

# Clay Chatter

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Clay Alliance



Provided/Ryan Durbin

April's general meeting was held online, complete with a "Brady Bunch"-style screenshot.

## COVID-19 can't stop Clay Alliance

In an effort to maintain our connections with each other during the stay-at-home orders this spring, we hosted our first remote general meeting via the GoToMeeting web conferencing platform. Members were able to join from the comfort of their homes using their laptops, tablets or phones. More than 30 people attended. We even captured a "Brady Bunch"-style screenshot of some of the attendees.

This was the first of many of our meetings to be held remotely. All board meetings



### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

since March have been held via teleconference. It has been a nice compromise for the group to give updates to the membership and keep pushing the organization forward, although we miss seeing each other in person on a regular basis.

The April general meeting included surprise guests Marsha Karagheusian and Lisa Merida-Paytes, who serve as onsite liaisons for the upcoming NCECA 2021 conference coming to Cincinnati. They gave the member-

ship a glimpse into what the National Council on Education of the Ceramic Arts is, how our members can assist as we get closer to the event and why it's such a big deal for our city and region. We also shared board goals for the year, welcomed new members, shared feedback from the Jen Allen workshop and more.

All past general and board meeting minutes can now be viewed on the Clay Alliance website in the "Member Tools" section under "Meeting Minutes." These can give you all the latest updates on the organization.

Ryan Durbin

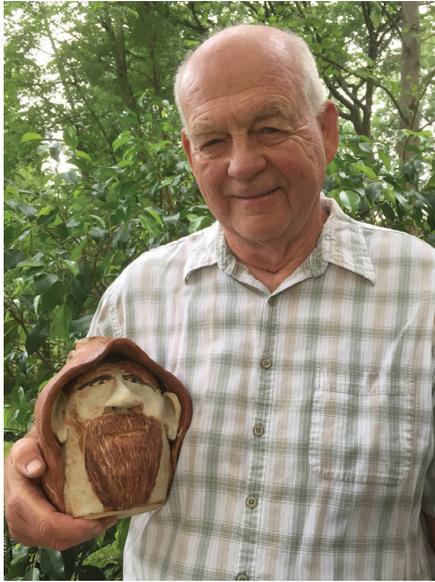
## Call for volunteers: NCECA committee

The Clay Alliance Board would like to call upon three to four volunteers to lead the NCECA 2021 Committee. The committee will be in charge of planning Clay Alliance specific event(s) to be held in conjunction with the conference in March 2021. These could include hosting a members-only exhibition in our Pendleton Art Center gallery or educating members about volunteer opportunities or exhibitions for which they may want to apply.

We'd like to have a group dedicated to these efforts and keep the board updated every couple months. March 17-20 will be here before we know it and we need as much help as we can get. The committee will ensure that Clay Alliance can continue to educate the public and conference attendees about members' work and the benefits we provide as an organization.

Please contact Ryan Durbin at [president@clayalliance.org](mailto:president@clayalliance.org) if you'd like to contribute to this committee. Committee members will be able to decide how they want to work together, how often they meet and where they want to take it. I'd love to see some new faces team up on this. It should be a great learning experience.

