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Winter Bypass

It's a good thing I came to grips with what was going on when I did as there ended up being no damage to my heart. In my mind I kept blaming other things like lifting all those tile boxes in Minneapolis in September! But in January, still? What finally caught my attention and provided me with the perspective I needed was during our daily hike up and around the mountain where we live. It wasn't shortness of breath this time as it was 12 years ago when I ended up in the hospital, leaving with two stents. This time, curiously, it was weight in my arms, like I was carrying something when I wasn't. There seemed to be congestion in my throat as well and my teeth felt cold, something they never do even when sucking on ice cubes.

I called my cardiologist the next morning and was told to go to our local hospital for a blood test to check enzyme levels in my heart muscle. We had a conference call planned with our Coverings people that morning—do I have time for this diversion? The test was quick and easy, and our meeting went on as scheduled, but then the call came... "Get yourself to Memorial Hospital immediately... and don't drive!" My heart was speaking, loudly.

Sheila Menzies and Joe Taylor enjoy an afternoon walk though the vineyards.
Photo by Abby Hoffman, March 2010.
So after a preliminary angiogram, it was determined that bypass surgery would be the best solution. Of course, this time around, I asked what my alternatives were, and my cardiologist (a really great guy whom I've known for 10 years or more) had an appropriate response: "You can put your clothes back on and walk out of here, but I guarantee you'll be back within a week or so and in a lot worse condition." That was on January 28th.

It was two weeks before I left the hospital as there was the angiogram, then a waiting period while my blood thickened, then the bypass surgery, followed by some problems with arrhythmia. This team of surgeons never stopped my heart or diverted my blood while they worked "off pump," but it was a 5-hour ordeal and another 5 or more before I became conscious.

In early April I celebrated my 8h week since the operation. I'm doing well thanks to huge love and support from Sheila. And to all of you who have sent good wishes in phone calls, emails and cards, please accept my sincerest appreciation. Each message was like a shot in the arm-one that felt good! — Joe Taylor

Winter Wins Tile Heritage Award

In November 2009 the Tile Heritage Foundation presented Dr. Robert Winter, the celebrated architectural historian, with the Tile Heritage Award, an honorary tribute conferred by the Foundation's board of directors to an individual who has made an extraordinary contribution to the tile world. The award itself, an 8" x 8" custom tile produced especially for Dr. Winter by Steve Moon at the Tile Restoration Center in Seattle, commemorates the 100th anniversary of Ernest Batchelder's house, where Winter has resided since the early 1970s. A detailed illustration of Batchelder's bungalow by Marie Glasse Tapp and her daughter Delia Tapp, the founders of the Tile Restoration Center, was incised in clay from which the award tile was made.

On hand at Dr. Winter's home in Pasadena, California for the afternoon "tea" in addition to the honoree were Batchelder's grandson, Alan Batchelder, his wife Katherine, and his daughter Cynthia; Steve Moon, current owner of the Tile Restoration Center who produced the award tile; and Riley Doty, Sheila Menzies and Joe Taylor, directors of the Tile Heritage Foundation.

Dr. Winter, his numerous titles and publications aside, has personally done more than most to preserve and promote the heritage of tiles in Southern California and well beyond. He serves as the respected voice representing the legacy of Ernest Batchelder, arguably among the most innovative-some would say revolutionary-tile makers of the 20th century. A responsible custodian of the house for almost forty years, Bob has established a museum out back where his collection of Batchelder tiles is on display, and he has willingly opened his home to countless tile and Arts & Crafts enthusiasts over the years.

Bob's care of the Batchelder legacy and his willingness to share his knowledge and his residence with others embrace the spirit of Tile Heritage, which is dedicated to promoting an awareness and appreciation of ceramic surfaces. We salute Dr. Winter with our sincere thanks, honoring him with the Tile Heritage Award.
Tell-Tale Tiles & Fractured Fantasies

Closed April 19th... but click on the logo to view the entire exhibition including the prize winners!

