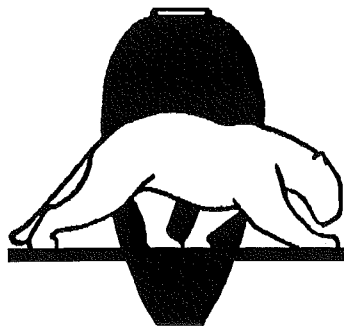


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# Pot & Puma

Published by the Frankoma Family Collectors Association



Volume 3, Number 2

Spring 1997 Issue

# Pot & Puma

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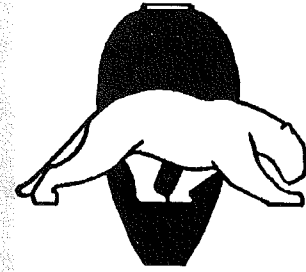
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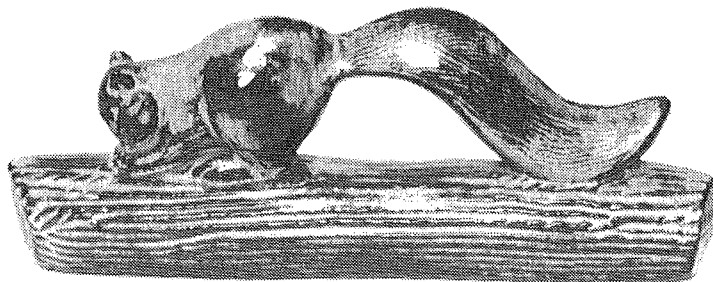
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*A Special Thanks!*

*The Frankoma Pottery photographed in this issue of the Pot & Puma was provided by numerous members of the FFCA. These photos are not reproduced to scale; however, the actual size is given whenever possible. We wish to extend our gratitude and thanks to these members for helping us to enrich our issue with these photos.*

# Show & Tell Us

## My Frankoma Family of Pottery

BY ALBERTA KING—HINSDALE, IL

**M**y love affair with Frankoma began several years ago when my sister gave me a Prairie Green Wagon Wheel Sugar and Creamer set. As my home décor has a Southwestern flair, she thought I might like to have them, and she was right!

Coincidentally, I had been searching for a set of Thanksgiving dishes, and I felt it would be nice to have a set similar to my Frankoma pieces. I looked and looked for more than three years and was unable to find what I wanted.

When my husband and I were visiting our daughter in Boise, ID, last year, we discovered in an antique shop a Frankoma 4-place setting in Prairie Green. I immediately wanted to purchase them and carry them home on the plane. But my spouse was adamant that we already had too much luggage to contend with. My only other choice was to have them shipped, and I was reluctant to do that because of my unhappy experiences in the past with shipping dishes. So I left them there, so disappointed and downhearted. I shed a few tears on the plane trip back, and a few more after we got home.

Some months later I was visiting a local resale shop. To my complete surprise and amazement, there was a huge collection of Prairie Green Frankoma! It was not a 4-place setting—it was a 12-place setting! There were all kinds of extra serving dishes, and artware too! The woman who had donated them must have loved them very much, because she requested that the collection not be broken up, that whoever bought them must take the whole lot—101 pieces! I was shocked that the owner was willing to part with them, but at the same time grateful that she wanted to pass on the legacy.

The dinnerware is for the most part Oklahoma Plainsman, although there are so many other kinds of pieces in the collection, including a little Circus Horse. Every piece is in the wonderful Prairie Green, and I'm so thrilled. If the lady who gave them wanted them all to stay together, I understand. I've come to think of them as my Frankoma Family of Pottery, and I believe families *should* stay together. ■

## My Green Sleeping Giant

BY BEVERLY PETERSON—IVANHOE, MN

**A**s Snoopy in the "Peanuts" comic strip often writes—it was a dark and stormy day. My husband and I went searching in opposite directions. He went south, and I went north, both in pursuit of the biggest and best bargain! He went to several auctions. But like a good fisherman, I stayed at the one auction I figured would be best. You'll never catch a fish if you hop from stream to stream.

I didn't find a lot at my auction, just a few things we could resell in our shop. My husband was very late getting home that night, but when he walked in he was *oh, so proud!* He was carrying a big box filled with what he said was "green Depression glass." But it was quite different than anything he had ever bought before. It was green and heavy, but fortunately it had a name on the bottom of most of the items. He bragged he'd paid \$20 for all of it—about 40 perfect pieces of dinnerware.

I tried not to laugh. I just remarked that I did like the stuff. All he said was "SELL IT!" So for that whole season, April through November, that box of Frankoma Pottery sat in the shop with a price tag of \$37.50 on it. When no one bought it, I hid it all away like a secret stash. I called it my "Sleeping Giant."

Nearly four years went by before my husband finally figured out that his green Depression glass was not Depression glass. But to this day, he has never asked me what happened to that box of dinnerware.

One of these days soon, when I get all my Frankoma books, I'm going to get out all my "sleeping giants" and line them up in the store. Even when Andy sees it, I wonder if he'll recognize and remember his great bargain purchase of years ago.

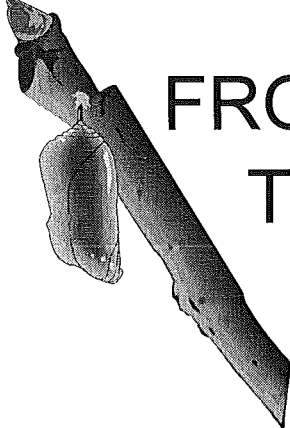
As far as I'm concerned, other people can stay behind the times. I'll buy and pack away all the Frankoma Pottery I can afford to buy. Sleeping giants don't sleep forever, you know. And this one, I believe, is just about to stop snoring and wake up! ■

*Soon after we received this story, Beverly's husband Andy Peterson passed away on April 3rd. We, the Frankoma Family, all join together in sending our heartfelt condolences to Beverly Peterson in her great loss. †*

# MY METAMORPHOSIS

## FROM "Acquirer" TO "COLLECTOR"

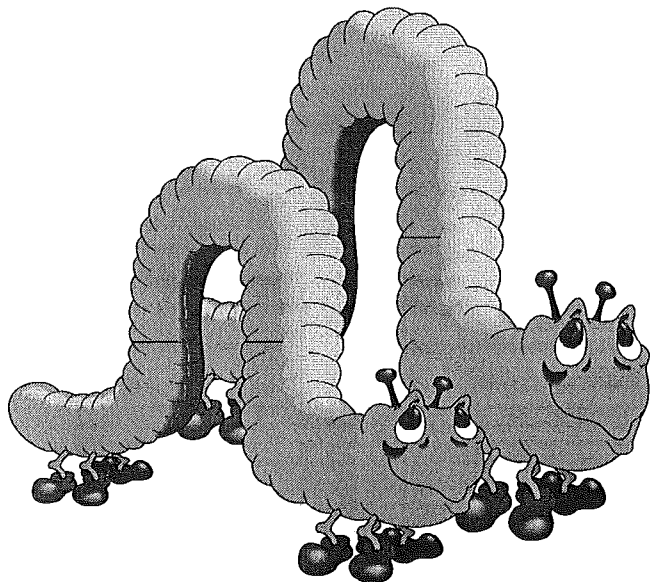
BY BRUCE BATES—BROKEN ARROW, OK



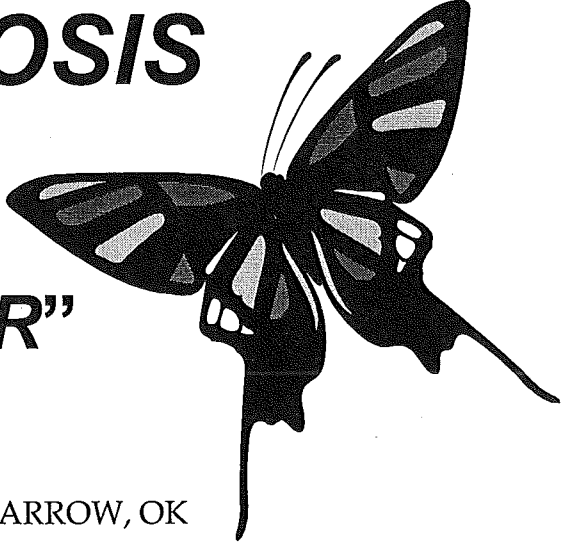
**E**ver since my wife Lynn and I joined FFCA in March of this year, I have been an "acquirer" of Frankoma. In just seven short weeks, I "acquired" over 200 pieces, buying everything I saw, with the sole idea of selling and/or trading them at the reunion in September.

But May 10, 1997 was the day that I was miraculously transformed into a genuine, bona fide, don't-look-back "collector"!

In response to an ad in the Tulsa paper, I went to an auction in Bartlesville, OK. There were several pieces of pottery displayed in typical auction fashion, all sort of jumbled together at one end of a table. There was also a lot of miscellaneous "stuff" sitting on the ground in boxes.



I don't care what you say—  
you'll never get me up in one of those things!



After the ring man had auctioned off several rusty old toys, he appeared ready to start hawking the assortment of pottery. I asked him if he would offer this box of Frankoma first, and I would open the bidding at \$20. There were 18 pieces in the box, and to my delight, *no one raised my opening bid!*

In that box was the *first* piece that changed me from an acquirer to a collector of Frankoma Pottery. It was a #455 Cigar Ashtray, made of Ada clay and glazed in that beautiful Silver Sage, which dates it circa 1942. Averaging it all out, I figure it cost me just over \$1.

The *second* piece, the one that completed my transformation, was an insignificant looking little vase in a small box with only 6 other vases. I also paid \$20 for this second box. I wound up buying every piece of Frankoma that was offered for sale that day. The auction finally ended, and as I was repacking my acquisitions to take them home, I took a closer look at the little green vase. *It was trying to speak to me!*

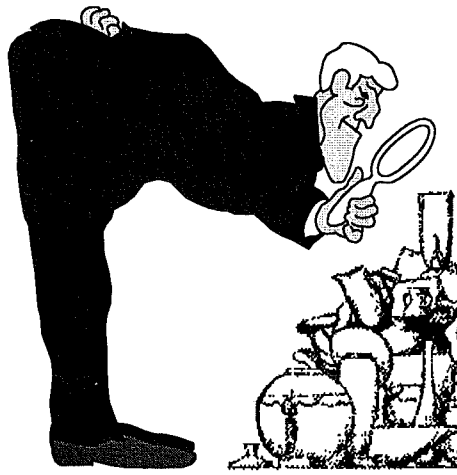
**T**hat little old vase was on my mind all the way back to Broken Arrow—a 60-mile trip that seemed to take forever that day! I was being haunted by a picture I remembered seeing in a back issue of a *Pot & Puma*. When I got home, I could hardly wait to open that journal. And sure enough, there in Pat Warner's article on Page 8 of the Autumn 1996 issue (the one on the far left), was my little 3-3/4" Verde Green Cone Vase, ink stamped "Frank Potteries—Norman, Oklahoma"! How can anyone expect to make two such rare finds in one day—both for less than \$5?

I still plan to have a table at the reunion to sell or trade my 200 acquisitions. And I will also bring my grand two-piece "collection"—but for display and bragging purposes only.

Don't even ask!

My Frankoma collection is **NOT FOR SALE!**

# WHAT IN THE WORLD IS IT?



H-m-m-m, It's a FRANKOMA!

made. Each piece of the block mold has a master mold. That is to say, a 3-piece mold has three parts to the whole master mold.

