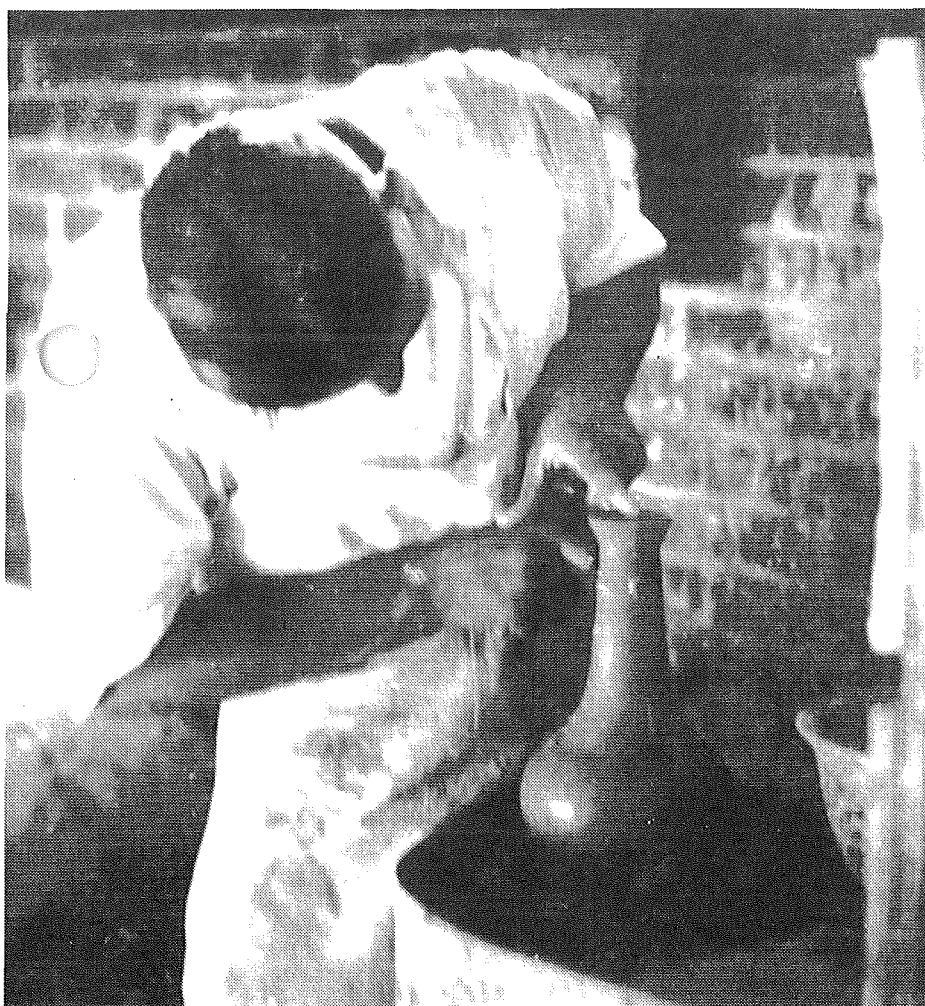


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Pot & Puma

Published by the Frankoma Family Collectors Association



R. E. Hefner

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

RAY STOLL

My, how time flies when you're having fun! And the past three months have been full of a lot of good things, along with a lot of work. Our membership has continued to grow rapidly, and the renewals are also coming in at a high rate.

The interest in Frankoma and FFCA becomes quite obvious when you're looking for new pieces; it's becoming more and more difficult to find most of the "special" pieces such as animals, figurines, and pieces with the Pot and Puma or small round "o" marks. It really adds to your enjoyment when you're able to find one of these treasures!

Pat Warner and I have given two presentations in the past month to interested groups. The first was to a group of antique collectors, one of whose members is also a member of FFCA. The other was to a group of senior citizens from a local church who learned of us through an antique shop in the area. Both presentations were well received. If any of you are offered the opportunity to give such a presentation, please try to accommodate the request. In this way we can spread the word about our Frankoma Family, and we may gain some new members.

A ballot for election of new officers and trustees will be mailed to you soon. Please fill it out, seal it in an envelope, place that envelope inside a mailing envelope, and send it to the Secretary (Donna) in sufficient time to ensure receipt no later than September 10, 1996. The ballot envelopes will be opened only by a committee of three (3) tellers, appointed by me, with the consent of the Board. They will record the results of their count and place the results in a sealed envelope, which will be opened and read during the business meeting at Reunion 96. Each membership is entitled to one vote.

If you wish to see a change in this arrangement, you may propose an amendment to the by-laws at that business meeting. Any such proposed amendment must be in writing, with a copy for the Chair and a copy for the Secretary. ■

CO-EDITORS, Donna Frank, Nancy Littrell

COMPOSITOR, Nancy Littrell

CIRCULATION, Donna Frank, Steve Littrell

CONSULTANTS, Maxine Saddler, Jim Shull, Pat Warner, Ray Stoll & Elaine Stoll

COVER PHOTO: From the Frank Family Collection, Sapulpa, OK.

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ABOUT THE COVER

DONNA FRANK

A VASE FOR HIS ROSE

As you can well imagine, our mother's passing left us with a lifetime of accumulation to go through and sort out. In doing so, we've come across a few treasures—some unknown to us, and many familiar but long-ago-forgotten items to jog our memories.

We uncovered a dusty scrap book that had belonged to our Grandmother Bowman, Mother's mother, who has been gone for well over forty years. Among a lot of yellowed photographs was one of our father in his classroom at Oklahoma University, at his potter's wheel, in the act of throwing the very vase he made for our mother as an engagement gift.

I can feel all those eyebrows lifting in question at this very moment. "But that's not in the book!" you say. No, it wasn't, and here's why.

When I was rewriting *Clay in the Master's Hands*, I asked Mother a lot of questions. But she could not remember that day or if she was there. I had to work around that and surmise that it happened the way I wrote it, which she approved. But after someone pointed out to me that Phyllis Bess had mentioned in her book that Grace Lee was actually there—watching him as he threw that vase—I learned that Phyllis had heard it from Mother herself several years ago when her memory was very sharp. Dad had driven to Oklahoma City that Saturday morning and brought Grace Lee back to Norman to his classroom. Knowing him, I'm sure he did that to show himself off and impress her. Well, it worked, didn't it?

So here it is, unmistakably the birth of that lovely black engagement vase you've all either seen at the house, or pictures of. That's the very one.

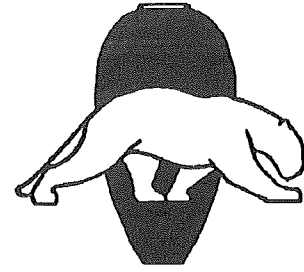
What a thrill it was to discover it! ■

See another one of our finds on Page 5—*Joniece and her turtle!*

PHOTOGRAPHY, Phyllis Bess, Steve Littrell

PUBLIC RELATIONS, Steve Littrell

RESEARCH, Phyllis Bess, Gary Schaum



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About the Cover Photo:

Norman, Oklahoma
University of Oklahoma
Ceramics Department, July 14, 1928

John Frank at the potters wheel

Photograph from the Frank Family Collection
Photography by R. E. Heffner

The Frankoma pottery photographed in this issue of the *Pot & Puma* was provided by various members of the FFCA. We wish to extend our gratitude and thanks to these members for helping us to enrich our issues with these photos.

FROM THE SECRETARY

DONNA FRANK

Your secretary's message this time is a very personal one. As most of you know, I've been very insistent about the fact that *I am not a collector!* Of course I'm always interested in your collections, despite the fact I know relatively little about Frankoma collecting. You know I was away for forty-five years, and my life interests took other directions. And after all, my illustrious sister was the potter, not I.

I grew up in the midst of it, it was on our table at every meal, and it's what my parents did for a living. While I appreciated its attractiveness and its practical uses, it was **no big deal**. I certainly never got into saving or hoarding it for the day it might be worth something. And now, many of those things my parents lived with and preserved are still with us, and my sister and I have inherited them.

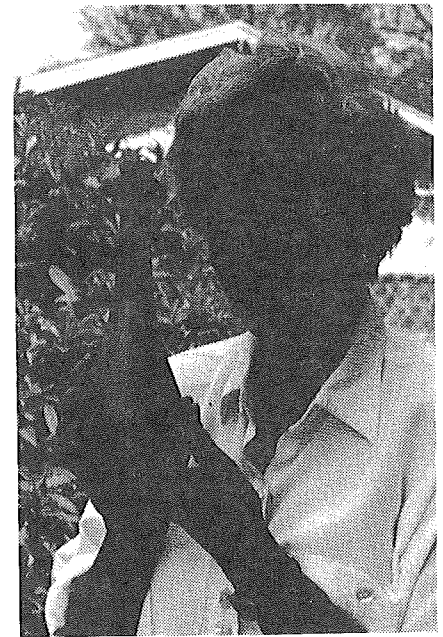
Being back in Oklahoma for these two and a half years, and getting all caught up in FFCA and you wonderful people—and having lived this time so close to Sister Johnnie—I couldn't help but absorb *some* knowledge by simple

osmosis. I still know very little about it, but I'm very good at referring you to those who do have the answers.

In January, I was doing a book signing in Muskogee at Bob and Alma Sadler's Main St. USA (fellow FFCA members), and there I discovered an early Norman vase. I asked to take a closer look at it, so Alma took it out of the case and put it into my hands. It was so permeated with the old John Frank vibrations, my knees went weak! As I continued to hold it, I swear it turned warm and glowing. I melted. It was mine. I knew it was mine. It *begged* me to bring it home.

The original price is still marked in ink on the bottom—49 cents—a pot and puma mark, bronze green, and later identified as a #14. The asking price now? Well, you can imagine—definitely out of my league—but no matter. I gave Alma every cent I'd made that day from the books, and some more, and asked her to put it in layaway for me. The end of March I finally paid the balance. And now it has come home.

So I've bit the dust and made my first big purchase. Move over, cousins. John and Grace Lee's little girl has become a qualified, bona fide Frankoma collector. ■



Phyllis Bess

Donna and her #14 Bottle Vase

John and Grace Lee's little girl has become a qualified, bona fide Frankoma collector

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP

DAVID G. MATTHEWS, TX

WHY I COLLECT FRANKOMA POTTERY

Not long ago, I was sitting in Pat Warner's living room after having seen his remarkable Frankoma collection. Nancy and Steve Littrell had stopped over and were sharing with us a beautiful Frankoma sugar & creamer set with one of the early marks (Frank Potteries).

A conversation ensued about why people collect Frankoma pottery. I told Nancy, Steve, and Pat the following story of why I started to collect these wonderful pieces of pottery.

As far back as I can remember, my family has always used Frankoma pottery, everything from juice glasses to plates to coffee mugs. All were part of our family meals. These were some of the happiest moments I can remember as a kid.

As I grew up, I noticed that more and more "things" around the house were Frankoma. The little Gardener Girl & Boy that were given to my mother by

some friends in Tulsa for helping clean their house; the trivets; the bowls with their flowing lines were all part of our home.

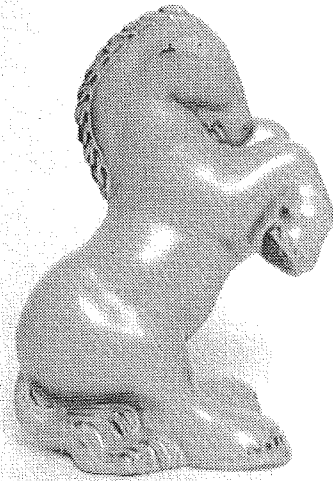
I can even remember as a child my mother and grandmother taking me to Sapulpa to visit the Frankoma factory and search for seconds. I would not characterize my family as ever being "rich". My mother has raised three kids on her own, but somehow she always managed to provide us with nice things. Maybe we couldn't afford the firsts, but the seconds from Frankoma were always a treat.

It's as if the spirit of John Frank and the entire Frankoma Family is contained within each piece of pottery.

What I am about to now say may strike some people as a bit odd. As a matter of fact, I was hesitant to share this with even Pat, Steve, and Nancy, but after telling them, I understood that it may not be so "odd". Frankoma pottery has a special magic about it. Pick up any

piece of Frankoma pottery. Feel something "magical" about it? I do. It is almost as if the spirit of John Frank and the entire Frankoma Family is contained within that piece of pottery. It transports me back to my childhood days when Frankoma pottery was part of our every day life. I can pick up pieces of pottery from other companies, but none of them have that special "magic" that Frankoma pottery has.