Tile Heritage Theater at Coverings

Take a break from the show floor and visit the new Tile Heritage Foundation Theater (Booth 3442) for inspiring videos highlighting historic installations of tile, stone and mosaic around the world. Unlike in former years when it was "catch as catch can," there will be a posted program schedule and the videos will be shown in their entirety.

Special thanks to the Coverings board, for the cooperation of National Trade Productions and the Tile Council of North America in whose pavilion the theater will be housed. Look for Booth 3442 with a large triangular sign atop the theater and then check the schedule posted there for your program of choice. And don't forget to come see us at the TCNA booth at 2816!

Tile Partners Services Humanity

Tile Partners for Humanity (TPFH) held its December board meeting at the campus of Tile Council of North America in Anderson, South Carolina. Representatives of the major tile industry organizations sit on the board as an energetic force supporting and enhancing the work of Executive Director Lynn Labuda.

TPFH is a partnership between the tile industry and Habitat for Humanity International, a nonprofit organization working to eliminate substandard housing around the world. Industry partners provide tile, setting materials, tools, floor preparation materials, cleaners and sealers, labor and installation training to Habitat affiliates interested in building with tile. TPFH is a 501(c)(3) organization that offers tax relief for donations of materials or other support for the partnership.

TPFH is also proud to partner with other non-profit organizations that would like to use ceramic tile for construction.
projects. In the past six years TPFH has facilitated donations and use of materials valued at $15 million to Habitat and other organizations and expects to double that amount in the next six years.

Tile Partners for Humanity can continue to successfully embrace its mission with your support and assistance in sponsorship for operational expenses as well as donations of materials and labor. Visit http://www.tpfh.com to find out how you can participate!

New Books, Magazines, Directories!

The Eighth Edition of the THF Resource Directory, 2009-2010, is now available. Unique in its contents, breadth and format, the THF Directory is designed to be used as a resource by architects and designers, preservationists, historians, collectors, dealers, installers as well as tile artists, artisans and manufacturers, among others. A listing is FREE; sign up by visiting http://www.tileheritage.org/THF-FreeListing.html, print the form, and then mail or fax the form to Tile Heritage. Copies of the new directory are $25, less 20% to THF members. If you contribute $60 or more each year in membership, the directory is free for the asking (we include an optional invoice for $5 to assist us in paying for production and mailing costs.)

The Handmade Tile Association (HTA) publishes an annual directory of tile artists from the Upper Midwest and beyond. The 2010 11th annual directory represents 45 handmade tile and mosaic artists from whom you can commission kitchen backsplashes, fireplace mantels, bathroom tiles, public art, garden sculptures, and art for almost any application. The directory is in full color and is FREE for the asking. Email Tile Heritage at http://www.tileheritage.org or HTA at http://www.handmadetileassociation.org with your name and address or visit Tile Heritage at Coverings, Booth 2816, to pick up a copy while they last.

The "Journal of the American Art Pottery Association," vol.26. no. 1 (Winter 2010) features the first of a three part article on Rookwood tiles by tile historian, Richard Mohr. Twenty-six oversized pages in length, complete with numerous illustrations and exhaustive endnotes, "Rookwood Faience Tiles: Their History, Designers, Techniques, and Styles - Part I," is scholarly in its approach, comprehensive in its scope, and represents a treatise the likes of which will not be seen for a long, long time, if ever. Interwoven into the story are the author's frequent judgments regarding the in-house decisions involved in the pottery's production and the comparative quality of the finished products, expected with such an in-depth study by this knowledgeable writer. See http://www.aapa.info to obtain a copy. Part II is also now available: vol. 26, no. 2 (Spring 2010) and Part III this summer.
"Mosaic Art NOW," now in its third edition, promotes the international understanding and appreciation of contemporary mosaics through high-quality publications and a lively online presence. Its provocative and inspirational content is ideal for artists, curators, architects, designers, collectors and educators. The 106-page, full color publication features high quality photographs of a wide range of mosaics from fine art to public art, from marble to stained glass, from two-dimensional to large sculptural works. The magazine, a fabulous work of art in itself and a fine tribute to the art of mosaic, is distributed internationally through the website at http://www.mosaicartnow.com/ and selected resellers. To order a copy go to: http://www.mosaicrockspress.com/shop/item.asp?itemid=53

