

CloseUp

# Feats of clay on display

## Guild's potters will be showing, selling wares

By PAT BORDEN GUBBINS  
Staff Writer

Kim Lewis is deep into matters of clay in her well-lit studio behind her home near UNC Charlotte. On this particular afternoon, she is attaching handles to a raku lamp base before firing it in her kiln.

To the south in Pineville, Karen Kammer is equally absorbed as she bends over the potter's wheel in her studio, creating a vegetable dish to add to several others drying on the shelf behind her.

She's wearing a Matthews ArtFest T-shirt, a memento from the town's recent festival where she and other craftspeople showed their work. Now, she and Lewis and at least 25 others in the Charlotte area are busy making more pots for Saturday's annual Fall Pottery Sale put on by Carolina Clay Matters Inc., a guild that nurtures them in more ways than one.

East of uptown, on Central Avenue, guild President Andrew Litton and his wife, Karen, are also throwing pots for the event, between teaching classes and running their gallery at Pottery Central.

And, a few blocks north of The Square, Adrienne Dellinger is at work managing the Clayworks Studio at the Tryon Center for Visual Art, where newcomers to clay can take lessons and potters can rent studio space to do their work.

They are just a few of the 100 or more people who make up the guild. Like Lewis, a native of upstate New York, and Kammer, who grew up in Florida, they may come from different parts of the country, but they share a common passion: creating



Photos by L.MUELLER/Staff

**Karen Kammer of Pineville shapes a bowl on her potter's wheel in the studio behind her home. Kammer, a member of the Carolina Clay Matters Inc. guild, was the group's president from 1997 to 1998.**

### WANT TO GO?

Carolina Clay Matters will have its semiannual pottery sale from 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday at McAlpine Business Park Historic Barn and Silo, 8300 Monroe Road. A portion of the proceeds from the fall sales will benefit Holy Angels Nursery in Belmont.

For more information about the guild, call President Andrew Litton at 537-4477.

shirt, a memento from the town's recent festival where she and other craftspeople showed their work. Now, she and Lewis and at least 25 others in the Charlotte area are busy making more pots for Saturday's annual Fall Pottery Sale put on by Carolina Clay Matters Inc., a guild that nurtures them in more ways than one.

East of uptown, on Central Avenue, guild President Andrew Litton and his wife, Karen, are also throwing pots for the event, between teaching classes and running their gallery at Pottery Central.

And, a few blocks north of The Square, Adrienne Dellinger is at work managing the Clayworks Studio at the Tryon Center for Visual Art, where newcomers to clay can take lessons and potters can rent studio space to do their work.

They are just a few of the 100 or more people who make up the guild. Like Lewis, a native of upstate New York, and Kammer, who grew up in Florida, they may come from different parts of the country, but they share a common passion: creating works of beauty, whimsy and usefulness from clay.

Their craft is solitary and engrossing, requiring long hours on their own as they throw pots and nurse them through the painstaking steps to completion.

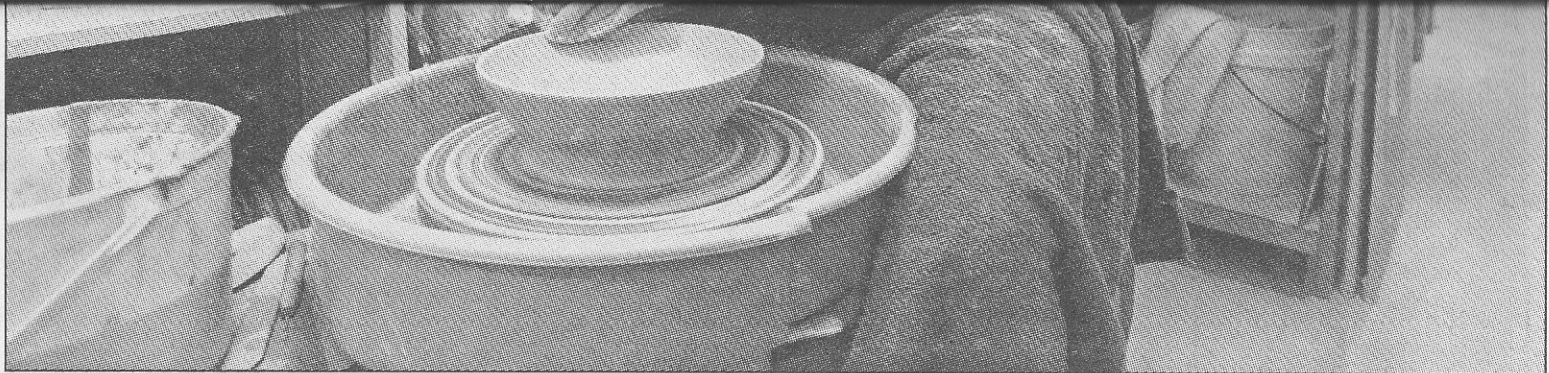
But at least once a month, they get together with other potters for a covered dish supper at the home or studio of one of their fellow guild members. It's a specialized community that puts them in touch with one another and helps them advance in their work, organizing workshops with well-known potters who draw from as far as New York City.

