

# PEWABIC POTTERY

*A National Historic Landmark*

Volume 16 Number 2

Pewabic Pottery is dedicated to the advancement of the Ceramic Arts

Autumn 2005

## PEWABIC: A CENTURY OF MICHIGAN'S ART POTTERY

The largest exhibition of Pewabic Pottery ever opened to the public on October 22, 2005 at Michigan State University's Kresge Art Museum in East Lansing MI. Over 140 rare examples of historic Pewabic Pottery vessels and tile, selected from public and private collections in Michigan, provide unique insight into breadth, depth and richness of Pewabic's production. As part of the University's sesquicentennial anniversary celebration, this exhibit pays tribute to MSU connections with Pewabic Pottery.

"The Kresge Art Museum staff was seeking a unique way to honor MSU's artistic legacy. As the years have passed, the role MSU played in Pewabic's history was becoming forgotten on campus," said Kresge Art Museum Director Susan Bandes. MSU owned the Pottery from 1965 to 1981 when it was given to the Pewabic Society, Inc. In an accompanying catalog, Dr. Thomas W. Brunk recounts the 1926-1981 MSU/Pewabic connections.

The show highlights co-founder Mary Chase Perry's evolution from a china decorator to studio potter and her promotion of Revelation Pottery Kilns manufactured by her partner Horace J. Caulkins. "This is the exhibition I have waited over thirty years to see happen," said guest curator Brunk. "This exhibition will be a 'revelation' for the seasoned collector, an inspiration for potters, and a pleasure for the neophyte."

Curators Susan Bandes, Thomas W. Brunk and April Kinglsey carefully chose examples to document all aspects of Pewabic's production. The exhibition draws from public collections in Michigan including Albion College, Cranbrook Art Museum, Detroit Historical Museum, Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit Public Library, The Henry Ford, Kresge Art Museum, Pewabic Society, and the University of Michigan Museum of Art. Several private collectors, among them Thomas Brunk, Bill and Patty Porter, and R.C. Schweizer, have generously lent to the show.

Many of the objects have not been shown publicly in several decades, if ever. There, three examples of the rare "Revelation Pottery Detroit" are featured along with pieces once belonging to world renown connoisseur Charles Lang Freer, founder of the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington DC. Among the Freer pieces are a lidded tobacco jar made for him by Perry in 1904 and a vase with peacocks with painted underglaze that Perry gave him when he purchased Whistler's "Peacock Room" the same year. A small nacreous bowl that was Perry's "first iridescent" piece is among the unique examples. There is a small Pewabic lamp with

its leaded-glass shade and other shades and lamp bases to delight the eye. A collection of ceramics made by William Buck Stratton are a special section of the exhibition.

An audio tour for adults is available free of charge in the galleries, and an "Art Beat" thirty-minute program featuring Pewabic will be on continual view, courtesy of Detroit Public Television. The exhibition opened on October 22 and closes December 16, 2005. An opening reception was held on Sunday, October 23rd including a Gallery Walk with guest curator Dr. Thomas W. Brunk.

Kresge Art Museum is located on the Michigan State University campus on the first floor of the Kresge Art Center. Admission is free. The museum is

open Monday through Friday 10 am-5 pm, Thursday until 8 pm, and Saturday and Sunday noon to 5 pm.

The exhibition is made possible with support from the Michigan Humanities Council, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities; the Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs; and MSU College of Arts & Letters.

Dr. Brunk is completing a history of Pewabic Pottery to be published by Michigan State University Press in 2006.



Pewabic Vase, 22" h x 12" w, early 1920s, a gift of Henry L. Caukins to MSU



# Pewabic Activities



## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



It has been a momentous year of growth at Pewabic Pottery. The Pottery has been making steady progress with buying adjacent properties in preparation for our campus expansion.

As you may have read in Crain's Detroit Business, in May of 2005 Pewabic acquired the last of the Cadillac Avenue properties to the west of our historic building. We needed only one more property to complete our Master Plan for Campus Expansion.

**Terese Ireland**

That final property was the large, derelict apartment building to the east of our historic site. The building has been a growing concern due to arson risk and increasing neglect and decay. Wayne County acquired the building through its very effective Nuisance Abatement Program (NAP). NAP had seized the property and Pewabic acquired the building through a public auction process.

Now, here is the wonderful news! In August 2005, Pewabic signed a purchase agreement for this property with Wayne County and the final papers were signed on September 26. Our property acquisition phase for the campus expansion is now complete. Next year will be a year of internal review of our master plan by trustees to determine the best way to use these new properties.