For many years we've been trying to design pieces with a nice finished foot so we can raise the lettering, instead of sinking it, because (1) it seems to read better and wear less, and (2) it's just more attractive. For example, the Christmas Plates have raised lettering on the edge of the front of the plate, and you know immediately that the lettering had to be done in the **block** mold, or the final **production** mold—so when you press clay into the lettering, it will be **raised**. All lettering in **block** molds must be done in **reverse**.

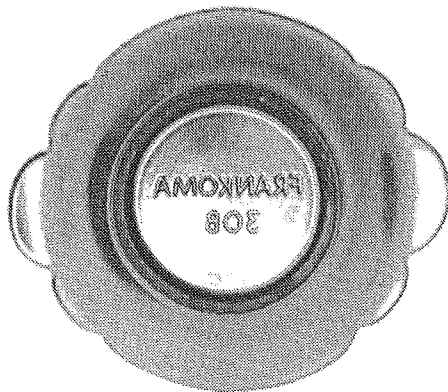
At this point in time, the voice inside the mind is telling you, "You always letter in reverse." However, there are times the lettering must be **sunken**, and that lettering must be from left to right forward. Once again, it's not automatic, like once you learn to ride a bicycle. Every single time you do it, you need to think it through or, just assure as the world, you'll letter a **master** mold backwards, thus creating a mirror image. Remember that the process often takes *several* waste ("throw-away") molds or "lumps" or "models" before you reach the **block** mold/**master** mold stage.

What has happened with Bruce's saucer is that the **master** mold was erroneously lettered in **reverse** instead of the normal left to right. The **production** mold is therefore made, and the lettering is readable as normal—but when the clay piece is made, it's back to reverse again. And maybe several hundred pieces are made with reverse lettering before anyone notices. It would have been terribly costly to break all those pieces and make them again. So we let them go out as is.

**Remember that payroll has to be made!** Once again I do want to say, especially to you new collectors, that the collector has been on our minds for many, many years, and we tried in every way possible to be legitimate, and not deliberately "create" collectibles, even through errors. And who could have thought at that time that something like this would be important later? And *is* it important now?

Although these are rare, they shouldn't be considered "rare collectibles." The price should be no more than a normal one. However—Bruce just may have come up with a new collecting category for Frankoma! Do any of you out there have anything in your collection with the letters reversed?

Thanks, Bruce, for calling our attention to this one! ■



Frankoma mark in reverse

backward into the **block** mold. If you want **sunken** letters, you letter the **master** mold forward.

A reminder: the books differ as to the proper names for the different steps and the names of molds in the mold making process. These are *my* definitions:

1. **MODEL:** The first sculpturing of a design. Can be clay or plaster or whatever. It is always 10% larger than the desired size of the finished piece.
2. **WASTE MOLD:** A plaster mold made from the model. It is usually very crude. But that's what the artist uses to smooth the places that need smoothing (because it's easier than doing it on the model) and over-carve into it (because it's easier than adding to areas of the model that need to be filled in). A lump (plaster model) is then made from that over-carved mold, and you can now more easily do the finishing work on the lump (plaster model). The waste mold is always thrown away.
3. **LUMP:** A more finished model than the first one. Usually made of plaster or Ceramical. As close to the true finished piece as possible.
4. **BLOCK MOLD:** The most perfect mold you can make from the most perfect lump you can make. This mold is cared for *very carefully*, because your master mold is made from it. If your master mold becomes worn, you return to the block mold to make a new master mold. The block mold looks just like a standard production mold (the mold used to produce the final product).
5. **MASTER MOLD:** From the master mold, all production molds are

## MIRROR, MIRROR

**B**ruce Throckmorton of TN found a Lazybones Saucer (#4e) that didn't seem to be anything out of the ordinary. But he turned it over and discovered that the name was printed in reverse—a mirror image of the letters FRANKOMA! This prompted him to e-mail us and ask, "What In The World?"

Of course we went to Joniece for an answer on this one.

Joniece explains it like this: This is one of those instances that, no matter how many times you do it, it's *not* like riding a bicycle. It doesn't come automatically—you'd better stop and carefully trace the steps in your mind before you proceed. If you want **raised** letters in the final piece, you letter

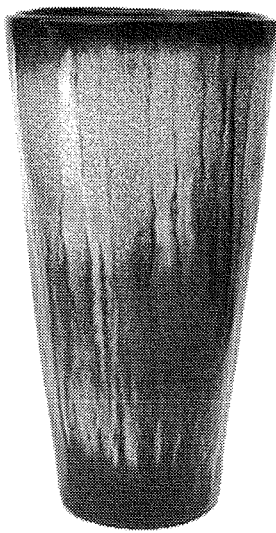


Photo by Phyllis Bess

*Club Trade Winds Tumbler  
#1 1-qt. Bamboo Tumbler*

## MISSING LINK FOUND!

A non-member has contacted us with a rare piece he found. Mr. Pauliny (OK) thought he was buying an unusual Frankoma vase. He showed an FFCA member friend of his, who showed him Ray Stoll's *Club Trade Winds* article. If you'll notice in Ray's list of items, #1 was listed as a "1-qt. Bamboo Tumbler." That was a supposition. It also said that Joniece couldn't remember what it was, and thought it was never produced. Well, folks, here it is. The bottom is marked **Club Trade Winds, Tulsa, Okla.** with a 1, not even T1. Upon seeing the photo, Joniece's memory was jogged. "I guess I spent so little time on it, I simply couldn't remember any of the details about it," she confessed.

"When Trade Winds wanted another large tumbler for a certain special drink, Daddy put me to work on it. It was to be very rustic, even crude—as if it may have been hollowed out of something found in nature—just form, no design. I had barely started to work on it when Daddy told me to stop. I protested that it wasn't even close to symmetrical yet." He said, "That's it, honey! Don't spend any more time on it. Make the mold!" A total of 72 were ordered.

If this piece was made after the rest of the line, how did it get assigned #1? Joniece has no clue. "Who knows the mind of the Boss Man?!" ■

## KACHINA "MUD HEAD" MUGS

Mr. and Mrs. Ken Clark (LA) and Lea Augustine (IL) both wrote to ask about the Kachina

Room "Mud Head" Mugs. On one side of the mug is **Kachina Room**, and on the other is a Kachina facemask and the words **Mud Head**. It holds 5 oz., was made only in Desert Gold, and is a very attractive and fun little piece.

A total of 2,028 of these mugs were made for the Fred Harvey Restaurants from 1965-1987, used only in the Kachina Room, a coffee shop in the Albuquerque, NM, Airport. Their problem was similar to the **Club Trade Winds**—people loved to take them home. But these mugs were sold to Fred Harvey at wholesale for just 45 cents each, so if people liked them enough to steal them, they couldn't have minded too much. Their current value is in the \$10-12 range. ■



*Front of Kachina Room  
Mud Head Mug*



*Back of Kachina Room  
Mud Head Mug*



*Bonnet Woman Medallion*

## BONNET WOMAN MEDALLION

Omar Villarreal (TX) writes: "I am a new member to FFCA, and I am quite pleased with the membership packet. On a recent trip to some antique stores, I found an unmarked Jade Green Bonnet Woman Medallion. I have not been able to find any information other than the date produced. I would appreciate any information such as why they were produced, the number made, or whatever you may know."

What a treasure you've stumbled upon, Omar! This little piece, about 2" across, was made in the mid-1930's by John Frank, given as a little souvenir remembrance to customers who came out of their way to visit his fledgling pottery plant. It is believed that the Cameo Medallion came first, a piece that came out of the fact he was so enamored with cameo art. The Bonnet Woman came just after, or perhaps even overlapped in time. These are the only two souvenir pieces made in Norman. (See Bess's Book II, Page 49.)

Knowing John Frank, we're pretty certain he would have kept no records of how many were made of either. He most likely made a few at a time, and when those ran out, he made a few more. But considering the lack of customer traffic during that period, we can only speculate that there were perhaps 30-40 of each, and possibly even less. After moving to Sapulpa, his gift souvenir to plant visitors was the Indian Head. And like the Christmas Cards of later years, none of these were ever sold, but all were given as a gesture of good will.

Congratulations, Omar. And we welcome you to the Frankoma Family! You've started your Frankoma collection with a real splash! ■

# GOLDEN AGE OF FRANKOMA GLAZES

BY SAMUEL A. "PAT" WARNER—OKLAHOMA CITY, OK

## With Additional Information by Joniece Frank and J. C. Taylor

The most fabulous glazes of all the Frankoma Pottery we've ever seen occurred with the changeover from Ada clay to Sapulpa brick red clay. The colors were ever so rich and deep. The dark red clay, because it was so rich in minerals, enhanced the rutile in the glazes to bring us the most extraordinary colors of all the Frankoma eras. This time period produced a contrasting two-tone richness that was unsurpassed!

### Brick Red Clay Era—Circa 1955–1965

The use of the Sapulpa brick red clay began in late 1954, although you'll find that most writers use 1955 as the starting date. Not just the rutile glazes, but *all* the Frankoma glazes were deepened when applied to the red clay. The stunning results that came from putting rutile glazes onto Sapulpa brick red clay can be described as follows:

#### RUTILES:

- Prairie Green**—Two or three shades of green with golden brown, some with gold swirls and spotting. 1955–1965.
- Desert Gold**—Streaks of creamy beige with golden brown. 1955–1965
- Woodland Moss**—Silvery matte blue with warm brown variations. 1960–1965
- Brown Satin**—Two shades of rich chocolate brown, much darker than the later Brown Satin. 1958–1965
- Peach Glow**—Peach with pinkish brown variations. 1962–1965

#### NON-RUTILES:

- Turquoise**—Translucent. 1955–1957
- Clay Blue**—Medium solid Blue. 1955–1961
- Onyx Black**—Glossy Black. 1955–1965
- White Sand**—Off White. 1955–1965
- Sunflower Yellow**—Mustard Yellow with Brown specks. 1958–1960
- Flame**—Red-Orange. 1964–1965

After 1965, the red clay continued to be dug from the same hill, but from that time forward, the clay became gradually lighter in color, and often "pinkish." 1970 signaled the end of those extraordinarily beautiful glazes, as the U.S. Government ordered all mining of

rutile halted in the U.S. Mr. Frank was then forced to use a rutile imported from Australia. The Australian rutile never produced the rich colors that are our subject here.

I base my time frames on Frankoma Christmas Cards, although this is very general, rather than specific, as Joniece will discuss later. The clay remained brick red until *about* 1966, medium red until *about* 1970, and pinkish thereafter. I feel the period from 1955 to 1965 was the "Golden Age of Glazes" for Frankoma. (However, there is no actual "cut-off date," as some of these splendid, deep-glaze pieces showed up as late as the early 1970's.)

The rutile glazes on brick red clay make a splendid collection. They are generally not too common, but hardly deserve the tag of "scarce." You'll find them around if you look. You rarely see a "smeared" glaze during this period. The colors are bold, distinct, and would accent any room or collection. In fact, any of the *non*-rutile glazes were richer on the brick red clay and will catch the eye. Compare, and you'll immediately see the difference in richness and depth.

With a little practice, you can spot the circa 1955–1965 glazes from a block away. They are *outstanding!* And now I'm going to yield the floor to someone who has a lot of background on the subject, Joniece Frank. My thanks to Joniece, J. C. Taylor and Donna for their help in getting the real story of these glazes together for you...

