

Czechoslovakian

Collectors Association



Spring Newsletter
May 2010

Hand Made by Machine

by

Rolf Achilles



Elongated bowl/planter
5-color stenciled airbrush
Stamped Celebrate, Made in Czechoslovakia
Attributed to Bihl by pattern and others
with BIHL back-stamp.

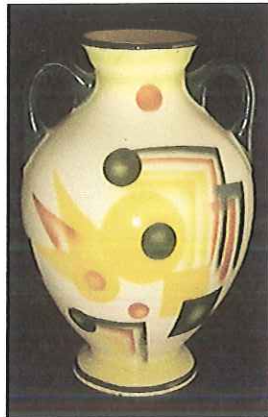
For the better part of 20 years I've been interested in mass produced ceramics and porcelains covered with airbrush (Spritzdekor in German) applied, non-objective patterns produced in Germany and Czechoslovakia between 1928 and 1935, a portion of the 20th century that falls into the Art Deco years. Airbrush is applied with a spray gun developed by the Paasche Company of Chicago. It is also known as an Aerograph. These ceramics were produced in unknown quantities by mostly known manufacturers. There were many dozens of manufacturers, some employing over 600 people in each of several production centers. Originally forms and decorative patterns were given inventory numbers or names and some partial inventories and catalogs survive, as do commercial publications, such as *Die Schaulade* in which they advertised.

Many ceramics and porcelains survive without makers' marks, without form numbers or pattern numbers resulting in only partial, if any, glimpse at production and patterns for these firms.

Over the past thirty years self-assembled photo-catalogs, especially of air-brushed patterns, have helped create chronologies of production, glaze and color usage, and pattern development and in general, fill in many pieces of the vast puzzle that is the seemingly borderless ceramics and porcelain production of Czechoslovakia and Germany of the years between World War One and World War Two.

With the conclusion of War in 1918, the tumultuous collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire resulted in the founding of several countries in a whirlwind of changes that continued well into the 1920s across Eastern Europe. Within the storm, the Czechoslovakian ceramics industry found a hold to survive. Employing German models of industrial mass production and marketing, they developed their own niche in both ceramics and porcelain production, competing in form and pattern head-to-head with Germany. With an unimaginable proliferation of patterns, shapes and style, the industry's mantra appears to have been: more is not enough.

By the mid-1920s this mantra was becoming very evident as the market became flooded with an array of choices: individual pieces as well as elaborate and extensive sets; there were new patterns and new forms, as well as traditional forms with traditional patterns, and combinations of both. Choices continued to proliferate until the mid-1930s, when the changed political climate (not only in Germany, but also in Czechoslovakia and elsewhere) stopped production of new shapes and patterns in favor of the traditional ones.



Vase, 3-color stenciled airbrush.
Stamped: MADE IN CECNO-SLOVAKIA.
Attributed to Bihl by pattern.

Judging by today's international market for Deco Era Czechoslovakian ceramics and porcelains, the traditional forms and patterns are by far the most popular, and not only because they are more available. By being more general and broadly accessible as well as appearing to be without the baggage of historic context, traditional forms appear to be safer and more universal to collect than time-specific and date-sensitive, politically incorrect, airbrushed, non-objective patterns. Also, there is usually not an artist/designers name associated with the work.

Yet the great innovations of the 1920s that continued into the 1930s and the finely tuned mass production that had swept out of the later nineteenth century ceramics industry had the result that many people could afford well-designed and high quality ceramic and porcelain household items.

To confront the mess of mass production, a consortium of designers, craftsmen, and manufacturers founded the Deutscher Werkbund in 1907. The objective was to create a "modern style that by no means is an effusion of novelty, caprice, or faddishness of any sort, but that it has emerged logically from altered conditions ..." (E. Högg, "Neue Wohnräume, neues Kunstgewerbe – das Haus eigen." *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration*, Band 16, 1905, p. 643ff.). This new direction quickly found admirers in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. After World War I, the Czechoslovak mass production ceramics industry continued to follow the Werkbund ideal until the mid-1930s.

