trivet and more. All in excellent condition. 51 pieces for \$2,000 or best offer. Call Ardell at 608-523-4701 for more information.

RED WING WANTED

Wanted: Old Racine, Wis. advertising items wanted. E-mail HORLICK@WI.RR.COM or call 262-554-0488. 12/09

Wanted: Interested in buying advertising crocks, jugs & churns from NE, ND, SD, KS & others considered – especially pieces that have a wing, birchleaves or Elephant Ears in addition to the advertising. Willing to pay top dollar for the right piece. Contact Scott at COBE142@AOL.COM or 402-331-4749.

Wanted: RW advertising stoneware from Vancouver and Victoria, British Columbia. I'd love to see pictures even if not for sale. Please contact Rick at NEWSLETTER@REDWINGCOLLECTORS.ORG OR 414-416-9464.

WEBSITES

Visit WWW.RAREREDWINGCOLLECTABLES.COM – a unique, new approach to buying and selling. Open to marketing your rare Red Wing pieces. Check it out! 12/09

AUCTIONS

Tuesday, July 7, 2009 – 3 p.m. National Guard Armory Red Wing, MN. 2, 8, 10, 12 gal crocks, 5 gal water cooler, 2, 4, gal churns, shoulder jugs, sand lobby jar, Commemoratives, cookie jars, ash receivers, jolly jars, Rumrill pitchers, large collection of bob white, good assortment of art ware pieces, plus much more.

Wednesday, July 8, 2009 – 3 p.m. National Guard armory Red Wing, MN. 6, 8, 10, 12, 15, 20, 25, 30, 40, 60 gal wing crocks, assortment of 2 gal crocks, 20 gal birchleaf, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10 gal water coolers, spongeband, greek key, kitchen queen mixing bowl, koverwates, brushware, 1977 – 2008 Commemoratives, plus much more.

Catalogs available June 1 at \$5.00 each – Houghton's Auction Service, 1967 Launa Ave, Red Wing, MN 55066. 651-388-5870 WWW.HOUGHTONAUCTIONS.COM

CLUBS AND PUBLICATIONS

Stoneware book (*Antique Trader Stoneware Price Guide*); includes Red Wing; Monmouth-Western; Blue/White; Eastern U.S. 288 pages; colored photos; \$20 postage paid. Gail Peck, 2121 Pearl, Fremont, NE 68025; 402-721-5721. 12/09

NEW 2009 values for *Red Wing Stoneware* for \$12.95 and 2008 values for *Red Wing Collectibles* for \$9.95 or \$19.95 for both plus \$2/\$2.50 postage, respectively. Gail Peck, 2121 Pearl, Fremont, NE 68025; 402-721-5721. 12/09

Blue & White Pottery Club –

Visit the club's website for membership form at WWW.BLUEANDWHITEPOTTERY.ORG. Annual membership is \$15 for first member, \$5 each additional member and \$1 for members under 12 years old. You can also write to B&W Pottery Club, PO Box 460517, Aurora, CO 80015.

Collectors of Illinois Pottery & Stoneware – Visit the club's website at WWW.COIPS.ORG for membership form. Annual membership is \$20 for the first member of the household and \$5 for each additional member. You can also write to COIPS, c/o Susie Nolan, 402 N. Laurel St., Elmwood, IL 61529 or e-mail COIPS@MCHSI.COM.



HERE PIG!

Order your limited edition Western Stoneware Commemorative Brown Pig made for the 2009 "Pottery on the Square Swap Meet" to be held on June 27 in downtown Monmouth, IL. The brown pig will cost \$45. Size is approximately 3¼ inches tall and 6¾ inches long. "Western Stoneware Monmouth, IL" and the maple leaf will be on one side with the "Pottery on the Square, June 27, 2009, Monmouth, Illinois" decal on the other side. The pig will be embossed with the year 2009 and will be available in June. There is no limit to the amount you can order, but the deadline for orders is June 1, 2009. Shipping cost will depend on quantity ordered. Call 309-734-3181 or e-mail MACC@MAPLECITY.COM to place your order.