Look for more upcoming changes to our campus in early 2006. Pewabic's East Jefferson streetscape will have a new historic fence, landscaping, lighting and sidewalks, thanks to a Michigan Department of Transportation grant. The Pottery will show a whole new face to our 53,000 annual visitors.

**Terese Ireland, Executive Director**

## FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD



The new property acquisitions as described in Terese Ireland's column on this page will provide all the land that was included in our master plan started five years ago. These properties will allow us to start a new planning process for what the future of Pewabic Pottery will look like for many years to come. The planning process will take time and require much input from all the Pewabic stakeholders, customers, staff, students, faculty and trustees.

**Joe Vassallo**

These acquisitions are being funded by loans, grants and contributions. We have only begun our fundraising and are very grateful for the support that we have received to date. I am especially thankful for the support that has been provided by all Pewabic Trustees, above all for the generous contributions from the Shirley Schlafer Foundation/Edie and Barry Briskin, the Roger and Joanna Garrett Foundation and the Caulkins family (Carey Ford). Without these generous contributions, it would have been extremely difficult for us to acquire these properties.

As I reflect on the most recent accomplishments, I want to state how proud I am to have worked with the dedicated staff and trustees for the past three years as the board chairperson. In November, at the annual meeting, a new chairperson will be elected. I would like to wish my successor the best of everything and hope that he or she will be as fortunate as I have been to see so many good things come to the Pottery. I know that person will find the staff and executive director a pleasure to work with. I look forward to continuing to be part of the bright future of Pewabic.

**Joe Vassallo, Board President**



**Max Loridon, winner of the "Name the Vase" contest with Christina Devlin, Director of Galleries. Winning name was "The Arch Vase."**



**Earthy Treasures Display**



# Pewabic Activities



## PEWABIC MUSEUM NEWS

The Pewabic Museum has a new addition to its collection. This wonderful Pewabic vase was discovered by Crosby, Minnesota antique dealers Bob Novak and Scott Berg on the North Shore of Lake Superior near Grand Portage, Minnesota, only seven miles from the Canadian border. It was found in a tiny one room antique shop and identified as Rookwood pottery.

“The colors of brown, buff and camel and the matte glaze were very atypical of Rookwood, and once it was turned over and the five maple leaf mark and the “Pewabic” stamp were visible, I caught my breath,” said Novak. Berg and Novak never expected to find a piece of Pewabic given its rarity and are very pleased that they were able to play a role in returning this beautiful vase to its original home. The yellow matte glaze is an important addition to the collection.



Yellow Matte Glaze c.1904,

Another addition to the collection is a set of sea horse tiles that were donated to Pewabic by Mr. Ted Popowitz. In 1922, Pewabic Pottery worked with Cass Gilbert, a famous architect from New York to create tiles for the Scott Fountain on Belle Isle, Detroit. The tiles surrounding the basin of the fountain were in the images of crabs, turtles, dolphins, lobsters and sea horses. The sea horses on display were overrun tile from the fabrication for this project. You can see these tiles on display in the Museum.

## EDUCATION STUDIO EXTREME MAKOVER A HUGE HIT!

In 2004, those who used the education studio knew that it needed updating and renovating. Students and staff were interviewed about what was needed for an up-to-date studio.

Pewabic’s Education Committee met several times to review wish lists; their input was important because of their impression of the space and its many uses over the years. All this gave the architects and designers the information needed to design a space which met the needs of all students, both adult and children. From storage to sinks, from traffic flow to safety, all the details were worked out by designer Mike Crosson of Crosson and Associates. Work began in Spring 2005 and shifted into high gear this summer.

The new space is organized by tasks; the children now have their own studio space with room for many activities; the adult or main studio has a discrete Glaze Lab, with separate sink, and a large Kiln Room to accommodate all related tasks. Large Glaze Cabinets were added in the courtyard where the wares ready for glaze firing will be housed, easily accessible to the large outdoor gas kilns.

## HEIDELBERG PROJECT

This past summer, the Education Department partnered with the Heidelberg Project, the renowned Detroit urban art project created by Tyree Guyton, to bring art to neighborhood children. During the first community outreach event, area children came to the Heidelberg Project to make and decorate tiles that will become a permanent part of the main art house. Our participation serves to raise Pewabic’s profile in the fine-art community.



Elizabeth Robbins examining the mapleleaf mark



Children’s Workshop

# Pewabic Activities

## IN HER OWN WORDS Excerpts from Mrs. Stratton's Autobiography THE HOTEL BAR: CIRCA: 1910

Almost concurrently with St. Paul's was the work of remodelling a well known bar in one of our popular hotels. The drawings were made by a local firm of architects and the details called for very large tile - what we now term as terra-cotta, and massive columns and capitols. We had had no experience with such heavy fabrication and should never have undertaken it. It never occurred to our inexperienced minds to give up the almost impossible for our small kilns. As happened many times afterward under similar conditions when special help was needed Arthur Herbert came up the walk. He had been brought up in a large pottery works where they specialized in building material. He proved the expert we needed.

