“It is well to remember that there are five reasons for drinking: the arrival of a friend, one’s present or future thirst, the excellence of the beverage and any other reason.”
— Latin proverb

A cup is likely the most common object a ceramic artist creates — and probably the most frequently used. It feels good in the hand. And when we put it to our lips, the sensory experience is immediate and pleasant.

I really enjoy cups. I love looking at them. Handling them. Using them.

I have hundreds in my house. And I certainly have my favorites. The reasons are as numerous as glazing recipes. For instance:

■ How much does it hold?
■ How does it look?
■ Is it easy to clean and store?
■ Can I drink a hot beverage without burning my hand?
■ How does it make me feel?

It amazes and amuses me that something as innocuous as drinking a cup of coffee in the morning might take me an extra 30 seconds, maybe even a minute, just to choose the right vessel. I like to think that the cup I select helps me celebrate the art of everyday living.

On the flip side, I own some cups that look as if they function well, but, in all honesty, aren’t entirely practical. I like those cups, too. They remind me of the ‘62 Chevy pickup in our driveway. It looks fantastic, but it won’t start. No big deal. The function of the truck may be limited, but it’s a beauty to behold!

For this show, I based my selections on more than 50 years of experience working in the ceramic arts, most of them as an educator and a potter. Still, selecting cups from JPEG images on a computer monitor is not ideal. I wish I could have handled, examined and, yes, experienced each of the submitted entries. But it’s almost impossible to jury shows that way anymore.

As much as I enjoy making selections for a cup show, I don’t relish the elimination process. I know firsthand what it’s like not to be accepted. My advice to those who did not make the cut this time: Use my decision as motivation to become better, to make your art more esthetically persuasive! I’m happy to answer your questions (my email address is oprcng@sbcglobal.net).

Congratulations to those who were successful in getting into this cup show, and to all of you who entered, thanks for bringing me so much joy!