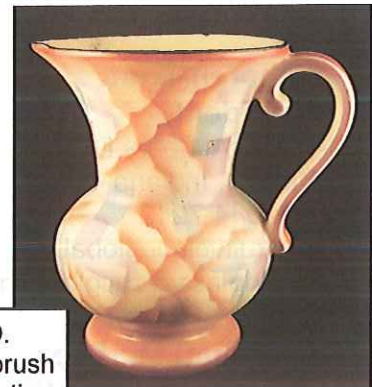
The new order had aesthetic effect as its emphasis. The new look was that of the machine, not the hand. The machine tempered by the hand was seen as crucial for the execution of an artistic design. By the late 1920s, one of the most significant responsibilities of modern civilization was seen by the new artists/craftsman as guiding the creation of functional/useful objects along healthy lines, and it was through mass production that the desires, needs and taste of the epoch would be both satisfied and determined.

The newly simplified forms had glazes applied by airbrush in new patterns often aided by stencils. Forms and patterns were Modern, Deco Era new, with specific audience appeal. Starting in mid-1928, unrestricted inventiveness in glazes, colors and patterns seems to have driven airbrush use. It ended suddenly in mid-1933. Maybe it was the change in local politics and the perceived Soviet styled Constructivist, non-objective and abstraction of the patterns that allowed airbrush decoration to live only some five years, but whatever it was, there seems to be no limits to its inventiveness, colors and patterns.

The anti-airbrush sentiment of those who favored traditional decorative techniques (e.g. painting and gilding) as well as the existing political climate forced the removal of modern stenciled airbrushed patterns from display and sale. They even caused the actual destruction of inventory at its sources in both Germany and Czechoslovakia.

While there were numerous manufacturers of airbrushed ceramics and porcelain in Czechoslovakia, only a few manufacturers actually exported to the US under their own names. And, it is not yet much collected or exhibited in the US. In Germany and in the Czech Republic it is sought out and has been the subject of several publications and much visited museum exhibitions.

Of the many firms active in Czechoslovakia, one of the best-known exporters of modern, Deco, airbrushed patterns to the US was Ditmar-Urbach AG. Founded by the Urbach Brothers in 1882, by 1919 the business associated itself with Rudolf Ditmar, Znaim, to become Ditmar Urbach AG, with production in both Triptis and Znaim. In the late 1920s and early 1930s airbrush and stenciled patterns were extensively used. Ditmar-Urbach's black back-stamp with a T or a Z in a circle followed by a shooting star trail, were marked Czechoslovakia.



Jugs.
Stamped: Celebrate, Made in Czechoslovakia
Attributed to Bihl by pattern and others
with BIHL back-stamp.

Pitcher LOSTRO.
5-color stenciled airbrush
Ditmar Urbach, Triptis



BIHL also became popular in the US. In 1896 Gustav Bihl, took over the Tonwarenfabrik Robert Hanke, renaming the factory Robert Hanke's Nachfolger, Porzellan-, Fayence- und Majolikafabrik (unter G. Bihl). In 1906 the company was reorganized as Porzellan- und Steingutfabrik G. Bihl & Co., GmbH. In 1920, the name Czechoslovakia (without hyphen) was introduced, and the well-known red or green triangular BIHL Czechoslovakia back-stamp became well known in the US. Also, air-brushed patterns were created for specific markets, including the US, that were not available in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s.

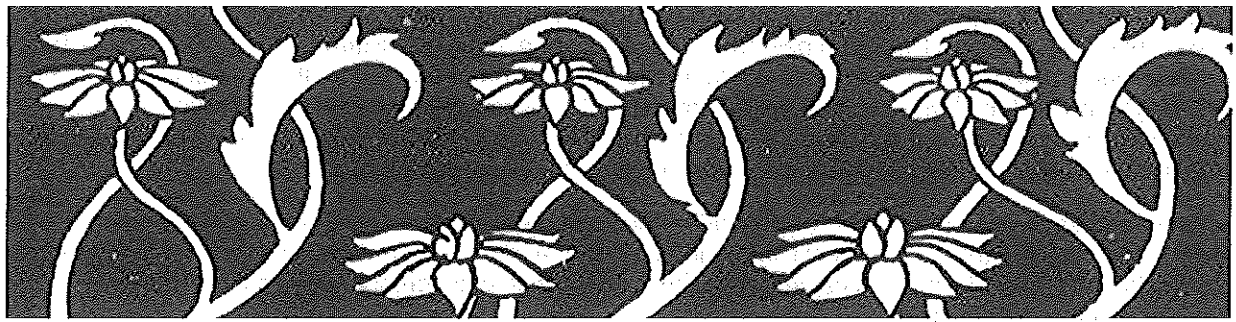
Celebrate and ERPHILA, importers in New York and Philadelphia respectively, are probably the two most widely distributed and commonly found ink marks in the US associated with Czechoslovakian ceramics.