### First, Let's Talk Clay!

Over and over again, the same question is asked about the many changes in colors and clays over the years. For instance, why does the Prairie Green appear to be one color, and then in the same relative time frame, it changes? Then it goes back to the color it was previously, then change to a third variation of Prairie Green?

J. C. Taylor and I discussed this recently, and he and I both agree on these same facts. The truth is going to come out now, and maybe you won't be so happy to hear it. But it's the way it was—and the way it would be today if things were the same as they once were.

First, let's talk **CLAY**. Once upon a time there was a very tall hill in the middle of Sapulpa called Sugar Loaf Hill. Daddy bought a strip right down the center of this hill, thinking that it would guarantee him plenty of clay forever and ever. And since the hill was clay and



wouldn't grow anything, in the minds of Sapulpans, the only thing it was good for was for kids to climb to the top of and slide down on cardboard boxes.

I cannot give you the scientific process on how clay is formed by the forces of nature. But I do know this to be true—that during the “millions” of years that it took to create clay on Planet Earth, it endured dry seasons, wet seasons, cold and hot seasons, etc., etc. If you sliced the hill in half, those layers would be ever so obvious to the eye, and each layer would have different characteristics. This is another reason Daddy bought the strip down the middle—it was full of those layers. Just like when you take a scoop of ice cream off the side of the mound, that's the way we dug the clay out of the hill.

In digging it from the top to the bottom, you get a sampling of *all* these millions of years of creation. The front-end digger/loader/tractor took bites out of the hill the same way you take a bite off the side of your dip of ice cream. Now this is in *general principle*. As we got back into the hill, we sometimes had to go a bit to the left, or a little to the right, or horizontally. One dump truck of clay that we took would have a different set of characteristics from another. When we brought in several truckloads of clay at a time, we hoped it represented a fairly even sampling.

But understand that this is not done by a computer! This is God-made raw material that we, mankind, are taking and further developing to bring it to a higher, more refined state.

Sometimes we would be ready to go and get some more loads of clay, but the weather wouldn't permit. It was raining, or there was ice on the roads, or it was a 3-day holiday, vacation time, or whatever, and we would get what we called “deep into our clay supply.” We would keep using the clay already in the clay storage area, and the closer we got to the back wall, the longer the clay had been there. And because the clay at the back could have been there for a number of years, it often gave us some problems—but not so big and horrific that we couldn't cope with it.

Then also, we'd get in new clay and mix a batch in our 1200-gal. tank. And if we mixed *new* clay in the mixing tank, then transfer it into the holding tank that had some of the other clay from the previous mix, they balanced out pretty well. *Sometimes*. Sometimes, if we had to use that new clay too fast, naturally there were going to be changes in the color of the clay.

Many times our ceramic engineer Bill Daugherty would have to make some adjustments by adding extra materials into the clay. For instance—that red clay is red because of a high content of iron. If it wasn't firing red enough, he might add some iron to it. How much is “some?” You start with a low amount and gradually increase it, and about the time you get nice red-firing clay, it's time to dump a new load of fresh clay into the holding tank. If the new load has a high content of iron, now you have too much iron and the color changes

again! This is a constant process of adjustment, you see. I'm sure that, in this world of chess-playing computers, there's a computer that can take a batch of slip and analyze it, and do all those things in a very perfect and scientific way. But *it wasn't necessary for us at the time*. It just wasn't a big deal. If the clay was a little lighter—so what?

## Now, Let's Talk Rutile!

Now, when it comes to **GLAZES**, let's talk about this changing of the rutile (pronounced roo-*tee*). In the 1960's, the government began its new campaign to “take care of and protect us.” The increasing number of “safety” regulations had slowly crept into our lives, for the good or the bad, but from a manufacturer's standpoint much of it has far surpassed the point of absurdity. I'm not going to talk politics here, but the trend that started then, and is still progressing, has also had some devastating consequences.

The government started requiring certain standards so that the worker would be protected and not placed at risk. In principle and in words, this sounds great and honorable. In practice, there have been instances certainly very advantageous to protect people, such as the coal miners in the South. In order to feed their families, they had to go down in extremely unhealthy and hazardous conditions, which the owners of the mines could not or would not recognize.

However, in many cases, this revolution of standards and practices has developed into a ridiculous and unrealistic monster. We have child-proof bottle caps to protect children that older people with arthritis cannot possibly open; child-proof lighters came into being because a kid started a fire (which kids have always found ways to do without lighters, and always will); and we have air bags in cars that have saved many but killed many, and on and on. All of these kinds of changes were also starting to affect the mining of rutile in the US. The government decided that the employer was doing something that was unsafe for the employees, and changes had to be made in order for rutile mining to continue.

The biggest use of rutile is for flux on welding rods. The grade of the rutile doesn't have to be very high in this case. But the quality and grade of rutile for making glazes has to be of a high standard. And it simply wasn't worth the money the employer had to invest in order to provide those companies who needed the high grade of rutile—whatever its use—in our case, glazes. It wasn't economically feasible for them to continue the mining of the type of rutile Frankoma needed. So the mining stopped, and suddenly it was no longer available to us.

To find the *quality* of rutile we desperately needed, we began using a rutile imported from Australia. But at the risk of sounding simple, because it is—*God just made it different in Australia than He made it in America!*

Some adjustments could be made, and they were made. But it just wasn't the same rutile we had used before. That is the big difference between the wonderful deep greens and browns and the beautiful Woodland Moss that we all love so much, and the later glazes that did not produce the same depth and richness of color.

It took a couple of years to complete the change-over. We slowly introduced the Australian rutile into our glaze formulas. We did it gradually for a number of reasons, one being so that it wouldn't be such a shock to the public, and the colors of their replacement pieces would still blend with what they had. But when we reached the point of no more American rutile, that ball game ended there.

Now, I do remember once during that era that a pottery somewhere down in Texas had found a bunch of 50-lb. or 100-lb. bags they had forgotten in the corner of a warehouse. We learned about it and immediately snatched them up. And then we had those gorgeous colors again—until that rutile was gone. But we didn't use it 100% in the glazes. We added some of it to the Australian rutile a bit at a time to stretch it out. We really *did* want to make pretty pottery, you know.

## And Now the Firing!

And now the **FIRING** of the ware enters into the picture. We could take the lighter clay and glaze it, and it would produce an equally beautiful piece. But when you turned it over and looked at the color of the clay, it may have been a slightly different shade. Again, our attitude was—so what?

Also, no matter what has gone on in the production areas, once it sits on a kiln shelf—*two exact same pieces will react differently!* How many times have you baked a cake with the same recipe and it comes out different? Puzzling, isn't it? And frustrating! And this is true of all potteries everywhere, not just Frankoma!

There's also one other variable here. The nature of the ceramic engineer's profession is to "change things to see what happens," all for the purpose of improving on what you have. All of us—J. C., Ted and I—would say, "Oh no, Bill! What did you do to this anyway?" "Well," he'd say, "I just adjusted the such-and-such so that we could use Material B instead of Material A, which will cost us a lot less, and it's readily available out of Dallas as opposed to Pittsburgh." And of course that argument would be a valid one. If we could do something better, and cheaper, it was worth a try. And many times it worked. But then—just as many or more times, it didn't work. It was just another variable we had to work around.

I want you to know that I completely understand the true collector's need to classify these items. But by the same token, I want you to understand that there is a virtually endless list of variables when it comes to producing pottery. *They are unlimited!*

Artist Dave Greer once said to me that he thought an artist who creates a good piece of pottery (in his case on a potter's wheel) was one of the world's great treasures, and one who seldom receives the praise that he or she is due because of all of these variables and uncertainties. A painting may have a \$50 price tag on it. But a hand-thrown pot that took an equal amount of time is subject to so many more dangers. It can crack in the kiln, or the glaze can decide to go crazy, or it can get under-fired or over-fired, or any number of hazards may strike at any time during the production process, causing the artist to have to discard his piece and start all over again. Most people don't give the potter the artistic credit he or she deserves when he or she has created a "good pot."

There are no black and white answers here, folks.

I'm saying all of this to encourage you to enjoy the beauty of each individual Frankoma piece you find, because you'll never find two alike. In the same way that God made all of us, the potter makes many pots that may be the *same*, but never are any two *alike*. Appreciate that about your pottery. And acknowledge and feel the love that went into its creation.

John Frank often said in his talks, "God is my Father, and I have inherited from Him the ability and the right to create whatever I wish. And, like Him, I choose to work with living material and strive to improve it. When it obeys me, I can take it as far as it wants to go toward perfection."

My friends, do not try to solve the unfathomable mysteries of living clay, because no one ever will. Just know that it is a gift that God created especially for man, that man might have the raw materials with which to manifest his own creations. \*

*For additional reading sources on Frankoma clays and glazes see:*

### Volume 1, Number 3

- ♦ Why Ada Clay? And Why Sapulpa Clay?, by Donna Frank, Pages 8-10

### Volume 1, Number 4

- ♦ Gibb Green On The Very Prairie Green, Page 5

### Volume 2, Number 1

- ♦ Frankoma and Sugar Loaf Hill, by Maxine Saddler, Pages 10-11
- ♦ Pat Warner on Collecting Frankoma-Collecting by Clay, Page 11

Frankoma Treasures by Phyllis & Tom Bess, Pages 24-35.

Frankoma and Other Oklahoma Potteries by Phyllis & Tom Bess, Pages 7-11.

The Collectors Guide to Frankoma Pottery -- Book One by Susan N. Cox, Pages 34-49.

The Collectors Guide to Frankoma Pottery -- Book Two by Susan N. Cox, Pages 18-22.

Frankoma Pottery, Value Guide & More, 1933 to Present by Susan N. Cox, Pages 110-111.

# Bolas and Bolos

BY DONNA FRANK

**W**here and when was the bolo tie born? Our research came up with the following story.

1949, roundup time on a ranch in Wickenburg, Arizona. Vic Cedarstaff was riding across his pastureland when a gust of wind blew his hat off. He got off his horse to retrieve it and saw that his silver-tipped hatband had come off. Rather than bother with it then, he slipped it on over his head and around his neck. His partner said, "Hey, Vic, nice tie you got there!"

Vic was a rather good silversmith, and he had taught leather craft, so that got him to thinking. He soon started experimenting with what he called at first a "slide tie." The leather strap he used, however, was very much like the piggin' string that cowboys use to tie the legs of a cow, and he ultimately named it a "piggin' necklet." Ah, but that name just didn't catch on for Vic's new invention.

Then one day Vic chanced to see a *baleadora*, which is the South American cowboys' favorite weapon, made of three strips of braided leather or rawhide with a rock at each end. So he decided to dub his tie the "bola." Funny how just a change of name can change the whole picture.

Bola ties then began to take off, showing up on men in suits everywhere—at Sunday morning church, parties, and business meetings. And wearers readily fought back when restaurants claimed they weren't wearing a tie! Soon the Bola Tie Society was formed, and in 1971 Arizona declared it the official state neckwear. New Mexico did the same in 1987.

So how and why did the "bola" get to be "bolo?" It's anyone's guess. But in 1978, "Bola Bill" Kramer wrote a book titled *Bola Tie: The New Symbol Of The*

*West*. "Bola Bill" is quite adamant about the difference in spellings and defies what he calls "all the insidious attempts by the uninformed and uninspired to keep alive the term *bolo*." In his book, he writes: "As an incorrigible bolophile and esteemed member of the Bola Tie Society of Arizona, it is my sworn duty to confront any and all non-believers with advice that 'You might choke yourself with a bola, but all you can do with a bolo is cut your throat.' The *bolo* is a Philippine knife or machete."