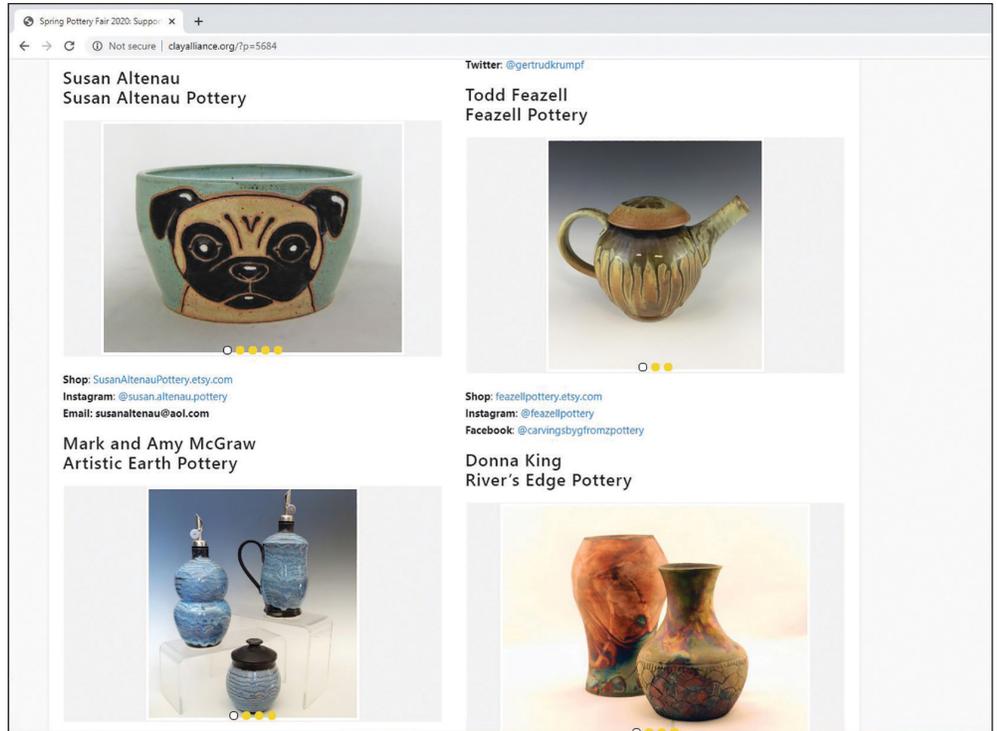
Ryan Durbin



Provided photos

## Overman designs awards for Bockfest

This year's 28th annual Bockfest Cincinnati event commissioned **Dick Overman** to make the three "Best of Bock 2020" awards presented during the celebration. The "Stoneware Monk Growlers" were awarded for Best Float in the parade, for Best Bock Home Brew and to the winner of the Bock Beer Games. The crew from Sonder Brewing of Mason (below) raised their growler in victory!



Though Spring Fair was canceled, artists got a boost via the web.

## Spring Fair artists' work promoted on CA website

It was the first Saturday in May in Cincinnati's East Walnut Hills neighborhood. The weather was perfect for our group to celebrate another Spring Pottery Fair featuring more than 50 clay artists. It was primed to be another incredible year, but unfortunately COVID-19 had other plans for us. Although we tried our best to come up with a way to hold the 20th annual fair, we were unable to host anything in person. Once we decided to cancel the event in mid-March, all artists' booth fees were refunded 100 percent, which seemed to be well received. Clay Alliance was also able to cancel all advertising and miscellaneous costs early enough not to incur too much loss besides the postcard and poster printing.

In an effort to support some of our artists, members of the Spring Fair committee built a page on the Clay Alliance website with artist contact information, photos of their work from their artist applications and links so customers could buy directly from artists via their online shops. Artists were responsible for submitting this information digitally

to the committee in order to be featured. With many shows all over the nation canceled, small businesses like ours that rely on art shows to sell work directly to the public have been hit hard. This felt like a small gesture the committee could offer. We've posted multiple times on social media to get more visibility to this page over the past couple months.

The webpage can be viewed by clicking the banner on the Clay Alliance homepage ([clayalliance.org](http://clayalliance.org)) with the image showing "Spring Pottery Fair Canceled" or searching for "support our artists" in the search box at the bottom of the homepage. Since the page was published April 30, it has received nearly 1,200 views.

Big thanks to Jennifer Watson and Ryan Durbin for getting the webpage live and Linda LeGendre for continuing to post on Clay Alliance social media accounts, getting more exposure to these artists' work. We look forward to hosting an amazing Spring Pottery Fair next year on May 1, 2021.

**Ryan Durbin**

# MEET THE MEMBERS

## Amy Pellegrino

Amy, the youngest and only girl among her four siblings, recently married her husband, Kameron. She was born and raised here in Cincinnati.