Further reading:

Buddensieg, Tillmann. *Keramik, 1919-1933, in der Weimarer Republik*. Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nürnberg, 1985.

Marques des Porcelaines Tchecoslovaques de 1845 a l'art Nouveau & Deco. Bruxelles, Editions Collections Livres, 1996

<http://www.bihl.nl/BIHL%20pottery.htm> is the most informed, other web sites are more or less informed.



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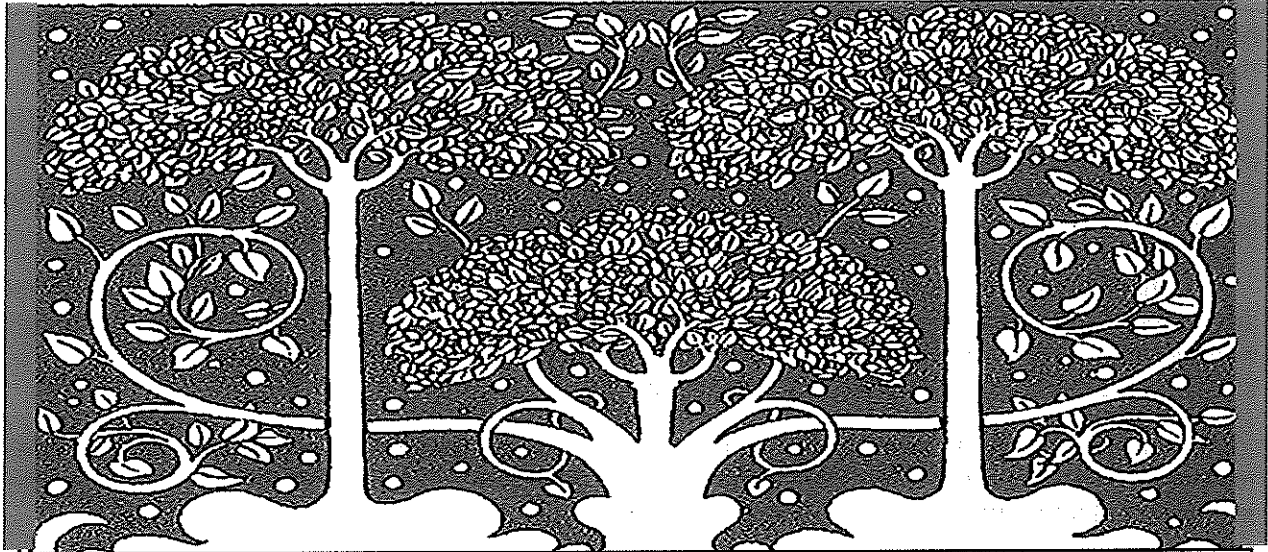
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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

My cat Brandy taught me something today. She walked on my keyboard (although I keep telling her No) and when I went back to work, I couldn't move the cursor. I tried everything – Control/Alternate/Delete, Escape, turning off the laptop by pressing the On/Off button. I couldn't move the cursor. So I packed up the laptop and took it back to the store. I knew it would be something simple. And it was. It's a new laptop and has a feature (mouse lock) that I hadn't noticed. It's a button above the touch pad. And Brandy had stepped on it.

So, what did I learn? Unlocking my cursor was easy to do once I learned how to do it. It wouldn't have taken a professional to show me how to do this – many of you probably know that this button exists. But I didn't know who I could turn to.

And why am I telling you (CCA members) this? I don't know most of you. I don't know your profession, your interests, your obligations. I don't know who to turn to when something needs to be done for CCA.

