

# Czech it out!



CZECHOSLOVAKIAN COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION

**NEWSLETTER**

APRIL 2017





# SEE YOU IN CINCINNATI

## 2017 Convention just around the corner

BY MARY GAWLE

Hey Members! — I am sure all of you that came to Cincinnati a couple of years back are looking forward to this year's convention. We all had such a good time, we came back two years in a row!

This year we are at a great new location. The Garfield Suites, where we met before, has been converted back to apartments, so that venue is no longer available. So we will have a fresh new look at the city from the other side of the river. The **Marriott Cincinnati**

**River Center** is actually in Kentucky, but barely. The view of the Cincinnati skyline is fabulous, and we have all the convenience without the congestion. Walking across the bridge to Fountain Square takes just minutes, or you can take the looping shuttle that goes directly from the hotel to locations all throughout downtown Cincinnati.

We will be spending one evening cruising the Ohio River again on the riverboat, but without the complications of getting there since we will already be on that side of the river. But

do pray for good weather. The upper deck at sunset is so lovely!

We are also planning spending an evening with the fishes. (No, not IN the river!) The Newport Aquarium is a world class aquarium, and is minutes away from the hotel. Check it out at [www.newportaquarium.com](http://www.newportaquarium.com).

Please book your rooms as soon as possible. There is a baseball game scheduled in town on Wednesday June 7 and Thursday June 8, so rooms will be harder to get on those days if you miss out on our room block.

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Reservations can be made NOW until May 18, 2017 at this web address:

<https://aws.passkey.com/go/ccaconventionjune2017>



Cincinnati Marriott and Rivercenter



Carew Tower



Gorilla World at the Cincinnati Zoo

# CONVENTION SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Cincinnati Marriott at Rivercenter | 10 W Rivercenter Blvd, Covington, KY 41011 | 859-261-2900

## THURSDAY, JUNE 8

12:00 pm	Dealer/Exhibit Set-up Registration
2:00–4:00 pm	Members Preview
6:00 pm	Aquarium Tour



Cincinnati Aquarium

## FRIDAY, JUNE 9

8:30–9:00 am	Registration
9:30–11:30 am	Seminar #1 – <i>100 Years of Mrazek Pottery</i> David Phelps and David Fein
11:30 am–12:30 pm	Membership Meeting
1:00–5:00 pm	Show and Sale – Show FREE to the public
7:00 pm	Annual CCA Banquet – cash bar and entertainment

## SATURDAY, JUNE 10

9:00–9:30 am	Registration
	Show and Sale – Show FREE to the public
9:30–11:30 am	Seminar #2 – <i>Cased Art Glass from the 1920s and 1930s</i> by Jericho Mora
12:30–4:30	Exhibits
	Show and Sale – Show FREE to the public
5:00 pm	Silent Auction Finale – Distribution of items
6:00 pm	Riverboat Cruise & Dinner

## SUNDAY, JUNE 11

8:30 am	Open Membership – <i>Convention 2018 planning</i> Breakfast Meeting (pay your own) at the Hotel
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# *Dribblings'* **OFF THE DESK**

BY DWIGHT GILBERT

Figure 1



**I love fan  
vases, but who  
made them?**

As stated, I do love me some fan vases. I am big on collecting but not so much focused on their history. I would like to take this opportunity to enlist the help of our members to inform me of any history I may not know.

I will start with my favorite fan vase! This form is found in Lotz-Bohmische Glass 1880-1940-Band 2 and I believe it is designed by Eduard Prochaska for Loetz. It is shown next to a Prochaska piece that is stamped with the “Loetz” Czecho-Slovakia within an oval (figure 1). The foot and web base of this fan is also a Prochaska design. This vase has been found in a red base with black trim and cobalt blue papillon finish. **Very nice!**



Next is a fan that I think may be Rindskopf. In the photo the orange vase is commonly called Rindskopf and it has the same feathering as my fan. The majority of Rindskopf fans seem to be larger and not in this form. This fan also has been seen in green glass plus feathering. This piece bears a straight line Czechoslovakia stamp, so is this piece a later production than the larger fans? Maybe so. **Wonderful!**



