



# FRANCISCAN NEWSLETTER

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WELCOME TO THE THIRD VOLUME OF THE FRANCISCAN NEWSLETTER. THE NEWSLETTER BEGAN IN 1994 AND HAS DEVELOPED INTO A PRINTED NEWSLETTER AND THE FRANCISCAN WEB SITE ON THE INTERNET. SEE THE WEB SITE AT [HTTP://WWW.GMCB.COM](http://www.gmcb.com) THE SITE IS THE PREMIER SITE FOR COLLECTORS OF FRANCISCAN POTTERY AND IS THE LARGEST WEB SITE DEVOTED ENTIRELY TO ONE POTTERY. THE WEB SITE AND THE NEWSLETTER ARE COMPLETELY SUPPORTED BY MEMBERS SUCH AS YOU. LET US TAKE THIS TIME TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

## Franciscan Collectors Online

One of the newest forms of collectors sharing information has been in the news group on the Internet. If you have access to the Internet, check out the Franciscan Web Site discussion group. The group is sponsored by Onelist at <http://www.onelist.com>. The group is named gmcb. The discussions have been lively with over 80 members online. The group receives either daily e-mails or a digest e-mail once daily compiled from e-mails sent from members.

One of the questions answered has been whether Franciscan made animal figurines.

Franciscan never made

miniature animals or any animals in general that I know of. Though for 18 years I have always hoped to find something somewhere about them existing. There is however a frog which is a flower frog in two sizes in many colors - one large and one small. I have sold both over the years. There is a dolphin which is a mammal, though

it is more of a mythological dolphin - one that you find on American furniture

and old scroll maps. There is a dove and also a pheasant planter. Though not figurines, they are birds in shape. These are the only ones I

know of that were made under the name of Franciscan at the Glendale plant.

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*Onelist sponsors the Franciscan Discussion Group on the Internet*

## What's New in Apple and Desert Rose

What's new in the favorite of the embossed hand-painted patterns from Franciscan?

Wedgwood moved the Franciscan line to Johnson Brothers in early 1988. So now it is known as Johnson Brother's Franciscan. Orchard Glade which was the Fresh Fruit design in blues has been discontinued (Spring, 1999). The company introduced a line of linens in 1996 which included coordinating Apple and Desert Rose hot pads, tea towels, table cloths and napkins. A new design of the tea kettle was introduced for both Desert Rose and Apple. As a premium in 1996-97, you would receive a metal colander or a set of stacking metal storage

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But there is an exception, as Gladding McBean did make terra cotta animals, large terra cotta elephants, lions, (bears?), and other large beasts as well as fish and giant eagles which top many buildings. Many of these animals/fish/birds are free standing as garden statuary. Frogs were popular for the corner of ponds and are the most common found in terra cotta. Again these are heavy! I have seen or have sold these so I know they are out there.

Another area of interest was the connection between Weil Ware and Franciscan Ware.

You are not too far off from Franciscan in collecting Weil Ware. Weil Ware once had a factory in the LA area that was started by Max Weil. Prior to when Max passed away in the 1950's the plant's controlling interest was purchased by Frederick Grant. Frederick Grant is the man responsible for creating the dinnerware division of Gladding McBean in 1934 after he left Weller Pottery. When he left Weller Pottery, he also left his wife to marry his secretary. His wife was the daughter of Weller.

Messy divorce. Since Frederick was the President of Weller Pottery he left with his secretary (who he married) and as a severance package took the Zona pattern which is what Apple Franciscan was based on. He took a position with Franciscan and his new wife was Mary Grant who designed the Apple pattern and the Desert Rose pattern. She is attributed with the wonderful carving that gave the patterns depth and the quality that spoke of Franciscan.

So, when he left Gladding McBean and acquired the controlling interest in Weil Ware, he also took with him all of the molds of the Artware that Gladding McBean made prior to 1942 (the year the Artware was discontinued due to the war) This is why you see Polynesia marked "Weil Ware" as well as the Nautical shells and other patterns made by Franciscan.

The burro (not a donkey) on the backstamp of Weil Ware is an interesting story in itself. The factory had a pet burro that roamed freely at the Weil Ware plant. His name was Dopey. Beloved as he was by the employees and Max Weil,

he became the symbol of Weil Ware and appears as the factories mark.

Another interesting fact is that that Weil Ware survived and is today a distribution company that is now based in Texas. They distribute ceramics that are made overseas and do not make any of their wares.

Another question asked was about the salt & pepper sets in Wild Flower....