Luckily CCA has a professional serving in the position of Treasurer. Aggie has organized our financial records, taught the Board how to develop and read a budget and financial reports, and is helping us keep track of CCA's finances so that we are good stewards.

Luckily CCA had a Secretary for the past two years who has the vision and skill to produce interesting and educational Newsletters, has kept our documentation in order, and has kept members informed by letter and email. Jorie is not able to continue in this position, and I don't know who to turn to.

Luckily Donna was serving in the role of Membership Director. She has proved invaluable in greeting potential and new members and in providing the Board with varying perspectives based on what she has heard from potential, current and former members.

Luckily Dave had stepped up to serve as Publicity Director in 2008 and was willing to serve a full term starting in 2009. He has maintained our communication with other collecting organizations, organizations that are interested in Czech and Slovak heritage, and antique publications.

has done and the connections she has made. I doubt that we can convince her to take on the role for another city, so I don't know who to turn to.

Luckily Brian agreed to take on the Website when Amy felt she needed to focus on other things. Brian has provided professional advice to the Board on how the website can further CCA's mission. He has interesting ideas that need Member involvement, and we don't know who to turn to.

Luckily Steve is a dedicated CCA member and was willing to provide his professional legal advice as the Board focused on the legal status of CCA. We still need to answer the question of whether CCA should become a 501(c)(3) organization to allow gifts to be tax-deductible. But that's a question for the Members, not for Steve.

Luckily Amy could take enough time from her teaching and Antelope Antiques to scan the membership and approach potential candidates for Board positions. But even with all the people she has contacted, we still don't know who to turn to for the Secretary's position.

Luckily for me these people were in their positions when I became President last June. They knew their jobs and were good at them. As new needs became evident, we reached out and luckily found more people who were willing to help.

* Bonnie A. was willing to support CCA by allowing us to use her address as our address-of-record for CCA's incorporation in the state of Pennsylvania. She has not been active in CCA and yet answered our call for help.

* Katerina was looking for something new to learn when I asked her to organize the Survey of Former Dealers to learn what we can do to make the convention worth their efforts. Bonnie P. and Jeanne were willing to help. Katerina's a quick learner and provided the Board with insights as we planned this year's convention.

* Sandra, Mary, and Jean (former Presidents) provided me with advice on my responsibilities.

* Tom and Jane, Mary, Karl and Ian volunteered to take active planning roles in the convention.

As you can probably guess, luck has nothing to do with any of these people making CCA the organization that it is. Their life situations are the same as yours. At times, their (and the others who served in the recent past) circumstances allowed them to volunteer their time and skills in support of CCA. Now circumstances have changed and some of them are not able to continue providing as much time as they have in the past. There must be others of you whose circumstances have changed and would now allow you to volunteer.

We have 3 immediate needs: Secretary; Convention Coordinator for 2011; and a Newsletter Coordinator. Please review your situation. If you have been looking for something creative to do... if you can fill one of these needs ... there are plenty of people who have been there and are willing to support you. These roles are easy if you are taught how. And I'd be proud to learn alongside you.

Best wishes in the growth of your knowledge and collection.
Debbie

PS: Ceramic collectors -- tell me who you would like to have speak/demonstrate at the 2011 convention. I'd like to identify someone of the stature of Jiří Harcuba in glass.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The review of the CCA finances for FY10 (3/1/09 – 2/28/10) has been completed. Following is the balance sheet showing the financial condition of CCA as of 2/28/10.

Czechoslovakian Collectors Association
Balance Sheet
For the Period
3/1/09 – 2/28/10

Assets

Checking Account	\$ 13,482.43	
Prepaid Expenses	\$ -----	
Total Assets		<u>\$ 13,482.43</u>

Liabilities

Deferred Income	\$ 1,355.00 (Note 1)	
Accounts Payable	\$ 172.94 (Note 2)	
Total Liabilities	\$ 1,527.94	

Fund Balance

As of 2/28/09	\$ 13,107.14	
Net Profit(Loss)	<u>\$ (1,152.65)</u>	
Fund Balance	\$ 11,954.49	

Total Liabilities and Fund Balance **\$13,482.43**

(Note 1) – Dues for 3/1/10 – 2/28/11 received in February, 2010.

