



# THE OTTAWA GUILD OF POTTERS LA GUILDE DES POTIERS D'OTTAWA

*Fired Up!*

**Next meeting is February 8, 6:30 pm via Zoom**

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - Natalie Gosselin**

Hello from the darkest part of winter! How are you all doing? Me? I am counting the days until spring, and enjoying the minute or so of extra daylight we are getting every day. I do love winter, though have found this year to be particularly cold, making it difficult to get outside as much as I would like.

This month, we start looking forward in earnest to planning events like Great Bowls of Fire, and the Spring Sale. I encourage everyone to volunteer to help with one of these activities where you can - it will distract you from the February blahs.

We also continue to move forward with plans for our 50th Anniversary celebrations - lots yet to do, and moving forward we will need the help of people with a variety of skills, so please contact me if you are interested in helping.

We are still looking for people interested in filling the positions of Vice President and Secretary. Have a look at the descriptions below to see if you are interested in joining this dynamic executive.

See you at the February meeting,

Natalie

### **Available Positions:**

I am available to discuss the specifics of either of these positions with anyone interested: [ottawaguildng@gmail.com](mailto:ottawaguildng@gmail.com)

### **Vice President:**

The VP is accountable for working as the right hand person to the president, to support and discuss all issues and business. If guild positions are vacant, the VP and President will attempt to fill the positions unless the positions fall within a guild committee, as this becomes the responsibility of the chair of the committee.

The VP and President share responsibilities for reviewing bylaws, and perform other administrative duties related to running meetings, and managing Guild business.

### **Secretary:**

The Secretary functions as a member of the Guild Executive Committee throughout the year. She/he/they provide the administrative support for the guild at both the executive and the general membership meeting.

The secretary is accountable for

- Recording and distributing all minutes for the executive meetings and the general membership meetings
- Tracking all issues in coordination with the president that need further resolution.
- Filing each months minutes on the Guild website

## Exhibition Report - by Elizabeth Davies

With Dave's help, the Exhibition Committee has been streamlining its website pages and the Exhibition application process.

What you see now is: the Exhibitions Slider takes the viewer to the “Events” menu’s About our Exhibitions page (mirroring the About our Sales page). The About our Exhibitions page takes the viewer to the Upcoming Exhibition (which might be the Annual Exhibition or Celebrating Clay).

The December 2020 Virtual Exhibition introduced a significant level of complexity, simply because it was the OGP's first fully-virtual exhibition. Given that this year the exhibition will be in-person, we have scaled back the virtual aspect, simplifying the application process. For the May 6-8 2022 Exhibition, our plan is as follows:

**The Opening and Awards Ceremony** will be held in-person, and live-streamed. This should give the event far greater reach, and potentially attract many more people not only to the in-person show, but also to the website to view the Exhibition Catalogue, and to view the members' gallery pages.

**The Exhibition Catalogue** will showcase the award winners' pieces, along with the other items in the exhibition. However, we won't have individual exhibitor item's web pages (as we did for the December 2020 exhibition). We plan to make the Exhibition Catalogue available for online viewing by exhibition closing.

## From Rosemary Swan - a member's request

Hello Members,

One of my long time students, Mary-Ellen is looking to set up a studio:

Would anyone have one of the following:

Kick wheel

Electric wheel

Electric kiln

Her contact info:

Email: [maryellenks614@gmail.com](mailto:maryellenks614@gmail.com)

Tel: 613 614-8421

Thank you,

Rosemary Swan

## Standards and Education - Jocelyn Jenkins

## Standards and Education Committee -

A few words about what we do...



The word “education” in our title is actually the most important part of our focus. Maybe the word “standards” conjures up the image of a rule-bound entity whose main focus is policing. If so, we’re doing our job wrong! We exist to help members appreciate some of the issues that the Guild feels are important in the production and practice of ceramics in home and community studios. These issues are especially important when we start to sell our work to the public...hence for many of us, our first contact with the Guild’s Standards and Education Committee (SEC) is when we join one of the Guild sales and encounter the SEC Evaluation sheets at the mentoring meeting.

