

Glass Shards

NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL EARLY AMERICAN GLASS CLUB

Founded 1933

A Non-Profit Organization

Spring 1991

Smithsonian Depreciates Glass

A controversy has arisen in literature and elsewhere concerning the status of the Smithsonian's glass since the permanent closure of the Glass Hall at the National Museum of American History. I would like to take this opportunity to bring our members up to date as to the present status of the glass and, perhaps, to voice an opinion on the subject.

There is once again an exhibit of American Glass at NMAH and it consists of some 150 pieces currently in Ceremonial Court. Installed in three recessed cases are the following: Case 1—Art Glass: Dorflinger, 1916-17 (3 pieces); Union Glass *Aventurine*, 1904-5 (6); Steuben, 1918-32 (5); misc. Tiffany, 1893-1924 (7) and *Favrille* (6); Douglas Nash, 1926-31 (5); Gillinder Cameo (2). Case 2—Cut and Engraved Glass: Libbey, including *Apotheosis of Transportation*, (4); Tuthill (1); Hawkes (10); misc. Pittsburgh (8); Mount Washington (5); Dithridge (1); New England Glass Co. (1); Enterprise (3); unidentified punch bowl and vase (1 ea.). Case 3. Amelung (8); misc. lily pad (4); South Boston (3); misc. mold blown (9); misc. pressed lacy (20); misc. lamps (10); misc. vases from the Duckworth Collection (7); *Comet* pressed glass (12); *Argus* pressed glass (8). There are also six pieces of Presidential Glass close by as well as other production wares, jars and bottles, etc., accompanying exhibits elsewhere in the museum.

Ceremonial Court is an elegant, but rather small and subtly lit room where the glass shares space with collections of jewelry, silver, pate-sur-pate and other furnishings. The amount of glass shown is very disappointing and, besides the limited space, poor lighting is a major contributor to its downfall as a showplace for glass. Many items are on dimly-lighted shelves, high above this visitor's head, while others are ankle height. Interior-case lighting is totally ineffective while a few ceiling spots concentrate their beams only on the center shelves. It would appear that the glass installation here was an afterthought.

Ceremonial Court was reportedly scheduled for completion around November 1990, a fact which received little or no publicity and, up until last month, was unheard of at the Visitor Information Desks where the official word was, "the Glass Hall is permanently closed and no other glass exhibit is to be seen in the museum." These conditions have since been brought to the attention of the museum's director who promised to look into the lighting and information problems.

The "new look" in the National Museum of American History is one in keeping with the character of its director. It is a dramatic move from traditional exhibition, one where, eventually, there will be no "collections" as such focusing on any one medium or industry. The trend is now toward what

some have termed "show biz" and "pop-culture" representation. However, there is little doubt of the success of this approach since the NMAH is the third most popular tourist attraction in the Smithsonian complex. Sadly though, the glass, ceramics and other collections will have been squeezed out by what some have challenged as having questionable permanent significance.

While the glass in Ceremonial Court is not worth a special trip to Washington, it may delight the casual visitor, since the few pieces contained therein are outstanding. It's unfortunate, however, that a suitable place cannot be found for the thousands of other outstanding pieces in our National Glass Collection now in storage; a place where one can gain an appreciation of American glass in a context with that of other lands and other ages, and in context with the related field of ceramics. This cannot happen in the theme park which the National Museum of American History has become; I'm afraid it's time to look for another place to house the collections of glass and ceramics as well as the other crafts and fine arts which previous keepers of the Smithsonian have so painstakingly assembled over the years.

Francis N. Allen, President
National Early American
Glass Club

Chapter News

(Editor's Note: If your chapter is planning a special event which takes place in the spring months, I should have a write-up about it sometime in the fall, before the first issue of GLASS SHARDS. (November 1 deadline.) Fall events should be sent to me before the March 1 deadline for the spring issue. In this way, most events will be published.)