(Note 2) – FY10 expenses paid after 2/28/10

CCA closed FY10 with a deficit of \$1,152.65. This resulted from total income for the year of \$4,102.45 and total expenses for the year of \$5,255.10. The largest expense of \$2,611.08 for canceling the 2009 Convention was the main reason for the deficit for the financial year.

Detailed financial information for the financial year 3/1/09 – 2/28/10 will be presented at the annual meeting during the 2010 Convention in Indianapolis.

The CCA Board of Directors approved a budget for 3/1/10 – 2/28/11 at their conference call meeting on 3/16/10. The new budget format has been developed to show Operating Income and Expenses, Convention Income and Expenses and Auction Income and Expenses. The Operating Income for CCA is based on member dues and other income from donations and the sale of back issues of the Journal. Within the Operating Expenses are five Cost Centers - General, Membership, Newsletter, Publicity and Website. This new format will allow for more transparency and cost analysis. The approved budget will also be presented at the annual meeting during the 2010 Convention.

Respectfully Submitted,
Aggie Elwell, CCA Treasurer

MEMBERSHIP REPORT
Donna Leventhal, Membership Director

Thanks to all who have renewed their membership in CCA. If you have not yet responded, please mail your form and check to: Donna Leventhal, CCA Membership, P.O. Box 219, Ashton, MD 20861. The renewal form can be found on the CCA website (www.czechcollectors.org).

Welcome new members:

Dorothy Baylin
219 Upper Terrace
San Francisco, CA 94117

Bill Herbort
2574 Lake Mont Circle
Morristown, TN 37814

Vlasta Becvarova Barber
Historian, Czech Society of Oregon
11120 SW Summer Lake Drive
Tigard, OR 97223-1978

Reid Palmer
2110 Ashmore Drive
Ames, IA 50014

Arthur Bonene
601 Bienville Blvd
Dauphin Island, AL 36528

Jim Schee
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Ukiah, CA 93601

Donna Eshleman
1211 Highview Drive, NE
New Prague, MN 56071

Joan Steskal
P.O. Box 389
Ahwahnee, CA 93601

Elaine Swiler
4157 County Route 21
Cameron, NY 14819-9801

A special thanks to Silver Sponsors (Donation of \$100)

Gene & Patti Ferguson, Dieter Forthuber, Vincent & Patricia Giarrusso, Dwight Gilbert, and Deborah Truitt

The 2010-2011 Membership Roster is in the mail!

Dear Fellow CCA Members,

I enjoyed serving as your CCA Secretary/Newsletter Editor. I found the tasks and meetings interesting and stimulating. I especially liked being your Newsletter Editor. Everyone I interacted with was helpful and generous.

I regret I can not continue on as Secretary but other responsibilities need my attention. I am happy to help the newly elected Secretary as he/she assumes the position.

My best regards, Jorie Martinez

From the Publicity Director - David Phelps, April 2010:

1) Eighteen (18) antique magazines and journals were contacted, most indicating that they would publish our press release toward the end of April or May, closer to our convention.

2) Fifty (50) letters of introduction to our association were sent out to other Czech and Slovak associations. Our introduction letter was followed with our press release and more CCA membership forms. Many Czech/Slovak associations were either out-of-business or had changed their address. There was some immediate positive response to our letters, most did not respond.

3) Convention posters were made, three different ones, each with an emphasis - either glass engraving, or the auction or the show. These were emailed to members for posting in their area and the posters were also used for local distribution for advertisement. Members were encouraged to post them in antique malls or other places of interest.

4) Membership forms were distributed at a number of shows and auctions for additional publicity. Members were encouraged to take membership forms to the shows in their areas and leave some on the free literature table.

5) Facebook and Craigs list can also be used in your area to advertise the show. These sites are free. Facebook has a space for Events on which the convention can be announced.

6) Publications:

Deb Truitt's Article on "Moser Glass: Much More Than Gold Decor" appeared in Southeastern Antiquing & Collecting Magazine, May 2009.

"Decorative Czech Wall Masks of the Art Deco Era" by John Wesley Thomas in the West Coast Peddler, February 2009.

"19th Century Bohemian Pottery" by Ian Macmillan in Southeastern Antiquing, July 2008.