As usual I executed the decorative features with Miss Loud's assistance. We showed "the vine in its various phases," as well as the hop, which had many decorative possibilities, also there were convivial monks and meditative monks. . . . A number of very good ecclesiastic designs remained after our church work was finished and some of these tiles we found we could use quite suitably, by inverting them. Thus are symbols inter-related in our city. We imagined that in centuries to come, when excavations may perchance bring tile to the surface where the drinking place stood, some archeologist unearthing Gothic symbols, will record it as the location of a church.

We found it difficult to dry and move the large sections of moulded clay and another large kiln had been built without tubes, so the material had its firing in the open flame. It had a large circular chamber, and proved useful up to the top of the entrance. Above that, we found that a man would have to build himself in and he could not do this without suicidal intentions. Our mistake made us lose much hot space. We had great success with green-to-blue matte glazes, and the large pieces came from the kiln astonishingly well, until the last firing. They then began to show a number of heat cracks as well as a tendency to twist out of perfect shape.

The remodelling of the hotel was almost complete and we had been notified of the immediate need for the ceramics. It made us push pretty fast and it was probably this which made us fire so rapidly that a desperate looking lot of material came from the kiln. At least that is how

it appeared to me. Mr. Caulkins, who would have been a strong-hold at such a time, was away at Atlantic City with his family. I was aghast at the position in which the bad kiln had placed us, Even more I hated to call the architect, Mr. Shilling, by telephone to tell him that a good part of the work would have to be made over again, which would mean several weeks delay.

You may believe it was not long before he appeared with Mr. Fred Postal, the owner of the hotel, who had driven him up in his red racer. If I appeared as minute as I felt, it would have taken a microscope to discover me. All around, on the floor, on the tables and chairs, were portions of the terra-cotta facing for the room, sections of the niches, capitols of columns, masses of green-blue tiles, many of them showing glaze cracks and uneven surfaces.

Mr. Postal and Mr. Schilling looked at each other dubiously and then at me. "I never felt so sorry for anyone in my life," was Mr. Postal's opening ejaculation. Then noticing a card tacked upon the wall, "Harmony is a Fact; God Rules," he read it over aloud slowly, and then a second time more slowly. "Then, I believe it is true and everything can't be wrong." Big and bluff and red-faced Mr.

Postal walked up and down looking at the tile. Then to my amazement he said, "Say I like this stuff. It is just the right kind for my place. I don't want it to look new and perfect. It is much more friendly and easy just the way it is! I want it put up just the way it is." And he proved to be perfectly right. We were so anxious to deliver material perfect mechanically, that we had utterly failed to recognize a more important factor, a quality which Mr. Postal either foresaw, or out of the goodness of his heart pretended he saw. I thought he was an angel just the same.

At any rate, the installation proved a great success and brought us much favorable comment. . . . For a number of years, when I chanced to be passing on Griswold Street, it was no unusual thing for Mr. Postal to run out, and beaming with pride, draw me into the distinguished precincts where ladies were not supposed to be welcome, and before his customers he would proclaim me producer of the surroundings. I never let him know that one of the most conspicuous plaques was an ecclesiastic symbol, turned upside down. I had felt no qualms about it myself, thinking that if it might turn itself around sometime, nothing but good would come of it.



The hotel bar on Griswold Street

# 2005-2006 Pewabic Calendar of Events

All events are free and open to the public unless noted. \*Pewabic Society members enter free with membership card.

Oct. 22-Dec.16 **Pewabic: A Century of Michigan's Art Pottery** at the Kresge Art Museum at Michigan State University. ( See details on Page 1)

Nov.11-Dec.31 **Earthy Treasures** Holiday Show  
 Nov.12 Open to the public through Dec.31  
 Mon.-Sat. 10 am-6 pm; Wed. evening 6-9 pm;  
 Sun. noon-4pm



Jeri Au in Stratton in Sept. - Nov.

**2006**

Jan.9 **Winter Classes Start** Included: Basic, Intermediate, & Advanced classes; Tile Making, Throwing & Handbuilding. **New for 2006:** Advanced tile making and Independent Study on Sundays 1-4 pm.

