

fusion

The Journal of the International PMC Guild



*Lorena Angulo,
"Oaxaca Pot"
Bronze clay
photo: G. Post*

Revisiting Bronze Clay

16

2011/2

Bronze Clay Update

It's been nearly three years since bronze clay was introduced at the Guild's summer conference at Purdue University in 2008. In the time since, artists and craftspeople have been having fun—and getting a little frustrated at times—experimenting and working with the new material.

There seems to be no question that bronze clay, known in the marketplace by its trademarked name BRONZclay and its sister product FASTfire BRONZclay, has found its niche as an alternative and complement to various other clays on the market. As artists have become familiar with its nuances and more comfortable with it, we are seeing more and more people incorporate the material into their work.

Bill Struve, who invented the material and continues to manufacture it at a tiny production plant behind his home in North Carolina, knows this because his work load is steady. People are buying the clay, keeping him and his wife, LaceyAnn, busy. They call their company Metal Adventure.

"I was able to retire from my other job at the end of 2009 because the business was doing well," he said. "I'm very pleased. 2010 was not as good as 2009, but that was mostly due to the effects of the worldwide recession. I expect 2011 will be better than 2009. It certainly looks that way. The economy is swinging around, and we're busy all the time."

People who use and sell the material support Struve's assertion.



*Nisa Smiley
Square Bronze Bell*



PMCGUILD
International

The PMC Guild is a members organization with the mission of providing support, education, and exposure for artists working in Precious Metal Clay.

PMC Guild
1921 Cliffview Lane
Florence, KY 41042

Executive Director

Jeanette Landenwicht
Director@PMCGuild.com

Treasurer

Darnall Burks
Treasurer@PMCGuild.com

Communications

Tim McCreight
Tech@PMCGuild.com

Journal Editor

Bob Keyes
Journal@PMCGuild.com

Chapter Liaison

Jobie McCreight Fagans
Chapters@PMCGuild.com

Web Manager

Sadelle Wiltshire
Web@PMCGuild.com

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Vickie Hallmark
Rings
Bronze clay

Margaret Schindel, who has published scholarly articles about the clay (www.squidoo.com/bronzclay), knows the material as well as anyone. She calls the clay "a welcome addition" to her choice of materials. That's partly because of economics, but she also finds aesthetic appeal in the new clay and appreciates the new opportunities it creates.

"The cost of gold has become prohibitive and BRONZclay allows me to create substantial pieces in a warm metal color affordably. It certainly isn't a substitute for gold, but bronze metal has a warmth and beauty all its own," she said. "Having a more affordable kind of metal clay is very freeing, allowing me to explore and refine design ideas and construction techniques as much as I wish before committing it to more expensive precious metal clay."

But as with any new product that requires familiarity, many people have become frustrated learning its characteristics. With BRONZclay and FASTfire BRONZclay, the window for successful sin-





*Clockwise:
Dany Lennertz,
Lois Engle,
Monika Zimmerman,
Barbara Simon*

tering is narrow. The original BRONZclay has a tendency to crack during firing and needs to be patched and refired, and the firing cycle can last up to nine hours start to finish, Schindel noted.

Those issues aside, it is finding its niche in the market, said Kevin Whitmore of Rio Grande. It was met with tremendous enthusiasm out of the gate and enjoyed a moment “as the next great thing,” he said. Affirming its standing in the market, BRONZclay quickly found itself facing competing products, both from within the United States and abroad. “So it would seem that bronze clays have achieved some level of market acceptance,” Whitmore said. “Unfortunately all of these clays, regardless of brand, are more difficult to succeed with than the pure silver clays.”

As a copper-bearing alloy, bronze reacts with oxygen. Silver, a noble metal, does not, or at least not nearly as dramatically. This means that pure silver clay can be fired in an open air kiln, while bronze clays generally need protection from the oxygen present in normal air, he explained.

“The other factor that impinges on success is what sintering temperatures are needed. Depending on the formulation, silver clays have a wide window of temps and times that can be successfully employed. For example, PMC3 can be fired as low as 1100°F or as high as 1650°F, for as little as three minutes under a torch to as long as you like in a kiln. This just

isn't the case with BRONZclay, and generally speaking it cannot be the case with other brands of bronze clays."