From Amy Lagler, CCA Nominating Committee:

The Nominating Committee is happy to report that David Fein has agreed to run for Membership Director. We are still looking for a candidate for the Secretary's position. Please contact Amy Lagler at amy@antelopeantiques.com if you are interested in information about this position.

Please note that this year CCA will be using email ballots for members who have supplied us with an email address. Postcard ballots will be sent to members without email addresses. Please watch for these ballots, they will be arriving in your in-boxes and mailboxes sometime soon!

CCA Website News from Brian Severn:

I've completed moving our site to a new webhosting service that will allow us the ability to do a multitude of new functions that were severely limited, or not possible to do with our old hosting service, such as post videos of unlimited size from the convention speakers, more photo storage space, add forums and much, much more. Speaking of forums, I will be setting up an internet forum section with various CCA related topics. Initially the following topics will be started – Czech Glass, Czech Pottery, Czech Jewelry, Czech Perfume Bottles, Czech Trip Reports and 2010 Convention Photos.

These forums will be moderated by topic-specific experts from CCA, and I'm looking for volunteer moderators for the following new forums – Czech Pottery, Czech Jewelry, Czech Perfume Bottles, Czech Trip Reports and 2010 Convention Photos. Two moderators per forum would be ideal, and can be adjusted if need be. Moderator responsibilities include policing their respective discussion forums, helping members with identifying their forum-specific items, and keeping the forums on topic. Please contact me ASAP if you'd like to volunteer to be a forum moderator!

I've also added a Convention Auction "teaser" photo page that can be found from the main www.czechcollectors.org page, and then clicking on the [CLICK HERE FOR THE 2010 CCA CONVENTION AUCTION PHOTO PREVIEW!](#) link under the 2010 Convention Update header at the top of our home page. This isn't an auction catalog per se, but does include a multitude of photos that of many of the pieces that will be available to bid on at the 2010 Convention! The Convention page has also been updated to include maps, schedule of events, seminars, convention and auction flyers that can be printed out and handed out at your local antique malls and other appropriate venues, the Convention Reservation Packet, dealer and volunteer forms, and even a YouTube video of convention guest speaker Jiří Hrcuba!

EVALUATION REPORT from Katerina Zisman.

[The CCA President tasked Katerina Zisman (with help from Jeanne Berry) to conduct a survey of dealers who had set up to sell at prior conventions. The objective of the Dealer Survey was to determine what factors cause dealers to set-up to sell at the annual convention, specifically the effects of a live auction. The goal was to determine what the most optimal circumstances are for the dealers to set-up to sell and/or consign at the live auction. This is Katerina's report.]

I created an introductory letter and a set of questions addressing the objectives of the survey and sent it by email or regular mail to 35 dealers. 14 dealers responded. There were many different or incomplete responses.

1. The purpose of dealer set-ups (according to 3 dealers) is to sell/make a profit. 4 dealers said the purpose is to show/expose others to the ABCs and educate. 2 dealers have set up to sell unwanted items in their collections.
2. Of the 14 respondents, 10 were positive about an auction (5 in favor of having an auction and 5 were neither for nor against the auction/neutral) and said they would set up to sell if an auction was on the agenda. 2 did not respond.

2A. Of the 10 positive responses about an auction:

- 2 dealers said it was not a deciding factor in their decision to set-up.
- 1 dealer agreed with having an auction, but would not set up to sell if high end items were offered.
- 2 dealers would come to the convention and/or set-up to sell ONLY if an auction was on the agenda. 1 said the auction should be the main event.
- Of the 5 neutral respondents, 1 felt the auction does affect the dealer sales and will not set-up if “important” items are offered.
- 2 dealers said the auction has no effect on their sales.
- 6 believe the auction presents an opportunity to buy stock.

2B. 2 dealers were opposed to the auction. Of these, 1 will not come unless the auction is on Sunday; 1 said the auction takes away from sales.

3. Publicity and proactive advertising by CCA was a very important factor for most responding dealers. 8 dealers expressed that the show and/or dealer set-ups and the auction must be publicized to the public and the local community and should be scheduled at a time the general public is able to attend. Bringing the public in would stimulate both the dealer sales and sales at the auction. 1 dealer said that the low number of members who currently attend the convention can’t be expected to support all the dealers.