These fans I believe to be Ruckl fans. They have been described as “shimmy glass” or spatter glass with pullups. They are the most fascinating of fan vases. Usually stamped Czechoslovakia in a straight line, I have only been able to find these three colors. I hope to someday find a lavender one. **Beautiful!**



Now comes the color burst, fans classified as Kralik. These fans come in a myriad of **FAN**tastic colors, guaranteed to entertain your eyes for hours! They seem to have two main “signatures”, an arched Czechoslovakia in block letters—commonly called a Kralik signature—and Czechoslovakia in a straight line. The pieces I have found are about 60% unstamped. While I consider the Ruckls the most elegant, these are the most fun! It is impossible to see a display and not stop and look! Really!! **Terrific!**

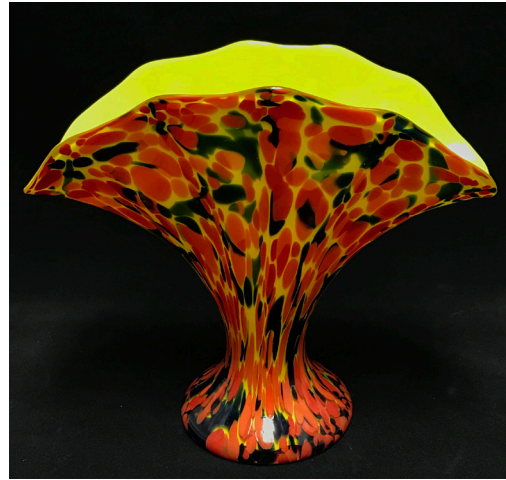


# Dribblins' OFF THE DESK

## Some interesting oddities



My only fan with cobalt blue pullups, most are amethyst. **Great fan!**



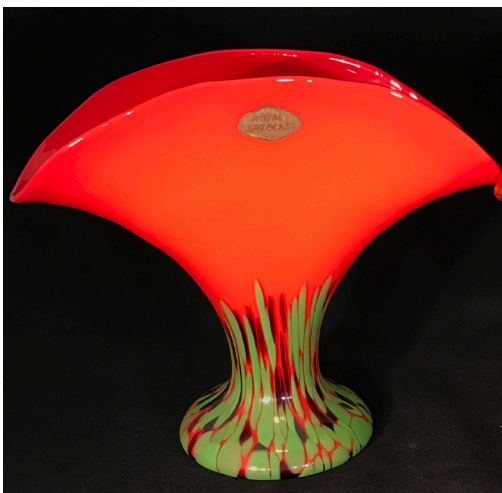
Another interesting yellow fan but with outer decoration. **Cool!**



My only fan with "aventurine" base. **Nice!**



Anybody need a "cane"? **Unique!**



A fan with a sticker! A Royal Art Glass sticker. Royal Art Glass was an importing company here in the States. **Super!**



A couple of fans collected for the love of the form. My lovely spouse calls these guys the "ugly ones"! You know, the longer I keep 'em the prettier they are! **Very interesting!**

## My secondary fans



Not the form of the others but with great decors. These are the “Welz bunch”. My attribution comes from what I call the “stripes and bubbles”. This decor seems to be attributed to Franz Welz around the web—correct, I do not know. If stamped, they seem to be stamped Made in Czechoslovakia. **Love the decors!**



Although in the same form the decor is a bit different on these fans. Still Franz Welz? Marked the same, same shape, I will guess yes, Welz. Feedback would be great. **Lovely fans!**

Here are two fans I currently do not own but hope to at some point. The “Loetz Blue” is what I consider the “Ultimate Fan”, bucket list material. If you ever see one for sale, **email [tracman@tritел.net](mailto:tracman@tritел.net) please!!!**



If you have stayed with all the “dribblins” to this point, I thank you and ask for any help you are willing to share. Email [tracman@tritел.net](mailto:tracman@tritел.net) or call 307-754-3045.