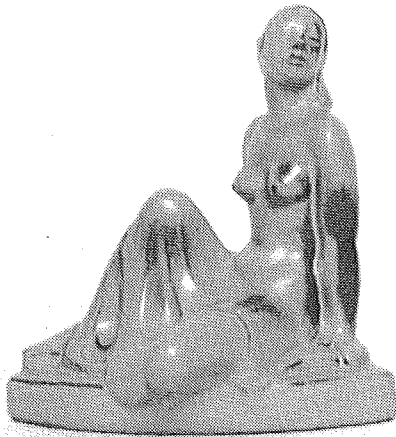
After having shared my story with Pat, Steve, and Nancy, they just looked at me. I half expected them to suggest that I check into the state psychiatric ward, but they just said, "Nothing strange about that, David." They told me that is the main reason a lot of people collect and use Frankoma every day. Aside from its beauty, there is indeed a special kind of magic about Frankoma pottery that will continue to live in all the pieces that were produced. I can't help but think that it is perhaps the spirit of John Frank and all that he stood for. Who knows? Nevertheless, I will continue to search for those special "treasures" and continue to enjoy Frankoma pottery in my everyday life. ■



REARING CLYDESDALE , #107
by Joseph Taylor
7" H X 4" D

By Special Arrangement with Frankoma Pottery

We are Proud to Present a *Special Re-Issue of 5* Original Frankoma Sculptures



MOUNTAIN GIRL BOOKEND, #136
by Joseph Taylor
6" H X 4 7/8" W X 4 1/2" D

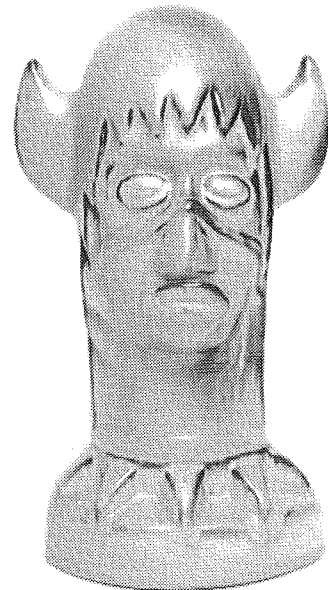
Our goal was to offer these Sculptures to the collectors at an affordable price. We think we have achieved this.

The price for any one of the 5 pieces is \$75 each, plus \$5 S/H. OK residents please add 8% sales tax (\$6) or tax number.

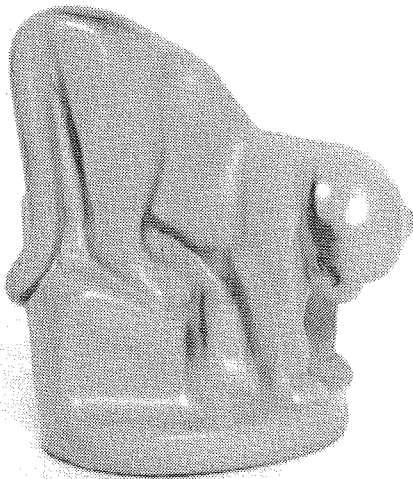
All Sculptures are produced from the 1973 molds, numbered with permanent ink 1-96 thru 200-96. Available in Prairie Green, Desert Gold, Onyx Black, and Bone. Orders will be filled in order of receipt.

Special Thanks to the Management, Mold Makers, and Work Force of Frankoma Pottery for an excellent job in producing these fine Re-issues.

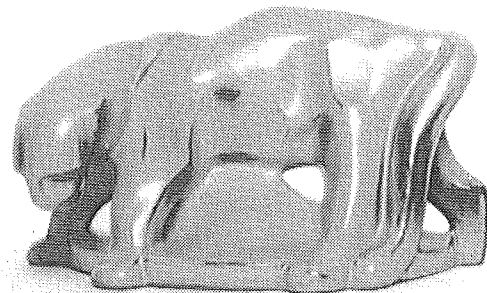
Contact Tom Grogg
PO Box 847
Kellyville, OK 74039-0847
918-247-4541 or 918-247-3682
Prodigy ID TRYF73A



MEDICINE MAN, #115
by Acee Blue Eagle
8 1/4" H x 4 1/4" W x 4 1/2" D



PUMA ON THE ROCKS , #119
by Joseph Taylor
6 1/2" x 4 3/4" W x 3 1/4" D



LEOPARD BOOKEND , #112
by Joseph Taylor
4 1/2" H X 8" W X 3 1/2" D

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP

KOMA GAL, CA

FINDING MY TREASURE

From 1963 to 1967 I lived in Bixby, Oklahoma, while I worked for Bovaird Oil Supplies in Tulsa. At lunch time, I used to walk around and see Frankoma Pottery in some of the shops in town. I fell in love with the Wagon Wheel dinnerware.

But like many others, I had a young family and just couldn't afford the luxury of a "second set of dishes." With time, all things changed, but not my love for those wonderful Wagon Wheel dishes. However, when we moved to Southern California, where we now live, I never saw it anywhere out here.

Our Orange County newspaper always sponsors a twice-a-year "Troubleshooter's Antique Swap Meet," with well over 600 vendors. In October of 1985, my husband Alan and I decided on a whim to go.

When we entered the gate, just three rows in, there was a vendor that had a cardboard box of pottery under her table. She told me they belonged to a friend, and she was just helping her out by bringing them to the swap meet. I asked to see what was in it.

To my surprise, that box contained my beloved Wagon Wheel dishes in Prairie Green! When the lady told me she was asking \$35, I knew right then—that box was going home with me! All I saw at first were six 10" plates, six tumblers, two 9" plates, a teapot, and a salt and pepper. I was so excited, I never took the time to look all the way down to the bottom of the box. I just gave her my money and left before she changed her mind.

When I arrived home, I discovered the box also had a small open-tailed swan (#228), a medium leaf dish (#226), a large round ash tray (#457), a 24-oz. pitcher (#845), plus some 7" Wagon Wheel plates, a vegetable bowl, and a sugar. What a treasure! I know that box of Frankoma had been just waiting there for me to find it.

Although he knew nothing about Frankoma, Alan loved the new dishes. I told him what little I knew, and we began going to all the antique malls we could find to look for more Frankoma and asking dealers what they knew about it.

One day we were at an antique mall in Solana Beach (in North San Diego County), and found Susan Cox's book on Frankoma. While Alan drove, I read it aloud for all of the hundred miles back to Orange County.

Now the bug had really bitten us! Soon afterward, we heard about Phyllis Bess's *Frankoma Treasures*, and we sent for it right away. With those two books—we read and we bought, read and bought. Alan became a big fan of the miniature animals and sculptures, while I still love the Southwestern things, like the cactus pieces, the boots—and my Wagon Wheels.

We're the two California Frankomaniacs with license plates that read KOMA KID and KOMA GAL, which we had even before there was a Frankoma Family to join. ■

(FYI, Koma Gal and Koma Kid sometimes also answer to Alan Stoltz and Cece Winchester-Stoltz.)

TELL IT TO DONNA!

WE think this is our best issue so far, cousins! Why? Because more of you are daring to get into the act. But most of you are still reluctant to send us stories. Yet, when we talk to you on the phone, they just seem to flow effortlessly. Are you hesitant because you think you "can't write"? Well, with our help—you can!

Nancy and Donna *can* continue to sit around and work up a sweat trying to think up fun things to fill these pages for you. But it's your journal, and it's alot more interesting to your fellow collectors when you jump in and help.

So send us a story! We'll help you fluff it up a bit, and maybe add a comma or two. And *voila!* You're a published writer. Guaranteed painless. But if you just can't seem to get those funny-sad-exciting-ironic-horror stories down on paper, then *call* us and *tell* your story. All Donna needs is the plot line. Call 918-224-6610, noon to midnight CST, and operators are standing by. ■

GO AHEAD—MAKE HER DAY!



ALIEN ABDUCTION RECORDED!

Another great find! In a little box of Mother's keepsakes, we found some color slides of Joniece with the hyperactive turtle she talked about in the last issue. Joniece doesn't even recall the episode being photographed. We believe Grace Lee herself must have taken them. Anyway, if any of you have doubts about the truth of that story, here's bona fide proof—

Believe It Or Not!

Romancing THE BUFFALO

By Joniece, as explained to Donna

You wanted a white buffalo. You told Kyle Costa, you told Dick Bernstein, and they listened. And I was assigned to bring one to life.

The white buffalo will be in production before this issue reaches you. Many who received Frankoma's customer mailing apparently liked the photograph well enough to send in quite a few orders. I do appreciate your confidence in me, and in Frankoma.

Frankoma has chosen to make a limited edition of 2,000 in white only, sold only at retail. Those FFCA members who wish to purchase one will receive a 10% discount, with their membership number.

When Kyle approached me about doing a white buffalo, I was still in my "angel" mode, and it made my head spin to change gears so fast from ethereal angels to earthy buffalos. But that's what he wanted, and that's what he would have. (I know the plural of buffalo is buffalo, not buffalos. I don't say "fishes," but I do like an "s" on the end of "buffalo.")

I confess I was a bit nervous at the beginning. After all, Frankoma had already produced that buffalo of Joe Taylor's back in the Norman days. I wasn't sure I could compete with that—or if, in fact, that's what I would be doing. I mean, would people be comparing mine to his? Could I live in that shadow? Would I have to?

Another thought hit me that made me question my being so sure I could do a good buffalo. I had been "designing pottery" for many, many years—lots of dinnerware, Christmas plates, vases, etc. You collectors had such faith in me, repeatedly referring to me as a "good sculptor." *But was I?* I had done those animals like the turtle and turtle planter, the pig planter and bank, the dog planter and bank, and of course the donkey mug—not great works of art, but utilitarian, with a certain measure of charm and personality.

But when was the last time I had done a serious piece of sculpture? Was it possible to reach back and reclaim the sculpting

ability I once had? These doubts could have stopped me cold in my tracks. But the stubborn old Capricorn in me said—maybe, just maybe, after having survived these many years of all that life had dealt, I *could* be more capable now than ever before of producing better, more mature art. It must be true that what doesn't kill you makes you stronger. So, as Daddy would have put it, "I grabbed the bull by the tail and looked him straight in the eye!" (Well, that's the way *he* would have put it.)

And all the while, there was the confidence in me that *you collectors* continued to express that gave me the support and *drive* I needed. It was during a very difficult time. I wasn't feeling well, Mother was dying, and there were times I just wanted to give it all up. But your encouragement and faith in me, as well as Kyle's and Mr. Bernstein's, allowed me *no room for self doubt*. I had to perform. I wanted to perform. For this, I can never thank you enough. I hope you like the results.

My best animal sculpture was done while at OU, under the instruction of Joe Taylor. It was a large collie dog, and I was pleased with what I had done. And when Joe said, "Now, *that's* a good piece of sculpture, Joniece!" I was thrilled, as Joe never gave praise lightly, and it was the only work of mine he ever complimented that highly. But when it was fired, someone forgot to turn the kiln off when they should have, causing it to literally melt like a fallen soufflé. I kept what was left of it, and I always had in mind going back some day and reconstructing it. It was stored on the second floor of the plant in 1983 when it burned.

A buffalo is a difficult animal to replicate. When I began my research, I went to places like Hallmark stores, antique malls, art shops, and other places I thought would surely have buffalo figures, just to see what's being shown in today's market. I made this kind of study to see how other artists approached the subject.

I was very surprised to find that buffalos are virtually non-existent. It seems no one is making buffalos these days! Well, *almost* no one. Those few I did see were not very good (by my stan-

dards of "art"), and I got very anxious to get into my studio and go to work.

The reason a buffalo is difficult to do is that his hulky body seems to go against all the laws of physics. As pointed out in the last issue, he sort of falls into the same category as "bumblebees can't fly." You've just got to go out and find a live one in motion to study, and see if you can capture that unlikely stance and posture and "mode" that is the buffalo.

Also difficult, because a buffalo has been romanced so much, not only in history, but especially after the birth of the white buffalo calf in Wisconsin. It's not like doing a dog that could be in anyone's back yard. Everyone images the buffalo in a different way, and all those images are apparently correct, as I soon learned.

I searched through my files and found a card I'd been saving for a long time, though I didn't know why until now. It had the phone number of a couple near the town of Catoosa who owned a small herd of buffalos. I called and introduced myself, and was invited to come to their place and see their "pet" buffalos. There were Cody the bull, four of his wives, and four of his children. And by the way, "pet" doesn't mean you can walk up and pet them at will. They're still wild animals and can be dangerous, and one must be cautious. But by comparison, these are "relatively" tame, having been around humans for a long time.

These buffalos live in the "front yard," as it were, of the rural home of the Jacksons. They were wonderfully hospitable and allowed me on two different days to tramp around in a lot of buffalo dung, taking photos and observing Cody's every move.

From my first look at that awesome animal, I knew I could do it. From that moment on, I experienced a feeling with Cody that I wanted more than anything to take home and share with my clay, which I hoped would in turn be passed on to those who would own the sculpture I would do.

The first day, after hours of being around him and talking to him, this enormous beast allowed me to reach out and scratch his nose and get the feel of his fur for a few moments. At the end of the second

day, the Jacksons and I were standing at their front porch saying goodbye, when Cody slowly lumbered up to me and nuzzled me with his nose. *I had been recognized! I was accepted! I was ecstatic! I was in love.*

I held out the plaster model of him and said, "Look, Cody—do you know who this is?" His stretched his head forward, sniffed it, and gave it a brief lick. I took that as a kiss of approval, and a blessing offered.

