



Western Rosemalers Association

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello Rosemalers,

Since my part-time move to southern California I have become fascinated by the revival of an almost lost art form - the pottery of the people living in the Mata Ortiz area of Mexico from 1100 to 1400.

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Shards found in archaeological digs served as hints of the beautiful pots that once were made in the area. In 1955 Juan Quezada started experimenting with local clays, cow dung fueled pits for firing, local natural elements for dyes and his own children's hair for paintbrushes. Now he creates museum quality pots that have crossed over from Indian collectables to breathtaking world class Art.

A wonderful thing happened along the way. Juan taught his family and his neighbors how to make the pots. They taught their extended families and neighbors. These people were small cattle ranchers, farmers and teachers. Now 95% of their income is derived from the sale of pots. Experimentation and innovation characterized Juan's revival and are hallmarks in the current approach, "no artificial barriers restrict fledgling potters ... there is no cultural pattern that must be followed, in fact there is no pattern at all." Quality is the only required constant whether a potter is painting hundreds of ants circling his pot or making precise geometric forms with dramatic asymmetric swirls.

Juan was asked about this diversion from the original shards and he said, "we have left the archaeological dig far behind us now." They find inspiration in the "traditional use of old designs, abstract use of old designs, complete departure from old designs; symmetry, asymmetry, new products, new paints and more."

I believe the same to be true of rosemaling. We have left the inspirational trunks far behind us now. Today's rosemaling teachers through their own experimentation and innovation have acquired impressive abilities and knowledge. They have, like Juan, shared this knowledge with hundreds of students.

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The **Acanthus Vine** is published 4 times a year approximately two weeks prior to the coming meeting. News items that any member deems interesting or beneficial to our members is welcome. Send as **Word Doc** attached to e-mail if possible to **Barb Smith** (address above); or surface mail to **Gro Marit Kleitsch**.