"The guild encourages us," said Lewis, who moved to Charlotte nine years ago with her husband, Matt, and their daughter, Jessica. She started taking lessons in 1994 and is an enthusiastic member of the guild.

"And for \$50 a year, you're in contact with all these people, constantly exchanging ideas. Our shows have been growing on a regular basis."

In return, Lewis encourages others who show an interest by letting them use her studio to try making a pot. "Once they do it, their desire is awakened," she said.

Kammer, an interior designer by training who traveled as a sales rep for 17 years, tried fitting in her growing fascination with clay on a part-time basis. She'd arrive home from a trip and rush to evening classes on Mondays and Thursdays.



Photos by L.MUELLER/Staff

**Karen Kammer of Pineville shapes a bowl on her potter's wheel in the studio behind her home. Kammer, a member of the Carolina Clay Matters Inc. guild, was the group's president from 1997 to 1998.**

### WANT TO GO?

Carolina Clay Matters will have its semiannual pottery sale from 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday at McAlpine Business Park Historic Barn and Silo, 8300 Monroe Road. A portion of the proceeds from the fall sales will benefit Holy Angels Nursery in Belmont. For more information about the guild, call President Andrew Litton at 537-4477.

Eventually, she saved her money and tried working part-time for a while, taking more classes and practicing at home. In 1993, she was among the potters exhibiting at the Matthews ArtFest and watched as the guild got its start.

"Leslie Betz-Malone is the ringleader who spearheaded the group," Kammer said. "At the ArtFest, she went from booth to booth, saying, 'We need to start a group - we have a lot of good potters here.'"

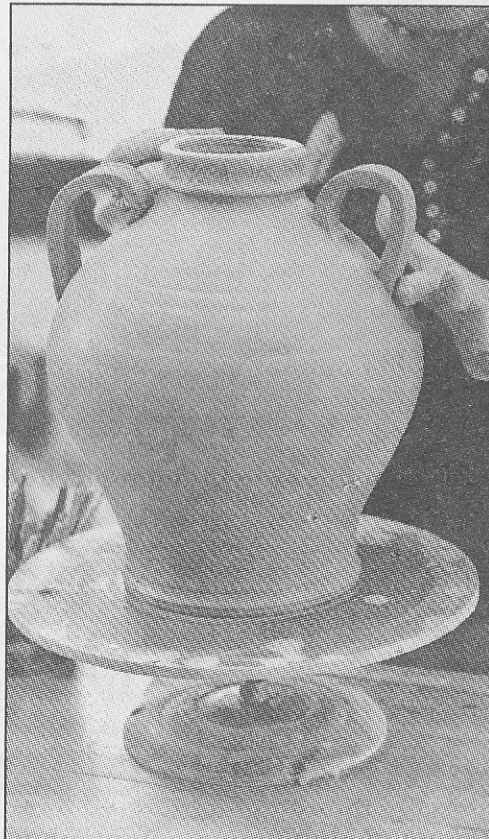
About 20 people started meeting in each other's homes, initially calling themselves the Clay People. Later, they adopted the name of an earlier, defunct group and incorporated as a nonprofit organization.

And, while Kammer was on her honeymoon with her husband, Jim, about five years ago, the group voted her in as membership chairman, a job that led to her serving as the guild's president in 1997-98.

Among her jobs was to organize the pottery sales, which she did for several years. The event quickly became another way for the group to bond and prosper.

"The barn sale provides incredible support for everybody," said Dellinger, who will be showing her work there for the third year.

"The show is getting better and better every time we have it. It's fun to get together with your colleagues that you know in town and sell your work together."



At left, potter Kim Lewis adds handles to one of her pieces. Above, one of Lewis' finished works. A number of Carolina Clay Matters Inc. pottery guild members have been working to produce works for a sale coming up Saturday at McAlpine Business Park Historic Barn and Silo.