Clearly, there has been a period of experimentation, with artists finding their own comfort zone. Schindel is drawn to the FASTfire BRONZclay formula. It's easy to use out of the package and requires no conditioning before use. She describes the texture as "almost velvety." Because it retains flexibility in the greenware state, she has found it particularly useful when creating chain and jump rings.

"Pieces usually fire with no crack and have a lovely golden color after wire brushing and finishing, and the metal is easier to sand, file and drill than fired original BRONZclay," she said. She also likes the fact that FASTfire BRONZclay lives up to its name. "The total firing time is

significantly shorter. ... I've been using the FASTfire formula almost exclusively since it came out, and it definitely lives up to my expectations."

In many ways, Schindel has been an advocate for bronze. In addition to publishing her paper about the material, she shows up on chat boards to help others who are struggling. In late March, she chimed in on the Yahoo metal clay group as a voice of encouragement.

One newbie to the material posted this question: "I just tried the FASTfire BRONZclay. It seems very sandy, doesn't make a good coil and dries very fast. Before firing it is extremely fragile."

Schindel replied, "I've used FASTfire BRONZclay quite a bit and love it! If your clay feels sandy rather than velvety, you probably need to knead in some additional water (which, fortunately, is easy to do, as FFBC absorbs water much more readily than original BRONZclay), wrap it up



Noortje Meijerink

"Speedy"

Bronze and copper clays

All photos in this article by
Abby Johnston



Laila Bakker
"Moai: Guard of Rapa Nui"
Bronze and copper clays

in plastic wrap and let it sit for a few hours before using it. I've had no problem rolling even very small coils with the FFBC if I get it sufficiently hydrated first.

"I would avoid adding glycerin to your clay, which would make it harder to join and also prevent it from hardening fully in the greenware state so that filing and sanding to a smooth finish would be more difficult." Issues related to firing times aside, Whitmore has no doubt that BRONZclay has found its place. Its early success may well be attributable to curiosity. But in the two-plus years since, the bronze clays have proven enough of a market force to lead Whitmore to conclude they are here to stay. "They offer artists an important option," he said. "Bronze is a much-loved metal in its own right. It is useful, and the ability to create functional tools is an interesting application. And then there is the ever-rising price of silver. Back in 1996 when Rio first started selling PMC, silver was routinely about \$6 an ounce. Silver is roughly six times more expensive. Bronze and copper clays represent an economical option, especially for beginners and children who will aspire to 'graduate' to the more expensive silver clay."

As she becomes more comfortable with the material, Schindel finds herself using both bronze clays to refine and explore her designs and

constructions. She makes her prototypes in bronze, her finished pieces in silver clay. She also uses the bronze for larger pieces that would be more expensive, and often cost-prohibitive, in PMC.

"I have plans to make a bronze bangle or cuff bracelet to take advantage of the strength of fired metal, and to start making more earrings and pendants from it just for the color. All the charms I created for the 2010 Charms for Charity bracelet were made with FASTfire BRONZclay. I thought combining silver, gold and copper charms on some of the bracelets made them far more interesting."

She's also working on making bronze pieces for a board game as a gift to her husband, using different designs instead of different colors to differentiate each player's pieces.

Schindel is using less PMC now than before, but that is not because of BRONZclay necessarily. It's because of the cost of silver. Bronze gives her another choice. If BRONZclay did not exist, would she use more PMC? "Perhaps a little," she said, "but not much. I see BRONZclay as an additional materials choice rather than a substitute for another material." For Struve, the inventor, the market has played out about as he expected, recession aside. He and his wife still work a few days a month to meet demand, which is about what they had planned and hoped to do when he began his metal adventure a few years ago.

He laughs at the perception that he is getting rich with the material. Not yet, he says. Not even close. "We've put more money into the company than we are getting out. It's not paid for itself yet. I hope that happens this year, but we are not there yet."

He quickly adds that he didn't do this for the money. As an inventor, he felt compelled to push the material to find something new, to see beyond the horizon.

More gratifying than any financial reward is simply the acceptance. In June, he will travel to Milwaukee to accept an award at the Bead & Button Show, where he is being honored for his contributions to the field.

"I'm overwhelmed with the response," he said. "It's quite gratifying."

