

"small talk"

official newsletter of Club Olszewski, Inc.
P. O. Box 29067 Parma, OH 44129-0067

ISSUE 32

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"Wallie has asked me to write a line or two. They say the first line is the hardest and they lied - it's what follows. Sitting here in the nursing home beside my dad, Walter, I realize nothing matters except love, family and friends. You fans are very loving and I consider you 'family'. The cards, notes, words of comfort and prayers have really touched my dad and I, THANK YOU! Walter has had three strokes, is a very sick person but presently is holding his own.

Now I bet deep in your hearts you knew this would be coming - Club Olszewski, Inc. is phasing out. Wallie and I have felt for some time the information from the studio would eliminate the need for a fan club newsletter. So dear friends, please know you are truly special to me and may your lives be full of love, family and friends."

- Jacci -

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"THIS IS THE FINAL ISSUE OF 'small talk'.

"Unlike Jacci, the first line was hardest for me. Saying 'Good Bye' to you is difficult. Over the years we have made lots of new friends at shows and conventions and George and I are very grateful for that. You are a wonderful group of people and we hope our paths will continue to cross."

- Wallie -

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This completes the EIGHTH YEAR of Club Olszewski, Inc. The fan club was formed because collectors weren't getting any information from Goebel. We've taken pride in bringing you on time, informative and hopefully enjoyable newsletters. We've tried our best to give you interesting pictures of Bob, beautiful patches, puzzles, copies of articles, stickers and many other things to make this a FUN club. We had two displays of Bob's miniatures in our local library and had a "Display Bob's Stuff" photo contest. You really showed off your talents and collections. We sent you humorous calendars of Bob and included comment pages and questionnaires requested by our honorary.

We can't end this club without giving all of you credit for helping Bob get to where he is today. As a group, you supported him through his rough times at Goebel, gave him clout, strength and support to go on his own. You were there with best wishes, prayers and flowers sent on your behalf

when he was ill. When Bob and Eva got married you sent cards and, as members of his fan club, sent them a gift certificate for a night's stay in their favorite little town, Cambria, CA. Each year on May 2, you bombarded Bob with birthday wishes, especially on this 50th. You drove or flew hundreds of miles to his museum shows and appearances. You purchased progressive sticks and artists proofs to fund his retirement and gave him financial and moral support in your purchases of his work over the years and the list goes on and on..... So, pat yourself on the back. Bob would not be where he is today without YOU!

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Our annual dues started at \$12.50. Even though postage has gone up over the years, dues were only raised once to \$15.00 when you voted for expanded newsletters doubling the postage.

Since we are on a quarterly renewal basis we can't end the club all at once without owing refunds to some of you. The first three or four numbers before the dash written on your envelope tells you the month & year when you became a member. You April joiners (4--), this issue fulfills our obligation to you. The paid up July members (7--) will get a 25% refund, the paid up October members (10--) will get a 50% refund and the paid up January members (1--) will receive a 75% refund. Those of you who have a spouse or associate member will also be refunded their dues. The checks are in this mailing.

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We thank you for the many wonderful cards, letters, extra money for a margarita, recipes and other surprises you sent us over the years. You took the chore out of the quarterly newsletter and made it fun for us. We value your friendships. The post office box will remain open until July 31, 1998. Feel free to write us 'til then. And now...for the last time...

miniaturely yours,

Jacci, President Wallie, Vice-President
CLUB OLSZEWSKI, INC.

PS: The following "Fan Club--Letter" was written by Bob before the decision was made to dissolve the club and is followed by "Closing Thoughts" from him.

Fan Club Letter - 12/8/97

"Greetings! This morning finds me in my favorite chair enjoying our second heavy El Nino storm of the season. The rain and a fresh cup of coffee make the perfect atmosphere to set down some thoughts.

Before the day of the phone call, I always like to reread the last newsletter to refresh my memory on what I previously said. I have found that it is best to focus my comments on the past and present, and try and keep out of the future as much as possible. I have also found that everything is subject to change until we actually drop the mailing to our collector lists -- the latest "Renaissance" mailing is a good example. By now you will have received the official studio mailing on the Renaissance program. I'm sure you were surprised by the low numbers that were published on the availability list. We are too.