Selling our work takes us to new places. It’s no longer enough just to form the pot, get it glazed and get it through that final firing, intact. When we decide to sell that “intact” pot to a paying customer, we enter into a contract with them. This act places us in a different position in relation to that piece of pottery. The sale brings with it conditions which we are all aware of at the level of consumers, but which we should think about explicitly as they relate to the products we are selling.

*Merchantable* is a legal term used to describe an item that is reasonably fit for the ordinary purposes such an item would be used for. This is a new word for me, but we all understand the word intuitively as consumers. It’s what we expect when we buy an item at the store.

“Most consumer products have an implied warranty of merchantability. This warranty makes the assumption that a good or product works for its intended purpose.”<sup>1</sup> The product you make should be fit for a specific purpose. If you sell a teapot, it should hold boiling water, without slopping or splashing. If you sell a casserole, it should move in and out of the oven without breaking. (In that context, it’s worthwhile to explain to your customers that ceramic ovenware is subject to thermal shock which can cause cracking and that this can be avoided by heating and cooling the casserole slowly.)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/i/implied-warranty.asp>

The Guild's evaluation sheets are divided into two sections...those *rules* I was talking about and a couple of recommendations. You can check sheets out at the following link:

(<https://www.ottawaguilddofpotters.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/2020-sec-standard-evaluation-sheets.pdf>)

Many of the rules on the Guild's SEC Evaluation Sheets relate to ensuring that our products are merchantable.

Other rules on the evaluation sheets relate to the first aim stated in our mandate which is to:

*“encourage the growth and development of pottery and maintain a high standard of artistic expression and craftsmanship.”*

Hence, we have criteria such as those that require that the objects at our sales be predominantly made of clay and that slip cast objects not be made from commercial molds.

What are our responsibilities when we start to sell our work? Simply put, we want to ensure that our work is fit for the purpose intended and thus meets our customers' expectations. How do we do that? We test. I can't point to any potter, that I know well, who has not had (unpleasant) surprises from their work. Often, it's testing or prolonged use that reveals flaws such as glaze-fit issues, individual pieces or designs that are especially prone to thermal shock, handles that are not functional in daily use, etc.

An examination of our glazes and their functionality is part of the SEC review. Commercial glazes, or those mixed up in buckets in community studios around the city are often labelled “food safe”. That label means that the glaze is food safe as long as other conditions are met. If you are not doing the firing, it is difficult for you to warrant that those conditions have been met. Here is what Amaco says about its popular line of commercial glazes, which is labelled “food safe”.

*“It is impossible for any glaze manufacturer to guarantee the finished properties of its products, since application and firing are critical factors over which the supplier has no control.”<sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.sheffield-pottery.com/Amaco-Glazes-Usage-and-Safety-Information-s/337.htm>

The label “food safe” also makes no claims as to how the glaze will perform over time in normal use, in a strong acidic or basic (alkaline) environment. So, while “food safe” is a great starting point for knowledge of a glaze’s performance, there are other things to consider before you can assure a paying customer that your work will stand the test of time and use.

Durability is a concept that is useful to us, as vendors... perhaps more useful than the concept of “food safe”. If you are interested in exploring this distinction, I refer you to the discussion at the beginning of *Mastering Cone 6 Glazes*.<sup>3</sup> When we buy a product, we do not expect it to deteriorate with normal use. This is particularly true for ceramics. Durability tells us something about how glazes perform over time. Factors as diverse as firing schedules and dishwasher use can impact durability. The potter who understands what makes a glaze durable and applies it in their own practice can offer their work for sale without worry.

The criteria outlined in the SEC Evaluation sheets are not absolutes. They are simply the things that the Guild has chosen to emphasize. At other sales, you can set your own criteria but we hope that what you learn through the Guild will help guide the process and give you confidence in your own decisions.

Next month in the Newsletter, the SEC will look at the two recommendations on the functional Evaluation sheet... the grey areas!

SEC is always looking for new members. We welcome enquiries from anyone who would be interested in joining us.

January 2022  
Jocelyn Jenkins

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<sup>3</sup> Hesselberth, John, and Ron Roy. “What Do We Mean by Stable or Durable Glazes?” Essay. In *Mastering Cone 6 Glazes: Improving Durability, Fit and Aesthetics*. Brattleboro, VT: Echo Point Books & Media, 2020.