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Online Learning

Georgie Galante shows up to class early, cup of tea in hand, and mingles with the instructor and other students. They make small talk—about the weather, perhaps, or maybe leftover ideas from an earlier session. As the start of class draws near, Galante and the other early-arriving students settle in at their work stations and get themselves organized and focused on the task at hand.

But the students don't see one another. They are queued up for Craftcast, a leading online learning opportunity for craftspeople. Craftcast, the brainchild of New York based educator and artist Alison Lee, is one of many online learning sites available to the craft community, and also one of the most popular.

What distinguished Craftcast, and what has spurred its wildfire growth in recent months, is the fact that Craftcast is streamed live on the web, with photos to illustrate techniques and an energetic host to spur interaction among participants. About 100 students participate in each class, hosted by Lee and a workshop instructor. The podcasts, which are available shortly after the live class, include complete class recordings. So far Lee reports close to 600,000 downloads. Because of its success, the Craftcast approach to learning has changed the notion of an online education within the craft community.

But there are other choices. Donna Kato, from the polymer clay world, offers a class called Craftedu.com. The general online learning site Ed2go.com offers classes in subjects ranging from small business to digital cameras, which are popular with artists. Tonya Davidson at Whole Lotta Whimsy offers guided tutorials and video tutorials, as well, and there are many more of all stripes.

E-learning is not a new concept, but it is evolving and improving all the time. E-learning comprises all forms of electronically supported education. It is an industry estimated to be worth more than \$48 billion worldwide.

According to the Sloan Foundation, the e-learning business is increasing at a pace of 12 percent to 14 percent annually, far outpacing student growth of the U.S. post-secondary education system. Based on statistics from 2009, a recent report by Ambient Insight Research said that 44 percent of U.S. post-secondary students took some or all of their courses online.

Galante, 62, understands why.

"You just show up, at your computer, at home, in your PJs if you like, hot tea, hot toddy. We start pouring into the virtual classroom about 7:30



p.m., and Alison greets us and keeps us amused until the class begins at 8:00. During the class we hear the instructor, view tons of photos and have the ability to ask questions. You can take the class with a mic and headset. It runs until 9:30. Afterward we get an email that contains a PDF and about a week or so later we get a copy of the class that we downloaded," she said.

Stan and Ann Rosier have taken many online classes, including some through Craftcast. They appreciate the convenience of learning at home. "We loved the idea of sitting in front our monitor for about an hour-and-a-half, not having to go out of the house. The first time we took a class, our expectations were met," they said in an email. "Very well done, as in you could see and hear all the steps that the teacher took us through with pictures and video."

Holly Gage has been on both ends of the online class experience. She recently led a Craftcast session about negative space caning. She admits to being nervous before the class began, but because Craftcast builds in a half-hour of social time before the actual work begins, it helps settle her nerves.

"It gives you a chance to say hi to the students and warm up a bit. There is also some camaraderie that takes place, making it a bit more real," she said.

Along with the others, Gage appreciates the convenience of communicating through the digital world. You can teach or participate in a class from nearly anywhere. As she noted, it's much more convenient to teach technical information when you have the benefit of being in your studio. Not only is everything you need at hand, but it also feels comfortable.

"And it is several steps above a written article or video because it is interactive, making it more personal, especially since there is an opportunity for a question-and-answer session," she said.

She described her experience as "if you were teaching on a radio show with the addition of visual aids."

That said, it's unfair to compare it to an actual class, with live bodies in a classroom. Students are not creating their pieces on site, and the instructor does not have the benefit of seeing and reacting to projects that are in process. "I spend a good deal of my time at my workshops walking around helping people individually, trying to get them to take those tiny leaps."

On the other hand, online learning is affordable and convenient. It enables instructors to reach many more people than would normally sign up for an in-person classroom experience. "It is the next-best thing for



those who can't make it to an actual class," Gage said. "It was nice to have in attendance several students who expressed an interest in taking my class, but couldn't do so due to location or other physical limitations."

The cost is important, students say.

Craftcast cost \$39.95 to participate live. Downloads also cost \$39.95. "What I like most about taking classes online is the knowledge that it is available at an affordable price," Galante said. "If I traveled to every class I wanted to take, I'd be gone all the time and broke. Robert Dancik has done a few classes on Craftcast. Since my schedule conflicts with his workshops, I've been able to pick up so much from what he has taught. That's not to say I do not want to go to his workshops. Quite the contrary. There are some classes I have taken online for very little money just to see if I want to explore it further."