Jan.13-Mar.10 **Minimum/Maximum** A two artist show curated by Tara Robinson (East & West Galleries) (Stratton Gallery) Sylvia Ramachandran  
 Opening Reception Jan.13, 6-8 pm

Jan. 16 **Pottery is Closed for Martin Luther King Day**

Feb.11-12 **Third Annual Best of Arts & Crafts** Shotwell Pavillion, Oakland University, Rochester, MI  
 10 am-5 am Admission \$5.00

Feb.24-Mar 12 **Member Appreciation Days**  
 Members double their discounts up to 20% on all Pewabic items.

Feb. 25 **Empty Bowls for Gleaners Foodbank** 11 am-2 pm  
 Buy a bowl and enjoy soup from areas restaurants.  
 Proceeds go to Gleaners

Mar.11 **Pewabic Pottery's Annual Birthday Party**  
 Celebrating 103 years 10 am-5 pm  
 Hourly tours from 11 am to 3 pm  
 Free and Open to the Public

Mar.17-May12 **Landscape** A group show curated by Tara Robinson (East & West Galleries) (Stratton Gallery) To be announced  
 Opening Reception May17, 6-8 pm



Charles Krafft

Kathy Rush

**Polemical Clay Show in Sept. - Nov. 2005**

Apr. 21-23 **Annual Spring Sale of Overruns**  
 Fri. - Members Only Sat. & Sun. - Open to the public  
 10 am-5 pm Fri. & Sat., Noon to 4 pm Sun.

May 19-July14 **Teapots** a group show curated by Anne Crane (East & West Galleries) (Stratton Gallery) To be announced  
 Opening Reception May 19, 6-8 pm

June 2-5 **16th Annual "For the House & Garden" Show & Sale** Preview Party, Fri. June 2  
 Free and Open to the public Sat. & Sun. 10 am-5 pm

## New for 2006

We will be open for free tours on the first Sat. of Jan., Feb., Mar, Apr. and May. Docent led tours will be given at 11 am and 2 pm on each of those days.

## Also

Pottery will be open on Sundays Noon - 4pm

Pewabic Pottery is located at 10125 E. Jefferson at Cadillac, 4 1/2 miles east of downtown Detroit. • Gallery Hours are 10:00 am - 6:00 pm, Monday through Saturday except for special events, openings, or for the Holiday Show. • To join the Pewabic Society, Inc., to volunteer as a Friend of Pewabic Pottery, for information or to register for classes, workshops, tours and events, please call.

• Telephone: (313) 822-0954 • Fax (313) 822-6266 • e-mail [pewabic1@pewabic.org](mailto:pewabic1@pewabic.org) • Internet <http://www.pewabic.org>

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The Pewabic Society gratefully acknowledges the following donors for their support.

Pewabic Pottery programs are made possible through the generous annual contributions of foundations, individuals, and members of the Pewabic Society

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## NEW ITEMS for EARTHY TREASURES HOLIDAY SHOW

This Holiday season will bring three new ornaments as well as a serving platter and serving bowls to the Pewabic Museum Store.

The ornaments depict each day of the 'Twelve Days of Christmas' carol. Each year for the next 3 years Pewabic will add three more ornaments to the series. Beginning this year, A Partridge in a Pear Tree, Two Turtle Doves and Three French Hens ornaments will be sold individually and in boxed sets.



Last June, Pewabic introduced a Pewabic Dinnerware line which includes a dinner plate, soup bowl and salad plate. Now to compliment the Pewabic Dinnerware, the Museum Store is presenting a 16" serving platter and two serving bowls at 10" and 12." These will be available after November 11.

Please visit the Pewabic Museum Store. Hours are Monday through Saturday, 10am-6pm. Starting November 18 the Sunday hours are Noon-4:00pm. This will continue into 2006. During the Holiday Show, the Museum Store stays open until 9:00 pm on Wednesday evenings.

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Paint Creek Center for the Arts & Pewabic Pottery  
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## Make a Gift to Our Endowment and Earn a Special Tax Credit

State law permits you to reduce your Michigan Income Tax or Michigan Single Business Tax by a credit of 50 percent of the amount you contribute, subject to certain limits, to our endowment fund at the Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan. Please help ensure our future by contributing to our endowment fund.

All you have to do is write a check payable to the Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan, indicate Pewabic Pottery's endowment fund on the subject line, and mail it to: Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan, 333 W. Fort St., Suite 2010, Detroit, MI 48226-3134.

For complete details on the Michigan tax credit, visit [www.cfsem.org/gifts/taxcredit.htm](http://www.cfsem.org/gifts/taxcredit.htm) or call (313) 961-6675.

**COMMUNITY  
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For SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN

**PEWABIC POTTERY**  
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