On the way home, I stopped by a 1-hour photo place and developed all those rolls of film I'd taken. I taped most of them to the walls and cabinets in my studio so I could saturate myself with images of buffalos. I cut out pictures from newspapers, magazines, and catalogs to add to my collage of buffalo images. I ate, slept, breathed, stared at, and dreamed of buffalos!

But I noticed something peculiar about all those pictures—they were all the same species, but each of them was distinctively different! Some had horns protruding away from the head like a Spanish fighting bull, while others had horns close to the hair but not into it, and some had no horns at all. There were large heads and small heads. There were big heavy bodies, and others were slim. Some had an abundance of hair, while others had little hair at all. And one was even a ferocious beast, snorting and pawing the ground in rage. So what was *my* buffalo going to be like? My buffalo would be anything but mean and threatening. I wanted him to be strong and confident, contented, the undisputed ruler of the space and domain that he controls, patriarch and protector of his family, with nothing in his environment escaping his awareness. My living model was all those things. Cody himself was the most powerful influence on me, and I was happy to let the nature and force of his personality and presence guide me.

The first problem I had to solve was how to make those skinny little legs hold him up without his toppling over at the slam of a door (like the #117 Prancing Colt). Pottery buffalos don't come with automatic balancing mechanisms like the real ones. So I began by putting grass and vegetation around his feet, as if he were standing on a grassy prairie plain. It seemed to work all right at first. But as I proceeded, it became obvious this wasn't the answer. I didn't like it. It just didn't work aesthetically.

I eventually came up with a plain base instead. And the problem was still a nagging one. How was I going to make the legs thick enough to make him secure, and at the same time make them *seem thin*? Having abandoned the idea of the grass, there was nothing now to hide his feet and legs. And also, along with the scrawny legs, those funny little split, spread-out hooves had to be dealt with. These were the dilemmas and the challenges I faced before I could move

too far forward. So I went to Joe Taylor's #420 Charger Horse Bookends, and also to the #107 Raring Clydesdale, to see how the master had dealt with it. And upon studying those pieces, I knew there was a way to accomplish what I was after.

But then, what of that stance that is unique to this beast? The shoulders always appear to be "hunched," which no other animal I know of can do without creating a lot of tension. The buffalo *looks* to be hunched—when, in fact, he's perfectly relaxed, yet ever alert. And the attitude of the head has to be just right to be true to the buffalo nature. He's not like any other animal in this respect either.

And then, a buffalo has several kinds of hair! Some of it is so thick, it appears to be solid matter. You have the long, thick hair on his shoulders that comes forward over his head like the afro styles of the 1970's; you have the short hair that covers the face; you have the long, straighter, wiry hair that makes up the little beard; there's the hair that lengthens and straightens out as it comes down over the front legs; and then there's the short kinky winter hair that covers the back half of the body, starting from behind the withers, which he loses in the spring, leaving the back half of the body as bald and smooth as a rubber ball. So I had a lot of contrasts to work with.

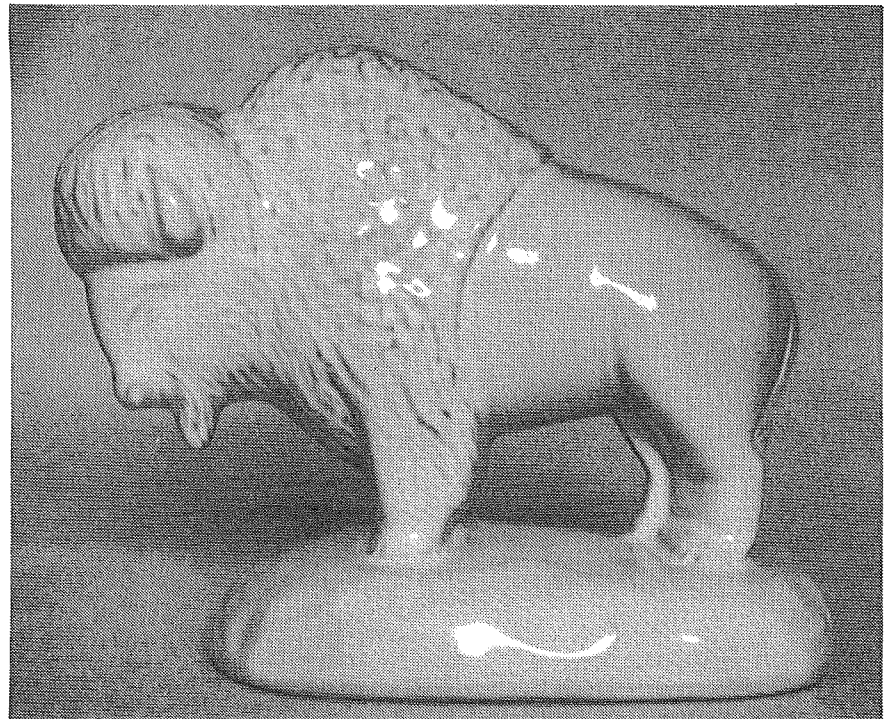
Well, finally art and realism met somewhere in the middle, and the whole thing came together and seemed to work.

Now that he's finished, I'm pleased. I like my Cody. And that discomfort I expressed earlier about my buffalo being compared to Joe Taylor's disappeared rather quickly, once I got down to work. Now I can laugh about having had those thoughts. There's no way I could ever compete with Joe Taylor or any other artist. My only competition is myself.

By the way, I even succeeded in making a good "production piece"—a simple, 3-piece mold—just two halves and a bottom. And I'm proud of that. (See *Believe It Or Not* in this issue.)

Donna says one of her worries when she finishes writing a piece is that people will think, "It took her *how* long to write something that simple?" When, in fact, she spends hours, weeks, often a year with a book, working to make the final product *appear simple*. And I do the same thing with my design work. It turns out we both work toward the same goal, for the same results. We agree on the value of the old KISS principle—"Keep It Simple, Sister." If it looks in any way complicated, you know it's not finished yet.


Ah, but what satisfaction there is when you finally arrive at "plain and simple." 🐾



The Great White Buffalo
Limited Edition 1996
by Joniece Frank

THOSE WONDERFUL FRANKOMA WAGON WHEELS

Article and Photographs by Gibb Green

 Why do I collect Frankoma? Because it's uniquely American; because of its simple, graceful lines and rainbow colors; because I can feel John and Grace Lee Frank in each and every piece; because it's made of native Oklahoma clays; because it's wonderfully Western.

So let's talk this time about Wagon Wheel pieces (the #94 series of stock numbers). Introduced in 1942, it predates by six years any of the other Frankoma dinnerware patterns and, like the Mayan-Aztec, it remains available by special order from the factory today.

Precious wife and I have three dinnerware sets—Plainsman in Woodland Moss, Mayan Aztec in Woodland Moss, and an Ada clay set of Wagon Wheels in Prairie Green. Can't speak for Beverly, but obviously the Wagon Wheel is my favorite. We bought our core Wagon Wheel set of six place settings about three years ago at a flea market in Longmont, CO. It has the 1942 mark. Since then we have added as many of the 1942 marked pieces as we can to make it a full "twelve."

The 1942 catalog shows just 11 pieces in the first offering. The #94F 9" dinner plate, the #94C&E cup and saucer, and the little #94H salt and pepper were introduced that year. The #94A&B 1-oz. cream and sugar were also available, as well as the tiny #560 creamer. The #510 sugar didn't come till later (about 1947, as the Christmas card of that year indicates). The #94D 1-1/2-qt. pitcher (later a 2-qt.) was the companion of the #94T 4-cup teapot.

Then there were two vases, the 6+" #94 and its miniature, the #94K, a 3-1/2" beauty. The #94K is slightly smaller than the #94B sugar bowl, which was without the extended lip on both sides of the top opening. All are common pieces except the #94K. I would place its value in the \$100 to \$125 range. It is a very tough find.

I found my #94K as a companion to a banged-up #94A at a Denver antique mall for \$25. I threw the #94A away, because it was too far gone. But the #94K was perfect, especially since it wasn't the sugar bowl that the seller thought it was. The "K" was *only* in the 1942 catalog and has not yet been pictured in any of the reference books.

The 1949 catalog offers the following beautiful four paragraphs to help sell Wagon Wheel dinnerware to Frankoma lovers:

"The romance of the West lives on with our Wagon Wheel set. The pitchers are quaint and practical. The cup is the hub of the wheel, and the 'good luck' horseshoe makes the handles for the baker. There are bands of cattlebrands on the platters and bowls. The whole set is an application of the fine designs that one can find on any ranch.

"A most colorful part of the history of the Southwest is the cattle industry, and the rancher's 'coat of arms' is his 'cattlebrand'. The covered wagon, 'wagon wheels', horses, the cowboys, cattle, the 'little doggie', and above all, the 'cattlebrand', are symbols of this natural industry. The cattlebrand is the symbol of the rancher, and it identifies his proudest possessions. It is the family trademark, handed down from generation to generation.

"Many of these brands are fine designs, and most of them have definite meaning. Some are the initials of the owner, others may refer to hills on the ranch, the number of acres he owns, the number in his family, his monogram, a key, a hat, or any of a thousand items of interest. Each brand is usually registered in the county and state in which it is used.

"We are proud to take this opportunity to eulogize these pioneers of the Southwest, and include a number of these brands in decorating some of the pieces of our Wagon Wheel set."


Well, since old GG has a farm and ranch background, it's not hard to figure out why the Wagon Wheel pattern has so much appeal for me. Of course, by 1949, there were many new pieces added as part of the Wagon Wheel line. The

#94HL 3" horseshoe salt and pepper had arrived. The #94V 1-1/2-qt. baker and the #94W 3-qt. baker, both with cattlebrands, were available. The #94U mini baker with cattlebrands was also in the line. Many still think it's a sugar bowl, but it was actually an individual baker for such things as baked beans. They're hard to find with lids and no chips. They'll easily bring \$30 each.

The #94Y wall pocket was offered for decorative purposes. My daily-use coffee mug, the 12-oz. #94M, came along for the big coffee hitters who still want a wagon wheel hub on the bottom of their mug.

Also introduced was the wonderful little #94J 2-cup teapot with lid. And there were serving pieces in that catalog such as the 13" #94Q platter, the 17" #94P platter, and the #94N 1-qt. round service dish, all three with cattlebrands around the exterior. Two bowls were offered, the #94X 16-oz. chili or soup, and the #94XS 10-oz. desert. The plate inventory was expanded to include the large 10-1/2" (later 10") #94FL, and the 7" #94G salad plate.

With the advent of the 1949 catalog, the Frankoma fancier could have a whole wall full of Wagon Wheel dinnerware, and prepare and serve most any kind of meal, casual or elegant, depending upon the kind of linens used.

 In later years, before the end of the Ada Clay Era (circa 1954-55), several other extremely useful pieces came along. They included the #94XL 20-oz. bowl for teenage boys who loved to eat a half box of cereal at a time, the cutie #94XO 6-oz. dessert bowl, the #454 Wagon Wheel candleholder and ashtray with finger loop (a later version had no cigarette indentations and no finger loop), the huge #94WL 5-qt. baker, the #94FC 15" 7-section lazy susan with ball bearing base, and the #94QD 13" divided oblong serving bowl.

Here were two tumblers often marketed with the Wagon Wheel set—the #80C 12-oz. (which was later re-numbered #94L), and the little #90C juicer, a 3-ouncer. A lid was added to the #94B creamer after the Ada Clay Era.

The boots made by Frankoma also mix well with Wagon Wheel items. The little #507 star boot, the #134 4" boot, and the #133 6" boot vase and wall pocket, as well as bookends, all dress up a Wagon Wheel display. The #34 and #167 horseshoes can add a flavor of the Old West to dinnerware sets as well. You can use even red bandannas for napkins. Joniece says that Grace Lee used to roll up the bandanna length-wise, tie it in a knot around the center of the horseshoe and called it a napkin holder.

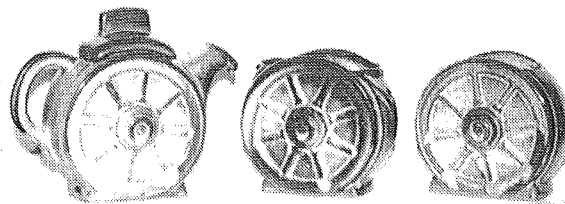
In 1957, with the advent of the Frankomadam trivet era (yes, old GG just invented another word, after his triumphant invention of the now-a-household-word "Frankomaniac"), three more very useful pieces came along to further accessorize the Wagon Wheel dinnerware. The rare #94TR Wagon Wheel trivet was joined by the more common #94TRH horseshoes trivets and the #94TRC cattlebrands trivet. All three are treasures, but the #94TR will bring \$60 or better.

Company records indicate that Wagon Wheel items first went into production in 1941. A few collectors have told me of a #94D 2-qt. pitcher with a pot and puma mark (1936-39), and one collector suggests that a #94K mini vase has been found with a small round "o" mark (1934-35). But the real production en masse of dinnerware came with the advent of the 1942 catalog.