## February Program - Amy Bell

### Program News:

The February meeting program is a presentation by two of Ottawa's high school ceramics teachers, Emily Lim and Lynn Glover. Come and hear about their approaches teaching pottery to high school students and how they do it!

Want to suggest a speaker or topic? Do you have a little time to help with ideas or planning? Contact Amy Bell at [amybellpots@gmail.com](mailto:amybellpots@gmail.com).

NCECA 2022 is coming up, and will be a hybrid event. It will be in-person in Sacramento, CA, and online. Presenters include Natalia Arbelaez, Eliza Au, Jennifer Ling Datchuk, Josh DeWeese, Dr. Wendy Gers, Brian Gillis, Amy Gogarty, Varuni Kanagasundaram, Bonnie Kemske, Samuel Nortey, Reginald Pointer, George Rodriguez, Stacy Jo Scott, Billie Sessions, Takuro and Hitomi Shibata, Timea Tihanyi, Ehren Tool, and more.



<https://nceca.net/2022-sacramento/>

## Great Bowls of Fire - Barb Minish - Co-ordinator

The date for this years GBOF has been pushed back 3 weeks to March 26. We hope this will allow time for the COVID situation to improve. Even with the delay we have decide to go with a “take out” model where, after choosing their bowl, people will take away their choice of soups in takeout container to enjoy in the comfort and safety of their own home. We hope this will allow more people to feel comfortable participating in these uncertain times.

Help us make this event a success. If you are able help out, I would love to hear from you.

### Note from your Newsletter Editor

I apologize for this large gap but for the life of me I couldn't figure out another way to include the following PDF that Kim sent. I am still learning, and to make it harder I am using a MacBook. Gotta love Apple!

Please keep reading...

## COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

The Communications Committee has big plans to promote Guild members' work!



### *Promotional bookmark examples*

1

We're building a **library of members' photos** to use in lots of ways. We need images of your work, your studio, you working in the studio. Help us to feature you!

#### ***Please email us your photos!***

Filename= [your name + title] ie "SamMartin-blue-vase.jpg" Size requirements? Email to [communications@ottawaguildofpotters.ca](mailto:communications@ottawaguildofpotters.ca)

2

The Communications Committee is creating **promotional bookmarks** for the Guild to be used at sales and events, featuring members' photos (see examples above).

**3**

We're also planning a **Potter Showcase** on our social media platforms, where we'll regularly feature the work of our members. To do this, we need PHOTOS! Again, it is a chance to showcase who you are, what you make, and why you love pottery.

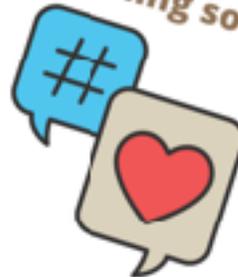
**4**

The Communications Committee is going to become more active on **Facebook, Instagram,** and even **Twitter.** Get an account with these platforms and begin sharing and tagging the Ottawa Guild of Potters to help our organization grow. We are here to celebrate pottery-making and the amazing work that we do!

These are some of the benefits to being a member of the Ottawa Guild of Potters- to showcase who you are, what you make, and why you love pottery- promotion and celebration!



**More information  
coming soon!**



5

We've got great news! Two new volunteers have joined the Communications Committee!



## Welcome Rowena & Nancy!



Rowena's Work



Nancy's Work

Rowena and Nancy are both incredibly skilled potters and are keen to help promote the Guild! Thank you both for your willingness to share your talents - graphic design and photography - to make the Guild sparkle!

## Your Executive - 2021-2022

President - Natalie Gosselin

Vice President - Vacant

Past President - Amy Bell

Treasurer - Michele Macdonald

Secretary - Vacant

Sales Chair - Sue-ann Blakely

Programming Chair - Amy Bell

Standards and Education - Jocelyn Jenkins

Membership Chair - Carol Badenoch

Exhibition Chair - Elizabeth Davies

Communications Chair - Kim Lulashnyk

Great Bowls of Fire coordinator - Barbara Minish