In March THE DORFLINGER GLASS STUDY GROUP of Silver Spring, Mary-

land was privileged to hear Past President of NEAGC, Miriam Mucha, speak on the subject, "From Blank to Beautiful." DORFLINGER members are hard at work on their Montgomery County Antique Glass Show & Sale November 2 and 3. Glass from the ancient to the contemporary will be for sale, with plenty of Victorian, early American, 20th century, and European glass also for sale. Mark your calendar, fill a bus, and join us! (We're just 9 miles from the White House!)

In Boston, THE FOUNDERS CHAPTER of NEAGC recently held their annual

glass sale and for the first time ever, opened the two-hour show to the public. Videos on glass and glass collecting were shown in the hall during the show, thus imparting a nice educational touch to the event. Dan Dailey, contemporary glass artisan, will lecture to the FOUNDERS CHAPTER on May 8th. A tour of the glass working facilities at the Massachusetts College of Art, Boston, and a preview of the Senior Class Exhibition will conclude the day. In the morning Study Group, the video, "Dale Chihuly: Glass Master" produced by Ringe/Rydman, will

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CHAPTER NEWS, *continued*

feature Chihuly and his team at work in the studio of Harvey Littleton.

At a recent meeting of the COLUMBIA GLASS CLUB in Maryland the chapter had a group discussion on Contemporary Studio Art Glass. Members brought in pieces from their collections and by consensus answered such questions as: what is considered contemporary, what is studio glass, when is this glass collectible art and is this glass a good investment?

The PITTSBURGH CHAPTER, NEAGC continues to attract excellent lecturers for their meetings. In May, Kenneth Wilson, one of America's foremost glass scholars and author of *New England Glass*, will speak on Thomas Cains of South Boston, an early American glassmaker noted for his chain-decorated glassware.

OUR UNIQUE TREASURE

Our treasure is 100 years old, articulate, knowledgeable, and humorous; she is Rose Ernst, born on September 8, 1890. Rose has a variety of impressive collections, but her favorite remains "Three Face Glass." Over

the years, Rose has given many interesting talks to our chapter, and just three years ago on St. Patrick's Day, she entertained our glass group in her home. She usually travels with us when we go to glass shows. Rose has been a member of the St. Paul Chapter for 44 years! Last year, she missed only one meeting at which time she was traveling in China. Lois Grossmann, Corresponding Secretary, St. Paul Chapter, NEAGC, Mendota Heights, Minnesota.

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Tell *Glass Shards* about your special member. Each will be spotlighted here, as received, and as space allows. It is important that chapter members understand that club happenings are *never* published in *The Glass Club Bulletin*. Come fall, when most clubs reconvene on a regular basis, please send news of your club activities and/or a program of chapter events for the coming year. *Glass Shards* deadlines are November 1 and March 1, but material may be sent anytime PRIOR to those dates. HAVE A WONDERFUL SUMMER and remember to support your favorite glass museum!

—Sylvia

America's Largest Glass Symposium and Exposition June 7-9

MILLVILLE, NJ — The largest exhibition and sale of contemporary glass in the United States, panel discussions by glass professionals, and demonstrations by internationally renowned artist Dale Chihuly will be the featured events at the Creative Glass Center of America's "Glass Weekend: A Symposium and Exposition on Contemporary Glass" to be held June 7-9, 1991, at Wheaton Village.

The fourth biennial national conference has been expanded this year to serve not only connoisseurs and collectors, but also the general public. The weekend will offer lectures and panel discussions by museum curators and directors, artists, and collectors. Participants will have the opportunity to discover exciting new directions being taken by contemporary glass artists.

Eighteen art galleries from the U.S. and Canada representing over 150 artists will offer for sale the most comprehensive selection of international glass ever available at a single location in the United States. The sale will be open to the public.

Throughout the weekend, demonstrations of glass blowing and other glassmaking techniques will be presented in the Wheaton Village glass factory by world renowned artist Dale Chihuly.

