

Gets sense of achievement from making ceramics

BY DOREEN HOOVER

Teaching ceramic classes is giving Cheryl McLellan of Burgessville the opportunity to sense personal accomplishment as well as allow her students that same opportunity.

Mrs. McLellan has been teaching ceramics for the last two years, but her interest in ceramics started 10 years ago.

A friend in Burford talked her into attending a ceramic class and she soon began taking lessons in Brantford.

Mrs. McLellan found she was making so many ceramic pieces that she decided to get her own kiln. The next step was to offer classes in her home.

She now has from 25-30 persons from Norwich, Burford, Ingersoll, Brantford and Burgessville taking part in her four weekly classes.

Mrs. McLellan took a Teacher Training Program to improve her skills in ceramics. During the program, which consisted of five weekends of classes, she produced eight ceramic pieces each weekend. The classes taught her how the various paints and finishes that can be used in ceramics will react under different conditions.

The classes have allowed Mrs. McLellan to be of more aid to her students and also improve her own work.

The first step in ceramics is to chose the greenware and then do the fettling which is the cleaning of the mold. Mold lines must be removed before any further work can be done.

"A lot of people dislike the cleaning," Mrs. McLellan said. "It is the dirtiest part." She enjoys all the steps of creating a ceramic figure, but dislikes cleaning for long periods of time.

She had found that a quality that is needed to excel and enjoy ceramics is patience. "You have to have the ability to sit and take your time," she said. "You have to take your time or the piece will turn out crumbly." A good sense of color also is an aid so that colors can be matched to create the best effect.

It can take from two weeks to months to finish a ceramic figure depending on the detail in the mold and how fast the individual works.

Mrs. McLellan most enjoys making scenic plates because there is more



Love of ceramics

Cheryl McLellan of Burgessville works on a ceramic scenic plate during one of the ceramic classes she teaches four times a week. Her hobby of ceramics developed into the (NG Photo)

flexibility with the paints that can be used. Of all her work her two favorite finished products are two large German shepherds and a German stein.

She has no idea how many pieces she has created in the last 10 years because most of them were destroyed in the 1979 tornado. The only pieces that survived the tornado were a frog and a mushroom.

One good thing that came about from the tornado was Mrs. McLellan's decision to teach ceramics. There would not have been enough room in her old house to be able to offer ceramic classes.

Although the hobby of ceramics can be expensive, if the finished products are used as gifts, it is not that expensive. Using the ceramics as gifts also gives the artist a sense of accomplishment.

Mrs. McLellan often gives her ceramics as birthday and Christmas presents. She also does orders for weddings and christenings.

She enjoys ceramics because of the

feeling she gets from "creating something nice and useful," Mrs. McLellan said. "It is fun to see how things turn out." There is a feeling of satisfaction to know that she created the pieces.

The best part besides Mrs. McLellan's feeling of personal accomplishment is when she sees how happy her students are when they see the results of their hours of work.

One of her students, Pearl Cowan, RR 2, Burgessville, enjoys the class and making ceramics because it makes her feel proud. "I see what I can accomplish," Mrs. Cowan said. "I feel great when I give them as gifts."

The first thing most of her students do on their arrival at the classes is to quickly search out their piece of ceramic to see how it turned out after being fired in the kiln.

After the initial joy of seeing their completed work, they once again start work on their next creation.