



INSTRUCTION — Jo Dixon (left) offers some advice to Hilda Harrell as she works on a five-piece canister set during the Thursday night class at J-Dees Ceramics & Gifts.



STUDENTS AT WORK — Mrs. Lloyd Lane, Mrs. Durwood Reed Jr. and Gary Reed diligently work during a Thursday night session at J-Dees which is offered through COA's Division of Continuing Education.



FINISHED PRODUCTS — A wide variety of finished ceramic pieces are on display at J-Dees' new location on Church Street in Hertford. Some of the items are for sale and others may be special ordered.



POTPOURRI — From plaques to ash trays to vases and knick knacks, ceramics has been called "the world's most fascinating hobby." This picture shows some of that versatility.

Grand Opening Set For Sunday

J-Dees Gifts & Ceramics Comes To Town

By KATHY M. NEWBERN

"The world's most fascinating hobby" has come to town, literally. The hobby is ceramics and it has gained popularity locally with the opening of J-Dees Ceramics & Gifts, now located at 147 N. Church Street in Hertford.

The shop is operated as a family business by Claude and Jo Dixon and their 16-year old son, Chris. Now into its third week at the new location, business can only be described as booming.

The new venture will be officially recognized on Sunday, April 17 with a ribbon cutting ceremony and open house to be held from 1 to 6 p.m. marking its grand opening. County and town officials will be on hand for the ceremony. The day-long events will include refreshments, periodical drawings for door prizes, grand opening sales representing savings up to 30 per cent off, and special demonstrations of ceramic techniques by Virginia dealers and distributors.

Although new to Hertford, J-Dees is not new to the area. Mrs. Dixon has been operating the ceramic business in the county for the last 18 months. She began in the basement of

her home with six students taking classes. From there, she moved to a shop near New Hope but still with limited space. And now the family is enjoying their spacious new location in town with student enrollment in classes up from six to 45.

Mrs. Dixon has been involved in teaching the hobby for eight years. Before locating in Perquimans County, she worked in shops in both New Bern, N.C. and in the Raleigh-Durham area. However, the family agrees that they are extremely pleased with the current set-up and described local merchants, the police force, town officials, and the people as being very encouraging, cooperative, and interested in the business. She sums up the attitude as that of "home folks." She said, "The reception has been more than we ever dreamed it would be."

In addition to holding ceramic classes for registered students, the business is also involved in several other areas. J-Dees sells a complete line of supplies related to the hobby from slip to kilns. A large selection of "quality greenware" is available for purchase and the business also

offers the service of special-ordering items not in stock. J-Dees is also dealer in ceramic paints by Ceramichrome.

Concerning ceramic instruction, Mrs. Dixon also conducts workshops for non-students, special seminar classes for those interested in learning advanced techniques, and offers seminars for both teachers and dealers when requested. An additional service is special classes for interested civic or community groups upon request. One such class is scheduled for a local Brownie troop. Mrs. Dixon summed up the variety of services by explaining that a variety of activities and instruction are available to anyone interested from the beginner to the advanced. She added that her student enrollment includes both men and women and spans an age range of nine years old to age 68.

Space is also provided for display of students' work and currently the front window is filled with ceramic pieces that recently won ribbons in a show in Richmond, Va. With pride, Mrs. Dixon added that of the 29 pieces entered in that show, 14 placed in competition.

J-Dees is open Monday

through Saturday from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. with Wednesday hours being 1-5 p.m. Mrs. Dixon said she frequently has visitors who just want to watch others at work or those entered in the classes take advantage of the day hours to work on ceramics. Also, she has many who already know how to do ceramics come by and work on their pieces during regular hours.

In addition to the regular hours, J-Dees is the site of much night activity including regular classes and the Thursday night class which is offered through the Division of Continuing Education at College of the Albemarle. Mrs. Dixon is instructor for that class.

The schedule of classes is as follows: Monday, Tuesday and Thursday nights from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. and Tuesday and Thursday from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. Special classes for children are held each first and third Saturday from 10 a.m. until 12 noon. The age requirements for participation are from 9 to 16 years old. Expansion plans include a planned youth activity workshop to be held in the summer from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. on Mondays. Open workshop sessions for anyone interested (student or non-student) are held Tuesday through Friday from 1 to 5 p.m. and Monday from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. Needless to say, in view of the schedules observed, J-Dees is usually full of activity.

Mrs. Dixon said the success of ceramics as a hobby can be attributed to a variety of factors. First, many students enjoy working with their hands and the sense of accomplishment they gain. Secondly, ceramics offers gift-giving at a large savings. Mrs. Dixon said that many people don't realize the therapy value that is also credited to ceramics

and pointed out that it is popular for use in treating patients in alcoholic and psychiatric rehabilitation centers. Others find it to be an enjoyable past-time. Ceramics, according to Mrs. Dixon, is successful in any area and is recognized worldwide. Part of its fascination is the variety it offers once interest is established.

The teaching of ceramics is an occupation within itself. Mrs. Dixon has learned the skill through observing and doing and through a "lot of reading and studying." She is currently working on her master's degree in ceramics taking two full days of study and work in Virginia. She points out that learning never ceases and ceramics is no exception to that rule.

From a basement set-up to a larger shop in Hertford, Mrs. Dixon readily admits she's had a lot of help along the way. She added that the interest, time and cooperation her distributors have shown in her business has definitely contributed to its success. She expresses particular gratitude to Norman's Ceramics in Norfolk, Va. and Hobby Associates in Virginia Beach, Va.