This cause could already be a lost one. "Bola Bill" admits with a scowl that when you look it up in the dictionary, it does show both spellings.

Every September, Oklahoma City's Cowboy Hall of Fame continues to hold its annual "Bolo Ball" at which everyone wears his or her favorite bolo tie.

John Frank called it a "bolo." You can call it by either name if you wish. The bola/bolo has become an American tradition—proudly worn by cowboys, Indians, rock stars and presidents, by men and woman alike. And now we know the true story of how it came to be.

## THE FRANKOMA BOLO

**N**ot long after the bola or bolo tie came into being, John Frank saw the future of it and began making them in pottery. It was a natural! **Silla-Gems** were introduced into the market in August of 1955. This was good planning, as the wholesale dealers would have them just in time for the Christmas season. (Named for silica, which is very fine sand, found both in clay and glazes, and the primary ingredient in glass.)

In addition to bolo ties, he rounded out the line with screw-on and clip-on earrings, cuff links, tie bars, lapel and little "scatter" pins, pendants (which Grace Lee named Lady Bo's), tie clasps, and tie tacks (called Ti-Tac's). There were 35 items in all. All these pieces of jewelry were made in Prairie Green, Desert Gold, Pink, White Sand, Onyx Black, Clay Blue and Turquoise, as well as three colors he created exclusively for the line. Those were Blood Red, Yellow and Brilliant Orange. The Turquoise glaze was left over from previous production (discontinued in 1952), and when it was used up, he didn't make any more. So the Turquoise is probably the rarest. According to Sue Cox, the Pink runs a close second.

The bowling bolo tie was in the original line from beginning to end, although special pairs of screw-on earrings were made for the Frankoma women's bowling team that bore the year on the front, which Mr. Frank lettered by hand. Those with the year, of course, are very scarce, as they were given only to the members of that bowling team in that year.

**M**r. Frank designed a four-leaf clover design for the 4-H Club, with an "H" on each leaf. There was also one for the FFA (Future Farmers of America). We don't remember any other bolos made to order for any other clubs, but we could be wrong. Let us know if you have another special bolo we don't know about!

In a letter to his customers, Mr. Frank wrote, "There is nothing like true ceramic colors - they are brilliant, radiant, lustrous and beautiful." In the letter that introduced **Silla-Gems** to his wholesale accounts, he wrote the following:

"Dear Frankoma Customer: We said we would get you something new every month, but all of our energies for the past three months have gone into getting out, not one or two new pieces, but a whole line of jewelry.

"Our new plant is in production. We are not only proud, but thrilled with our new 'baby'. This is the biggest advance we have made at Frankoma since the introduction of dinnerware. We have had the line on trial here at our retail store for two months now. It is twice as good as we expected.

"Many of our customers are buying ear clips, bolos, lady bos, etc., to match their dinnerware design. It is a natural - try it! Smart and well designed - real conversation pieces! Consider

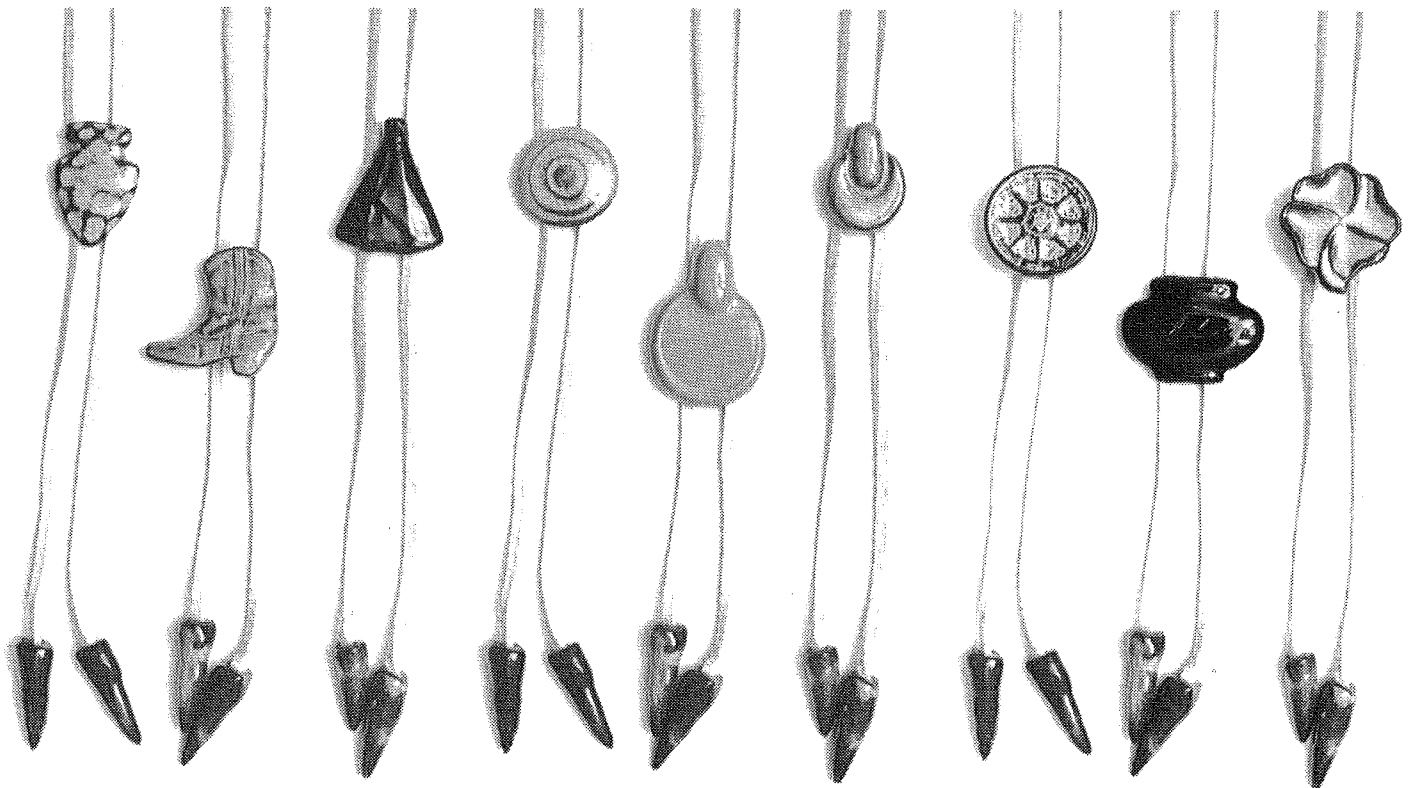
their uniqueness - they are all original! Test the weight - unbelievably light! Feel the textures - lovely to touch! Examine the colors - for depth, luster and brilliance! Notice the metal parts - they are durable and non-tarnishing! Only the finest of leathers are used on the BOLOS and LADY BOS! All pins have fine lock clasps! All findings are guaranteed not to come off! Mounted on fine cards - easy to display! Compare values - nothing quite as reasonable, anywhere!

"Since the department is new and we are training all of our help, we can't make immediate deliveries - allow 10 days, if you can. **WARNING:** Get your orders in early for fall, before the Christmas rush. Use the attached order blank - filling in only the blank spaces. A jewelry sale does not take the place of another sale - it is always an extra pick up. Cash in on these gems - now! Sincerely, John Frank."

**F**rankoma's line of **Silla-Gems** was a successful novelty for a while, especially at the Frankoma showroom. However, the Franks soon learned the hard way how tough it was to sell jewelry mixed with a line of art and dinnerware. Jewelry needed to be marketed with other jewelry. When buyers came to the gift shows, they weren't shopping for jewelry. That was another market entirely, and another buying trip.

**THE BOLO TIE: CERAMIC GEMS AND TIPS WITH FINE SPORT LEATHERS  
1 DOZEN ON EASEL DISPLAY CARD**

**BOLO TIES LEFT TO RIGHT: #1 Arrowhead, #2 Cowboy Boot, #3 Teepee, #10, #11, #12, #4 Wagon Wheel, #6 Indian Bowl, #7 Clover Leaf**





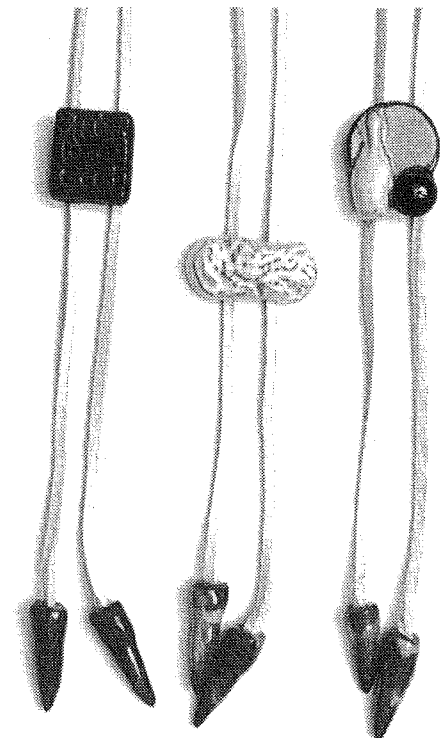
LADY-BO LEFT TO RIGHT: #4 Wagonwheel, #19 Aztec, #16, #20, #14 Mayan-Aztec, #11, #5 Arrowhead and #6 Indian Bowl

THE LADY-BO: COLORFUL CHARMS HUNG FROM FINE SPORT LEATHERS  
1 DOZEN ON EASEL DISPLAY CARD

FOREVER BRILLIANT — LUSTROUS — RADIANT — BEAUTIFUL!  
THESE NEW SYNTHESIZED CERAMIC GEMS IN COSTUME JEWELRY ARE MADE  
UNDER ENORMOUS PRESSURES — A NEW CONCEPT IN CERAMIC FORMING.  
THE WIDE RANGE OF 10 COLORS GIVE ADEQUATE CHOICE FOR COSTUME  
HARMONIES. THEY ARE LIGHT IN WEIGHT, YET SO VERY DURABLE.  
THIS IS THE NEW LOOK FOR A NEW LIFE.

## WHAT ABOUT VALUES?

**W**alues of Silla-Gem jewelry items vary widely as to locale and availability. Several pieces have reportedly been picked up at yard sales and flea markets for \$2 to \$5. This, of course, is the exception. We tend to be realistic here. "After all, it's only a little piece of pottery," as one authority insists. We happen to agree. The tiny Ti-Tacs, we feel, should be no more than \$5-8, depending on how much the buyer wants it. But that goes for all the other items, as well. Earrings should bring anywhere from \$15 to \$65, depending on color and rarity. Bolo ties are another story. Prices on these could be \$20 to \$100, depending on rarity of design and color. ❖



BOLO TIES: #13 Mayan-Aztec, #25 Cork Bark, and #31 Bowling >

# Joniece

# Joniece's



Joniece tells the stories . . .