A big factor in the success of Craftcast is Lee's demeanor, the Rosiers said. She makes people feel welcome, and talks to participants "as if we were right there," Ann Rosier said. "We sit and enjoy the presentation without the distraction of having to take notes, knowing that the PDF file of the class notes will be emailed to us."

She understands the importance of networking. People join a class and become part of a community. "That is the key," she said. "It's personal relationships. People want to know they were heard and that they are part of a community, including an online community."

It's also important to offer something they want. She tries to stay ahead of the trends by offering classes in subjects that are new and topical. She also has to stay on top of technology. Especially in the world of e-learning, the same old, same old won't cut it.

Her latest offering are audio transcriptions. "I have spent hundreds of hours trying to figure out what works and what doesn't. People's expectations are very high. They expect the highest content delivered to them in a medium that is brand new."

Live video will come soon, but not before Lee knows she can deliver it seamlessly. "First it will be myself and a teacher on camera, with still images. And then it will morph into something else. It will morph into the next thing."

In an interview, Lee said she believes the key to the success of her enterprise is the personal relationships she is able to build with instructors and participants. She loves being behind the microphone, and loves talking. "I feel comfortable talking for long periods of time to a wall with no one there, but I really feel they are there. I really do. They feel like they are there with me, and that is really real for me," she said.



Ask Sol

Dear Sol,

Recently I have been taking my adolescent daughter along with me to beading and metal clay classes. She always has a good time once we get there, but sometimes I need to twist her arm to come along. My husband thinks I'm pushing her into my hobbies and that I should quit insisting, but I maintain that I'm helping her discover her artistic side. Which of us is right?

– Trying to be a good mom

Dear Trying,

It is a part of good parenting to lead children into activities that will enrich their lives, sometimes providing the discipline that a kid might not summon. I think there are plenty of kids on sports teams and in school bands who enjoy it now but might have given up if not for parental guidance. Of course it's also possible that by insisting too much, a well-intentioned parent might create frustration that will turn a child away from something that would appeal if left on their own.

I think it's important to understand that there is no right and wrong here. What is appropriate for one child might not be appropriate for another, and what works at one age might not work at another. The better question, then, is not who is right between you and your husband, but what is best in this situation. As you can guess, my next suggestion is to involve your daughter in the conversation.

Choose a convenient time for a relaxed chat and see if you can draw her out on how she feels about the time you spend together working on crafts. Try not to lead her to the answers you want to hear and remember to listen well to her comments. You might wish that somebody had given you these opportunities at her age—and it's okay to say as much—but she might be interested in other opportunities.

Speaking personally, I think it's great to see craftwork in the light of a family activity. We take for granted family hikes, ski trips, fishing expeditions, and so on, and all of that is great. But there is something to be said for the quilting bees and front porch whittling of by-gone days. Maybe a class at the local bead store is the 21st century version of this important social bond.



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Editorial

A leader in our field sent a note in the immediate aftermath of the Japanese earthquake and tsunami that pretty well summed up what many of us were feeling.

"I'm not even certain where in Japan our materials come from (or where they're manufactured," she wrote. "I don't know if those facilities have been affected, either directly or indirectly, by this event. I would assume that, since Japan is a relatively small country, everyone in the country has been affected to one degree or another."

She noted the special friendship between the metal clay community and Japan, and suggested that our relationship with Japan is unmatched by any other relationship between an artist community and a country. Simply put, without Japan, PMC would not exist. We are inextricably tied to the proud Asian nation.

Especially in those first few hours, we knew little about how our friends at Mitsubishi were faring. Soon enough—miraculously soon, really—we learned from the business office in Tokyo that they were fine, relatively speaking. Employees were asked to stay in their office overnight in the immediate aftermath, but they were otherwise physically OK. The quake hit in the north of Japan, and PMC is manufactured south of Tokyo. But still, the sentiment on this side of the Pacific ranged from concern to alarm. Our instincts were to reach out, and help in whatever way possible. We may be half-a-world away, but we're very close in all ways other than geography.

Our first reaction was and remains, what can we do to help?