4. Scheduling the auction – day and time – was an important factor [numbers in parentheses represent dealers in favor].

- FRIDAY: (7) A Friday evening auction was favored by 2 dealers. 4 dealers said the auction should take place early in the convention, so that it would be finished before the dealer set-ups/sales are over and the public as well as CCA members can shop from dealers on Saturday. 1 dealer said Friday is the best day for the auction because it allows time for attendees to get to town, consigners to deliver items, and dealers time to set-up, and the public can buy from both the dealers and the auction.

- 4 dealers wish for the auction to take place before the dealer set-ups and sales end, they thought this would prevent attendees from just waiting for the auction and not buying from dealers before the auction.

- SATURDAY: (1) 1 dealer was in favor of having the auction on Saturday with no further qualifications. 1 dealer said a Saturday evening auction would interfere with the traditional Banquet on Saturday night. 1 dealer said a Saturday morning auction would push the speakers to the afternoon and many convention attendees would skip the speakers in the afternoon; losing audience could be embarrassing with relatively low convention attendance. With a Saturday auction, according to the same dealer response, the dealers would have to stay late and be rushed to take down their goods and scramble to be ready for the banquet.

- SUNDAY: (1) Sunday was preferred by 1 dealer, who was not in favor of the auction and wished to be able to leave before the auction.

4. If an auction is on the agenda, some responding dealers think certain criteria should be set.

- A minimum price/bid should be set, below which a lot should not be sold (2). 1 dealer thought \$35 should be the minimum; 1 dealer said \$50. The rationale was to ensure a fair price to the consignor and to encourage attendees not to wait for the auction “bargains.”

- Only “important” items should be sold at the auction, no “willi nilli” (1).

- There should be 10 tables of items, at least (1).

- Allow as much time as needed (1).

- Allow up to 3 hours (3).

- Let each member bring up to 50 to 60 items per dealer, up to 500 items total (1).

- There should be no limit to the price (1).

- All items should be cataloged (1).
 - Auction should be the main event (1).
5. 4 dealers would like to see a variation in the set-up. Setting-up to show and sell out of the rooms at predetermined hours was suggested as a good change and something that was enjoyed in the past.
 6. Glass dealers in general seemed to be disappointed in the recent years, as they thought interest in glass has dropped off significantly and people were not buying glass, especially not the higher end. Most interest seems to be in pottery. This accounts for some past members and most of the glass dealers who dropped out.
 7. 2 responders said table fees to dealers should be low or free.

Thoughts By Jean Humlicek

As CCA members we are "ABC" (Austrian, Bohemian, Czechoslovakian) decorative art collectors. Beyond this common collecting thread a variety of differences about "what" and "why" we collect exist.

Upon inquiry, usually an ABC collector can immediately state exactly what he/she collects. Additional, and more specific questions may follow the initial question, and then, perhaps, the collector begins to self question, "Why do I collect _____?" "What do I know about _____?" "What are the benefits of collecting _____?"

Responses may include, (appearing in any order):

- 1) an adjective about the group, category,
- 2) the on-going quest for finding another new and wonderful piece (the "treasure hunt"),
- 3) belonging to an organization (CCA) which provides opportunities for learning and sharing new information,
- 4) developing new acquaintances and friendships,
- 5) the adventure of traveling to new places and seeking an out-of-the-way shop, mall, or location.

In addition, the collector can expand horizons regarding his/her collection by:

- a) identifying where the items are made,
- b) learning about the history, culture and customs of the people living in the identified area (accomplished by researching, attending a festival, visiting a museum specializing in the culture, or traveling to the area/country),
- c) determining when and why the type of item originated and investigating the history,
- d) what materials/techniques are required to create the art,
- e) what makes this type of art/item different from similar products produced in another area/country,
- f) how do the old and newer differ,
- g) where may I go to observe production?????

Yes, the questions and learning opportunities are endless, and they are applicable to any collecting specialty. In conclusion, the above thoughts and questions will inspire you to expand your knowledge regarding your collection. Yes, collecting can definitely provide a "a multitude of joys".

Happy Collecting!