Donna writes them down



Photo by Phyllis Bess

**Club Trade Winds #T1—1-qt. Plain Tumbler**  
8-5/8" Tall, 2-7/8" across bottom  
4-1/2" across top, 13-3/4" around top

## PLAYING CATCH UP

*This issue of your journal has so many important articles to offer, we thought we would shorten this one from our usual long-winded format to assure room for them all. We're just not ready to expand to 28 pages yet! So, instead of our usual lengthy wanderings, we'll be brief.*

*The last few issues we've concentrated on very specific subjects. Now I'd like to use this one to "tie up some loose ends." There have been several suggestions for subjects to talk about, so this time we'll be turning our attention to those letters and comply with some of your requests.*

*Before we get into those subjects, I'd like to bring up one of my own and get it out of the way.*

# BELIEVE IT OR NOT

## RETRACTION PLEASE

When Ray Stoll called on me to provide some facts and figures for the **Club Trade Winds** article in the last autumn issue, I did my best. But since then, more information on the subject has miraculously surfaced. And now—with apologies—are the numbers on the *original* first order. According to our source, the delivery was completed as ordered.



Mark on bottom of #T1

Number	Description	Glaze	Quantity
#T1	1-qt. Plain Tumbler	Prairie Green	72
#T2	7" Bamboo Tumbler	Desert Gold	72
#T3	8" 1-qt. War God Mug	Cinnamon Toast	72
#T4	7" Widow Maker Mug with handle	Onyx Black	72
#T5	Tiki Salt & Peppers	Woodland Moss	120 pairs
#T6	Tiki God Serving Bowl	Clay Blue	72
#T7	4" Coconut Planter	Brown Satin / White	72
#T8	7" Fish Ash Tray	Woodland Moss	144
#T9	7" Clam Shell Dish	Woodland Moss	72
#T11	17" Palm Leaf Tray	Prairie Green	72
#T12	2-qt. Bird of Paradise Coconut Pitcher	Woodland Moss	36

You'll notice the #T3's color is marked "Toast." Did Frankoma produce such a color? Of course not. Daddy used Gracetone's Cinnamon Toast glaze on this one. Do you have a #T3 1-qt. War God Mug with the "Club Trade Winds" mark in Cinnamon Toast? Please tell us if you do!

You see, the reason I erroneously kept thinking that the order was not delivered in total is that 72 is a very large number for some of these items. I mean, where are they, folks?? Only one #T1 has surfaced—that we know of. And more Deer Groups have shown up than Tiki God Serving Bowls! Maybe the dishwasher at Club Trade Winds was klutzy and broke a lot.

Frankoma never claimed to be restaurant ware, and always advised the customer that Frankoma would not last as long as regular restaurant dishes. But the cost of Frankoma was half, or less, and our designs were original, made to order.

There are also the #T3S and #T4S, the more common smaller War God Mug and the smaller Widow Maker Mug. But those came later when we shrank the #T3 and #T4 and put them into our Frankoma line, not in existence at the time of the Club Trade Winds original order.

## THE ONE-FIRE PROCESS

Georgia Martin (OK) has asked us to explain the one-fire process, which was developed by Daddy. As far as we know, he was the only ceramist who accomplished this feat in large production plant type operations.

The normal process in ceramics is the twice-fire. First the ware is fired with no glaze, and that's called the "bisque firing." The glaze is then applied and fired a second time. The only time Frankoma ever twice-fired was when we used the Flame glaze, which was necessary to produce a red-orange flame color.

Those of you who have read *Clay in the Master's Hands* know the reasons Daddy worked so hard to perfect the one-fire process. He was passionate about being able to produce a good ceramic product inexpensively enough that average-income people could afford to use and enjoy it in their homes.

"Why cater to just the rich who can afford to buy anything they want?" he often said. "Everybody who wants to live with fine art should be able to." So he set about his experiments and eventually came up with a way to mature both the clay body and the glazes, forming a stable bond between the two in one firing. And fortunately, he was able to produce a product that was both durable and practical for everyday home use. And the elimination of that one firing cut the cost of production significantly.



## BLACK CORING

“**B**lack coring” is the name given to a process that causes a black, green, or greenish-black spot on a piece, which is usually the size of a quarter to a silver dollar—on a *Frankoma* piece. It appears as a result of (1) an improper mixture of oxygen and gas during firing, affecting the kiln’s atmosphere and preventing the proper maturing and development of the clay, (2) sometimes the thickest part of an item did not dry all the way through before entering the kiln, or (3) the piece has a thick area in its design which does not allow for proper ventilation or “breathing” of the clay.

Maybe the gas company was changing wells and neglected to call and warn us, or they could have changed the gas pressure. Maybe a piece of “trash,” a chunk of fire brick, or a bit of kaolin—or any other bit of matter that is not flammable—falls onto the burner, not allowing it to produce a clean flame.

If it *is* being fired properly, the glaze gets very bubbly and “cooks.” It’s during this time that the gases must free themselves from the clay. If it’s *not* being fired right, it doesn’t bubble evenly, gases cannot get out, they’re sealed inside, and the piece can’t “breathe,” causing black coring.

Gases escape in places that are not glazed. For instance, the Trivets and the #247 Soup Ladle both have very small brushed areas (unglazed, as on the bottoms) for these gases to escape. In these examples, the only unglazed spots are small ones on those little feet they rest on. The nature of these pieces allows only a small area for gases to be released. On the Soup Ladle, there are only two very small places (for that size piece) on the bottom that it rests on, so if it wasn’t fired “just right,” it would black core right there at the top at the thickest part.

If it appears on only one or two single pieces—like maybe all the Spoon Holders on the whole kiln were perfect except for a spot of black coring on one or two at the apex, we could assume that the spot had not thoroughly dried all the way through that thickness before going into the kiln. This is not entirely uncommon with these two pieces, as well as some of the trivets.

Understand that we are not ceramic engineers, nor are we chemical engineers. We are “potters.” And *my* experience is working *with* people who have that sort of knowledge and experience. I can tell you *how* a kiln was fired by looking at the results (evenly, too much oxidation, under-fired, hot or cold spots in kiln, or when a burner has been clogged up). And I only know what worked with *our* clay and glazes, and how we had to fire it, which may be entirely different than any other company does it. Like we didn’t have the leeway of even half a cone. We had to fire within a mere quarter of a cone to get good colors, while most potteries have a good full cone they can play around with. We didn’t.

## WHAT IS A “JIGGERED” PLATE?

**B**efore the era of hydraulic presses arrived, plates and other flatware, as well as bowls, were made on what we call a “jigger wheel.” It works on the simple principle of one side of the piece being made by the mold, and the other side formed with a template.

Think of a cereal bowl. The outside is concave in the mold. Soft clay is put inside the cavity, and the mold is placed on a horizontal spinning wheel. A lever on a rocking arm is manually lowered with a properly shaped template, which makes the inside shape, pressing the clay against the mold for the outside design (if it’s a bowl that has a design), while it cuts the center out.

In the case of a plate, it’s made upside down. The impression of the face of the plate is on the top of the mold. When the clay is put on the mold, the arm with the template is lowered, pressing the clay against the mold (which makes the design on the face of the plate), and as it does, the template shape forms the foot of the plate. To recognize a “jiggered” plate, look at the bottom and look for the circles made by the template.

It’s a lot of fun to watch a jigger work. In that era, when we gave guided tours through the plant and stopped by the jigger, there were lots of squeals and giggles, especially from the kids. After the tour moved on, it was sometimes discovered that a kid or two was missing, and we’d always know where to find them!



The temperature in our kilns could vary only very slightly without damaging the ware. (Cones measure temperature. Each cone melts at a slightly different temperature, allowing the viewer to accurately calculate the temperature by which cones have melted, and which have not. Kilns have a small hole through which they may be seen during firing.)

The worse the black coring, the darker the spot. If you broke the piece at the point of the black core, you'd see that it was the same color all the way through the clay at that point. It would be a "second," of course, because it's a blotch that stands out and doesn't match the color of the rest of the piece. Contrary to what one would think, it's not weak at that point, but extra strong because of its density.

## THE CARE AND FEEDING OF

**D**eb Oller of TX, a relatively new collector, asks for hints on the best way to clean, repair and preserve her Frankoma. She says she's heard that many put their Frankoma in the dishwasher. Although she lets the machine do her dinnerware, she can't bring herself to do that with the other pieces. We ask—why not, Deb? All Frankoma was made from the same clay, glazed the same, and fired at the same temperature. Fear not! Frankoma can take it. After having been fired at almost 2000 degrees of heat, what harm could mere hot water and detergent do?

Deb goes on to give advice on removing the lime deposits so often found in used vases. Mix white vinegar and water, let it sit overnight in the vase, and most of it (if not all) will be gone tomorrow. I think a lot of us can use that one!

She asks how to protect the inside of vases from scrapes and scratches caused by placing arrangements in them. Frankly, we've never heard of this problem. But if it exists, there's always the old standard metal frog at the bottom into which you put the stems, or in the case of permanent flowers, the wire stems. If you're going to do an actual "arrangement," you need to have control of where you want each stem to go, so they need that grounding, which is obviously why flower frogs were invented. Actually, the old metal frogs are rather passe, now that inexpensive Styrofoam and oasis-type materials are so available. If you just want to put a bunch of flowers into a vase and let them fall where they may, I suggest they be real flowers, as organic stems would not scratch like the wire stems of permanent flowers. But I must say that this is the first time we've ever heard of this problem.

Deb adds that she just bought an Indian Maiden that had been repaired, but the repair is hardly noticeable and is fine to stand guardian over her other Frankoma. She says she's aware that chipped and repaired pieces are not always good as investments. But they

need good homes, too, and sometimes she loves them that much more because she believes they've been used and enjoyed by someone who loved them.

Many of your fellow Frankoma collectors feel the same as you do, Deb. You recognize that each piece has a personality and appreciates kindness. Thanks for your letter, and we're glad to know your Frankoma has a caring good home.

## REPEAT AFTER ME . . .

**G**ranted, my name is not a common one, and I'm not particularly disturbed when someone mispronounces it. However, after I say it for them a few times, and they still can't say it right—well, you get my drift. Someone suggested that I write a few words here about it so everyone can say it the same. It's spelled *J-o-n-i-e-c-e*, like Jo-niece. But it's pronounced *Johneese*. Remember, I was named for my father, John. My parents dropped the "h" to make it more feminine, but it still begins with the sound of "John."

And then there's the name *Frankoma*. Even some of our members are still misspelling it, inserting an "h" into it—*Frankhoma*—which calls for an extra breathy sound that doesn't belong. It's simply *oma*—not *homa*. *Frank-o-ma*.

So if you remember to drop the "h" in both my name and the company's name, you've got it! (Being a girl-type person, I'm a John-niece, not a John-nephew.)

## Cast, Poured, Pressed, & Hollow Ware

**A** lot of people are asking for specific definitions of these terms we use. A "cast" or "poured" piece is one that has had clay poured into the mold (liquid clay is called "slip") and left to sit for a half hour or more, or long enough for the plaster to draw enough moisture from the slip to form a solid wall (next to the mold) as thick as you want the piece to be.

The slip in the center is then poured out, making it hollow (thus, the name "hollow ware"). After a little more drying, the mold is taken apart, and the soft piece lifted out to be air-dried.

A "pressed" piece is made on a hydraulic press. It works very much like a cookie press. There's a top half and a bottom half. A piece of clay is placed between the two halves, and the two halves are forced together to create the piece. The top half of the press comes down on the clay with 2,000 pounds of pressure, forcing it down on the other half of the mold, creating both sides of the shape. Press molds are made of a hard, durable material called Ceramical, a material that is mixed, and sets up, similar to plaster of paris. ♦

# Gibbs

# Manly

# Mini's

ARTICLE & PHOTOGRAPHS BY GIBB GREEN

## Frankoma's Earliest and Rarest Miniatures

**T**hose Frankoma miniatures! I love 'em! Call them what you may—curios, souvenirs, what-nots, knick-knacks, or whatever—I *still love 'em!*

The heavy production of the little Pitchers, Vases and Animals began in the early years of World War II and was a response by the Franks to the shutting off of such imports from the Orient due to the war. Of course Americans were addicted to these little "decorables" (and still are), so the Frankoma issues were a hit. Page 12 of the 1942 catalog shows no less than 28 different items available for purchase and collection of the miniature variety, including Animals and Salt & Pepper sets.