From where I sit, I must say that I am singularly impressed with the heartfelt reaction of the PMC community to the Japanese crisis. The outpouring has been astounding. I'm not going to recite all the dollar tallies, because there is no way of knowing precisely how much money the PMC community raised. But if you are part of the PMC community and plugged in, you know at least some of the details because of all the internet chatter. In a little over a week, one active group of artists raised more than \$5,000.



I am certain that figure represents a slice of the pie and not the entire pie. Many in our community no doubt reached out on their own. More important, perhaps, the effort represents a huge and meaningful gesture. It signals to Japan that we care, that we offer support, and that we sympathize with their plight.

Going forward, the best thing we can do, as a community and as individuals, is simply to continue to do what we've been doing for almost 15 years now. We must support Japan by doing business with them. At this time, we don't know if the manufacture and shipment of PMC will be slowed or interrupted. It certainly is plausible to assume that it might be. But I suggest we not get hung up on those worries and simply go about our business as creative beings.

Buy, make, sell – repeat.

We have reached out in a meaningful way. Our friends in Japan know we care and are standing with them. As individuals, we may choose to do more, of course. If a group of artists or a PMC Guild chapter decides to do something over and above, all the better.

But again, the most important thing we can do is to support them with our continued loyalty in business. Our friends in Japan are proud and capable, and they know we have their backs. They will recover, and we can help by going about our business as artists.

— Bob Keyes

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Jurors Announced for Guild Annual 5

The jurors have been selected for the PMC Guild's Annual, due out this fall. It will be the fifth time the Guild has published an Annual, which brings together some of the most innovative and interesting work made with PMC.



*Bob Ebendorf
Cornwall Necklace
Fine silver, stone,
steel, shell, copper.*

Work selected for the book goes through a rigorous judging process. Each year, we select a panel of judges with a range of expertise in PMC and the craft world in general. The judges consider all the pieces that are submitted, and a consensus emerges during the jurying process.

This year's panelists:

Bob Ebendorf, a metalsmith and jeweler, and leader in the studio jewelry movement. He teaches art at East Carolina University in North Carolina.

Celie Fago, a well-known artist from Vermont with a distinguished career in PMC. She is an educator and artist, and has exhibited widely.

Kelly Russell, who has been working with and teaching PMC since 2004. She's also a writer and blogger (www.Beadfuddled.blogspot.com). She lives in Maryland.



Lorena Angulo
"Arbol de la Vida"
 fine silver

Lorena Angulo, an active metal clay artist specializing in wearable art. Her work is widely featured in various magazines and publications, including previous Annuals. She grew up in Mexico and lives in Texas.

"It will be a privilege to have the opportunity to see all the wonderful work made with metal clay by artists around the world," Angulo said. "I am looking forward to seeing work that has a story to tell, work that will catch my eye because it has originality and represents each artist's unique style and voice." You can see an example of Lorena's work on the cover of this issue.

Ebendorf has the least amount of experience with PMC. He worked with it only briefly several years ago. "I enjoyed it, but honestly I've not worked with it since. But that experience helped me understand the aesthetic richness of the material that I have never forgotten."

As a founding member and past president of the Society of North American Goldsmiths, he brings a broad spectrum of experiences to the judging panel. He's impressed with the quality of the PMC work that he has seen lately, and is looking forward to taking a close look at the work submitted for consideration.



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*Kelly Russell, Brooch
Fine silver, colored pencil*

photos: Robert Diamante



*Celie Fago, Pendant
Fine silver.*

"PMC certainly has come out of the hobbyist realm and gained its presence in a creative fold of metalwork," he said. "It's a real honor for me to be a part of this group. It's a very special group of jurors."

Russell said she agreed to serve as a judge because it was a good way of giving back to the PMC community and to the Guild, whose leaders have supported her over the years. She has never submitted work to the Annual, but is happy to be a judge.

"I am excited about participating. I am looking forward to seeing all the photos of everyone's pieces. I was very honored to be asked to help," Russell said.

Celie Fago was represented in two previous Annuals and has been a consultant to the Guild for many years. "I'm thrilled to have this opportunity to take the measure of the field," she said.

"Seeing all the images will be a feast! I look forward to collaborating with the other jurors, viewing, reviewing, and ranking the submissions. How exciting!"

The deadline to submit images for consideration is May 16. Images should be put on a CD and sent to PMC Guild Annual, 318 Bath Road, Brunswick, ME 04011. All Guild members are eligible to submit work.