Launch of "The Basics," a new workbook offering training in sales support skills for tile and stone businesses by Industry Expert Sunny McLean. "The Basics" is a workbook for high-end tile and stone or kitchen and bath showrooms that need well-trained and professional sales associates. In today's competitive environment, selling is not just about product and price anymore. A productive sales associate must meet the customer's expectations for top quality service, professional knowledge and a competent, pleasant sales experience. "The Basics" enables a new-hire to develop important support skills and more experienced associates to update their existing skills. Written in a workbook format with lessons, illustrations, activities and tests, "The Basics" provides a self-managed program that can be completed in as little as eight hours of work time, spread over four weeks. "The Basics," the first workbook of its kind, is an essential training tool for every tile and stone business that wants to excel in service-oriented sales. It is available for sale at the Tile Heritage Foundation www.tileheritage.org, as well as at their booth at Coverings in Orlando. The price is $50.00 plus shipping and handling.

About Sunny McLean: With over forty years in the tile and stone industry, Sunny McLean recognized the need for training tools to help new sales associates become profitable quickly and for existing associates to improve productivity. Using her experience on the sales floor, as upper management in two national tile companies and as a business owner, Sunny has filled an industry void by writing "The Basics," a workbook for sales support skills for service-oriented tile and stone showrooms.
Studio Protector From CERF

The Studio Protector is the one tool no studio artist should be without (if they want to cover their A's that is? their art, assets, and archives). It's a calendar-sized wall chart with wheel charts and pull-out booklets that cover the essential points of preparing for and recovering from emergencies. The complete, fun-to-use disaster kit designed by artists for artists makes the dull details of emergency preparedness a little less tedious for creative types of all stripes - including tile artists and artisans! $16.00 plus shipping. Why wait? Click here to order: http://craftemergency.org/support/studio-protector/

Tiles Needed For Doylestown Festival!

The Moravian Pottery and Tile Works is hosting its 12th annual Tile Festival on May 15 & 16, 2010 on its hallowed grounds in Doylestown, Pennsylvania. Each year Tile Heritage sends out a solicitation to tile makers throughout the U.S. and Canada asking for decorative tiles to be donated for sale at this festival, the largest of its kind in the country. The proceeds from the sale of these tiles help to support important archiving activities, our major focus at Tile Heritage.

Last year Tile Heritage participated in three tile sales: Doylestown, Minneapolis and Seattle. Understandably, we are entirely out of tiles to sell at the moment! Please, when you receive the request for tiles in the mail, choose a couple of favorites and send them along to Doylestown (they don't have to be BIG and HEAVY!). Imagine being at a sale with nothing to sell-HELP!-and accept our sincere thanks in advance. Oh, one more thing: donors are listed at the THF website. Scroll down at http://www.tileheritage.org/THF-Supporters.html

Save The Date: Sunday, September 12th!

