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## **Celebration of Seagrove Potters Exceeds All Expectations**

Seagrove, NC.....After only five and half months of planning and execution, the Celebration of Seagrove potters went off without a hitch, exceeding attendance estimates and putting big smiles on the faces of the participating artists. Over 400 attended the opening night Gala and over 5000 attended the potters market Saturday and Sunday. The Steering Committee kicked into gear in early June, drawing in community support from potters, clay workers and community members, to create a very successful event.

Opening on Friday night with the Gala Preview Party, attendance in the historic Luck's Cannery exceeded 400 people. Dr. David Jones, Director of the NC Zoo and, his wife, Janet were in attendance. Dr. Jones stated, "I think the thing that really impressed me, apart from the numbers attending and the huge effort that had obviously gone into organizing it, was to see all those potters in one place. The sheer kaleidoscope of colors, shapes, sizes and designs was just mind blowing. I'm used to seeing the work of one or two artists together in a single setting but to see fifty potters (and a (pottery) jeweler) under one roof was extraordinary." And he was not alone in those comments!

Booths were open for sales, the jazz band entertained, White Rabbit catering provided a delectable buffet and guests enjoyed sodas, wine and beer. Coordinated by volunteer Nan Revel of Asheboro, the event was festive and enjoyable. At 8:00 PM the collaborative auction began with the Jugtown collaborative piece bringing in the top amount at over \$1000. Several other pieces, such as the Ben Owen/Michael Mahan piece signed by participating artists and a teapot by Pam Owens and Jennie Lorette Keatts also brought very high amounts. Bidding was competitive and friendly, sales at the booths were good. Paul Ray of Ray Pottery stated "Sheila and I have been doing around 20 shows per year for the last 7 years. Many of them have a gala or preview night. The Celebration Of Seagrove Potters gala was, by far, the classiest we've seen. The food, band, and especially the pots were all superior! The gala was a good indicator of the rest of the weekend, great! It gave us a great sense of pride in our community to see how we were able to come together and work for a common cause." A sentiment held by many!

Saturday morning started with a line at the door and it just kept going. Over 3600 people visited the Celebration on Saturday alone, making the exhibiting artists quite happy. Throughout the day potters demonstrated, the Kids Area was open for learning and working with clay, as well as Kids Priced pots in the Kids Only booth, which raised \$1000 over the weekend and will be donated to the Westmoore and Seagrove Elementary schools. Dr. Terry Zug and Pam Owens of Jugtown gave talks related to the history of Seagrove. And sales were strong through out the show. Sid Luck, an exhibitor, demonstrator and educational talk leader, stated, "I am overjoyed with the success of the Celebration Of Seagrove Potters. It exceeded my expectation." This thought was echoed throughout the show by exhibitors and customers alike. Sid's specially designed beanpot with the Luck's pinto bean logo, inscribed on the bottom a tribute to Ivey B. Luck, Alfred Spencer and H. Clay Presnell, founders of the historic Luck's cannery, brought \$2100 at the Saturday auction! Sunday continued in the same line, with education, demonstrations and sales.

Bonnie Burns of Great White Oak Gallery headed up the volunteer committee. "The event could not have gone on without them. It was heartwarming to see how many people volunteered their time and efforts to ensure that the Celebration was seamless." Seagrove is a close knit and caring community, as evidenced by the volunteers and artists alike. In the midst of such success, unfortunately one of the family of Seagrove artists suffered a tragedy. Saturday night, Chris and Lisa Luther lost their shop and studio to fire. Fortunately, another potter passing by saw the fire and notified authorities before the fire could spread to their home. The potters and artists pulled together to support one of their own, from covering their booth, to donating pots and items to the Seagrove Potters Relief Fund booth, to giving hugs and support when needed.

This festival was about unity, sharing and working together for the benefit of each other. That is what the Seagrove community is really about, for the most part. A group of artist concerned about the welfare and continued well being of their fellow artists and potters, about maintaining the integrity and authenticity of their work, and this event was a catalyst to really develop it further and keep that going. If that were the only result, this would be a success, but given the overall numbers and comments from customers, exhibitors and volunteers, the Celebration of Seagrove Potters truly shone brightly and showcased the pottery shops of the area in a new light. We could not have asked for a better show!

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Sid Luck's Bean Pot brought \$2100 and the Jugtown collaborative piece brought \$1075

