

What is it that draws us to a clay event? The teachers? The classes? The food? The facility? The beds? Or is it the chance to meet and interact with other clayers? AHA! Of course, we go for the teachers and the classes. We don't care about the food or the facilities. Much. But oh, those kindred spirits. And trading!

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Judy Belcher

We, as polymer clay artists, are known to be a sharing group. But something magic happens when you get a bunch of us in the same place. I just finished reading the account of Shrinemont, the NPCG retreat, in the Polymer Café and have to agree with Judy Belcher. "It's the feeling of community."



And the best place to get the sense of community is in the workspace. Open 24 hours it is your home away from home. It's a place to get some work done. Or not. And it's place for impromptu demos. It's also place to meet the teachers in a relaxed setting. The workroom at Trinity Lutheran College where Ravensdale was held was in an auditorium with a stage and a piano. Our own little supper club- without the supper. Although, thanks to the Internet chat groups we had plenty of chocolate. Kellie Robinson of Alaska had the unofficial title of "bringer of the most unusual chocolate". The groups had joked about bringing chocolate for about two weeks before the event. And while most of us went out and bought Hershey's kisses and the like, Kellie brought homemade fudge spiked with espresso! It was a big hit. Dotty McMillan was sure it speeded up her work. Kellie says, "Ravensdale was my first clay retreat of any kind, and it was a bit overwhelming at times. The amount of information I absorbed in such a short time is amazing. This was the most exciting event of my whole life."

Verna Glass, another fellow Californian, was in several of my classes and her enthusiastic comment was "I like everything!"



Libby and Dotty

Libby Mills from Connecticut has been working with clay for three years and is a member of both the PCP (PolymerClayPeople) and PCC (PolymerClayCentral) chat rooms. She had seen pictures of Ravensdale happenings and was anxious to put names with faces of her on-line buddies. "It was a chance to take great classes from people I admire," she added.



**Notebook by
Jeanette Roberts**

I think the favorite activity was trading with everyone, from newbies to instructors. Whether it was loose beads, cane slices, canes or finished jewelry, the TRADE was definitely on. One of the most sought after trades was a small notebook with a pc cover in mica shift or foil by Jeanette Roberts. I don't want to write in mine and mess it up!



Susan Hyde

Susan Hyde managed to smile through a class in which her table collapsed on her knee while she was teaching!



syndee holt

And syndee holt taught us how to photograph our work with a plain old light bulb, a shower curtain and a piece of white paper.



Look ma, no shadows!

The newest newbie had to be Cindy Silas from Virginia who admitted to four months experience. Earlier in the year she was preparing to have some surgery and be off her feet for a while "and I got some clay to experiment with. I called Marie Segal at the Clay Factory and she was very helpful. I like the bright colors and the feel of the clay."



Gwen Gibson

One of the most lonesome clayers had to be Annette Durburg of the Netherlands. She told me that there was no clay in the Netherlands except rather old Fimo and that she orders her clay from Polymer Clay Express and gets it in five days! She has been fortunate to be able to attend Gwen Gibson's retreat in France and was an assistant there this year. She and Gwen keep in touch by e-mail.

The most lonesome title used to belong to Sally Haskell of Saudi Arabia but she has been spreading the word in the American community there and this year brought along Evie Lockard.



Margaret, Petra and Julie

And no clay conference would be complete without our friends Petra de Gues of New Zealand, Margaret Reid, Wales and Kazuo (Yamashita) Kono of Japan.

Here are Margaret and Petra with Julie Wise.