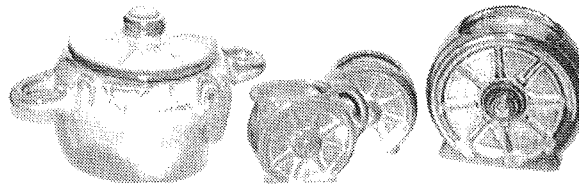
For sheer beauty, it's hard to beat the Prairie Green and Desert Gold colors and textures of the 1942 era. It is at once wonderfully "Old West," and quintessential John and Grace Lee.

Another Wagon Wheel beauty from 1942 is a sample set produced by a Frankoma employee for his wife in Desert Rose or Rosetone glaze. Dealer and friend Tom Grogg had quite a few pieces of it for sale earlier this year. It's the same basic color as Redbud, but has the texture of Indian or Peacock Blue.

In the Red Sapulpa Clay Era, a Wagon Wheel set in Peach Glow or Woodland Moss would have incomparable beauty and, of course, values well above book prices. Not long ago I saw a set in Onyx Black that was simply spectacular!



#94J Teapot, 2-Cup
#94B Sugar Bowl
#94K Vase



'Branded' Mini Baker
#560/510 Cream & Sugar
#94K Vase 3.5", 1942



The Classic #94H S&P
#94M Biggy Coffee Mug
#94XO Dessert Bowl



The Cattlebrands and
Horseshoes Trivets—
great Wagon Wheel
companions

I may have missed a piece or two in my search for all the Wagon Wheel items ever made. Which brings me to a key point about the wonder of Frankoma—you're never short of ideas to expand your dinnerware possibilities, because Frankoma made just about anything you'd ever need to go with your creative cooking and serving. And, if you didn't see it in the catalog, all you had to do was call, and they just might have made it for you. Besides, if there isn't a piece in Wagon Wheel to quite suit your fancy, there's probably one in another pattern or the general line that will fit perfectly, if it happens to match your glaze choice—this is especially true with candle holders and vases.

My bunkmate of twenty-seven years has a beautiful set of "Navajo" stainless steel flatware by William Rogers that goes wonderfully with either Wagon

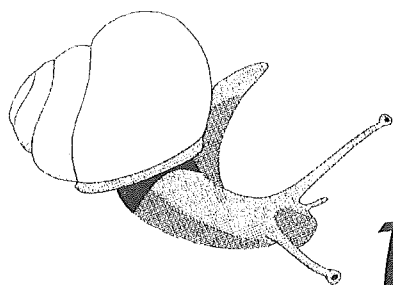
Wheel or Mayan-Aztec dinnerware. A word of caution—we don't put our Ada clay dinnerware in the dishwasher. It's not the heat you worry about (remember, all Frankoma is over proof), but the vibration *could* shake an old piece to pieces!

What do you pay for dinnerware pieces? I stay pretty close to Phyllis Bess and Susan Cox prices. Ada clay and better glazes can add 50% or more to their quotations. My personal thanks to both ladies for their inestimable contributions to our hobby! ☺

Please write or call me with your "Wagon Wheel beauty" stories. I always enjoy a good Frankoma letter or phone call. It's such a pleasure writing these articles for fellow Frankoma lovers, and in memory of John and Grace Lee Frank. You may find us here: Gibb and Bev Green, 225 Cherry Court, Windsor, CO 80550, 970-686-2752

The Frankoma

Snail Tale



Frankoma has long used the ubiquitous snail as a model for various pieces. It all began about 1934 with the creation of the #31 snail bud vase, an item that was carried in the line until 1992. Actually, this is Frankoma's longest continuously produced item—58 years.

This little gem is purported to be 6" high, but in reality ranges from a low of 5-13/16" to a high of 6-3/8"! The top opening of some is round, others are oval, and some even almost square. Likewise, some are comparatively straight, while others bend in a graceful curve. Finally, some are distinctively thicker in body than others. The colors range from such old-timers as Old Gold, Ivory, Royal Blue, and Silver Sage, through such beauties as Red Bud and Peacock Blue, also including the old standards, to the newer colors.

This vase, like many other Frankoma pieces, has been subject to copying. A friend gave me one that is bright yellow and purple, but the inside is white, as is the base clay. At first glance, though, it looks like the real thing. The copy is so good that it almost appears to have come from a Frankoma mold, rather than a forged one. Maybe this is a case of imitation being the sincerest form of flattery?

The snail bud vase can be found with many different marks on the bottom. These vary from "Frankoma" with a small round "o," the Pot and Puma mark, and various other incised Frankoma marks, to finally with "Frankoma" in the mold. In earlier snail bud vases, the whole bottom was bare. Later, just the foot was left unglazed.

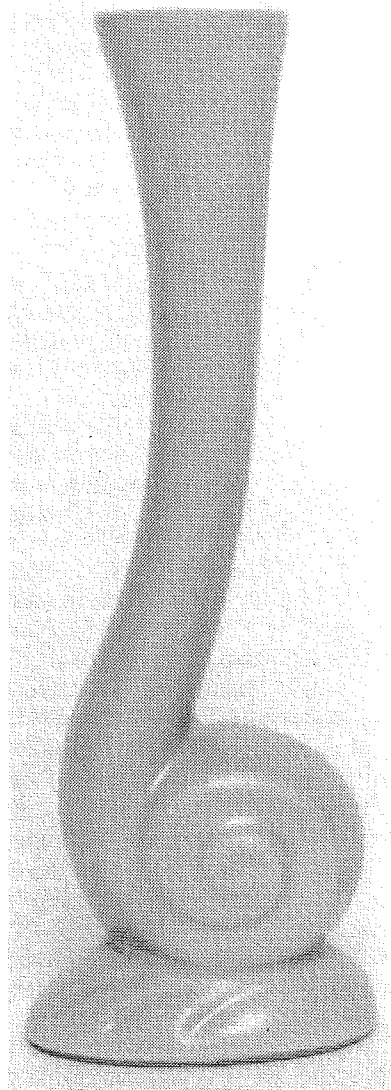
All of the clays used by Frankoma through the years (Ada, brick red, and pink Sapulpa clays) were used during the long production life of this pretty little vase. Except for the earliest years and colors, these vases are comparatively easy to find. They take up very little shelf space, make an attractive display, and are much easier on your pocketbook than a lot of other pieces.

The next use of the snail began in 1942 with the inception of the #558 snail mini-pitcher, which remained in the line until 1953. The basic design was also used for salt and peppers (#558H) from 1942 to 1949. These can be found with various configurations for the holes, e.g., as the letters S and P facing forward or facing backward, or even two large (salt) holes and three small (pepper) holes in a straight line.

Most colors of the line appear to have been used for both the miniature pitchers and the salt and peppers. As with most of the Frankoma "smalls," these attractive little items are becoming quite difficult to find, the pitchers somewhat harder than the salt and peppers.

Another Frankoma use of the snail is much lesser known and much harder to find than the others. In 1982, along with several other designs, Frankoma created a snail napkin ring (#261), which remained in the line until 1988. These were generally sold in boxes of four and were made in all colors in the lines of those years.

Every Frankoma collector should have one or more of the Frankoma snails in their collection. They're usually still at a price anyone can afford, and they're lovely little pieces to own and enjoy. *Happy snail hunting!* ☒



#31 Snail Bud Vase

by Ray Stoll



#558 Miniature Snail Pitcher

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP

ALAN ZASTROW, CO

MY FIRST FRANKOMA FIND

When I was 13 years old, I was growing up in Tomahawk, Wisconsin, a very small town that had a Main Street three blocks long. There were two stores that sold Frankoma, and one was a Hallmark store that one summer afternoon had a sidewalk sale. Among the merchandise were three Prairie Green jugs with corks. I fell in love with those little jugs and spent all my newspaper money to purchase them for about \$5.

The other store in town was a high-priced, knick-knack jewelry store. In 1980, it was going out of business and, being a small town, the store owner knew me. She had one Frankoma vase that was Prairie Green on top and Onyx Black on bottom. It was originally around \$35, a lot of money for me, so I could never buy it. But when she went out of business, she felt sorry for me, as she knew how much I enjoyed looking at the vase. She decided to sell it to me for \$7! I was so pleased, and I put that vase in my small room in a place of honor.

Later that same year, I walked into a discount store that sold odds and ends of merchandise bought from liquidators. They had three pieces of Desert Gold Frankoma that I purchased for about \$3. Those pieces were part of the bathroom set that Frankoma made.

When I moved away, I took my small collection with me and started buying most of my Frankoma at garage sales and antiques stores in Alaska and Colorado. Now I have over 300 pieces. When an antique store here in Pueblo, Colorado, gave me an 800 number for the Frankoma factory, I called, and they gave me Donna Frank's number.

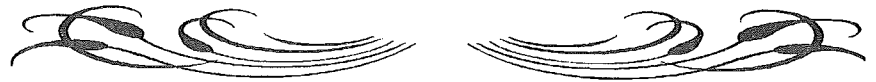
Hence, here I go again. I'm looking forward to finding out how much some of my pottery is worth. After I called and talked to Donna, she sent me the information package, and now I am proud to send my check to become a member of such a great group.

Thank you for establishing this association! I look forward to buying and trading Frankoma for a long time to come.

YOU'RE WELCOME!

P.S. Donna, great book! I read it this weekend. Usually bios are boring. This definitely was *not*! ■

Pat Warner on Collecting Frankoma



Review from last issue:

Collecting by Clay

- I. Ada Clay 1934 to 1954-55
- II. Brick red Sapulpa Clay 1954-55 to 1965-66
- III. Pink Frankoma Clay 1966 to date

COLLECTING LARGER FRANKOMA PIECES

The Franks designed some very attractive large pitchers and vases to be used as "accent" pieces in home decor, not for everyday utilitarian use. As I see it, they were not made to line up on a shelf like tall giraffes, but to be placed sparingly about the room on a table, a mantle, or as fireside sets.

There are the #77 and #77A Fireside Vase and Pitcher, 17" tall, produced in many colors. The tallest, however, are the classic Art Deco #78, #78A Pitcher and Vase, 19" in height. They were also produced in many colors, but the most popular, it seems, were in Prairie Green, Desert Gold, and Onyx Black.

The #820 15" Fish Chop Plate is an elusive, much sought after item, especially in blue. This Fish Chop Plate, as well as the #5FC Plainsman Chop Plate and the #94C Wagon Wheel Chop Plate all make very attractive wall pieces. They can also be great conversation starters.

There are many 9"-12" pitchers, vases, and bowls that can be used as decorations or attractively grouped on shelves or buffets and other furniture. The Collector Vases (the V-series) are good examples and, as a complete collection, offer a wide variety in shapes, colors, and intensities of color.

If you use the #F55 Wine Bottles as accents in your home, you might want to partially fill them with buckshot or sand to weight them, as they can easily be tipped and broken, especially if you have children or pets in the house.

If you can, look at some of the old Frankoma catalogs, and you'll find many of these tall bottles, pitchers, and vases featured on a lot of the covers.

~o~ Next issue ~o~

Collecting early pitchers, jugs, and vases

Joniece's



Welcome to our on-going serial feature article. We asked for your response, and it was overwhelming. Our thanks to all of you who wrote, and are still writing, to say you want more of these kinds of stories. Okay, here we go...



Phyllis Bess

Tepee Sign 6 1/2" H
Frankoma's #2 Display Sign, circa 1940's

Joniece tells the stories . . .

Donna writes them down

SIGNS OF FRANKOMA

The very first Frankoma sign was the small pacing puma, facing left, on a base which carried only the letters FRANKOMA (not FRANKOMA POTTERY). You'll find it pictured on the cover of Phyllis Bess's latest book, *Frankoma and Other Oklahoma Potteries*.

I'm sure Daddy was just playing around here, searching for an idea for a unique type of sign, but not especially for accounts to use for display. He may have been simply looking for a unique "image," with a good, uncontrived, flat area for the name. The puma was a natural, I suppose, as there were several of Joe Taylor's cats in line at that time. Those graceful lines of the puma, supported by a flat base, served the purpose nicely.

Let's think about it. Could that puma have been the predecessor to the Pot and Puma logo—before he added the pot? It's possible that here he was working on that concept before the Pot & Puma mark (representing artware + sculpture) came into being.

Okay, collectors, if you're fortunate enough to own one, run—don't—walk to your nearest pacing puma from Norman days (any pacing puma will do), and check out the mark on bottom. Does it carry (a) the Pot & Puma mark, (b) "Frank Potteries" black ink mark, or (c) "Frankoma?" We need your help here to gather the facts from what's out there. Pictures of your piece *and* its bottom side would be nice, if possible, but not necessary. Drop a note to Donna and me and tell us what you have, and we'll report back to you in the next issue. Just another mystery to solve. *What fun!*

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

Years later, when a definite need for a display sign with which to supply the accounts came into being, he got serious about designing one. The Pot and Puma was no longer especially representative of Frankoma. If you'll remember the Joe Taylor interview in an earlier issue, Daddy had previously offered Joe a partnership, which he declined. So, although many of Joe's creations were still in the Frankoma line, he was no longer in the picture on an active basis and was not contributing anymore works.