All work must be original. It can include jewelry, as well as other items like housewares, toys, sculpture, flatware, etc. Metal clay should make up a significant portion of the piece, but entries can include glass, polymer clay, wood, ceramic, gems, enamels, plastic, and other materials. All forms of metal clay are welcome, including non-precious metals.

The book will be sent to all Guild members in the autumn. To celebrate the fifth anniversary of the publication, prizes will be awarded for the top entries.

For updates on the jurying process, connect with the Guild through Facebook at PMC Guild International.

The Next Fusion Visual Trigger Challenge

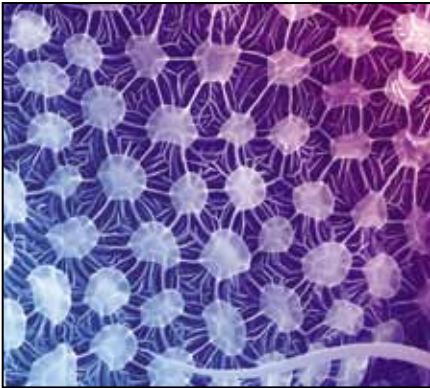


photo by MicroAngela, used with permission.

As the name suggests, the images used for the challenge are selected because they offer an interesting visual experience. As always, we will select a first-place winner and runners-up to be included in the next issue of *Fusion*. In addition to this international exposure, the first-place winner will receive \$100 worth of PMC.

Submitted work can be wearable, sculptural, or functional, and can include additional materials along with PMC. The winners will demonstrate creativity, craftsmanship,

and a clear reference to the target image. Send a digital image to Tech@PMCGuild.com any time before June 1, 2011. A larger image appears on the back cover of this issue.



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Rio Grande Gives New Meaning to Green Jewelry

Energy conservation is important in today's world. At the domestic level, we're all trying to live a little wiser at home. Rio Grande, one of the leading jewelry suppliers in the United States, is taking that idea to a new level.



The company, based in New Mexico, recently invested more than \$5 million in a solar energy system. With the installation last summer of 5,008 solar panels, the company now draws all the energy it needs from the sun to operate its 180,000 square foot plant. At the time of the installation of the 1.1 megawatt energy system, it was the largest privately owned flat-panel solar installation in New Mexico, according to Rio Grande director Alan Bell.

"It's actually something we were looking at for five or six years. The driving force has to do with the idea that we could run the company on energy from the sun in an area where one of the things we have in abundance is sunlight," Bell said.

At the time of their initial investigation into the idea, Bell and other company directors came to the conclusion that the project would be too expensive. As badly as Rio wanted to go green, it also had a fiduciary responsibility. In the business world, environmental sustainability must match up with economic sustainability.

But Rio never let the idea get too far away. In recent years, the per-watt cost to install the massive system dropped by half, thanks largely to government incentives. "That put the whole thing in a different light," Bell said. "It created an opportunity for us to do something we felt that, as global citizens, made sense, and it made sense as corporate citizens, as





well. Generating our own electricity assures the cost of our electricity remaining stable over time. From a business perspective, that is a big factor.”

Perhaps equally important, Rio Grande now stands as an example for other large consumers of electricity. By generating its own

power, Rio reduces demand on the power utility, Public Service Company of New Mexico, or PNM.

“By generating our own electricity, we reduce the peak demand requirement of the utility. We alone doing that are not going to impact what the utility’s infrastructure requirements are. But if a lot of large facilities were to retrofit with solar, the utility would be in a position to reassess the infrastructure and reduce costs.”

The investment has proven popular with employees, Bell said. People feel good about working for an environmentally responsible company. They also appreciate that the panels were installed over Rio Grande’s parking lot, creating a shady, covered parking area. “So far, I have heard no complaints,” he said with a laugh.

He expects the system to pay for itself in about five years.

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Local Chapters of the PMC Guild

The San Diego Chapter ended 2010 with a fun shindig and has big plans for 2011. Here's an update from **Louise Shadonix**: "The San Diego Chapter closed out the year with our annual White Elephant Gift Exchange where we all work over the year to assemble a goodie package with stuff related to PMC creativity. It's so much fun to get to know each other and see the dynamic of the "stealing of gifts" that takes place. We had 20 people in attendance and even had a second night of partying for those who could not make it on the previous night (or wanted an extra night of partying). It was just as fun! Our next meeting will involve making a jewelry storage frame and we will also do a "Zentangle" pass-around where each member will create a "Zentangle" and mail it to the next person on the list and they will add to it. At the next meeting we will make copies for everyone and also take a collection for making it into a texture stamp for the group and to help fund the group's future workshops. And, speaking of future workshops, we will be having our biennial "Camp PMC" the last weekend in August in Southern California."