Chihuly sculptures, which will be included in the Exposition, can be seen in nearly 100 museums around the world ranging from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London to the Hokkaido Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo. Chihuly will work with his team, including Lino Tagliapietra of Murano, Italy, to demonstrate the creation of his well-known glass sculptures.

Conference participants will also have an opportunity for hands-on glassmaking in the factory on Friday, June 7, before the conference opens. Throughout the weekend, regular tours of the Museum of American Glass will be conducted. An expert in glass restoration will be available for on-site repairs.

Lecture and panel discussion topics will range from "The Addiction of Collecting," to "Multiples and Duplication in Art." In addition, a panel of prominent museum directors and curators will describe how they would spend an imaginary \$200,000 to develop their ideal public collection of glass art and a panel of artists will discuss new developments in their work.

Galleries participating in the event include Heller Gallery and Leo Kaplan Modern of New York, NY; Habitat Galleries of Detroit, MI and Boca Raton, FL; Maurine Littleton Gallery of Washington, DC; Snyderman Gallery of Philadelphia, PA; The Glass Gallery of Bethesda, MD; Compositions

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Contemporary Glass Gifts To Toledo Museum

To further The Toledo Museum of Art's renewed commitment to contemporary glass, The Apollo Society, a collection support group of the Museum, has given nine major works by Dale Chihuly and Howard Ben Tré, two of the leading figures of the international Studio Glass movement. This gift includes seven blown glass works by Chihuly dating from 1977 to the present and a commission for two cast glass benches by Ben Tré.

These works by Chihuly, which are also a partial gift of the artist, make the Museum one of the major repositories of his work. Dale Chihuly is widely considered the leader of the blown form within the Studio Glass movement. The first American to bring the Venetian concept of teamwork in contemporary glassblowing to this country, Chihuly revolutionized Studio Glass methods here. Over the past 20 years this Tacoma, Washington-based artist has used glass as a material to respond to contemporary art movements, creating forms that transcend traditional glass limits.

Chihuly's glass documents each of the artist's major periods: *Baskets*, *Seaforms*, *Cylinders*, *Macchia*, *Persians* and *Venetians*. They show his ongoing concerns with incorporating line and drawing within the blown form and creating multiple-part installations.

The Apollo Society commissioned Howard Ben Tré to create the benches because he is considered the preeminent sculptor of monumental cast glass forms. By

combining the equipment and processes of both studio and factory techniques, he has created a body of cast glass forms that have no parallel in the history of glass or sculpture. The two commissioned benches can be used individually or joined to form a large, circular seat. Alone or together, they evoke the allure of ancient architectural monuments and generate a sense of ritual and mystery.

The Apollo Society was formed in 1986 to assist the Museum in selecting and acquiring important works of art for the collection. Annually, members of The Apollo Society donate \$5,000, select the area to be pursued, learn about specific works of art that are available, and vote on the purchase of one or more works of art with their collective monies. Membership is open to all. For information on The Apollo Society, contact Dennis Stefanacci, director of development and public information, at (419) 255-8000.

The Toledo Museum of Art also recently announced the gift of 64 works of art from the Studio Crafts collection of Dorothy and George Saxe of Menlo Park, California. Included in the gift are 59 objects of Studio Glass by such noted international Studio Glass artists as Howard Ben Tré, Dale Chihuly, Dan Dailey, Stanislav Libenský and Jaroslava Brychtová, Richard Marquis, Klaus Moje, Joel Philip Myers, Mark Peiser, Steven Weinberg, and Ann Wolff. In announcing this major gift, Dr. Steadman said, "This is a highly significant step toward the Museum building one of the major public Studio Glass collections in this country."

Glass Calendar

(Confirmation of dates and schedules advised)

April - June 23

Glass Exhibit: "From the Cutter's Wheel: American Brilliant Cut Glass, 1880-1915," at M.H. deYoung Museum, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, California. Major exhibit of 55 pieces of brilliant cut glass that illustrates the excellence and diversity of American glass cut in this period. (Catalog available.)