However, the family interest is also evident in the business. Mrs. Dixon admits that she's involved in this venture because "I really love this work and I just enjoy doing it." That attitude is evident to those visiting or studying at J-Dees Ceramics & Gifts.

In The News

Mrs. Sandra Stallings Winslow of Martinsville, Va. spent the Easter holidays with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Quinton Stallings.

Tim Gregory of Chesapeake, Va. was a guest of Mr. and Mrs. Noah Gregory on Friday.



THREE STAGES — Pictured above are examples of three stages in the ceramic-making process. At left is greenware; at center is the result of the first firing in the kiln; and at right is the finished product — a brillo pad holder in the form of a frog. (Staff photos by Kathy Newbern)

Easter Holiday Brings Visitors To County

Mr. and Mrs. Howard Mathews Jr. and family of New Bern were guests of Mr. and Mrs. Howard Mathews Sr. on Sunday. Miss Nancy Tunnell of Henderson was a holiday guest of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Tunnell. Dr. and Mrs. Bill Nixon and family of Wilmington

spent the holidays with their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Arvin Hudson and Mr. and Mrs. Preston Nixon. Mr. and Mrs. Donald Chesson and family of Garner were holiday guests of Mr. and Mrs. Jake Chesson. The Rev. and Mrs. Clifton Hollowell and family of

Robersonville were guests of Mr. and Mrs. Howard Mathews on Sunday. Mrs. Brooke Read and daughter of Alexandria, Va. were weekend guests of Mr. and Mrs. W.H. Oakey Jr. Mrs. Robert Barnard and son of Suffolk, Va. were guests of Mr. and Mrs. Marjion Swindell on Sunday.

Miss Jo Davis Towe of Richmond, Va. spent the weekend with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Martin Towe. Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Benton and son of Eden were weekend guests of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Benton. Bobby and Johnny White of Newport News, Va. spent

the weekend with Mr. and Mrs. Jim Bass. Mr. and Mrs. Clinton Eley of Virginia Beach, Va. were guests of Mr. and Mrs. Sid Eley during the weekend. Mrs. James Wetzel and son of Richmond, Va. were guests of Mr. and Mrs. J.E. Newby on Sunday.

Belvidere Highlights

By MRS. ELTON D. LAYDEN

The annual Easter Sunday Jessup family reunion was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. W.T. Riddick. This is a tradition that has been observed for a number of years at the Riddick home.

The guests gather together after attending church services and enjoy a buffet style dinner.

The children enjoy games and an Easter egg hunt in the afternoon.

Those attending this year were Mr. and Mrs. T.J. Jessup, Mrs. Mae Jessup Twine and Mr. and Mrs. Elton Walters of Gates County. Mrs. James Twisdale and daughter Ellen from Halifax, N.C., Mr. and Mrs. M.B. Merrill, Pokomoke City, Md., Mr. and Mrs. F.M. Matter, Mr. and Mrs. Foster Matter and sons, Milton and Will, Virginia Beach, Va., Mr. and Mrs. Roger Mercer and daughter Emily from Elizabeth City, Dr. and Mrs. Jack Porter from Raleigh, Mr. and Mrs. Jim Malco from Pt. Harbor, N.C., Mr. and Mrs. Bill Riddick and daughters, Patricia and Kelly from Franklin, Va. and Mr. and Mrs. Tim Jessup Riddick from Belvidere.

Those from here who attended the funeral of Mr. Ken Spivey's father in Ramseur, N.C. last week were; Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Layden, Mr. and Mrs. Lindsey Bunch and Mr. and Mrs. Mack White. A "cake cutting" for Brenda Schultheiss and Clarence Chappell III was held at the Bethel Community Building Friday, April 8. Those from here who attended were Mr. and Mrs. Brenton Winslow, Mr. and Mrs. W.T. Riddick, Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Riddick, Mr. and Mrs. Alvah Winslow, Mrs. Vivian Dale, Mrs. Mac White, Mrs. C.E. Layden and daughters, Barbara, Peggy and Mr. and Mrs. C.T. Rogerson, Jr.

Mr. and Mrs. Chris Sawyer of Elizabeth City are the proud parents of a baby daughter born Saturday, April 2. Mr. and Mrs. Paul Byrum, Sr. are the grandparents. Mr. and Mrs. Tim Riddick were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. John Pierce of Corapeake Saturday evening. It was Mrs. Riddick's birthday and she was pleasantly surprised with a birthday dinner.

Miss Betty Stallings, bride-elect of James Cartwright, was honored Friday night with a miscellaneous floating shower at the Belvidere Community Building. The shower was given by friends and relatives of the couple who will be married April 15. Mrs. Ray Cartwright registered the guests. Mrs. Jimmie Turner cut and served the cake, and Mrs. Jack Cartwright served the punch to the guests. Miss Stallings received a number of beautiful gifts.

her daughter, Mrs. Garland Walker of Virginia Beach, have returned home after visiting relatives in Bluefield, W.Va. They attended a wedding anniversary of Mrs. Lane's sister and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Milton Woolwine in Princeton, W.Va. They were in part of the section of those destructive rains and flooding rivers but happily they were uninjured.

Mrs. Charles E. Layden has been confined to her home for the past several days with illness.

(See Highlights, page 8)

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