For purposes of this article, I'll focus only on the Pitchers and Vases, the earliest and the rarest. Almost all of those little fellows carry mold numbers in the "500" series.

### The Earliest

**F**irst things first. Which are the earliest produced of the 500's? Pretty easy. The 501 Vase (2-1/2" tall) and the 502 Vase (3-1/2" tall) were both produced by **Frank Potteries** in 1933 before they were later made part of the **Frankoma** line. Two pieces were produced in 1934-1935 with small round "o" **Frankoma** marks—the 550 mini Guernsey Pitcher with a tall collar, and the 500 Ringed Vase. Two different FFCA members have told me that they have a 557 mini Spiral Pitcher with a small round "o" incised logo. I don't doubt them one bit. One piece is Cherokee Red, the other Jade Green. They were probably with small round "o's" based on color production years alone.

Are these early ones easy to find? Hardly, especially with the earliest marks. Of course, the 501 and 502 with the **Frank Potteries** stamps are extremely rare. I have a **Frank Potteries** 501 in Ivory that I bought in

Denver a while back. In 1933, Mr. Frank called his Ivory "Eggshell." I've found three other 501's in my earnest searches, all with **Frankoma** 1942 marks (Prairie Green, Silver Sage and Osage Brown). I have never found a 502 with a **Frank Potteries** stamp. I have four **Frankoma** ones, all 1942 marks—Prairie Green, Dusty Rose, Old Gold and Silver Sage.

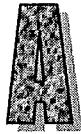
The mini Guernsey Pitcher 550's are my favorites, as I've said before (February 1996 issue). I have five with a small round "o." They are Fawn Brown, Jade Green, Blue Gray Jade, Onyx Black and Osage Brown. I have some 18 other colors with later marks. The 500 Ringed Vase is much more elusive. I have two of the 1934-1935 marks in Osage Brown and Jade Green. I have only seven other colors—Prairie Green, Desert Gold, Royal Blue, Onyx Black, Fawn Brown, Redbud and Terra Cotta Rose, the last one on brick red clay. Now, I do not mention my colors to brag. I only want to illustrate the extent of the production of these pieces and give all you miniature collectors out there some hope of finding a few of these treasures.

### The Rarest

**W**hich of the miniature Pitchers and Vases are the rarest? Easy question to answer. There are three, and they were all manufactured in 1950-1951. They are the 502 (yes, there are two different 502's), Footed Scroll Vase, the 503 mini Cornucopia, and the 505 Egyptian Vase. (There is also a 1942 Bud Vase numbered 505.). All three of the 1950-1951 beauties are 2-1/2" tall. The 502 Footed Scroll is by far the rarest. Two of the *biggest* FFCA collectors don't even have *one!* Three of us habitual addicts with thousands of pieces have only one. Mine is in Desert Gold. I have seen one in Redbud, one in Onyx Black, and two more in Desert Gold. That's it—period—at least that I know of. Surely there are more, but they are really scarce. The 505 Egyptian is next. I have them only in Prairie Green and Desert Gold. I have sold three other Prairie Green ones. I have also seen the little fella in Onyx Black, Redbud and Sorghum Brown. The 503 Cornucopia is the easiest the find of the three, but still real scarce. I have them only in Prairie Green and Desert Gold. But I have sold four others in Prairie Green, and have seen them in White Sand, Redbud, Onyx Black and Sorghum Brown. Don't give up hope, they *can* be found!

The next group in terms of rarity includes the 562 mini Lazybones Creamer, the 554 Jug (from 1942 only), and the 557 mini Spiral Pitcher. The 562 was probably made only in 1953 (introduced as a Christmas Card) and a year or two after. Most without the Christmas greeting are in red clay. I have only Prairie Green, Clay Blue, Desert Gold, Brown Satin and Onyx Black. I suspect most of the 562's made were special orders with dinnerware sets on red clay before 1960.

## Other Rare Mini's

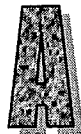


Another of my favorites is the 554 Jug. Patterned as a miniature of the #86 refrigerator jug (a 2-1/2 qt. beauty), it is a cutie. I have only six—Royal Blue, Prairie Green, Desert Gold, Fawn brown, Dusty Rose and Osage Brown. Keep diggin', fellow Frankomaniacs, they're out there! Speaking of that shape, the rarest of all the Salt and Pepper pairs is the #86B from 1938 only. I'd readily give up a couple of C-notes for a pair of those!

And now for the 557 Spiral Pitcher. It was used as the 1952 Christmas Card and the Donna Frank Christmas Card of the same year. Of course, it is a miniature of the #88 1-qt. Refrigerator Jug from the Norman era. I have only eight—Prairie Green, Desert Gold, Onyx Black, Redbud, Fawn Brown, Silver Sage, Osage Brown and Ivory. You'll see ten Prairie Green ones for every one in any other color!

I use "I" far too often! Friend and precious wife also owns this collection of Frankoma treasures. We are privileged, at least, to be temporary custodians of these timeless classics. In fact, she's a better hunter than I. She often finds the tiny ones first. This last weekend she pulled a #30 square bowl with a pot and puma mark that I missed. I guess that sometimes "we" is too long a word for me!

Other 500 mini rarities include: the other 505, a 4-1/4" Bud Vase (1942 only); the other 501, the mini Ringed Bowl (the mold for the 1950 Christmas Card); the 556 (the tiny Pitcher of 1944 Christmas Card fame); the 552 Ringed Pitcher (mold for the 1951 Christmas Card); and the 511 Wedding Ring Bowl (which said Merry Christmas in 1954, the year Donna was married). All of these are also fancied by the miniature collector, and are only slightly easier to find than the others detailed above.



**little advertising:** I have just completed a detailed miniatures price list of all the Frankoma issues less than 4" tall. It breaks down values according to clays, marks and glazes. I have consulted heavily the works of Bess and Cox, as well as talking to scores of collectors and dealers. I have also produced a price list for Salt and Peppers. The lists are available from either Donna or Nancy by mail (send SASE) or e-mail.

Call or write me if you have questions on any of the miniatures, or if you have a goody with a small round "o" that I haven't mentioned!

Next issue I'll be discussing the Lazybones and Westwind dinnerware patterns.

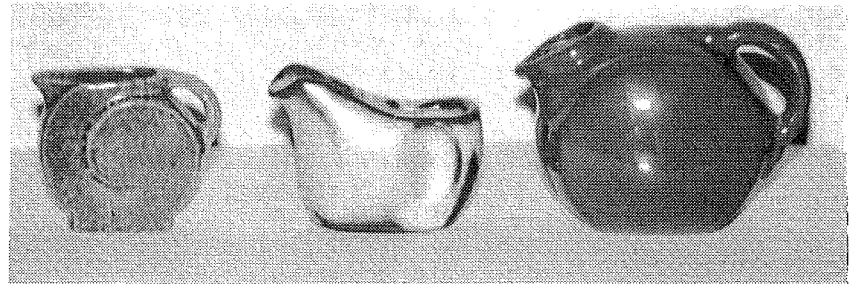
## THE EARLIEST



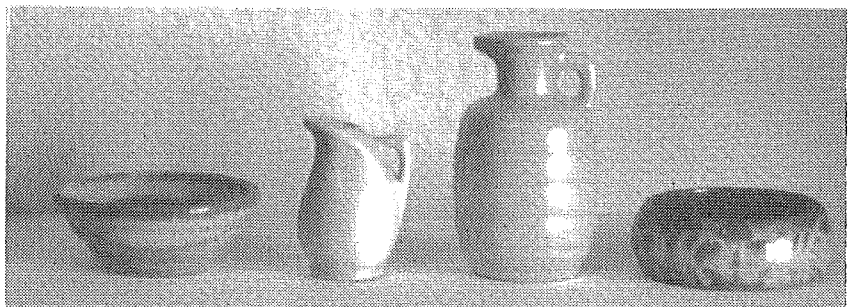
## THE RAREST



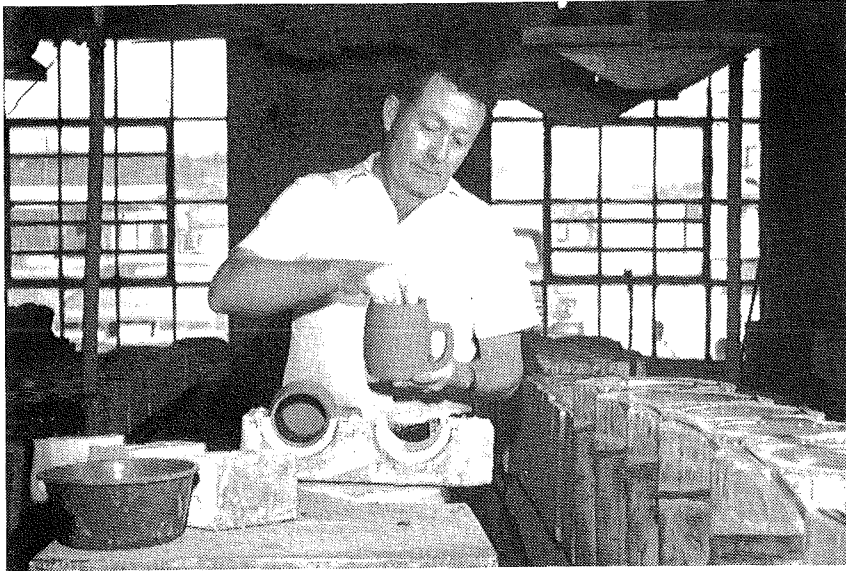
## MORE RARE MINI'S



## OTHER RARE MINI'S



	MOLD	DATE	SMALL ROUND O	1942 MARK	NORMAN GLAZE	ADA CLAY	BRICK RED CLAY
ROW 1 EARLIEST	#502	1933-42		\$40-50	\$80-90		
	#501	1933-42		\$40-50	\$75-80		
	#500	1934-57	\$65-70	\$30-35	\$65-70		
	#550-TC	1934-64	\$40-50	\$70-80			
	#550-LC	1934-64	\$15-25	\$35-40			
ROW 2 RAREST	#505	1950-51				\$40-50	
	#502	1950-51				\$75-80	
	#503	1950-51				\$40-50	
ROW 3 MORE	#557	1940-53			\$45-50	\$35-40	
	#562	1953-61				\$25-35	
	#554	1942 only			\$60-70	\$40-50	
ROW 4 OTHER RARE	#501	1950-55				\$35-40	\$30-35
	#556	1942-53			\$35-50	\$20-25	
	#552	1942-48			\$45-50	\$25-30	
	#511	1954-60					\$35-40



## Hank Perkins Retires

*Mr. Frank called him  
"One of the Few  
Natural Born Casters"*

BY DONNA FRANK

**H**ank Perkins came to Frankoma in 1952, shortly after he and Faye were married. He was 19, she was 14. It didn't take long for Mr. Frank to recognize Hank's natural artistic abilities as a caster. He just had that special "feel" for it. Mr. Frank many times was heard to say, "A caster is not made—he's born."

