

Clay Chatter

MARCH 2020 • WWW.CLAYALLIANCE.ORG



Clay Alliance

Clay in the time of COVID-19

- ▶ The general meeting to be held 6:30-9 p.m. Wednesday, April 1, will be online only. Visit <https://www.gotomeet.me/ryandurbin/clayalliance> on your computer, tablet or smartphone, or call in to 1-646-749-3117 or 1-866-899-4679. Access code: 840-206-901. The meeting will not be on Facebook Live, but will be recorded and shared later. Guest speakers Marsha Karageusian and Lisa Merida-Paytes will discuss NCECA 2021.
- ▶ The Spring Pottery Fair scheduled for May 2 has been canceled. Artists have been refunded their booth fees. Further decisions will be made by the Spring Fair committee about where to go from here. Spring Fair will be discussed at the general meeting.



Provided/Charity Rust-Jordan

Jen Allen wows at NKU workshop, see page 2.

Despite current challenges, great year lies ahead

I'm excited about the year ahead for our organization and my chance to lead this group alongside a great team on the Clay Alliance Board. As I write this, I can't help but reflect on the stressful weeks many of us have encountered as the threat of COVID-19 grows. The novel coronavirus affects everyone



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

as it shifts our daily routines and businesses. As a fellow small business owner, I feel these next few months could be tough for us, but organizations like ours can be supportive as we weather this storm.

Our states and the nation are actively working to keep us safe with stay-at-home orders and physical distancing. Amid schools going to online curriculums, sports leagues suspending their seasons, and events and conferences canceled (NCECA included), we had to decide whether to hold the 20th annual Spring Pottery

Fair, an event dear to me since co-chairing it the past two years.

I struggled with whether we should push forward with hosting the fair on May 2, postponing it a few months or canceling it altogether. After considering guidance from the Ohio Department of Health

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WHAT'S GOING ON

Allen shares current processes after her transition to stoneware, hand building

Clay Alliance sponsored a workshop by ceramic artist Jen Allen on March 4-5 in conjunction with Northern Kentucky University. What a workshop it was! Allen has called many places home, as she discussed in her lecture, but now resides in Morgantown, West Virginia.

The delicate porcelain pieces that Allen throws on the wheel and then alters are familiar to many. However, her current work is almost unrecognizable. Not only did she change her clay body to stoneware, but she also now focuses more on hand building. Workshop attendees were fortunate to see her more current processes and hear about her transition from work that “seemed a little sterile” to the work she does now. By redirecting her attention and craft, her work felt more handmade and attendees could more easily see and appreciate her process. For instance, she previously used tongs when glazing but now chooses to dip her pieces by hand, leaving the evidence of that process in the form of glaze streaks and thumbprints. One thing that hasn't changed is her love for texture and her attention to detail, as evident in everything she makes.

During the workshop, Allen created numerous forms, including butter dishes, cups, vases and pitchers. She showed several hand-building techniques, shared templates and engaged the audience through light and candid conversation, including asking questions such as “what’s



the worst disaster you have had?” It was comforting to hear that so many artists had shared similar disasters as well as successes. Allen also discussed her love of sewing and how it relates to her work. She then demonstrated this by showing us how she folds, darts and addresses the seams of the wet clay. On the second day of the workshop, Allen held a public lecture in which she talked about transitioning her work in the public eye, the influences her family and holidays have had on her work and which artists have inspired her throughout her career.

For more information on Jen Allen and her work, please visit her website www.jenniferallenceramics.com or follow her on Instagram, @jenallenceramics.

Charity Rust-Jordan



Provided photos/
Charity
Rust-Jordan

President's Message, continued

and the perspectives of Clay Alliance Board members, Spring Fair committee members and other local event organizers in a similar situation, the decision was made to cancel the May 2 event. Artists have been refunded their booth fees. Further decisions will be made by the Spring Fair committee about where to go from here. This sure has been a challenging test early in my Clay Alliance presidency, but I

think we will look back on this positively.

On the brighter side, I'm proud of the progress we've made as a Board and organization already this year including: new Spring Fair 2020 chairs Jeannine Kenyon and Mike O'Neal and their growing committee of new faces, our move to a new gallery in the Pendleton Art Center, better communication with our local NCECA 2021

planning committee, setting focused goals as a Board for 2020 and a positive workshop featuring Jennifer Allen in collaboration with our friends at Northern Kentucky University. And it's only March people! Thanks so much for your support of this group and we look forward to a great year ahead, even if we have encountered some big hurdles.

Ryan Durbin

MEET THE MEMBERS

Marcia Cochran

Marcia tells us her story ...

Hi! Marcia Cochran here. I live in West Chester, my husband's name is John, and we have a feral cat we feed and would like to help more but she refuses help. Before living in West Chester, I lived in Walnut Hills and Norwood. My first lessons on how to make pottery happened at Ohio University, and making and selling pottery has been my occupation for a long time. Making functional pottery is my main interest and I currently use cone 5 Bmix clay and fire in an electric kiln. Being able to use my own and other people's pottery in daily life makes me feel good.



I think selling my work has been, and continues to be, the most challenging aspect of being a potter. For the past 23 years I was a member of a pottery co-operative store in Yellow Springs, Ohio (Yellow Springs Pottery) and it was the best way I've experienced to sell work. I recently stepped away from being a co-op member but will always treasure my pottery friends there, the customers and the co-op experience.

My life doesn't feel boring in the least but my greatest pleasures have to do with simple daily living. I like to read, cook, garden, make pottery and keep up with my friends and family members. Last summer, my excitement was raising some monarch butterflies



Provided photos

from egghood to adulthood. I grow milkweed to attract and feed the monarchs.

Thanks to all you people who have been keeping Clay Alliance going and looking better than ever. It's been so wonderful to be able to reconnect with you and be part of the Clay Alliance community again.



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.

- **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**

WHAT'S GOING ON

Pendleton gallery up and running

Shortly after I moved to Cincinnati, I visited the Pendleton Art Center and thought it was so neat. It billed itself as the “world’s largest collection of artists under one roof.” That’s one of the reasons I was excited to join the Clay Alliance Gallery at the Pendleton – now I’m one of those artists!

I had participated in Spring Fair for many years, but I haven’t taken part recently because I’ve been pursuing other interests. For me the gallery is a nice way to ease back into the clay community without having to commit to a big undertaking like Spring Fair. Load-in was easy, pieces can be stored at the gallery between shows and the required volunteer tasks are nothing I can’t handle!

At February’s Final Friday event it was fun to hang out with fellow artists, some of whom I had not met before. We all chipped in to prepare Spring Fair postcards for distribution.

Contact gallery director John Mason at johnnyoasisstudios@gmail.com to learn more, and stop by one of the remaining Final Friday events this year after things return to normal: April 24, May 29, June 26, July 31, Aug. 28, Sept. 25, Oct. 30, Nov. 27 and Dec. 18.

Jeff Williams



Provided photos/Jeff Williams

Patrons at the Clay Alliance Gallery at the Pendleton Art Center check out the work for sale during the Final Friday event on Feb 28.

**Next Clay Chatter deadline:
Friday, June 5**

E-mail submissions to
jeffersonation@gmail.com