“I took art classes all throughout grade school and high school, and I always enjoyed working with clay and sculpture,” Amy says. “It wasn’t

until I took Ceramics 1 at Northern Kentucky University that I finally realized that clay was my passion. I spent all of my free time yearning to make anything I could out of clay. In 2019 I graduated magna cum laude from NKU with a degree in spatial arts, which covers sculpture and ceramics.”

Amy does wheel throwing, hand building and ceramic sculpture. She is currently taking a break from the wheel to focus on hand building and sculpting. Amy is an employee at Core Clay and has a studio there. She is working on creating a functional basement studio in her home as well.

Amy recently attended the Jen Allen workshop hosted by NKU. She says she found it highly motivational to her hand building work and process.

“I can’t stress enough how important – and fun! – it is to see other artists’ talks and demonstrations,” Amy says. “It can be easy to sink into a set routine of making and thinking, but getting those bursts of education from a whole

new perspective can change your outlook on clay in such a positive way.

“Seeing Jen work so fluidly got the cogs spinning for new exciting ideas for hand building in my personal work. Learning and spreading information about clay is so important, and I love how accessible this knowledge is in the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky region.”

When not being creative in the studio, Amy loves to explore nature.

“Hiking and finding critters is my absolute favorite,” Amy says. “You can catch me birdwatching at any time of the day. In fact, if you have cool bird photos I’d love to see them.”



Provided photos

## MEET THE MEMBERS QUESTIONNAIRE

Want to be featured in “Meet the Members”? Just answer these questions in an email and send them to Jane Lester at [janelester@me.com](mailto:janelester@me.com).

- **Name**
- **Residence**
- **Family**
- **Where you’re from (Cincinnati or elsewhere)**
- **Where you work in clay**
- **How long you’ve been doing clay**
- **What kind of pieces you make**
- **Where you work (day job)**
- **Any other hobbies you enjoy**
- **Anything else of interest you wish to share**



Provided

## Route 66 inspires manhole cover project

**Steve Chrisman** has been working on a project since November 2019 commemorating towns along iconic Route 66 from Chicago to Santa Monica, Calif. Steve's passion has been to reproduce manhole covers from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, adapting the covers to include the Route 66 shield. These works are about 19 inches in diameter and are hand carved using raku clay. Steve has so far completed more than 12 pieces, including covers for the start, end and midpoint of the route (pictured above). His goal is to create about 30 pieces of notable and obscure towns and cities that were influenced by their proximity to Route 66 by early 2021 for an installation at Whistle Stop Clay Works during the NCECA conference.

## Pendleton Art Center gallery reopens, with social distancing

The Clay Alliance Gallery at the Pendleton Art Center suffered the same challenges everyone felt during the COVID-19 lockdown. We are beginning to take our first tentative steps back out into the world and hope to safely represent our artists and members moving forward.

The gallery was closed for the March and April art walks, and opened again in May. The turnout in May was light, as we anticipated, but we had already viewed this as a dry run to see if we could maintain the gallery in a responsible manner. We believe this was successful and intend to open again for future art walks. If any artists who have volunteered to work in the gallery feel uncomfortable doing so, please

contact John Mason. A smaller gallery staff will help with social distancing so we do not see any problem with those who do not want to show.

We are still making improvements to the gallery. Ryan Durbin and Nick Bonner are installing modern track lighting to give the gallery more pop. Other improvements are planned as well.

We would like to thank all of you for your support of the gallery's move to the Pendleton. For those of you brave (masked) souls who care to venture, we hope you will come visit us during future art walks as we continue to support the clay community into the future.

**John Mason**

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## Summer gathering to be held Aug. 22

In lieu of a summer general meeting, all members are invited to join us for a day at Trish McLennan's home and Gardenhouse Pottery studio. Ample social distancing will be available as well as great company and maybe even some throwing competitions.

**When:** 3-7 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 22

**Where:** 1190 Marion Ave., Maineville, OH 45039

**Rain date:** Sunday, Aug. 23 at 3 p.m.

More details to follow.

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## Next Clay Chatter deadline: Friday, Sept. 11

E-mail submissions to

[jeffersonation@gmail.com](mailto:jeffersonation@gmail.com)