If Mr. Frank ever had a question about casting, or if he needed backing up on a theory he had, he would always go to Hank. He'd say, "Let's talk to Hank about it," or "Let's see what Hank thinks." When Mrs. Frank needed mugs or plates to letter for specials, it was, "Hank will get them for me." And Joniece never failed to discuss with Hank any difficult mold or new approach to the manufacturing of a piece before it was completed, because he had the answer. And, too, Hank was so in tune with the clay, he could tell its precise consistency just by watching the slip pour into the mold, and could infallibly predict the exact setting up time.

Hank was a good looking young man, and Joniece confesses that as a kid, he was her hero. When Joniece could sneak away from her assigned job, her Daddy usually knew where to look for her—riding on the front of Hank's casting cart, talking to Hank and watching him work.

After about two years at Frankoma, Hank began listening to those wild and glorious tales about the riches in Colorado, California, and all points west. Well, this is the way Hank tells the story...

"I really liked being at Frankoma. But I was young, and I guess I just had a case of gold fever. Mr. Frank didn't want me to leave, but I think he understood my restlessness. So Faye and I packed up and headed west, and we got as far as Colorado. Experienced ceramic casters weren't all that common, and I got a job in a pottery plant. This company had some connection with a pottery in Eastland, Texas, and they sent me down there to help develop that division.

"I was there only a short time before a friend of Mr. Frank's called him and told him I was working there, and Mr. Frank got into his car and started driving. The

next thing I knew he was tapping me on the back. He put his arm around my shoulder and said, "Hank, I've come to take you home. I need you. Let's go." I came back to Sapulpa, and back home to Frankoma, and I've worked there ever since. Except for those few months, I've never missed a payday in 45 years. Even after the 1983 fire, I was one of the few that Joniece kept on the payroll to help clean up and rebuild the plant. I've always loved my work because it was more than just a job to me. Every piece I cast, I got a chance to express myself."

As is traditional in many families, the talents of the father are passed down to his children. This was the case with Hank and his son Randy and daughter Brenda. Both began working in the summers when they were still in high school. At Frankoma, employees' children always got first chance at summer jobs. Brenda was a spirited, talented and hard worker. Hank's wife Faye worked with staining, wetware and trimming. Ted Steeples and J. C. Taylor always trusted her to do the most difficult assignments, as she exhibited that special aptitude for fine detail work. (She is still employed there today.)

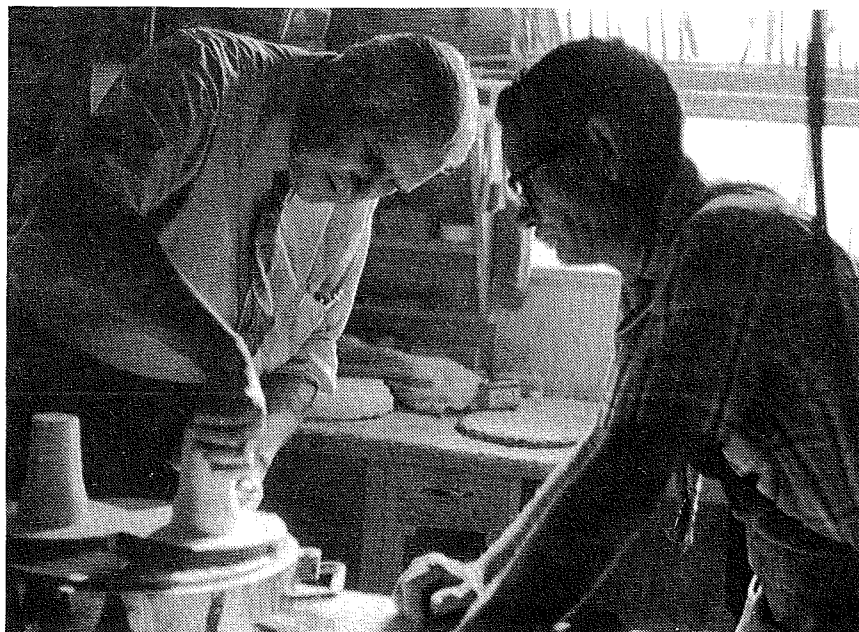
**R**andy soon became permanent at Frankoma. He was the spitting image of his father, plus he had that same "natural born" talent as a caster, developing into every bit as fine a craftsman. Everyone expected that Randy's career in life would be there alongside his dad. But that was not to be. Tragically, Randy was killed in a car accident when he was 37.

Hank, you are without question one of the pillars that made Frankoma what it became. We thank you for your loyalty, and for all you've meant to the industry, to Frankoma Pottery, and to the Frank family. We collectors know that if we own even a few Frankoma pieces, at least some of them must have been handled by you. In appreciation for your many years of service, the Board of Directors wishes to present you with an Honorary Membership in the Frankoma Family Collectors Association. ☞

## Junior Lucas Remembers . . .

*He was simply the very best*

BY DONNA FRANK



**A**s a member of the Frankoma family of employees, Junior Lucas played a very important role in Frankoma Pottery's history.

Mr. Frank first hired him as a caster in November of 1950. Junior tells us that about three months after he started to work, Mr. Frank called him into his office and began asking him about what he had done in his young life. Junior told him that he had served in the Third Army in Germany (WWII) under General Patton, and had earned four Battle Stars and the Good Conduct Medal. Mr. Frank never served in the Armed Forces, but he had a soft spot in his heart for those who had. "Junior," he said thoughtfully, "If you'll stay with me, I'm going to take good care of you." And Junior assures us that he always did.

Mr. Frank led him back to the mold shop that day and introduced him to Charles Watkins. Charlie had been working there for some time and was about to be promoted to management, and Junior was to become the mold maker. His pay was 50 cents an hour, which was not a bad wage in 1951.


"He was really patient with me," says Junior. "He led me by the hand and taught me mold making from the ground up, and I was anxious to learn. Mr. Frank eventually turned the mold shop over to me. He made a master mold maker of me, and I never left him. Then I trained other mold makers. I stayed and worked continuously for Frankoma for 37 years, until July of 1987."

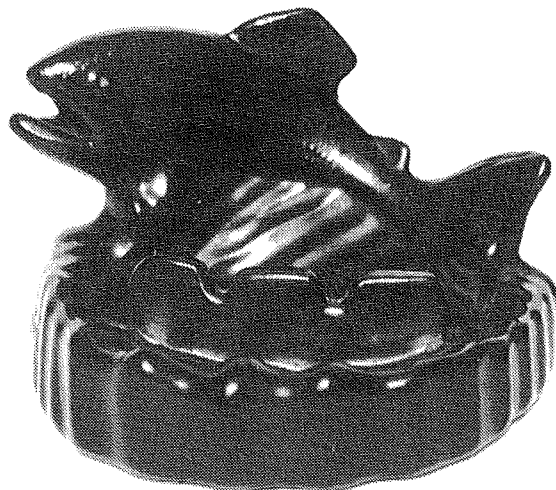
Joniece says of him, "Junior was the best. It's uncanny how he could just look at a piece and know precisely where the seams should be, and how many pieces the mold would have to be. When Junior worked for Frankoma, he didn't have the advantage of rubber molds as we do today. With rubber, you have a bit of leeway. But when you work with plaster, Hydracal or Ceramical, you may as well be working with cement. Less than perfect just won't do. And Junior's innate judgment never failed to produce the perfect mold. He was simply the very best."

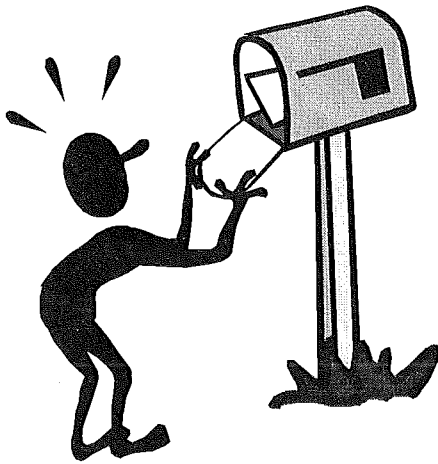
As we've mentioned before, at that time employees

were allowed opportunities to try their hand at whatever artistic projects they chose to try. Junior Lucas sometimes found an item he liked, made a mold of it, and cast and signed it. Among other items, there was a trout ashtray, and some collectors have his cat climbing a wall.

When asked what he remembered most about Mr. Frank, Junior didn't have to think long. "He was always so happy! Very few times did I ever see him when he wasn't. He whistled a lot, you know, and I could always hear him coming." He added with a touch of nostalgia, "Mr. and Mrs. Frank were the nicest and most considerate people to work for, and then later Joniece was just like them. I never wanted to work for anyone else."

**W**e thank you, Junior Lucas, for being someone the Franks trusted and depended on. They always spoke of you with great respect and affection. The Frankoma Family Collectors Association has elected to give you one of this year's Honorary Memberships for your excellent skills and faithful service to the Franks and Frankoma Pottery. 





There is nothing as exciting as opening up the old mailbox and finding a "Puma" or a "PGS" in it. —Alex Avalle, CA

## Mail Call

Dear Donna...

I was very excited to hear that you selected our ceramics student, Anita Fields, for one of your first three **John Frank Memorial Scholarships**. She is a dedicated artist and a fine person. We have been proud of Anita for a long time, watching her develop her work and begin to exhibit locally and nationally. Your scholarship will help her to work toward her graduate degree, something I know she has wanted to do for some years.

Thank you for providing this opportunity and for including Oklahoma State in your first selection process. I was glad you could come up for the Mata Ortiz Potters E Spring 1997 Issue *Pot & Puma* 21xhibit so that you could see our facilities and we could meet you. I look forward to continued connections with you and the Frankoma Family Collectors Association.

Thank you again. This is a wonderful honor for Anita and our Art Department.

**Nancy B. Wilkinson, Director  
Department of Art  
Oklahoma State University**

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Dear Nancy and Donna...

You have been so warm and gracious in welcoming me into the Association. You all have worked so hard in getting it going that I'm amazed you have the time and make the effort to be so courteous to us members. Your parents taught you well! Thanks for the back issues of the *Pot & Puma* I ordered, and especially for Gibb Green's paper on glazes. I finally put it in a sheet protector to save it from my constant handling. I'm very impressed with the quality, integrity and eagerness of all who have done so much in birthing the Association.

Is there any way we in the hinterlands can help? I'm trying to come up with an idea for a story in the P&P, but there is no way at all I could achieve the beauty and clarity of your writing. It is such a joy to read your pieces, and I know what you meant when you wrote about the time and perspiration involved in writing.

I noticed you have another member in TN. I'd like to get in touch with him/her. Would you be able to notify this person of my interest so that he/she might contact me? I don't like to ask for someone's name and address because of privacy concerns.

Thanks for being there and for being so dedicated!  
**Pat from TN**

*What a pleasure it was to receive your very kind letter, Pat! E-mail Nancy in OK-City at ffca4nancy@aol.com and ask her to list you as wanting contact from other members. It will be in the next PGSheet, and I'm sure your phone will soon be ringing. And please—do send us your story!*

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Donna...

The **Prairie Green Sheet** is a great publication. Thanks to it, my mother's Christmas Plates now have a good home in South Texas, where my parents spent many winters. Thank you.

**Joan from VA**

*Thanks, Joan, for your letter. Sure happy we could help you find a buyer.*

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Donna...