In closing, I hope to see you all in Cincinnati. The convention is going to be cheaper and easier to attend. Great presentations by Mr. David Fein, Mr. Dave Phelps and including a fine seminar by Mr. Jericho Mora! You cannot find more knowledgeable folks than these. Wonderful evenings on the riverboat! Yes, dancing allowed! Visit Union Terminal Train Station & Carew Tower for some terrific Art Deco, Rookwood Pottery Co., Cincinnati Zoo, Aquarium, Over the Rhine Tour and much more! You may have to stay a few days longer! It is always great to see new attendees and be able to put faces with names!

**See ya at Graeter’s Ice Cream Parlor! God bless!**

# 100 YEARS OF

# MRAZEK Pottery

BY DAVE PHELPS

100 years ago this winter, a young immigrant with training in art began to paint pottery in the manner of his native land that would soon become Czechoslovakia. It is hard to imagine leaving home at the age of about 19, but not only did young Joseph Mrazek leave his home, but he left his country to emigrate to the United States to seek his fortune. After working off his debt to his uncle, he went to art school in St. Louis and then off to New York. While working as an artist painting murals in Checkers Restaurants, an ad appeared in Macy's offering to fire pottery if paints were purchased. This was the beginning of Peasant Art Pottery. As the name implies, the pottery was painted in the style of his homeland using fruits and flowers as decoration.

Following the success of his new venture and the end of the First World War, plans were made to open a factory in Letovice, Czechoslovakia. This story has been told a number of times, most recently in the book "The Art Pottery of Joseph Mrazek: A Collector's Guide" by Harold and Robert Mrazek. What has not been written about is the development of the patterns. It is known that new patterns were introduced each year, in an effort to remain fresh and changing with the times. Most notable are the deco patterns that appeared in the later 1920s. Although the history of the company has been documented, the patterns have not been fully identified. While most collectors are satisfied with owning various pieces, the more advanced collector will want an example of all the patterns and to know how they fit into the history of Mrazek pottery.

As mentioned above, the first pottery is the Black Bird pottery (figures 1 and 2), made in New York. This is so named because of the black bird painted over the maker of the white pottery



Figure 1



Figure 2





Figure 5: Pictured above are a few of the 31 patterns.

purchased cheaply on the streets of New York.

A wide variety of this early PAI can be found and with enough patience, sets of tableware can be put together. Lemonade sets are common. Many of the later characteristics of Mrazek art pottery can be traced back to this early pottery.

There are actually three phases of Peasant Art pottery (or PAI). Next is the early Czechoslovakia pottery (figure 2). The first production in Czechoslovakia involved purchasing pottery similar to New York. A few pieces can be found that used the black bird mark along with a stamp stating "Made in Czechoslovakia". The country of origin was required for imports. This is the least known production period and is identified as having a somewhat cruder appearance than the later art pottery (figure 3).

The most often seen PAI comes in the "lettered" art pottery. "Lettered" means the pieces from the new factory using letters for the pattern designations: A, B, C, CA, etc.

So far 31 patterns (figure 5) of the art pottery phase have been identified. This doesn't include several pieces for which a pattern designation has not been made. These may yet be identified but other pieces need to be found. The humidor to the right is a great example (figure 4). Found only a couple years ago, it has many elements of other patterns, but the vertical stripes make it decidedly different.

There is still much to learn about this wonderful pottery. I'm sure there are pieces out there sitting in collections that could answer some of the questions that



Figure 4: Humidor



Figure 3

remain. At our Convention in 2017, we will be talking in more length about PAI and urge you to bring your unusual pieces for discussion. Maybe yours will be a unique piece which will add to the body of knowledge collected so far.

Details of the beginning of the pottery production in Czechoslovakia are few, but can be pieced together through the study of the pieces. This study includes both the shapes and the marks.