Frankoma was moving into a new phase. Daddy was always quite enamored with the romance of the Old West and all that wonderful Indian lore. So he took a piece of plaster and filed it down into a three-sided pyramid shape, which became a tepee. He then stuck an Indian head on the front and made a mold of it. And this is why the Indian head is slightly smaller on the sign than the one in line—firing shrinks it that 10% we've talked about before, remember?

Just a note here to call your attention to the artist's subtle touch on this piece. On the left side (as you face the piece), rather than leave that surface flat and slightly boring, he carved a small recess, creating the *illusion* of a raised area—giving the eye an interesting "trilogy of depths." It certainly doesn't need to be there in order for it to be a tepee, but it was a thoughtful little gesture on his part. Also, on the right, notice the back of an arrow coming out of a circle—without the need for the head of the arrow to come out the other side. And what of that circle? Maybe it's part of a drum, or a fragment of an Indian symbol. But it does make for an interesting contrast in lines, as well as slightly softening it, don't you agree? Put your hands over those features on both sides (or your thumbs over both sides of the photo), and notice how stark and almost uninteresting it could have been without those subtle touches. That's the difference in a "craftsman" and an "artist."

I'm not sure which came first here, the chicken or the egg. Did he add that Indian head because it had more or less

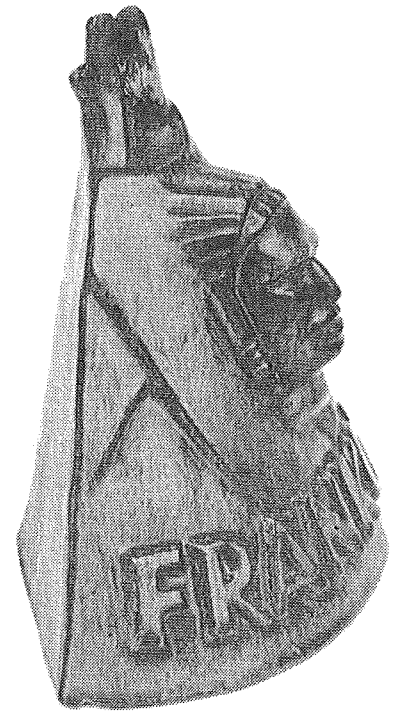
become Frankoma's symbol, or did the Indian head come to be a symbol of Frankoma because he put it on that tepee sign?

The Indian head was for many years "the" Frankoma souvenir, and here's why. It seemed to him that something "Indian" was indeed appropriate for an Oklahoma pottery that was producing the kinds of things Frankoma was doing.

There were clubs and all kinds of local groups asking to tour the plant. Classes of school children would come to Frankoma on field trips to see pottery being made. Sometimes there were tourists who had come very far out of their way to stop there. Daddy would drop whatever he was doing and be their guide, ending the tour in the clay shed, where he would entertain them by throwing a piece on the wheel—something they would never forget. Then he would take them back to the showroom and present each of them with a pottery Indian head to take home.

We so often hear stories from people whose teachers had brought their class to Frankoma in a school bus when they were kids, and they remember that trip every time they look at the Indian head that's still on their wall. And they wouldn't sell that little souvenir for any price, because the thrill of receiving it is still with them. Daddy gave it to them with a generous heart. But he also knew those kids would come back and bring their parents with them. And they always did.

None of those first signs were ever made to be sold. They were given to the accounts, not only to enhance their displays, but to plainly identify what their customers were buying. It was getting the name out there in front of people, and the name FRANKOMA was remembered. That tepee with the classic, bold face of an Indian on it stuck in their minds. It worked just like he wanted it to. It proved to be a great sales tool. And of course the idea of a display sign made of the same pottery as the items they were buying was pretty catchy.



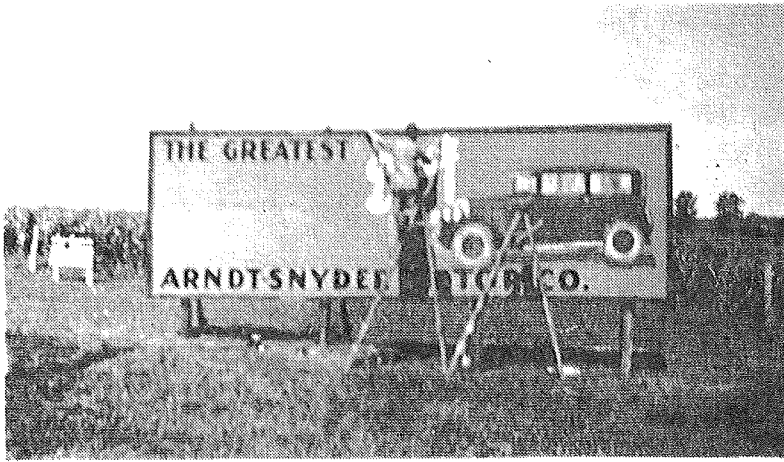
Phyllis Bess

Left View of Sign Front



Phyllis Bess

Right View of Sign Front



Frank Family Collection

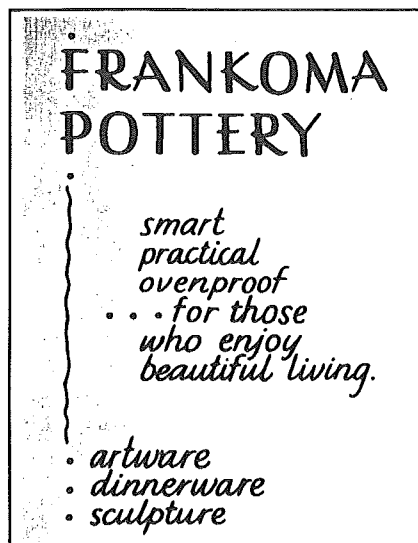
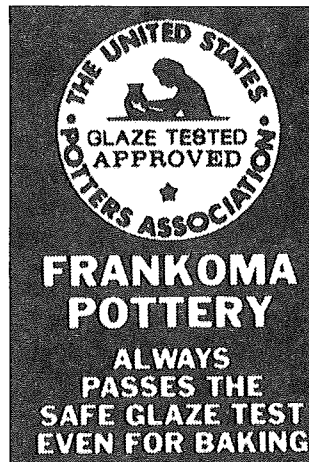
John Frank works as a sign painter in 1920s Chicago. This shows unique lettering style he later refined and used for Frankoma signs and letterhead.

There was another reason for a pottery sign. In those days, it was far cheaper to make a sign in pottery than it was to have a sign printed (it had to be typeset). Computers and copy machines were yet unborn, and printing costs were simply prohibitive. Besides, now that the line was expanding, he wanted to say more to customers than just the name. He knew if he didn't provide signs for the accounts, few of them, if any, could or would go to the expense of having one printed. And of course he wanted his product to have the look of a class act.

FRANKOMA CARDBOARD SIGN? >

Remember, Daddy had been a professional sign painter, and a good one. Finally, in the 1950's he did hand print a cardboard-backed, free-standing, display sign for the accounts. He used India ink and various sizes of nibs (pen points) to create that unique style of characters. It was as personal as his signature. Notice he used three different line widths in this style—a broad line, a half of that line, and a fourth of it. Looking at the photo of his sign painting days in 1920's Chicago, you can see he was working on it as early as then. You won't find it in any calligraphy book. He began using it in pottery with the tepee/Indian head sign, where you can see it was still developing.

He also used that unique script of his (see display sign), which had that artful "roundness" with every stroke. On many specials, he used a very plain block printing, which he could do very quickly



John Frank's 1950's hand lettered cardboard display signs

and perfectly the first time. Those styles were equally personal, and his alone. I always tried to copy his block printing but could never quite duplicate it. It always looked like a copy. (P.S.—his handwriting was next to *unreadable!*)

FRANKOMA DISPLAY SIGN #3 >

Years later, Daddy came to the realization that a smaller and simpler, but equally effective, pottery sign was needed. And, too, the tepee/Indian head symbol no longer fit the need. It limited the focus of the product, and Frankoma was now beginning to expand its horizons with dinnerware and all kinds of other things.

So, as he often did, he took a piece of clay and began spreading it out in the palm of his hand with his thumb, and made what could have been just a plain tailored surface on which to put the name. But he chose to leave the background a little rough and textured, as if the letters were built onto something in nature, like a rock, or coming out of some kind of natural surface. You can see those spreads of clay on either side of the letters that his thumbs made. Also, you can see where his thumbs finished off the back of it.

He first made just the basic shape of the sign, then made molds of the front and back, and lastly carved the letters into the plaster in reverse. It was a very simply designed piece, free-standing (no extensions needed to hold it up), compact, not easily knocked over, attractive, production efficient—and it didn't take up much room, or weight, in a shipment of pottery. It did the job very nicely, and they were made in a variety of colors.

ENTER JONIECE

And now—this is where I came in. When I graduated from OU in January of 1960 and went to work at the plant, Daddy knew what he was doing when he put me straight into the mold shop. I thought it was because he really didn't know what else to do with me, but I was dead wrong. He knew what he was doing, all right. He knew I could never enter the design phase until I knew and understood the principles of good mold making—both master molds and production molds. It's true that one cannot even *think* about designing a piece that will be reproduced in a mold without the experiential knowledge of mold making.

It is absolutely essential. Without that training, it would make for a *very* long, and probably next-to-impossible, trial-and-error process.

Junior Lucas, our master mold maker, was a splendid teacher. He taught me mold making from the ground up—how to soap and clean a master mold to properly prepare it to receive wet plaster, the making of production molds, etc. It was *extremely* hard work, with a lot of heavy lifting, and I was the only girl that had ever done it. (During WWII, Leona worked in the mold shop, but mostly trimming molds, never the real heavy stuff.)

At that time, I was living in a little apartment in Tulsa the size of a one-car garage, furnished, bills paid, \$50/month. It was my first home away from home, and to me it was a town house. When I came home from work, all I could do was fall on my bed and groan a lot. I had a back ache in every muscle of my body! But I'll have to say it did have its upside—my first six weeks in the mold shop I dropped twenty-some pounds.

In retrospect, going back to age twelve, was when I began working in the retail showroom. That was the summer we built the new gift shop attached to the plant. Some of you may have come across invitations to that open house. It was a grand and glorious event.

Christmas and Thanksgiving holidays and spring vacations, any time I wasn't in school, I was always working the retail showroom. But each summer for years I spent in a different department of the plant. I did invoicing. I glazed. I cast. I trimmed, pulled orders, worked in retail, took tours, wrapped orders, packed orders, loaded and unloaded kilns, ad infinitum.

And yes, I punched a time card like everyone else. It was actually good that Dad had me do that, because it set an example for the others and dispelled any ideas that I was being favored, or that he paid me anything but a basic hourly wage. My image was anything *but* "the owner's daughter who got special privileges."

Work began promptly at 7:30 a.m., there was a ten-minute break at 10:00, lunch from 12:00–12:30, a ten-minute break at 2:30, and quitting time was 4:00. To this day, at 10:00 and at 2:30, a bell goes off in my head, and I have an almost uncontrollable urge to flop down in the nearest chair and put my feet up.

I was clearly low man/woman on the Frankoma totem pole. But thank heaven for that! It gave me the opportu-

nity to establish a rapport with my co-workers that I will always treasure. It created such a strong bond that, some twenty years later, when I became their employer, we still maintained a family type closeness and respect for one other that is unheard of in such situations. Many of those people watched me grow from a clay-covered little kid playing at their feet beneath the casting benches, through the awkward teens, to a mature woman, to becoming their boss, the President and CEO.

If there was ever a truth that could be said about my father, it was that he never asked anyone to do something he wasn't willing to do himself. He taught me this principle, and I've always done my best to live it to the fullest.

Incidentally, around 1970, when the Frankoma stock was signed over to me, I was still punching that clock. However, because times were really tough, when I clocked out at 4:00, that was when I paused briefly to catch my breath and began my "second shift." With very few exceptions, I worked until very late at night, and through most weekends.

PRESSING ON... ♡

Back to the mold shop. It was during the time when the hydraulic presses were fairly new, by a year or two, and we had just added a couple more. All the while I was learning those basic skills of manufacturing, Daddy wanted to in-

volve me with something more in the designing end.

One of those things he assigned me was the making of a new Frankoma sign that could be made on the press. Until now, they had all been cast. True, we were getting more accounts and probably did need a new, more streamlined display sign. But maybe we didn't really. As I look back now, more than needing a new sign, we were simply enchanted with this whole new game of designing things, as well as converting existing pieces, for two-piece molds to be used on those exciting new high-tech machines of ours!

Up till now, we had always been confined to a mere "casting" concept, and now modern technology was at our very fingertips. We were thrilled and fascinated with the idea of *real mass production!* We were also living under the misconception that it was a lot cheaper to press, because it was faster. Maybe I'll talk about that a little later.