The Wildflower s&p is exactly like the shape of the Desert Rose, and very similar to Meadow Rose, however the colors are the Wildflower colors of the poppy and Meadow Rose is more yellow and brighter rather than the subdued yellow of the poppy. They are difficult to tell apart, but once you put them side by side you can tell they are not the same. I have sold three or four pairs and I do have information in the Franciscan Library with a table set with Wildflower showing the salt & pepper set. - James Elliot

***"If you collect Franciscan, you are not too far off from Franciscan if you collect Weil Ware."***

### *The Colors of El Patio, Glaze Numbers, & Production Dates*

The following colors were manufactured in the El Patio Line. The dates are when they were introduced and when they were discontinued. M.P. and the number is the glaze number assigned by Franciscan.

Other Colors could be special ordered.

- ♦ White, M.P. 1, 1934-1947
- ♦ Glacial Blue/Turquoise, M.P. 2, 1934-1950
- ♦ Yellow (Gloss), M.P. 3, 1934-1947
- ♦ Matt Ivory, M.P. 5, 1942-1950
- ♦ Golden Glow, M.P. 11, 1934-1947
- ♦ Redwood, M.P. 12, 1934-1947
- ♦ Flame Orange, M.P. 13, 1939-1947
- ♦ Mexican Blue, M.P. 14, 1934-1947
- ♦ Coral Satin, M.P. 15, 1942-1950
- ♦ Apple Green, M.P. 18, 1939-1942
- ♦ Maroon, M.P. 19, 1948-1950
- ♦ Coral Gloss, M.P. 21, 1942-1950
- ♦ Turquoise Satin, M.P. 27, 1942-50
- ♦ Yellow (Gloss), M.P. 33, 1939-1948 Re-named Bright Yellow in 1948
- ♦ Chartreuse (Satin), M.P. 45, 1942-50
- ♦ Satin Gray, M.P. 76, 1948-1950
- ♦ Bright Green, M.P. 78, 1948-1950
- ♦ Grape, M.P. 89, 1948-1950

## *Story of Madeira - The Otis Design Group & Interpace*

In the 1970's Rupert Deese designed the Madeira shape, Jerry Rothman did the decal design, and Kathy Takemoto developed the glaze.

Who are these people? In 1962, Franciscan became a

***"In 1962, Franciscan became a trademark jointly owned by its originator Gladding and McBean, and its new partner the Lock Joint Pipe Company. This new partnership was called Interpace."***

trademark jointly owned by its originator Gladding and McBean, and its new partner the Lock Joint Pipe Company. This new partnership was called Interpace. In 1963 Millard Sheets was newly hired as the company's design director for its tile and dinnerware division. An experienced teacher and administrator in the academic scene of California, Millard Sheets turned

to the art schools as the natural resource he would use to hire the Interpace design teams that now list as a who's who in American ceramic art.

In the 1950's, Millard Sheets was director of the Otis Art Institute in Los Angeles and in 1954 he hired Peter Voulkos from Montana as the head of the new ceramics department. Paul Soldner was Peter's only student for a semester. And until 1956 classes didn't grow past a dozen students. Other students from 1956 were Jerry Rothman and Henry Takemoto.

According to a 1993 article written by Cheryl White from

American Craft Magazine, at a 1957 competition for studio potters and sculptors in clay called the Miami (FL) National Exhibit, Paul Soldner, (Peter Voulkos' first student) won the Purchase Award. That means that a panel of teachers and critics of ceramic arts judged his work to be the best piece of pottery suited for purchase for permanent collection by the sponsoring Museum. Well guess what? The Museum director refused to purchase it. The Museum Director called it "Poorly fashioned, badly glazed and meaningless in form"

Peter Voulkos and his students at Otis were creating pottery that was new and made for different reasons than what has been made traditionally by individual potters and potteries. The forms were non-functional and sculptural, but not representational. Up to this time potters were making vases and decorated dinnerware or they sculpted figures of people, animals, and scenes. Larger sculpture was relegated to decorating exteriors and interiors of buildings or were ornaments for the garden. We as collectors of GMcB have been very lucky to see how Gladding McBean had excelled past other potteries in its perfection of all aspects of classical pottery tradition. From decorated dinnerware and porcelain, small sculpted figures, to architectural adornment and garden ornament. We have embraced this tradition and admired its success and innovations.

What was happening in the

mid 1950's and into the 1960's was that the definition of a potter as a craftsman (in the ceramic tradition) was changing to one in which a potter was artist and innovator. That means that a piece of clay put on a wheel no longer had to become anything functional or representational. It was really hard to define what it was that the potter made. In the art of painting the word used for this type of art was Abstract Expressionist. In 1958 student potter Jerry Rothman said, "the traditions of ceramics can be the basis of new forms that relate to the world in which we live".

A woman named Rose Slivka was the editor of a magazine named "Craft Horizons". In 1959, in an article on U.S. crafts, she was the first to try and give words to the new ceramics she bravely used painters as an analogy.