RECENT FINDS & DEALS

Did you find a rare piece or a great deal worth sharing? Briefly describe the item, where it was sold, date purchased, venue (store, auction, etc.) and price paid. Send on a post card, or e-mail RWCSNEWSLETTER@WI.RR.COM, or enclose in an envelope if you'd like to include a photo for publication. Multiple submissions result in multiple entries in the Newsletter Special Commemorative Lottery at the 2009 Convention. Send to the editor at the address on page 2. All entries received between July 2008 and June of 2009 are eligible whether published or not. Please keep submittals with purchase dates within six months of the newsletter issue.

ITEM	LOCATION	DATE	VENUE	PRICE
RW #604 matte pink, 11" rooster		12/08	eBay	\$50. ⁰⁰
4 gal beehive jug w/wing and oval	Wisconsin	1/09	Thrift shop	\$276. ⁰⁰
RW Red Owl grocery adv. hobnail ashtray	Eastern MN	2/09	Auction	\$225. ⁰⁰
2 RumRill #567 Athenian Group planters	Redwood Falls, MN	2/09	Auction	\$30. ⁰⁰
2 gal RW Chicago adv. shoulder jug w/ "2" on the front	Des Moines	2/09	MidWinter	\$100. ⁰⁰
50 gal blue birchleaf crock w/ski oval, base chips	Brookings, SD	2/09	Private sale	\$2,300. ⁰⁰
RW Bread crock, hairline in back, glued lid	Stewartville, MN	3/09	Auction	\$2,050. ⁰⁰



BIG GAME HUNTERS SCORE AGAIN! Story by Jerry & Kris Mounts, Trails West Chapter Members

This time it was in Southwest Florida of all places! Wouldn't it be fun to know how in the world these Red Wing pieces made it from the banks of the Mississippi River in Minnesota to the southwest coast of Florida?

Shortly after arriving in the place that some call paradise, we struck out to hunt for these "endangered species". Our first stop was the Isle of Capri. We found nothing great – just a #871 trophy vase for \$5, which we purchased for our friend, the newest RWCS member in Ostfriesland, Germany. But this was a definite sign of things to come.

Our next stop was Naples. At Heler's Military Surplus, we stopped dead in our tracks as we spotted a green elephant, #236D, for \$25. Wow! The hunt was definitely on. The

blue & white advertising milk pitcher from Leiser Bros. Dept. Store, Cullom, Illinois, was bagged for \$75.

On to Cooper City on the east coast of Florida, where the little J.H. Conradt & Co. liquor jug from Drydale, Missouri, was captured for only \$25. Then the biggest prize of all, a Nokomis vase, #206, for \$10 – a steal! This was discovered at the Quiet Waters Park in Deerfield Beach, where the couple from Miami said, "just a yard sale find". We also purchased a beautiful piece of Roseville in the Donatello pattern in perfect condition for \$7 from the same couple. Amazing!

In Plant City, Florida, which is more famous for its fantastic strawberries, we turned down several "shots" at a beautiful large Bob White

salad bowl and various dinnerware odds and ends too numerous to mention. We're still looking for that elusive Bob White trivet, and maybe another elephant or two.

Back on Florida's west coast in Sarasota, we cornered a really neat Jolly Jar for \$15 at the local Animal Shelter Thrift Store. And finally, even though it's not Red Wing, we couldn't resist the little Occupied Japan gray elephant, with painted nails, found downtown St. Pete at the Gas Plant. It joins the rest of the Mounts' "herd" of Red Wing and other miscellaneous pachyderms.

Oh, what fun it is to collect Red Wing art pottery, especially when surrounded by such marvelous friends and other great "game hunters"!

More From MidWinter 2009



COMING IN THE JUNE ISSUE...



CONVENTION
PREVIEW

ASK THE EXPERT:
DINNERWARE Q&A