So Daddy described to me the size he wanted the sign to be, and I remember taking a piece of clay and cutting it to the approximate dimensions. Then I took the clay and bent it just enough to get it to stand on its own, working with it until it had a nice graceful little curve to it, remembering to avoid undercuts, no straight sides, and all those other rules that had to be brought into play.

When the clay had dried to a "leatherhard" consistency, I mixed the plaster and poured it over the piece. As Daddy had done, I carved the letters into the plaster in reverse. By this time, he



John Frank's
display sign #3



Joniece's small,
thin display sign #4

had perfected a certain style of lettering he had been working on—the style that appeared on the Frankoma letterhead of the time—and that’s what I used on this.

“My” little display sign continued over the following years to be given to wholesale accounts to use with their Frankoma displays. However, around 1978 or thereabouts, I noticed the accounts were asking for more and more free signs, and we were making and sending out more and more. Finally, Chester Graham, our top salesman, and Wanda Morgan brought it to my attention that many accounts were selling those signs for anywhere from \$7.50 to \$15 apiece! Well! So we started charging them \$3.25 for each one. Of course we still gave one or two signs to a new account, but from then on, they were charged for the extras they wanted.

Does \$3.25 sound cheap? Realize that, at that time, a cup *retailed* for \$2, and a spoon holder was only \$1. Wholesale—that’s \$1 a cup, and 50 cents a spoon holder. So you see, \$3.25 was comparably high, and we priced them that high to discourage the accounts from ordering more, because it was an annoy-

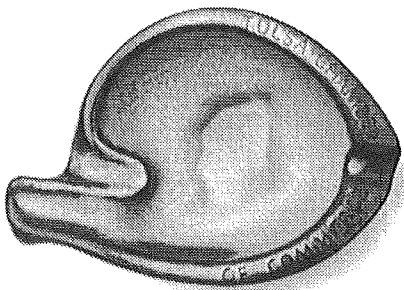
ance to us at the time. However, if we’d had any sense at all, we’d have charged them a mere \$1 just for the postage and handling, and let it go at that. After all, the purpose of that sign was to “get the name out there,” and it was doing a good service for us. That was poor judgment on our part. (Perhaps those accounts who sold them at those outrageous prices had a crystal ball we didn’t know about? Hoo noo??)

Now, let’s rewind and get back to this romance that Daddy and I had with the presses. There was more reason to *press* pottery than just the fact it appeared to be cheaper. It was an absolute delight to watch them being stamped out so fast! Wham—bam—set ‘em on the rack to dry. It was the highlight of our visitors’ plant tours to watch those presses in operation! *Casting* a piece meant about three hours from pouring the mold to setting the item up to dry—and it was very soft. Pressing it, however, meant the body was much more dense (pressed clay is much more compacted), so everything was already partially dried, and that also saved time. But beyond all that—we were simply *fascinated* with our new toy, and we were having fun! *Whhee!*

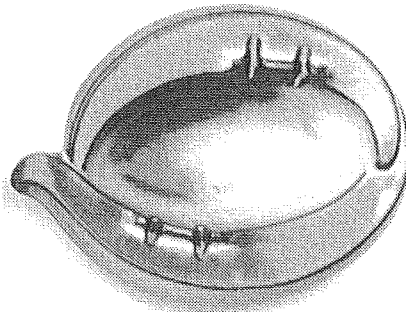
PASS THE ASH TRAY ▼

But the press sometimes demanded sacrifices. Take the production of ash trays. You may be surprised to learn that Frankoma never sold that many ash trays. Some of them were often bought as decorative pieces, like the big round #30T (with optional metal handle) and the #F203 tear drop. However, overall, ash trays never sold all that well for us—but they were needed as accessory pieces to “complete the line,” so to speak. Just like we never sold very many of those little corn dishes, but they provided additional choices for the customer who was buying a set of dishes, and I felt we needed them.

There was the #458 ash tray, which we previously cast, and now pressed. This piece served us especially well, as it was a good symmetrical design, an ideal size, and everyone liked it. With that one, nothing was really lost in the translation, and it continued to sell pretty well. And now, as a result of being able to press it, we could do a lot of different specials by just changing the design work in the round center. We made untold numbers of specials out of that ash tray!



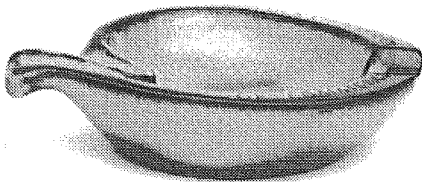
#452 Ash Tray produced by casting



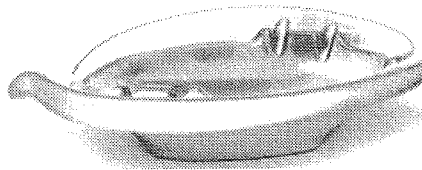
#452 Ash Tray after being redesigned for hydraulic press



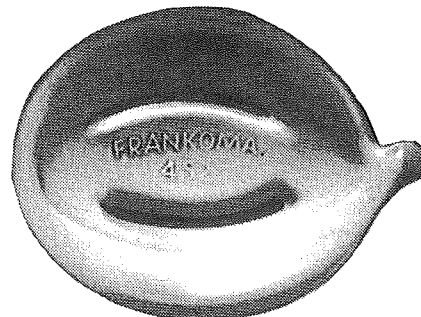
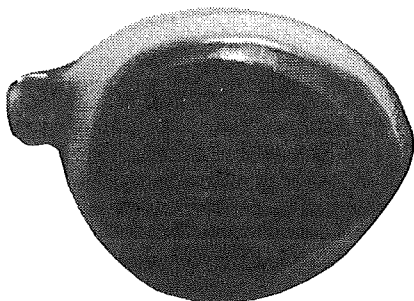
#458 Ash Tray



Cast #452 Ash Tray back



Pressed #452 Ash Tray back



NOTE: Example of one of the many specials made from this #458 Ash Tray. This one was designed by John Frank especially for Gus and Donna’s “Million Dollar Players” in Colorado. The Franks drove to Glenwood Springs in the summer of 1964 to see the shows and surprise them with these special ash trays. There were only those few made, which were given to members of the cast and crew of their summer stock theatre company. The four or five extras were given to certain merchants in the town who had helped promote the theatre and shows to summer tourists. This one, as you can see, was broken and poorly mended, but the only one we know of still in existence.

P.S. Just before going to press, Gibb Green called Donna asking if she knew anything about the Million Dollar Players. He had just discovered a perfect one in DG of the above at a flea market in Ft. Collins, CO—not knowing anything about the theatre company, or that we were using the above picture in this issue. Another case of serendipity! Thank you, Gibb!

On the other hand, when Daddy redesigned the #452 free form ash tray, what had to be done to convert it to the press took away some of its design "attitude," if you will. When it was cast, there was a certain depth and thickness and mass to it, which enhanced its overall design. When that mass and solidity were taken away in order to press it, much of the design "form" was sadly lost.

Daddy had started out to simply alter that piece a bit to fit on the press, but as sometimes happened, he got carried away and ended up with something very different that he thought would be better. It somehow lost the charm of that outstanding free-flowing shape, which obviously had been a large part of its charm and appeal, and it was never the same. It became something else instead, although it still carried the same number.

This is a good example of where you can't always change a piece from casting to press and still maintain its quality of design.

OF ONE MIND ➤

Daddy always kept some clay around at home. And, just like those pieces we've referred to before that he pushed and shaped into his hand, he would sit at the kitchen table and do that, and make models, or work on his lap while he sat in his big over-stuffed rocker.

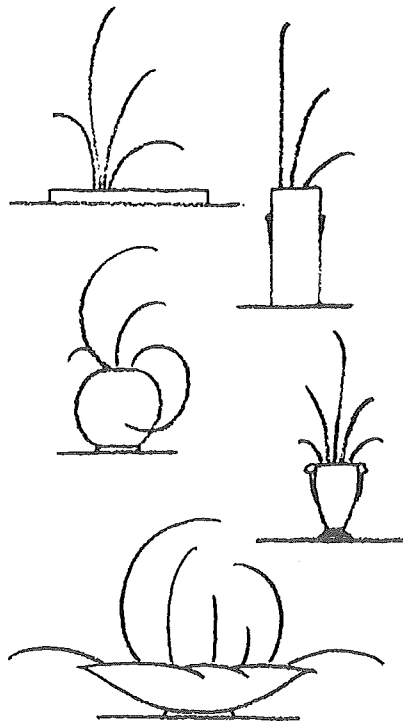
For the last twenty years of his life, he spent a lot of time outside, sifting dirt to get the rocks out so grass would grow on the terraces, and also so the mower wouldn't throw rocks at him or through the windows. And he was forever laying those rock terraces. When it rained and he couldn't work outside, he was often modeling or sketching—not a lot on paper, but mostly in his mind. When he was playing with the clay, Mother would often stop and make comments or suggestions about what he was doing.

The Lazybones dinnerware pattern was a direct result of that natural, effortless communication that connected them. *That was Grace Lee's design!* It was a product of *her* influence on *him*. And by way of explanation, there's some dialogue that needs to preface what I am about to describe.

Understand that when Grace Lee arranged permanent (artificial) flowers, the graceful curved line was of paramount importance to her in all aspects of those designed arrangements. I cannot

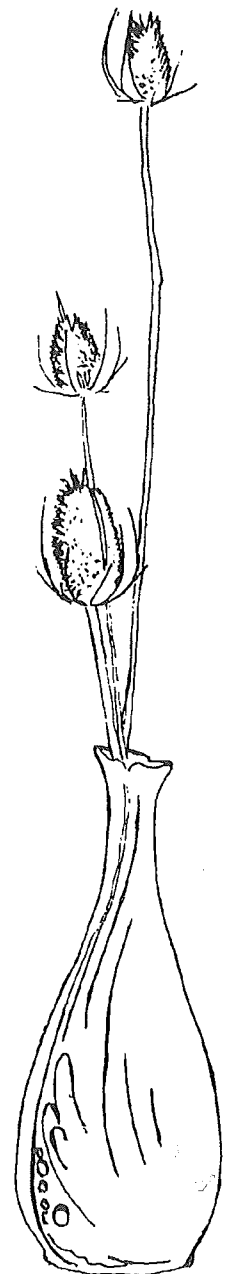
recall ever seeing her do a "mass" arrangement, i.e., a large bunch of flowers merely stuck in a vase and fluffed about, like you see those fancy ladies in old movies do after having just gathered them from their garden estate. Grace Lee always carefully placed each stem or stalk, bending and curving them into sweeping lines that led your eye from top to bottom, side to side, into, around, and through the arrangement, and back to where you started. The lines were always flowing and in motion.

You can see it in those little line drawings she did back in the 1940's as guidelines and shapes to teach people the difference in "putting" flowers in a container and "arranging" them. Some were very Oriental, particularly Japanese, in their exquisite simplicity. (Another example, cover photo of the 1965 catalog; same photos on inside cover of 1966.) And just look at that line drawing (V-2 vase) in one of the first pages of *Clay in the Master's Hands* that accompanies the Lao Tsu verse, taken from the cover photo of the 1970 catalog.



SUGGESTED RHYTHMS USING
DIFFERENT TYPES OF CONTAINERS

Note: The above illustration was taken from the 1941 *Fun with Flowers* booklet by Grace Lee. The back of the booklet reads as follows: Copyright 1941, Frankoma Potteries, Inc., Sapulpa, Okla. Just a little interesting tidbit for you researchers.



Line drawing of V-2 Vase from
Clay in the Master's Hands

Those say as much about Mother as anything I can point to—about her approach to design, product display, flower arranging, and even the way she assembled and wore her clothes. Like when she donned a scarf, she didn't just hang it around her neck or tuck it under the collar. When she finished, it usually flowed over one shoulder, draped gracefully over the back, moved in an interesting line up over the other shoulder, ending somewhere in a tucked or puffy gathering of one kind or another, often held by a smart little lapel pin. Then she might take one end of the scarf and put it through button holes from the under-

neath side to cover two or three buttons with it. So from front, sides, or back—her ensemble made a statement from every view. She *was* an arrangement.

Likewise, she always made the back and sides of a floral arrangement just as beautiful and striking as the front. Even when she knew the arrangement she was making for someone would never be seen from the back, still the lines had to flow around and through *to* somewhere—never running into a wall, or stopping abruptly, or going nowhere. So always, the last thing she did when she finished was slowly turn it around two or three times, making sure that, no matter from what angle you viewed it, it was pleasingly balanced and perfect.

In the design of containers, she was almost unerring. Now and then, Dad thought he could improve on something she suggested, and it didn't always turn out to be an improvement. But when she got what she asked for, there was no question that it was "*right*" in all ways.

I remember an exquisite Lalique crystal vase, valued at more than \$1,000, that someone brought her in which to make a permanent arrangement. They told her only where it was to be placed and what colors to feature. I'll never forget how she approached it, which was no different had it been a vase from the seconds room. Because no matter what the container, she always caused flowers and container to harmonize with and relate to each other, and the whole unit to blend beautifully with its surroundings. The lines always flowed in and around and through, in constant motion, as I've described, and it was always perfectly balanced from every side.