"The Potter today treats clay as if it were paint....Manipulating form as far as it could go to project the excitement of surface values, the potters found even the slightest concession to function too limiting...Instead of serving function, it now serves the possibilities of the new painting. "

The analogy was alright, but it made many traditional potters angry. The pottery pictured was viewed as horrible, ugly, sloppy, useless.... For some, especially those whose families have been making pottery for years, it was interpreted as an attack on beloved Ceramic Tradition and everything they ever knew about what made

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pottery beautiful. Many potters around the country acted on this frustration, confusion, and anger and even sent the author of the article hate mail. It was so hard to conceptualize that this was actually a liberating idea for the artist potter and not a step backward.

Another Voulkos student, Harold Myers, who graduated and left to teach pottery at the University of Washington in Seattle had similar feelings. In 1961 at the Fourth National Conference of the American Craftsmen's Council hosted by the University of Washington, Myers said, "a potter, once called only by the name of 'craftsman,'...can now, if his work demands it, be called by the name of 'artist'....What he makes his objects of is not important, but the amount of truth in what he makes is important. Creation should be no different in clay than in paint."

It was an uphill battle but by 1962 magazines and galleries began to use the same vocabulary they used for paintings to describe the new type of ceramics. So ceramics became Pop ceramics, Abstract Expressionist ceramics, etc. All fell under the scope of "Modern Art."

For Franciscan at Interpace, the times have changed and the older patterns just weren't cutting it any more. Demand for Starburst dropped and Desert Rose and Apple sales were maximized. Millard Sheets was sent out to find new and innovative designers.

Rupert Deese and Harrison McIntosh met for the first time

as students at Scripps college in Claremont, CA and studied ceramics under Richard Peterson. Also at the college at this time was fellow student Henry Takemoto and teacher William Manker. By 1950 they were using the ceramics studio and kiln at the Claremont graduate school all year long except in the summer time when the teachers used it. In 1952 they rented a building ran their own pottery in Claremont making artware bottles, vases, and small ashtrays all marked with a paper label. By 1957 Rupert started a teaching position at Mount San Antonio College (night class) in Walnut, CA. and in 1958 Harrison finished building a home and studio in Padua hills. So it wasn't a hard loss when they closed up in 1958. When the School of Theology was built over it.

In fact in 1960 Rupert won his second pottery award. It was the IBM Sweepstakes Prize at the Syracuse National Pottery Competition for a covered jar/bean pot.

In 1964 Rupert was one of the first hired by Millard Sheets as a designer and model maker at Interpace. Millard said it would take about two years to get a design group going. Rupert recommended Harrison McIntosh. Who was also hired. The design group was assembled at Glendale, the Franciscan plant on Los Feliz. Assignments were Dinnerware (China Design) and Tile design (12"x12" mural tile).

By the end of 1964 Millard Sheets had hired Helen Watson, Harrison McIntosh, Richard Peterson, and

Rupert Deese. They joined the already strong but small design department that included George James (Starburst and contours see previous issues of the newsletter) and supported by Mary Jane Winans (mold carver and designer for hand painted dinnerware) and Otto Lund (Masterpiece china).

By 1966 Millard Sheets was able to turn to Otis to find talented students and graduates to work for Interpace. The tile design group expanded and now included Henry Takemoto, Jerry Rothman, and Harrison McIntosh. The dinnerware design group included Henry Takemoto, Jerry Rothman, Rupert Deese, Dora Delarios, Sherry Stanton (Father designed Hannold library at Claremont/Scripps), Naomi Mizuno (studied with Vivika Heino), Elsa Radie (trainee designer, built her own pottery in Venice, Italy), and Helen Watson.

Some of the better efforts of the tile design group include the mural on the AT&T building at Tomorrowland in Disneyland, a 100 ft mural on a hotel in Hawaii and a large Mural at University of Notre Dame.

By late 1965 and into 1966 the Family line china was reintroduced as the Discovery Line. There were some technical problems at first. Each pattern used innovative decorating techniques never before seen on china.

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1. Decal patterned called "terra cotta"/decal banding over wax?
2. Glazed pattern called "Topaz" using a iron based glaze to fill in a acid etched rim design
3. Emerald Isle hands applied designs by Helen Watson
4. Tahiti by Helen Watson. White dots were hand applied to a china

Interpace received an Award of Excellence given in conjunction with the Second Annual Industrial Design Exhibition at the California Museum of Science and Industry. This was the third time that year (1966) the Interpace design team was honored. The other two times were for two new Franciscan building products, "Contours CV and Franciscan Terra Floor tile. At the Pacific Coast builders Conference also being held, Interpace was also given an award for best new concept in building components.

After the Discovery line, Ru-

pert went on to work on earthenware shapes. He designed the Madeira shape which came out in 1967. It was named for its best selling pattern called, "Madeira". Madeira was a pattern developed by Jerry Rothman. The glaze was a dark brown developed by Henry Takemoto's wife, Kathy. The name itself is a reference to the Island of Madeira off of Portugal. For hundreds of years this island is known for intricately embroidered lace and linens still known today as Madeira Linens. The dinnerware pattern owes itself directly to them.