Today I was thinking a lot after finishing your book. I must go to Sapulpa this September! I want to be a part of the FFCA experience. And I hope I can meet you and Joniece. You really did a beautiful job with the book. It gave me much more insight into Frankoma, the pottery I fell in love with the moment I saw my first piece (the honey jar). Although I can't afford some of the things I see, I can still look at them and get nothing but wonderful feelings. When I come home after work at night, the Frankoma I have helps me unwind just by looking at it. When I look at those Frankoma Kids, I see simplicity and beauty at the same time. Hands with tender loving care had to have made them.

Can't wait till September. It's going to be so exciting for me. P.S. Just got my Buffalo and Bears. Give a hello and a hug to Joniece for making so many people so happy through all her work.

**David from DC**

*Thanks for all your wonderful e-mails! (Folks, DC David's computer and mine have been doing a lot of talking to each other since he joined a few weeks ago. He's even changed his e-mail address to **Frankoma 1**. Is that a genuine A-#1 triple-distilled Frankomaniac or what?!)*

Dear Nancy and Donna...

We sent in our dues for FFCA this weekend. I learned much from the sample copy of the *Pot & Puma* that Donna sent me (information package), and I'm looking forward to learning much more.

I've met several collector/dealers down here in Texas who have also shown an interest in the Frankoma Family. I'm printing out the info posted on AOL's Frankoma board and mailing it to them. I thought this would be the best way of sharing information with them about FFCA. I've already praised it to them in person while I was out hunting Frankoma at their shops. Neither knew about FFCA. They just knew they loved Frankoma. One admitted that, like many dealers, he became a dealer because he and his wife couldn't afford all the pieces they wanted, and this way they owned them for at least a little while! Does this sound familiar?

**Deb from TX**

*Yes, Deb, "It seems to me I've heard that song before." But what a sweet one it is! (Since she wrote this letter, she has become the one we call our Frankoma Ambassador to Texas. She just keeps e-mailing us names to send info packages to!) Keep those e-mails coming, Ambassador Deb!*

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Donna...

Your (info) package was in my mail box when I got home from work last night. Many, many thanks!! I really haven't had time yet to read everything, but I have checks ready to send for my FFCA membership, and to Phyllis Bess for her **Frankoma Treasures** book.

I guess I never considered myself a "collector" of Frankoma. I just picked up pieces that I like through the years, and left behind the colors and pieces I didn't care for. Can you believe it? Now I wish I had bought all I found. Prairie Green is and always has been my favorite. It's surprising how much I *don't* know about Frankoma, and I've ordered back issues in hopes of learning more. Again, many thanks!

**Joyce from ID**

*Joyce, you're our first member from Idaho! Now we have members in 44 states!. All together now, cousins—WELCOME TO THE FAMILY, JOYCE!*

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Donna...

I've just purchased **Frankoma and Other Oklahoma Potteries** (4<sup>th</sup> Edition) to get me started on my journey. I'm attempting to catalogue my personal inventory myself. However, I can already see that I will probably have to muster some assistance from you somewhere along the way.

By the way, I found the most amazing thing! The last *Prairie Green Sheet* contained the name and phone number of a lady right here in my home town, not even a mile from my home—in fact, within walking distance. I phoned her, and we're getting together, as she has a few pieces of Indian pottery that she's willing to part with! HOW ABOUT THAT!!!

I want you to know that I think you're pretty special, and I surely appreciate your warmth and kindness, always willing to drop everything and give me your undivided attention when I call. Thanks for everything!

**Alberta from IL**

*Hooray! Our new directory is working the way we want it to! You're so kind, Alberta, and I've always enjoyed your calls so much. The first time we talked, I felt as if we were old friends. And thanks for a great collecting story for this issue. Now that you're a Family member, let's have some more of them!*

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Donna...

Well, my dear, the beautiful (white/WM) Clam Shell Bowl arrived this

afternoon, and I couldn't believe the packaging. I thought I'd never get it out of the box! But finally I did, and I was overwhelmed! It is really a beautiful piece of art. I'm so glad Dorothy was able to part with it (I'm not sure I could have) and that you and she have entrusted it to me. I shall enjoy it and think of the two of you as I see it every day.

When I get back from my trip, I'll write Dorothy a thank-you letter, sending it in care of you, so that you may give it to her. I read her story about your mother. She must be a special lady!

**Pat from TN**

*How nice of you, Pat. I know she'll appreciate hearing from you. I told her about you and said I knew for sure it would have a good home. Enjoy it in good health, as they say.*

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Donna...

Thought I would let you know I found a #T8 7" Fish Ashtray today, and got a deal at \$5. It was just sitting there on a box in a shop. I looked at it, it looked at me, and both of us smiled. It wanted to go home with me to be with its cousins. It's a translucent white. It's so happy, I

caught it jumping over the Frankoma Kids!

**David from DC**

*My dear David—life was pretty dull before I started getting your e-mails. Can't wait to hear what's going to happen next with your Kids and their menagerie of critters!*

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Nancy...

We started our set of Wagon Wheel dishes when we married in June of 1948, used them all the time for 30-some years, then we put them away. But I *had* to get them in use again, as we missed using them. We've added a lot of new pieces the last couple of years. My husband is a rancher, and he picked them out for us before we married.

I purchased *Clay in the Master's Hands* while visiting in OKCity (at the May Mall) this past weekend. Can't put it down! It makes my Frankoma even more dear to me.

**Donna from TX**

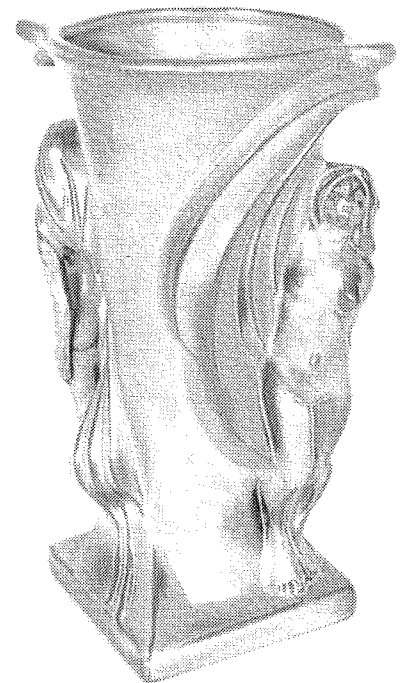
*To Donna from Donna: What good taste you have to choose a man with such good taste! So pleased you're enjoying the book. Bless you!*

# Gerald Smith Premiere Issue

## Order Your Very Limited Edition Art Deco Nude Vase

No. 1 of a Series  
Producing A Maximum Of  
600 Pieces—Each Numbered

11-5/8" Tall  
Designer: Gerald Smith



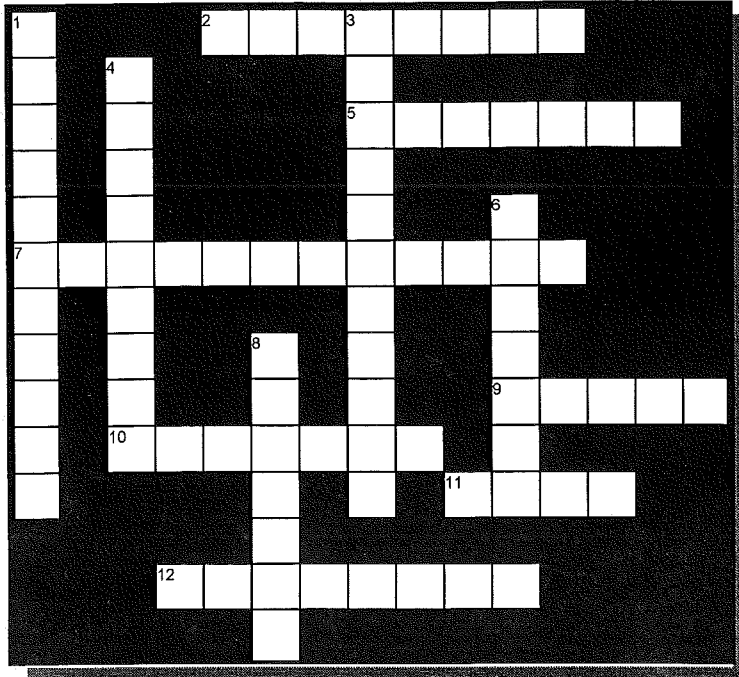
Order from: Gerald Smith ♦ 22833 Aspen Road ♦ Sarcoxie, MO 64862-9608 ♦ 417-325-5479

Produced by Frankoma Pottery Exclusively for Gerald Smith

Price: \$75 + \$6 S/H — Check or Money Order Accepted ♦ Please Specify: Prairie Green, Desert Gold, Bone or Cobalt

# FRANKOMA FUZZLE FUN

BY ALAN STOLTZ & CECE WINCHESTER-STOLTZ, CA



**PATRIOTIC SUMMER**

Complete this Frankoma Crossword Puzzle

Collecting Frankoma is like putting pieces of a puzzle together. How many can you answer?

**Across**

- 2. 4<sup>th</sup> of July Toby Mug
- 5. 1974 \_\_\_ for Independence Bicentennial Plate
- 7. 1972 First Bicentennial Plate
- 9. #AETR 1976 American \_\_\_\_\_ Trivet
- 10. 1976 \_\_\_\_\_ of Freedom Bicentennial Plate
- 11. #FLTR Old Glory Trivet
- 12. 1973 \_\_\_\_\_ Leaders Bicentennial Plate

**Down**

- 1. #BC87 "Constitutional" Bicentennial Plate
- 3. #LBTR 1973 \_\_\_\_\_ Trivet
- 4. 1976 \_\_\_ for Independence Bicentennial Plate
- 6. Old Fashion container for ink with quill
- 8. #STLP 1986 Statue of \_\_\_\_\_ Plate

✂ CLIP HERE AND MAIL

## COME JOIN US!

**YES!** I'D LIKE TO JOIN THE FRANKOMA FAMILY COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION

- PLEASE ACCEPT MY \$25 DUES AND ENTER MY/OUR FAMILY MEMBERSHIP IN FFCA.
  - New Membership
  - Renew Membership

NAME / NAMES \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP + 4 DIGIT CODE \_\_\_\_\_

AREA CODE + TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ FFCA MEMBERSHIP NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

**You can charge your dues to your credit card**

VISA      Account # \_\_\_\_\_

MasterCard      Expiration \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: FFCA ♦ PO Box 32571 ♦ Oklahoma City, OK 73123-0771

Make Check Payable to: FFCA

### Advertising in the Pot & Puma

Mail ads to *Pot & Puma*, PO Box 32571, Oklahoma City, OK 73123-0771.

Ad rates are subject to change without notice. You may arrange for advertising space at current rates up to four issues in advance. Members may place one-time ads at yearly rates.

The *Pot & Puma* is produced in Pagemaker; all photos are scanned. We prefer that partial-page ads be supplied in the same, or similar format—inquire if in doubt as to compatibility, font availability, etc.

### Display Advertising Rates

AD SIZE		1X	4X
Business Card	3 1/2" X 2"	\$15	\$10
1/4 page	3 3/4" X 5"	25	20
1/2 page	7 3/4" X 5"	40	25
Full page	7 3/4" X 10 1/4"	70	48
Page Banners	7 3/4" X 1"		18.50

### Publication Schedule

ISSUE	CLOSING
WINTER	January 31
SPRING	April 30
SUMMER	July 31
AUTUMN	October 31