For those of you within walking, driving or flying distance from Oakland, California the Tile Heritage Foundation is presenting a one-day tile festival and sale. This will be a one-time-only event as we have been invited by the owner of the famous Howden Building at 14th & Webster, a former high-end tile showroom from the 1920s, to make use of virtually the entire building including the main gallery that has not been open to the public for decades. The entire exterior is clad in decorative tiles and architectural terra cotta; inside there are installed tiles made by Batchelder, Claycraft, Muresque and Solon & Schemmel. This is "the real McCoy"! Mark your calendar now-details are forthcoming.
Gardiner's Ceramic Creativity Enlightens Library

The newly renovated Rust Library, 380 Waterford Road in Leesburg, Virginia, generously financed by the A.V. Symington Gift Fund, now features the ceramic creativity of Joan Gardiner, one of the most innovative tile makers in the United States today. Having studied at the Maryland Institute College of Art, Joan apprenticed to potter Jill Hinckley in Washington, D.C. before opening her own studio in Unison, Virginia, near Middleburg, in 1973. A tile project in 1982 with Steuart Weller of Weller Tile in Ashburn kindled her interest in the art of tile making. Her tiles now grace libraries in Ashburn and Purcellville, Virginia as well as schools, churches, organizations and private homes in the greater Washington, D.C. area. Her decorative tiles are also coveted by contemporary tile collectors throughout the U.S.

"I started painting and sculpting but always felt the need to make functional works. I found 'clay house' on campus where the kilns and wheels were located and I loved the atmosphere. Clay was the perfect medium for combining function and artistic surfaces."

For the entry wall of the Rust Library, titled "World Textile Mural," Joan looked for unique patterns in textiles to create a world patchwork of 495 related 8" x 8" images. The color palette was based on the surrounding natural earth colors of the exterior and interior of the library building. Within the 240" x 132" installation are twelve "bowls" or view-chambers, a recent trademark of Joan's work, where the center portion of a tile is dramatically recessed, thus creating a sense of wonder from what we normally expect to be a flat surface. She uses these "bowls" like cameos to feature people, animals or concepts.

In the restrooms, appropriately, Gardiner created a tile frieze using actual images to depict the source of the Town of Leesburg's water supply as it leaves the Potomac River and flows through the Water Treatment Plant and Water Pollution Control Facility to the library. Here the "bowl" tiles are used to draw attention to specific details.
For the library's 4,000 square foot teen center Joan, using her familiar majolica style, created a 84" x 48" tile wall composed of intimate depictions of Mrs. Symington's life (1916-2003) featured in the 6" "bowls" and placed within a timeline of major historical events that occurred during her 87 years. Scattered pages of text and imagery are strewn across the tiles illustrating these stories.

The artist then tiled a wall (214" x 132" x 16") made to resemble natural, organic materials including a nut tree with owls hiding in the branches in the children's story-time room. The owls represent knowledge and the natural world. The stucco façade of the wall, crafted by Richard Harrison of Weller Tile, gives a texture, depth and warmth to the installation, and the glazes of the tiles illustrate the process of melting in the fire that brought them to life. The stone threshold into the room contains the written affirmation "I am growing up."

Finally, each of four meeting rooms has a nine-tile diamond-shaped mural of animals in relief, and throughout the building, embedded in columns and walls are six "discovery" tiles (5" x 8") with text and images in deep relief depicting spelling lessons, library history, even the enemies of books -- sunshine and silver fish. The whole building is a virtual gallery of this artist's imagination in the timeless ceramic medium.

Valeria (A.V.) Harris Symington and her husband James became farmers when they moved from Baltimore and bought Temple Hall, a rundown estate outside of ...
Leesburg, in 1940. Their first "cash crop" was popcorn; they soon were the largest supplier in the eastern U.S. during World War II. The couple turned to raising livestock after the war that included cattle and hogs, and they grew wheat, corn and hay for animal feed. Mrs. Symington managed the farm after her husband lost his sight, and in 1985 she donated the property to the Northern a trust that provided $4.9 million in funding for the expansion and renovation of the Rust Library, which includes this unique ceramic project.

Special thanks to the artist, Joan Gardiner, her assistant Aimee Curl, and her husband writer John Rolfe Gardiner. Also to the Loudon County Public Library for publishing a brochure on the Rust Library titled "Experience the Creativity," from which much of the information above has been extracted. The renovation was completed in July 2009.

Click here to view past E-Newses!