In 1970 the Nut Tree pattern was designed by Rupert Deese. He felt bad because the decal was to difficult to use Millard Sheets told him to make the design bigger so it would sell. The shape for Nut Tree was by Henry Takemoto who derived it from a design bought from an outside designer. The decal company they used was Vita Chrome.

Other popular designs that

came out in the 1960's were on a shape designed by George James called Hacienda. The pattern had raised rings to made to make it look like it was thrown on a wheel. Different decal variations developed by Francis Chun and Mary Winens were used. These variations were continued through the 1970's.

- Patrick Barry



***"By 1966 Millard Sheets was able to turn to the Otis Art Institute to find talented students and graduates to work for Interpace."***

## New Books in the Future

Dean Six, who has written glass books on in the past, is currently working on a new book on Franciscan to be published in the next year.

This book will cover mostly dinnerware including the ever popular hand-painted embossed patterns such as Desert Rose, Apple and Ivy. Also included will be other patterns made in earthenware. A chapter is to be on just Fine China, an area that

is yet to really be explored. Contours and the Giftware will be included. You will also be able to find go with glassware and tablecloths that were produced.

More areas of history will be covered that were not covered in other books on Franciscan.

We look forward to seeing this on our bookshelf.

Also, for Garden ware and Art

Ware, Charles Bovier is working on a book to be published by Steve Sanford who has published books on McCoy. This will also be a welcome addition

It is rumored that Delleen Enge is working on a new book covering Fine China. We hope this is true as any new book by Franciscan Expert Delleen Enge is always sought after.

So get your shelves ready!

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bowls with plastic lids if you purchased a service for 4. These were offered in both Desert Rose and Apple as well. Now you can purchase these items separately.

New in Spring 1999, in Apple and Desert Rose are the following:

### Accessories

All made in Portugal, hand-painted. The salad plate and mug are shaped as an apple for Apple and the desert rose for Desert Rose. The utensil jar does not replace the original utensil jar in Desert Rose which is still in production.

- ♦ Medium Canister
- ♦ Large Canister
- ♦ Matching Utensil Jar
- ♦ Trivet
- ♦ Salad Plate 8"
- ♦ Mug 16 oz
- ♦ Watering Can

- ♦ Flower Pot & Tray
- ♦ Garlic Jar

### Enamel on Steel Cookware

Teakettle is redesigned and not like the original first introduced in 1983 and discontinued. All items introduced in Fall 1997 except Burner Covers introduced Spring 1999



- ♦ Teakettle
- ♦ Bowls w/lids, set of 3 sizes
- ♦ Colander
- ♦ Burner Covers, set of 4

### Place Mats & Coasters

Made of Laminated wood:

- ♦ Placemats, set of 4
- ♦ Coasters, set of 4

You may have to visit local outlet stores in outlet malls for Wedgwood or contact your local department store to inquire about these items.

***"You never know,  
these may be  
tomorrows  
collectibles  
available today"***

Beware of some dealers who may say these items are rare, as they are currently being made. You can add any of these items to your collection now.

You never know, these may be tomorrows collectibles available today! Now if we could go back and buy the 1990 commemoratives produced in England.

- James Elliot

## Franciscan Dealer Ralph Clifford 1927-1999

On April 11, 1999, A memorial Service was held for Ralph Clifford, owner of American Dinnerware, a leading national ceramics replacement services specializing in Franciscan ware. Ralph died in his Berkeley, California home March 1, 1999 of a heart attack. He was 70 years old. In 1981, Ralph started his business in Franciscan and Russel Wright pottery, china, and aluminum. From 1986 until 1997, Ralph produced the Berkeley-Oakland Books and Paper Collector Fair, the biggest and oldest bi-annual

books show in the East Bay area of San Francisco. Ralph graduated from the University of California at Berkeley as a drama major in 1951. However, for Franciscan collectors, it is through his business that we best remember him.

Ralph was a dear friend of many Franciscan Collectors and could be seen at the Don Wirfs Associates Cow Palace show, as well as other shows from Eugene, Oregon to Los Angeles. An early supporter of the Newsletter, I attribute his knowledge to making the

area of collecting Franciscan what it is today. Before many dealers recognized Franciscan as a collectible, Ralph was buying and selling Franciscan Coronado, El Patio and other patterns of Franciscan. Ralph was one of the first dealers to sell Desert Rose, Apple, Ivy and Small Fruit as well as Franciscan Artware patterns such as Polynesia and Oxblood.

Ralph is survived by his former wife, Roberta Clifford of San Francisco, and Jerry Hurley with whom he made his home for the last 21 years.