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The National Early American Glass Club

Newsletter

It has been very heartening to receive several fine letters from members around the country during the past few months. Thank you. Now, before the Post Office ups the rates, send me your news and views to: John Gotjen, 7 Lyndon Street, Warren, R.I. 02885.

Frances Armentrout wrote to say that the AMELUNG CHAPTER is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. It is the oldest Chapter in the area around Washington, DC, and quite wonderfully, Dorothy Camp, the current president, was the first president of the Chapter and one of its founders. Congratulations to all.

Another anniversary is the 75th of the Fenton Art Glass Company.

By now, I believe all the Regional Group Presidents have received a letter from NEAGC President Ruth Davis asking for ideas, aims, and even complaints. Ruth tells me she has gotten back some very nice replies, for which she sends thanks, and hopes for more input. The more the National President knows about the needs and direction of the whole membership, the better the Club can serve all of you.

There is a large number of past NEAGC Bulletins still in print. Send a list of what you need to the Corresponding Secretary, Mrs James A. Collins, 195 Follen Road, Lexington, Massachusetts 02173. She is also keeper of the Club's slide lectures.

Blanche Robinson and her committee have decided upon a design, and handsome it is, for the NEAGC's 50th Anniversary Cup Plate. More and better information on this project will be forthcoming before too long.

Erratum: In Newsletter #2 I mentioned that figured flask GX-31 was to be found in the catalogue Danish Glass 1814-1914. That's true. However, the catalogue is published by the Victoria and Albert Museum, not the British Museum as I stated.

NEW GLASS, an international show, opened recently at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City. It is part of a larger exhibit organized by the Corning Museum last year. This show comprises more than 75 pieces; but in the Met's 20th-century gallery, they have brought out 55 pieces from the museum's collection, so it's a double show. The Met is at Fifth Avenue and 82nd Street. Not far away, at 965 Madison Avenue at 75th Street, the Heller Gallery has mounted an exhibit of modern glass made in the past two years by many of the stars of the Met's show. Even better, you can buy what's at the Heller! The Met's show is open until January 13; the Heller Gallery's exhibit until December 20th. With Christmas at our throats again, do yourself a kindness and take in these two superb shows. --- And an added bonus, Paul Hollister reminds me, is that in the new American Wing at the Met you will be able to see the goblet-vase pictured on pages 11 and 12 of Bulletin 126.

The December 1980 number of Architectural Digest includes an article entitled "The Importance of Dilettantes" by Russell Lynes who writes an interesting and sympathetic appreciation of James Jackson Jarves, the son of Deming Jarves.

For any of you who have been waiting, as have I, for the Encyclopedia of Glass edited by Phoebe Phillips, wait no longer. My bookseller informs me that "publication has been abandoned." That sounds more than somewhat final.

I have it on the best of authority that the new catalogue A Century of Glassmaking in West Virginia is well worth having. It covers eleven glass houses and is illustrated with 62 black and white plus 18 color photographs. The price is \$7.50 (postage and handling extra) and can be had from the Hunting Galleries, Park Hills, Huntington, West Virginia 25701.

Ken Lyon writes to say that Montgomery County Antique Glass Show and Sale came off very nicely. This is one of the premier glass shows in the country each year and ought not to be missed. No doubt Ken is already at work to make the 1981 show better still. --- While I'm on the subject of things recently past, the day-long seminar held by the Boston club at the Winchester Country Club last month was enjoyed by all from whom I've heard. Kenneth M. Wilson, a past NEAGC President, came from the Henry Ford Museum to give a two-part talk (punctuated by lunch) on the best from the art glass era.

A word or two about Sotheby's sale of the Wetzel estate is in order. The glass, or most of it, was sold on October 3rd and I betook myself thither mighty early in the morning, the venue being Reading, Pennsylvania. A party atmosphere pervaded the place. Festive tents (Sotheby's has the best tents in the business!) were everywhere to give shelter from the rains; the staff were very co-operative; the sale itself went off without any problems as far as I could tell; in short, the day seemed to be a success. However, from the viewpoint of a collector of American glass, there was a good deal lacking. The glass to be sold was crowded together on tables inside a dimly lighted tent. People were let in to examine glass, one party at a time, accompanied by a member of the staff; but once in, it was difficult to judge color especially. Sotheby's sold all the glass on an "as is" basis. Some damage was noted in the catalogue; but damage brought to the attention of the staff on the day of the sale was not announced. The catalogue itself was another big problem. There was much foreign glass and almost all of it was called "Stiegel-type" to the point that the term became meaningless. Well, meaningless in theory: there were people there paying atrociously high prices for nice enough Continental glass, circa 1830, billed as Stiegel-type. I don't believe there's a need for this kind of thing. Either the cataloguer is beef-witted or he is working under the cunning assumption that the mentality of glass collectors is one step removed from that of cauliflower. It is unfortunately true that people are psychologically influenced to believe what they see in print. And when they see a beautifully made-up catalogue from a famous auction house, the tendency is to believe even more firmly. So, fellow collectors, be critical and wary. --- Finally, some of the better glass was: lots 1601 and 1620, Stiegel pocket flasks went for \$2500 and \$2200; a N.Y. state lily-pad bowl, lot 1587, went for \$3400; and the superb Pittsburgh pitcher with engraved eagle, lot 1629, sold for \$3600. Alas, none of these came home with me.