***Bring pieces to convention!***

# Czechoslovakian POTTERY

HOW POPULAR WAS IT? BY DAVID FEIN



When you research a specific type of pottery other than the general sales figures, production numbers, and duration of production what can you look at to determine its popularity throughout the world?

One thing that can always be attributed to any type of popular item is how often was this copied by competitors, in the same country, competitors from the same continent, and competitors world wide.

Czech pottery from the 1920's and 30's was some of the most copied of the ceramics of the period.

Czechoslovakian pottery was not only copied for its colorful design; it was copied for different shapes and molds.

## Ditmar Urbach

Ditmar Urbach (DU) was the most popular of the Czech pottery companies worldwide.

Ditmar Urbach canister sets from the 20's and 30's can be found written in English, German, Dutch, French, Spanish, Czech, and Hebrew.

Today, the most popular DU items are the animal pitchers.

These were copied in Japan mainly the Raven (often called the Toucan), and the Dog pitcher. The Japanese made a small Raven creamer, smaller than the normal DU creamer size using totally different pottery a rough



Figures 1 & 2: Japanese version is the smaller jug



Figures 3 & 4: Myott copy

bottom rather than glazed, with inferior paint that chipped easily. (Figure 1 & 2)

The Dog pitcher copy was the exact size as the DU one but again the pottery and paint was inferior. The Japanese Dog's paint chipped easily and the pottery was prone to extreme glaze crazing; often looking like the Chinese pottery from hundreds of years ago.

The English company Myott also copied the extremely rare Ditmar Urbach Cat handled full pitcher and running mouse.

The English version like the Japanese had inferior paint that chipped easily and pottery that was prone to glaze crazing. Even though the Myott English copy is still highly prized and fetches a price of \$800+ more depending on the condition. (Figure 3 &4) (Figure 5)

Ditmar Urbach's other items were also copied. The Ditmar Urbach patterns. These were copied often exactly as pictured, or with slight variations. These were copied mainly by the English Ceramics companies.

In the Book about Susie Cooper, the famous English pottery designer, it states that specific designs were produced to compete with the Czechoslovakian imports which were very popular.

The Czech imports were most probably offered at a lower price point, which added to the popularity.

Ditmar Urbach pottery molds were also copied.

The Lostro pitcher , Birma pitcher, W (Weiner) pitcher, and Batna pitcher were the most popular items to copy. With the addition of the similar painting patterns, these flooded the European market mainly in Great Britain, and her colonies.

(Figure 6) The Pitcher on right an English copy. "W" pitcher mold copy as well as pattern copy

**The English Ceramics companies we know copied the Czech patterns or molds are:**

- Longton Royal Art Pottery
- Crown Devon-Fieldings & Co Wade
- WM Grindley and Company
- Parrot & Company
- Coronet Ware Burslem
- ERA Homecraft
- Devonware Fieldings Stoke on Trent
- Falcon Ware
- Arthur Wood
- Beswick
- Myott son & Co
- Vintage GEM

*To name a few.*

# Czechoslovakian POTTERY



Figure 5: Ditmar Urbach original



Figure 6: The Vase on left Ditmar Urbach

## Mrazek Pottery

The creative designs of Joseph Mrazek's peasant styled pottery was also very popular to copy.

One of the greatest examples of this is the existence of the Patent registered in July 27, 1926 by the US patent office.

According to Made in Czechoslovakia Book 2, by Ruth A. Forsythe, "All the Peasant Art in this book was not the work of Joseph Mrazek. Many factories in Czechoslovakia and other countries made Peasant Art Pottery. So many copied the Mrazek patterns that Joseph Mrazek was forced to take out patents to protect his designs." (Figure 7)