Tammy Jones is a member of the East Tennessee Chapter of the PMC Guild, as well as editor of *Jewelry Making Daily*. She wrote a wonderful article earlier in March in which she talked about the joys of connecting with other enthusiasts in the setting of a Local Chapter meeting. Read the article at: <http://tinyurl.com/3ll8uds>.



We are excited to announce a new chapter in Louisiana. "L'esprit du Metal" is led by **Paula McDowell**, **Simone Palmer**, **Kathy Prejean**, and **Katherine Wadsworth**. The group is based in Lafayette, and will be holding meetings in locations around the state as more metal clay artists join in celebrating the Spirit of Metal. Their first meeting was held in Lafayette on 1/23/11 with nine current members. The March meeting was held at *A Bead Boutique* in Alexandria. For details about future meetings, contact Paula at lapmcguild@gmail.com.

The Greater Boston Chapter celebrated a year of Chapterhood in the fall of 2010 and currently has about 25 members. **Michela Verani** writes, "We have had demos on making a Viking knit chain, using colored pencils on metal clay, working with base metal clays, bookmaking, and a number of other topics." The group hosted a "Play with Clay" at the end of January and plans to schedule more of these play dates in the future.

And while were at it, congratulations to **Michela Verani**, for her article in the May issue of Art Jewelry magazine. She shows how she made the dragonfly pendant shown here.



photo: Abby Johnston

Michela Verani
"Dragonfly"

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Visual Trigger Challenge



Most of the images used in the Visual Trigger Challenge are intentionally so abstract that we can't tell what they are. That was not the case with the photo in *Fusion 15*, clearly a dense section of foliage. Too easy?

For some reason, we had fewer entries this time than usual. Share your thoughts at Editor@PMCguild.com.

First Place



Carol Gregory

of Burnley, Australia

"Cactus Flower"

Pin, fine silver and enamel

Other Responses to the Challenge



Roger Parish (*Pennsylvania, USA*)
Bronze, amethyst geode



Lisa Heath (*Isle of Wight, UK*)
"Evolving," fine silver



Lynn Edwards
(*California, USA*)
"Evolving," fine silver

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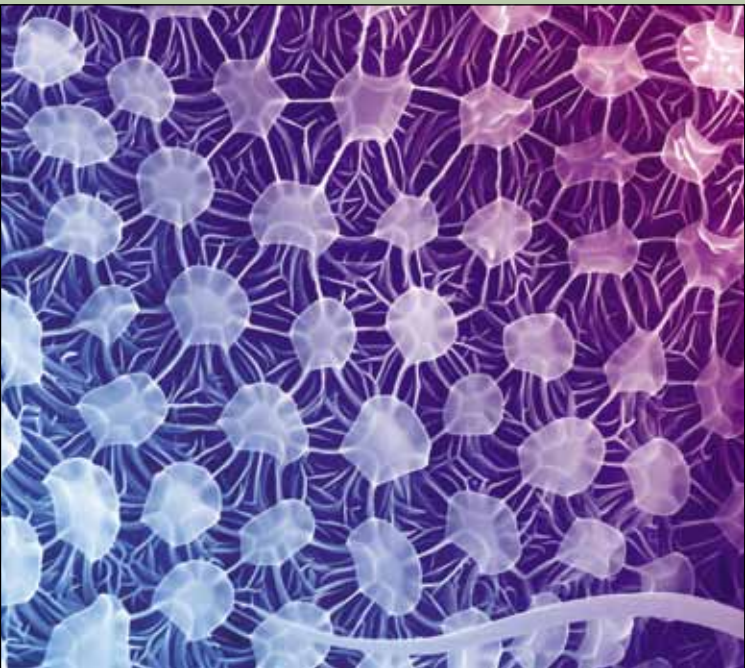


Photo by MicroAngela, used with permission.

Fusion Visual Trigger Challenge
See inside for details