

The Colors of Willow: Convention 2016

Submitted by Jeff Siptak

The International Willow Collectors held its 31st annual convention from July 7-10, in historic Springfield, Illinois, referred to as the crossroads where the Land of Lincoln and Route 66 meet. Co-chairs Carol Cordle and Marianne Johnson planned the exciting weekend at the State House Inn, which was convenient to many sites that attract thousands of visitors a year: the Lincoln Tomb, the Lincoln Presidential Museum, the State Capitol, the Frank Lloyd Wright designed Dana-Thomas House, the famous Cozy Dog Drive-In on Route 66, the Washington Botanical Gardens, many historical walking tours and more.



Around 25 early arriving attendees took in the sites and enjoyed dinner together on Wednesday night. And by Thursday attendees were greeted at the door with registration packets and a wonderful photo collage of members at past conventions made by Marianne Johnson. With packets in hand everyone was ready for the weekend's events.



Thursday evening featured a reception buffet and show and tell, where members brought their most unusual or favorite willow, and shared the stories behind them. Attendees introduced themselves and where they came from. We even channeled a bit of ol' Abe himself as one person donned a stovepipe hat.



Friday morning started with a presentation by Jeff Siptak titled "At Your Service: The Willow Pattern in Restaurants, Hotels, Railcars & More," which featured different types of willow restaurant ware and the places they have been used. This was followed by the flea market which provided everyone with some great "\$30 and under" willow bargains. (cont'd)





Connie Rogers also gave a presentation, "The Colors of Willow," which showcased many different examples of beautiful and colorful willow, other than the more traditional blue and white, and the companies that made them.

The auction was held Friday night with Don LaFont as auctioneer. He, too, did his best Abe Lincoln with a stovepipe hat. More than 300 lots were sold, with the highest bid of the evening going to a 22-inch Victorian lobster serving platter. (cont'd)





Saturday's events included the business meeting with discussion on old business and new, as well as an invitation to join Jean Hull and Judy Prophet in Atlanta in 2017, an arts and crafts competition, and the place setting competition. Members voted on their favorites and cash awards were given to the top three winners in each event.



Andrea Boudreaux, the owner of Antique Restoration Studio in Southaven, MS, gave an interesting presentation on restoring broken pottery, and had a good handful of business by the time she left. Antique Restoration Studio is an international business that specializes in porcelain, pottery, glass and crystal restoration and repair.
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She has trained with other professional restorers, completed advanced restoration training course and is a member of China Restorers and Antique Restorers groups and a certified Lladro restorer.

And what would any convention be without IWC's grand willow sale? On Saturday afternoon attendees shopped more than one dozen tables filled with every size, shape and color of willow.

The same evening, attendees gathered for the banquet dinner. Marianne Johnson was recognized with a certificate for her service as president, and both Carol and Marianne thanked everyone for attending this year's convention.

On Sunday morning an optional church service was conducted and led by Tom and Daisy Eden. A special exchange of vows was had by Marianne Johnson and Ricky Barrett.

A big thanks to our co-chairs and all the volunteers who made this great convention weekend possible. See you next year!