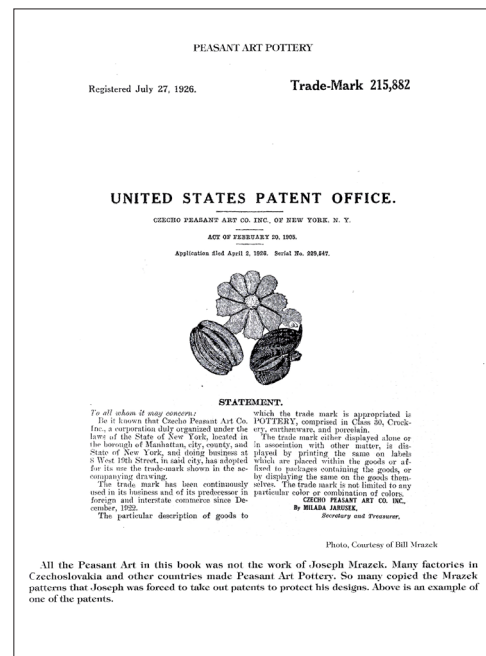


Figure 7: Copy of Mrazek patent

In the lecture Bill Mrazek gave in 1996, Bill told the room that hundreds of Japanese salt and pepper shakers, copies of Mrazek patterns, were dumped in the Atlantic Ocean due to the patent infringement. Below is a set that escaped



Example of a fake

destruction. They purchased in Florida in 2010. They are not marked but the stoppers are missing which might have identified them as made in Japan. Also shown is a nappy which is marked "Made in Japan". (Figure 8) The creamer is a close copy, but the green is not quite right and there are other differences in the pattern. These examples look a lot like Mrazek but differences can be seen when compared to genuine Mrazek. One tip is that the nappy and the creamer shown below are not molds made by Mrazek. Other pieces have been seen which are not quite as good of copies, mostly in the painting and the colors used. (Figure 9)

Many companies located in Czechoslovakia were also making pottery that are similar to Mrazek pottery. Although they may not have intentionally



Figure 8



Figure 9



Example of a fake

# Czechoslovakian POTTERY

tried to copy Mrazek, it is clear the popularity of Czech pottery in the United States due to Mrazek and Urbach pottery led companies to capitalize on the popularity with similar designs. None are done as well as the originals however. Phoenix is one company that produced a great deal of dishes. These may be found in nearly any mall. Although marked, it is easy to determine these are not Mrazek since they are more like porcelain than pottery. Other similar pieces were made with much darker clay resulting in colors with a muddy appearance. Another more frequent copy will be marked simply Moravia. As with many pieces, the name of the company may never be known since records were lost. Examples of pieces that were imported during this time are shown here. (Figure 10, 11, 12 & 13)



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12



Example of a fake



Example of a fake



Example of a fake



Example of a fake



## BETWIXT THE BOOKENDS

I recently purchased a new book to add to the Loetz "Library" and thought some members may be interested also. The Book!

*Loetz Series II, Paper patterns for glass 1900 to 1914: Jitka Lněničková* is for sale at the Museum Sumavy Susice. Priced at 3700 CZK (approximately \$150) with shipping of 500 CZK (approximately \$20) plus your bank fees for money wiring to the museum's bank. The book is massive: 9.5 x 13 x 2.5 inches thick!

Hours and hours of perusing here folks!  
Contact person is: Dagmar Sperlova, Museum Sumavy Susice. Email: [d.sperlova@seznam.cz](mailto:d.sperlova@seznam.cz)

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

### Mr. David Phelps

Phelps is a nationally known collector and author. His book, *The Collectors Guide to Pottery Birds Made in Czechoslovakia*, is available on his website: [czechpottery.com](http://czechpottery.com). Mr. Phelps has assembled a world class collection of Mrazek pottery and of course, Czech birds. He is also current a board member of Czechoslovakia Collectors Associations.

### Mr. David Fein

Fein is a world renowned expert on Czech pottery, specifically Ditmar Urbach and Mrazek. Mr. Fein has appeared on television shows with his massive collection of Ditmar Urbach and currently operates his website South Beach Antiques. Mr. Fein is currently a board member of the Czechoslovakian Collectors Association.

***Thank you – to these fine gentlemen for their contribution.***



**CZECHOSLOVAKIAN COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION**

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