Grace Lee was good! And what she did came from pure intuition. For those many years, people from everywhere came to her to make arrangements in their special vases or bowls. Or sometimes they left it up to her to choose a container from the Frankoma line and surprise them. They were never disappointed. There was a time that I was bound and determined to photograph every single arrangement she did—for history, and for me to study. Of course, that lasted barely through the first roll of film. The bossman kept me far too busy in the back of the plant, quite aside from the fact that her outstanding works got carried out the front door faster than I could click.

Thinking back to when I was around thirteen and fourteen years old, this was for me personally the beginning

of a unique and very enlightening era of my life. Donna was away at college, and my focus moved more directly to my parents. It was a time when I began to be aware of that mysterious X-plus factor that flowed effortlessly between the two of them. This is not to say it wasn't there before, but I was suddenly maturing enough to see, feel, recognize, and be totally awed by it.

I'm quite sure it was there long before I was born—probably from the very day they met. I can look back now and remember feeling it as a child, even as far back as when we lived in "the little shanty," as Mother referred to it (the Bucket of Blood). I guess we could have been "under privileged," although we didn't know it. It was a time when everyone was poor by today's standards. But through all of our struggles, my parents shared such a warm and bonded love and respect for each other. And it was a time when *I was so happy!*

One day stands out in my mind as being perhaps the best day I ever lived. It must have been spring, because it was warm but not hot. I was facing into a gentle breeze that blew the strands of hair away from my face. I looked up into "my" beloved elm tree as I readied myself to climb it, and saw it framed by a cloudless blue sky. An overpowering feeling of fulfilled joy and warm happiness welled up in me. And I thought, "Here is where I will live the rest of my life." That profound contentment and sense of well being was probably one of the most beautiful and satisfying emotions I have ever experienced in my life.

But it wasn't until I was beginning my teens that I became especially aware of that feeling in our home. We had moved to a house in town at 818 E. Dewey. There was a certain kind of harmony and synchrony, a serendipity that reached out from the walls and caressed and stroked me, making me feel ever so loved and secure. Its frequency permeated everything I touched. And it was then that I knew where it came from. It was all rooted in that unique phenomena that together my parents created and owned. I didn't understand it, and I couldn't give it a name. But I was very much aware of its realness, and I also recognized that it was a human rarity.

It was not so much the words they said to each other, but I recall very vividly the *feelings* of that wondrously perfect, and often silent, communication they had. Sometimes it was no more

than sitting together at the kitchen table, looking for a time at the same piece of clay. After a while, Daddy's hand would reach out and give the clay a little push here or there, bringing it to precisely what Mother was thinking or feeling. She did not design many pieces with her own hands, but in this way, she often directed Daddy's thoughts, which came through his heart center, and his hands obeyed.

(This is a good example of the old Gestalt principle that "the sum of the parts is equal to *more* than the whole." Meaning that, together, they became more than one + one.)

THOSE LAZY LAZYBONES

And so, the day I saw the first Lazybones plate come off the mold, I instantly knew where it had come from, how it had been conceived, and it felt oh-so-right! It had "*Grace Lee*" written all over it! This plate—and only *this* plate—was born with a curved line that takes your eye wandering around the plate, over the outer edge to the underneath side, around an endless circle, then coaxes it back to the surface of the plate, in a smooth, continuous, uninterrupted motion.

Check out the underneath rim of that Lazybones plate. It is so unique, so structurally sound, that it creates an unusually durable, hard-to-chip edge. By the same token, because of that, the design creates a very *thick* edge, without the *appearance* of being thick. You could almost call it a "buttress" effect.

Now, the Westwind plate edges chipped a lot, and so did the Aztec. As you've probably experienced, when you're stacking plates, the foot of the plate you're placing on top often catches the rim of the plate beneath it, and if you're not careful, you've chipped the edge of that plate below. But the Lazybones plate rim is slightly dropped, and for the most part, that hazard is avoided.

So of course I later set out to thicken the edges of all the plates the same way in order to cut down on the chipping factor. But try as I did, I found it strangely impossible to copy. You'd think something as simple as that would be easy! But the dynamics of it simply eluded me. Frustrated, I finally threw up my hands and walked away, leaving well enough be. There are just some things that were the products of that enigmatic

magic John and Grace Lee had—never to be fathomed, never to be duplicated.

Speaking of Lazybones, its perfection does have a flaw in it, at least for me. I never liked that cup handle. Daddy wanted just a nice, relaxed, flowing line for that handle. But in the end, it came quite close to being the one he said he never wanted—like the one on the English teacup that you can't possibly get a finger into, so you have to pinch it to hold it.

The trouble was, that cup handle was rounded where your thumb went, causing the cup to slip and slump. To keep from pouring hot coffee into your lap, you had to brace the cup below the handle with your middle finger, pressing it against the hot cup. *Ouch!*

But Mother loved it. Daddy loved it. A lot of people loved it. But those like me who hated burned fingers didn't and replaced them with the Plainsman cup for comfort. It's true that the Westwind cup handle is also rounded, but it's plenty big and wide enough to grasp tightly and prevent that slip-and-burn action.

So the entire mood of the Lazybones pattern started with the concept of relaxed, harmonious, lazy lines, almost a feeling of "pleasant melancholy." Look at that one-piece salt and pepper, will you? Two lazy swirled lines that have to hang onto each other just to sit upright. Thus the name Lazybones. Then it developed into the "joint and bones" concept, but that's another story for another time.

While we're on the subject, there's one more thing I'd like to say. I want to shout that the Lazybones creamer was the best cream pitcher Daddy ever made—pure perfection! Not so the sugar—it was top heavy, the lid never fit, and somehow it just never quite worked. The sugar was as *awful* as the creamer was *good*.

If you've never picked up the Lazybones cream pitcher and poured from it—you *simply must!* Go find one and do it! What takes place here is not merely the transfer of liquid from one receptacle to another. No, no, folks! With the #4A, you virtually *become* the cream, and you *feel* yourself falling, tumbling, cascading like a little waterfall into the cup. You'll see. It becomes a veritable religious experience.

THE PRICE OF CREATIVE FREEDOM

My father was an artist first and, although he was *aware* of production problems, those were always secondary to

the design. This freed him for all kinds of distractions and restrictions, allowing a piece to express his imagination, talent, skill, and artistic intuition. And that's how it should be.

However, this romantic and idealistic approach kept him broke most of the time. If you could see a true picture of the profits being generated in the manufacturing end of Frankoma Pottery back then, you would gasp! This is the atmosphere in which I dwelled as long as I worked with John Frank.

Meanwhile, Grace Lee was in the showroom practicing her extraordinary ability to make even the most *impossible* vases appealing by making just the right floral arrangements in them, showing people what could be done with them, making it look so easy a child could do it, and exciting them to buy, buy, buy. This was the reason Donna and I got to college. It was Mother who turned the profit picture around with her good sense of display, marketing, and salesmanship.

A prime example of one of those "impossible" vases was the three-holed #58, which *never* sold unless she did one of her arrangements in it, because people simply couldn't imagine what to do with it. Her far out, imaginative arrangements in that one piece took more blue ribbons at the prestigious Tulsa Garden Club shows than any other.

***If you've never picked up the
Lazybones cream pitcher
and poured from it—
you simply must!
Go find one and do it!***

As you know, I had been required to work my way up through every single department in the plant—not merely to learn *how* to do it all, but to recognize the inherent problems of each phase of manufacturing and invent ways to solve them. As a result of that kind of training (and being the Capricorn that I am), my tendency has been to always look first at possible production problems while working on a piece, and employ the old "ounce of prevention" approach. This has made for good production pieces, but I think my designs have suffered as a result. There have been many times that I've felt I've almost lost the flavor of those good, basic, classic designs that Frankoma was known for.

But I never got to experience that untethered freedom to stretch myself as an artist as Dad did. And after I took

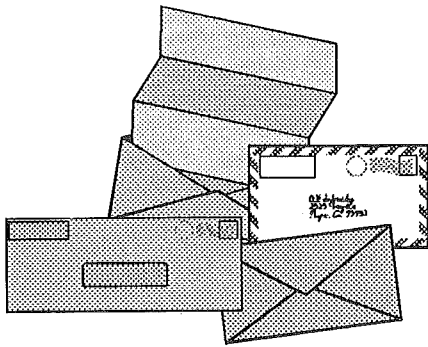
over the designing responsibilities after his departure, I also became responsible for everything else, including production and sales. My supervisory support team had started one by one to retire, never to be replaced, and this increasing burden I was suddenly carrying afforded my approach to design little chance to develop and evolve into something entirely satisfying for me.

I was forever being pulled in every direction by all departments in the plant, without the leisure to "be an artist" as I had always longed to be. Understanding the needs of all departments as I did, I was always trying to be accommodating to my glazers and my trimmers and my mold makers by designing with *their* needs in mind, as well as our salesmen—like California customers wanted one thing, Missouri wanted another, Louisiana wanted something else. However, looking at the *profit* picture during those *best* ten years I was in charge (before the 1983 fire), it was terrific! I must have been doing something right, because what I was doing brought Frankoma to its financial peak of all time. We were riding high!

And now, although I'm no longer orchestrating and supervising Frankoma Pottery's production, I *still* have an obligation to my employers, Richard Bernstein and Kyle Costa, to be production-minded in whatever I design. I'm *still* responsible for delivering finished models to Frankoma that are "production worthy"—making sure that what I present to them is something for which a simple 3-piece mold can be made by the mold makers, a piece that has dividing lines that are not overly difficult for trimmers to trim, and designs that glazers don't have to stand on their heads to glaze.

Ah, but I confess I still yearn to express myself without having to sacrifice "good design" in favor of "good production." I believe every artist craves the satisfaction that comes from doing single, one-of-a-kind art and sculpture. To be able to work one's clay into something aesthetically pleasing, allowing it to be done by the heart and intuition instead of one's "good sense," must be a great and rewarding luxury. There are many artists in this world who do that. Most of them are on food stamps.

But some day. Maybe some day I, too, may be able to afford the freedom to be an artist who creates art for art's sake. I believe I could learn to do that, if I tried. ☺



Mail Call

Dear Donna and Joniece...

Enjoyed your "squirrel" article and the correction. But mine is not "one of a kind." I have seen another that is identical. It belongs to a young member in Ponca City (OK).

Note that my squirrel is "fatter" than your squirrel, so my squirrel would make a better meal! Ha-ha!

Keep your stories coming!

Pat Warner from OK

Thanks for correcting our correction, Pat. Well, well, well—will wonders never cease? We'll stick to our assumption it was a playful employee who did the deed(s). Just another lesson for us in the Just-Can't-Be-Sure-of-Anything-When-You-Collect-Frankoma-Freaks Department. Could there be more than two triple-artist squirrels scampering around out there??

Dear Nancy...

Enclosed is our check for membership renewal in FFCA. My apologies for being so tardy with this.

I want to thank you for your kind and thoughtful card at the time of my mother's death (from the Frankoma Family of collectors). I never realized how meaningful hearing from friends at a time of loss would be. We are adjusting, and our daughter has moved to Phoenix to be with my Dad. One door closes and another opens.

On a brighter topic, we are so enjoying the **Pot & Puma** and the **Prairie Green Sheet**, and look forward to each one. It's a terrific publication; very professional! Thank YOU!

Haven't made our plans for the FFCA 96 Reunion. Jon's travel schedule will dictate.

Take care! All the best.

Madonna of SC

Joniece and Donna would tell you that the adjustment period is never easy, but we do get through it. Your daughter must be a very special person to do what she's doing. And

thank you for your kind compliments. All the best to you and your family from your Frankoma Family.

Dear Donna...

I read with interest your article about Guernsey pitchers, since one of my favorite Frankoma pieces is a small #93A pitcher. It is Ada clay with incised marked FRANKOMA. It is also marked on bottom (in the clay) "93A." The glaze is Black Onyx. But—it stands 2-3/4" tall, not 5-1/2" as your caption on the photo, or 3-1/2" as listed in the Cox Book III, and the Bess book on Page 55.

Variance of 1/4" or so would not surprise me, given the individual hand work involved in production. But this 3-way difference does have me puzzled.

I love my little pitcher and don't plan to pitch it because it does not conform to the books. In fact, the variance is very appealing.

I guess I just wanted to share this information. No doubt there are other #93A's the size of mine. Perhaps if other FFCA members write to you about theirs, you will have information for a follow-up article.

Keep up the good work with FFCA!

Lea from IL

I chatted with Nancy Littrell and a couple of the other "experts" in the ranks, and each time I had to laugh. When I read them your letter, they all moaned their own variations of, "Uh-huh, yeah—well, welcome to Frankoma collecting." Know that your problem is not uncommon to almost all Frankomaniacs who have been at it for long. These "freaks" now and then pop up out of the cracks, and then we go a little crazy trying to identify them. One thing is for sure—it is one half of a cream and sugar set, as all creamers and sugars are A's and B's.