Save April 2-4, 1981 for the National Seminar at the Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, Virginia.

In a review by J. H. van der Meer of Studia Instrumentorum Musicae Popularis VI in The Galpin Society Journal XXXIII (March 1980), there appears this interesting note: "...in Polish texts from the 14th to the 16th centuries...[is gleaned]...an enumeration of instruments used by the labourers in Polish glass works (musical glasses, a beaten crystallophone, a wide glass horn, a glass straight and a wound trumpet, a glass flute without and one with 5-7 fingerholes, a glass panpipe, and two instruments with glass membranes)..." --- These would certainly be rare items today.

For the 21st consecutive year the Anelung Chapter is placing a glass exhibit in the Silver Spring, Maryland, Library. The subject this time is Engraved Glass. The show will be on display for the month of April, 1981, and sounds well worth seeing.

Addendum to Newsletter #3

If you will permit me to go out on a limb, I will opine that any traveling Glass Club member would be welcome at the meeting of any other Regional club. We are in fact an open club. Thus, below is what I know about meeting days for a few of the various clubs. It might take a little effort actually to attend a meeting because I do not know most of the people involved nor where meetings take place. But some amount of time and a few telephone calls will, doubtless, result in unrolled red carpets and warm greetings. (When I receive more information, I'll publish it.)

First Mondays: Bethesda Chapter, day meetings, Oct-Jun.

First Thursdays: Tidewater Chapter, usually 1:30 p.m. at the Chrysler Museum, Sep-May, Nancy Merrill is President.

First Saturdays: New Bremen Chapter, meets at 10 a.m. at the Public Library, Frederick, Maryland, Sep-Jun.

Second Wednesdays: Amelung Chapter, day meetings, Sep-Jun.

Second Wednesdays: Boston Club, usually meets at 1:30 p.m. at the Park Street Church, Boston, Oct-Jun. However, this year Jan & Feb meetings are in private homes informally. The schedule otherwise is:

11 Mar: Arlene P. Schwind talking on Wistarburgh

08 Apr: Your Latest Acquisition, What & Why

13 May: Pittsburgh Glass, a Review

13 Jun: Stained Glass, A Walking Tour of Boston Churches, starting at Trinity Church at 10 a.m.

Second Thursdays: Bakewell Chapter, evening meetings, Sep-May.

Third Mondays: Dorflinger Chapter, evening meetings, Sep-Jun.

Third Tuesdays: Sandwich Chapter, evening meetings, Sep-May.

Third Tuesdays: Glass Collectors Club of Toledo, Ohio, usually meets at 7:30 p.m., excepting Dec, Sep-Jun. Some future meetings are:

20 Jan: Show, Tell, & Sell with William Heacock at Churchill's Cardinal Room, Sylvania, Ohio, 5:30 p.m.

17 Feb: Appraisals, Insurance & Security with three speakers at Ottawa Hills High School, Toledo

24 Mar: History of Glass Houses in Fostoria, Ohio 1887-1920, with Melvin Murray at UT Continuing Education Bldg., Toledo

21 Apr: Lalique Crystal with Kirby Shiffler, same place as Mar.

19 May: Joseph Locke, Glass Artist, with Kenneth M. Locke, same place as Feb.

Third Wednesdays: Mt Washington-Pairpoint Chapter, day meetings, Sep-May.

Third Thursdays: Greater Washington Chapter, meets at 7:30 p.m. at Christ Episcopal Church, Clinton, Maryland, Sep-May.

Fourth Tuesdays: Baltimore Chapter, meets at 7:30 p.m. at Lock Raven Library at Tayler Avenue, Towson, Maryland, Sep-Jul. William Thomas is President.

And otherwise I've heard from Grace Carolyn Dahlberg that the Greater Chicago Glass Club is very peripatetic. Last June, for instance, they hired a bus and made a 1500 mile journey through Ohio and West Virginia, stopping at glass museums and factories. It sounds like great fun. --- Arlene Jarvis, the Corresponding Secretary of the NEAGC Unit #4 in Seattle, Washington, wrote to say that her Club was founded in 1937, has a limited membership of 25, all of whom are "expected to present a paper and to entertain the club when called upon." They meet Sep-May and appear to have a fine time.

Finally, let me wish you all a very happy holiday season.