In fact, we are still finishing the dealer orders on Dashing, Summer, Winter, To Be/Not To Be and The Hunt and are working to have them shipped before Xmas. Prior to the mailing, a small number of Dashings plus TB/NTB were shipped to dealers. These were not signed. However, the balance of the current releases in production from June of 1997 to June of 1998 will be signed first edition and, judging by the availability list, the numbers will be low.

Collectors should know that each dealer listed will receive 1 set of TB/NTB, 1 bracelet, and 2 of each box. If you call and they have not received them yet, they will by Xmas. Except for a few extras, reorders will be filled next year. Consequently, collectors wanting first editions should call one of the dealers on the list and, if they are sold out, then order to receive pieces out of next year's FE production.

In the last newsletter I described our efforts to take on a sales force and expand our business. At a dinner with collectors in Philadelphia, I was asked about this, as it seemed contrary to maintaining a small manageable art studio. Yes, we are expanding. I have found that it is not possible to maintain a constant level of business. The business axiom of, if you're not moving forward you're moving backwards, is true. In these four years I have watched our base of accounts close, change directions, retire due to illness, or change hands. In order to overcome this, I could see we needed to offer a broader range of design to make it worthwhile for new dealers to carry our work.

Consequently, I am grateful for the time I've had to gather my thoughts, rest, regroup and plan how we can go forward in an acceptable artistic fashion. Thus we have set a sales force in place and will be moving forward. The benefit of this means I plan to increase my personal appearances in the future and look forward to seeing more of you outside of the major shows of Rosemont, Long Beach and Edison.

This fall I did two collectible shows and enjoyed meeting longtime collectors for the first time. I met two people that have collected my work since the early 80's that just never connected with me at a show.

Also, at the shows collectors did mention we are hard to reach, so another benefit of the shows has been a change in our location of customer service. For four years, customer service has been at Travis' home office. Because we are taking on more projects, Travis is at his office less and is with me at the studio. Consequently, no one is there to answer the phone. So, in order to improve our service, I decided to move our computers, phones, Travis and myself into one location. This should result in someone answering the phone most of the time. -- So don't be surprised if Travis is out running errands that I'll pick up. -- I can't spend a lot of time on the phone as I'm usually working on a design, model or color problem, but I have found my customer service experience has been very positive. The current feedback on the Renaissance and Dollhouse Dreams has been very rewarding and I'm happy to get the collector response firsthand.

"In the Studio"

Usually I don't like to discuss what I am carving, because many times I work on an idea and will set it aside to give me time to problem solve and come back fresh. However, since I'm at the end of this model, unless we have a casting problem, you will see a songbird in next year's collection. This new songbird has been designed to compliment the Mockingbird. For the miniaturists this means they could be placed on a mantel, left side and right side, and make an attractive pair.

"At Home"

In the upcoming Christmas season I look forward to seeing Meredith and David when they come home for the holidays. I've told Meredith about Dollhouse Dreams, but will give one of each of my 1997 pieces to Meredith and David on Christmas morning.

"Odds and Ends"

- 1) The pins in the surprise boxes are set with Swarovski crystals.
- 2) In 1998, collectors will be introduced to a new concept in the painted works that will take the place of the landscape program. This is a concept I've had in mind for many years that has finally taken shape.
- 3) Our fertile studio announces two more Olszewski Studio babies are due in 1998. This makes 6 since we started. Wow!
- 4) Miniatures are great stocking stuffers!

In closing, we here at the studio send our very best to everyone in the club, and look forward to seeing you on the road in '98."

"CLOSING THOUGHTS TO MANY WONDERFUL PEOPLE"

In September of 1985, I was approached by two very enthusiastic collectors with the idea of starting a fan club. I argued to discourage them from moving forward. I couldn't see long term how a group could focus on someone that spends his days alone, quietly shaping wax or mixing colors to paint the next work. For me there is great drama and excitement at this level, but I find this very personal quest difficult to make continually interesting and exciting news.

Well, as you know, the two enthusiastic collectors are Jacci and Wallie, and they have done an excellent job transforming everyday occurrences into a publication that has been fun and informative. The club has seen me through some trying times and I will never forget the warmth and support that has been extended to me.

As always, I will continue to pursue the art in my quiet hours and will look forward to sharing my artistic travels with all of you at shows in the future.

I would hope that even though the club will end, that the feeling of the club will continue, and I would be most happy to see past members wearing our great red badge.

Sincerely and with love,

ROBERT OLSZEWSKI

Robert Olszewski

1/11/98