I asked Joniece, and she led me through the house to a 93A that survived the fire, but it's exactly 3" tall—another variance; the 93B that goes with it is a little round bowl, 2" high. There is, of course, that #550, a 2-1/4" miniature pitcher that Gibb Green wrote about in the last issue.

But you say your pitcher is 2-3/4" and has "93A" on the bottom!

Actually, Joniece and I didn't have to scratch our heads for too long before we came up with what we believe to be the answer, the only logical one, to your dilemma. We speculate that ours, and many other 93A's in existence, were made prior to the 1938 fire. When all those master molds were destroyed, and Papa set about to recreate the line, he had no choice but to make molds from finished pieces—which had already lost 10% in the firing (as all pieces do). After making molds of those to put them back into production, they lost another 10% in size. And our hunch is that yours is one of those that came from a mold made from a finished 3-1/2" pitcher. That

degree of shrinkage would just about account for the difference.

Most collectors use this as a way to identify pre-fire versus post-fire pieces, especially obvious in the Joe Taylor sculptures. If something is roughly 10% larger or smaller by comparison to another, naturally the values will vary significantly, and often greatly.

Anybody out there own a #93A pitcher that measures out at only 2-3/4"? Give us a whistle and tell us what color yours is!

Dear Donna...

The **Pot & Puma** is my lifeline to Frankoma collecting. I've been collecting since the 1960's, but I am not sure "collecting" is the right word if you live in Ohio. I'm sure you've heard before that Ohio is not exactly the ideal location for this pursuit. This is particularly true if you live in the northeastern section of the state as we do. If not for some special dealers and the Zanesville Pottery Festival, my collection would never progress. It now numbers about 600 pieces, most of which are newer production. And we both know that quantity does not mean a quality collection.

We've been hoping to attend the reunion; but schedules have been a problem. We did have an opportunity to visit the factory in 1978, and Joniece was kind enough to help us identify the Rural Letter Carriers plate which we had found locally.

There are a number of other pieces about which I have questions. Two in particular come to mind: a small bowl and a figurine. Perhaps you can provide some insight. The bowl is 4-3/4" across and about 1-1/2" deep. It is red clay, which shows through a turquoise blue glaze. The bottom center is unglazed and is impressed "Franford" in a circular mark. ???

The figurine is a deer group which looks almost identical to the picture in the new Bess book. One exception is the modeling of the doe's ears which appear to blend into the buck in the picture. Mine's ears are modeled separately. The clay is clearly not a Frankoma clay; it is whiter and more toward a porcelain type. Neither is the glaze correct. It is semi-matte and shaded from grayish on the backs of the deer to cream on the base. I estimate size to be slightly under the dimensions listed in the literature. Has anyone reported such a group? It is very finely done, and I am curious about the resemblance.

I plan to take it with me to the Zanesville Pottery Festival in July. We will be at the Day's Inn and would welcome visits from Frankoma collectors. I should add that these pieces are not for sale, just discussion.

Regina from OH

You have my letter referring you to the knowledgeable Gary Schaum at the Zanesville Festival, whom I know will be very helpful to you with identification. For everyone's info, Gary tells me he has seen a copy of that early

Frankoma deer group, which is smaller, and I'm pretty certain yours is one of those, Regina. No one here seems to know who made the copy. Can anyone out there shed some light on who copied Joe Taylor's deer group? And when? See the response to Lea's letter above, and you'll see how they did such a good copy, but smaller. Changing just one pair of ears is easy.



Dear Nancy... Howdee! It was nice to hear your soft Southern voice last Wednesday. Thank you again for calling to tell me that Grace Lee had passed away.

My friendship with Grace Lee was about 13 years. These last years of her life, my contact was really from a distance. When I visited Sapulpa, I guess some six or seven times, I was with Grace Lee. We loved comparing our lives, raising our children, talking about our wonderful husbands. Our paths seemed very similar. Mostly our friendship grew through our letters. Grace Lee was a great letter writer. I have all her letters, as they are special to me. She used to write to me when she spent the winters in Florida. She was always so homesick in Florida and could tell me about it. She would say that Milton was playing golf, and she was counting the days when she could go home and be with Joniece.

I treasure the evening in 1986 we spent in her home. She cooked supper for us, served on Frankoma (what else). She talked and showed us the beautiful things in her home, collected over the years when she and John traveled the world. Her memories were all around her (no wonder she loved being home). I feel the same way. My husband and I spent our life collecting things... things that make the memories of our life.

I am looking forward to receiving the **Pof & Puma**. You folks do such a marvelous job. I am sure that you have to know... *ALL OF US FFCA MEMBERS REALLY APPRECIATE YOUR HARD WORK!*

You tell me you are receiving new members all the time. This is sure proof that FFCA is in good hands!

Maxine of OH

We know how loved you were by Grace Lee, as she always said your name so fondly and with a smile on her face. Many thanks for your kind and generous praise. It's nice to know how the work we do is being received by your wonderful collectors. You're the one reason we're here.



J.C. TAYLOR'S TRIBUTE TO GRACE LEE

Given at the "Celebration of Her Life" Event



We celebrate today the home-going of our dear friend, Grace Lee Frank Smith.

I first became acquainted with Grace Lee in September of 1940. We were somewhat younger then. I began working for Frankoma that same month. For fifty-five years, she was my friend.

Memories begin flooding my mind as I recall some of the experiences of those years. The annual Christmas party was always a special event at Frankoma. Grace Lee usually shared a beautiful poem she had written during the year. Sometimes she wrote about her daughters, her husband, about nature, or maybe just about the clay or mud we worked with on a daily basis.

My favorite poem was entitled "The Magic of Mud." I was always fascinated by her artistic abilities. She could take a piece of pottery, and a few flowers, and make something beautiful. One of her joys was sharing this gift with others.

Grace Lee also felt at home with a piece of soft, pliable clay in her hands and a modeling tool. Clay in her hands represented each of us as a piece of clay in the hands of our Lord, the Master Potter. She could transform a piece of clay into something of value, and the message she conveyed to us was that the Master Potter could also make a beautiful and useful vessel out of each of us. This was the message her life portrayed. Only eternity will reveal the number of lives she touched for good.

Grace Lee was a gracious lady, as her name suggests. Someone has said that we haven't really lived unless we have made our own little world a better place in which to live. Grace Lee has certainly done that, and she has been welcomed to her heavenly home as a profitable servant.

The scriptures indicate that, when all of the Lord's people get home, there will be an event called "The Marriage Supper of the Lamb." It just occurred to me that when the Lord prepares this great banquet, He will ask Grace Lee to help with the table decorations.

We are going to miss her, that's for sure. But we're going to follow in her footsteps until we join her once again in a land that is better than this.

May the Lord bless and comfort each of you. ☩

Ed.Note: J.C. Taylor was assigned by Mr. Frank to manage the Gracetone operation, and later bought it. He was a loyal and valuable Frankoma employee for over forty years, a member of the Board of Directors, a mainstay of the Frankoma family of employees, and a close friend of the Frank family. We are grateful to him for this loving and personal tribute to Grace Lee at her funeral.

Dear FFCA...

We have been overwhelmed and deeply moved by such an outpouring of sympathy and love from you, our wonderful Frankoma Family, at the passing our dear mother, Grace Lee.

You have expressed your sentiments in so many ways—the lovely cards and hand written notes and letters, and so many beautiful flowers and plants. There have been donations to the First United Methodist

Church, the Salvation Army, Green Country Hospice, charities and missions, and in California the planting of a tree in her name, all of which are very meaningful to us.

We are so grateful to each and every one of you. Your love and caring expressions will never be forgotten. ☩

*To Each And Every One—
Many Thanks from
Joniece and Donna*

FRANKOMA FUZZLE FUN

BY ALAN STOLTZ & CECE WINCHESTER-STOLTZ, CA



DINNERWARE

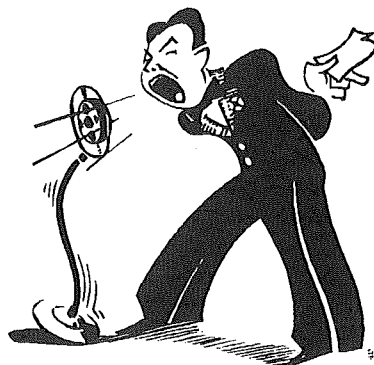
FRANKOMA WORD SEARCH

The following words are hidden in the puzzle. How many can you find?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bakers | <input type="checkbox"/> Plate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bowl | <input type="checkbox"/> Platter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Candleholder | <input type="checkbox"/> Prairie Green |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Christmas Card | <input type="checkbox"/> Salt Shaker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creamer | <input type="checkbox"/> Saucer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cup | <input type="checkbox"/> Sugar |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Desert Gold | <input type="checkbox"/> Teapot |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dinnerware | <input type="checkbox"/> Trivet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First | <input type="checkbox"/> Tumbler |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forty-two | <input type="checkbox"/> Vase |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mug | <input type="checkbox"/> Wagon Wheel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pepper Shaker | <input type="checkbox"/> Wall Pocker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pitcher | |

SO THE TURTLE SEZ TO THE TURTLE...

- ★ From Vicki of CA
"Just like a man—you've got feet of clay!"
- ★ From LaVonne of KS
She says to **him**, "WHY don't you answer me when I speak to you?"
(Lavonne says she uses this line a lot.)
- ★ From Catherine of CA
"Am I glad you came along! You can back up my story about being abducted by an alien!"
- ★ From Marj of AR
"Please—was it something I said?"
- ★ Andra of OK
"What's your sign, honey—
Democrat or Republican?"



And the WINNER IS—
drum roll please!?!

Catherine of California! Congratulations and a big hand for Catherine for sending in the winning caption! She's just won (what else?) *two Frankoma turtles!* But because all of them are so clever, we can't help but count the others as runners up. So *all* of you who came in second get one turtle each.

Birth Announcement



Buffy, a wife of Cody the Buffalo, gave birth to a healthy female calf on Friday, May 3rd. Because the baby was larger than normal, it was a difficult birth, and it was necessary for owner Alice to step in and act as midwife and provide assistance. Now both mom and baby are doing splendidly, thank you.

You may be interested to know that when a buffalo calf is being born, the bull stands at the mother's head throughout the whole process, and the rest of the herd surrounds them in a circle. The ritual stems from the instinct to protect the vulnerable newborn from wolves and other predators in the wild.

This is only the second time that Alice has had to assist in the birth of one of her buffalo. Her animals know her as a friend and allow her into the circle, as they seem to sense when her help is needed.

Congratulations to Buffy, Cody, and to Alice and Saber Jackson!

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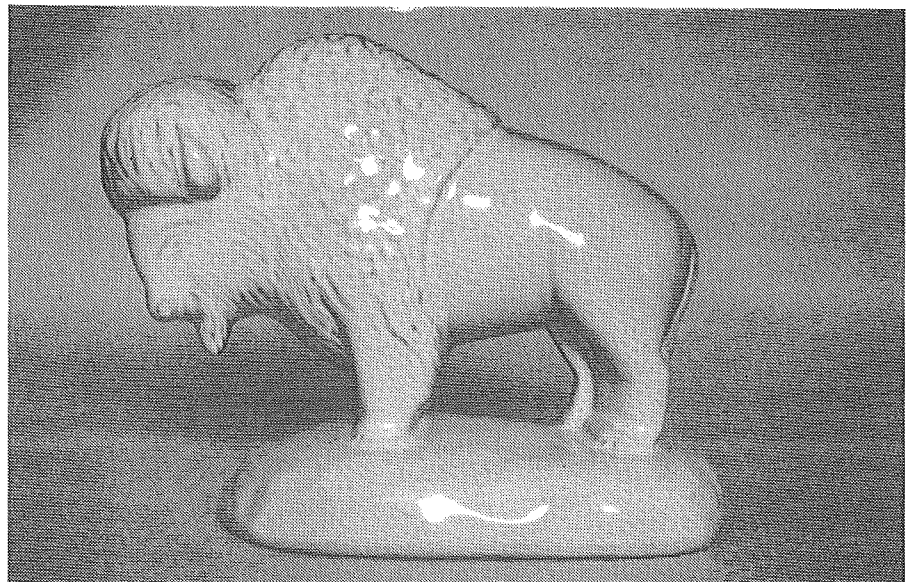
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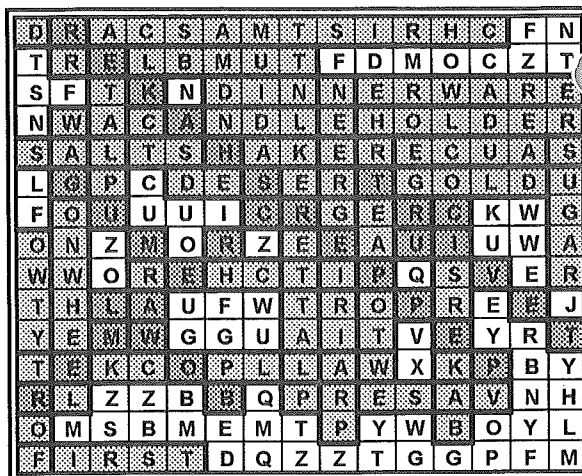
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