April - October 27

Exhibition: "Colorful Cutting"—Brilliant and post-Brilliant examples of American cut glass. Museum of American Glass at Wheaton Village, Millville, NJ. Info: Tel. (609) 825-6800.

April 16 - October 18

Glass Exhibit: Blaschka Glass Flowers and Sea Animals — Corning Museum of Glass.

April 27 & 28

Glass Show & Sale: Westchester Glass Show & Sale, sponsored by Westchester Glass Club, a chapter of NEAGC. NOTE NEW LOCATION: Greenwich Civic Center, Old Hardin Rd., Old Greenwich, CT. For info. (203) 531-7004.

May 1-4

Glass Seminar: Seventh National Glass Seminar sponsored by The National Early American Glass Club — Oglebay Park, Wheeling, West Virginia.

June 7 & 8

Show & Sale: "A Marriage of Glass," West Springfield, Massachusetts at Better Living Center on the Eastern States Fairgrounds. Info: 27 Plank Lane, Glastonbury, CT

06033; (no phone number or name given in publicity.) This show will feature antique bottles and glass. Admission \$4.00, \$3.00 with ad.

June 7-9

Symposium and Exposition of Contemporary Glass—"Glass Weekend," Wheaton Village, Millville, NJ. Contemporary glass exhibits, lectures, and glassmaking demonstrations by Dale Chihuly. Admission fee. Call (609) 825-6800, ext. 2733 for information.

June 21, 22, 23

Antique Show: Pittsburgh — Chatham College; sponsored by Pittsburgh Chapter, NEAGC. Info: (412) 828-2224. (Antiques of all types.)

August 17 & 18

Glass Show & Sale: Sponsored by the Sandwich Glass Museum and Historical Society. Oak Ridge Elementary School, 260 Quaker Meetinghouse Rd., E. Sandwich (Cape Cod), MA. Sat. 10-5, Sun. 11-4.

October 16-19

Glass Seminar: 31st Annual Corning Museum of Glass Seminar; (607) 937-5371 for seminar brochure.

November 2 & 3

Glass Show & Sale: Montgomery County Antique Glass Show & Sale, Armory Place, Corner Wayne Avenue & Fenton St., Silver Spring, MD — Dorflinger Glass Study Group, chapter of NEAGC, sponsors. Tel. (301) 933-2339 or (301) 589-1806.

Reflections

NEAGC, Circa 1933

(Editor's Note: The following excerpt was written by Boston newspaperman, William Germain Dooley, following a conclave of NEAGC members at the Hotel Mayflower, Manomet, Massachusetts. The gathering featured a glass exhibition of members' glass.)

"... No one could reasonably complain in viewing the great amount of glass set out by upwards of 100 exhibitors, that the spectacle was not worth the visit of every glass student. It will be expected not without a good deal of confidence, that the awkward conditions which vitiate the value of this showing will not prevail when the club advances on a firm financial basis to the next and a finer exhibition. It will take into consideration adequate and roomy showing of their glass in uniform cases, with the patterns grouped and duplications barred, except for legitimate variations of type. It will, no doubt, spend more time in preparation and care in labeling each piece in an informative way, and in placing the glass in a semblance of chronological sequence. In this exhibition, dealers who were members, were allowed to exhibit, but no selling was to take place. This rule the club's officers enforced with as much vigilance as possible, but it might be prudent for sharp excluding line to be drawn between collector and dealer, so that even the suspicion of commercialism might be removed from this strictly non-professional organization. True, there are some dealers who are also collectors, and many collectors who are not above selling, but the greater wisdom would demand that some strict standards be laid down, if the glass club is to keep its proper niche."

GLASS SYMPOSIUM, cont.

Gallery of San Francisco, CA; and Riley Hawk Galleries of Cleveland and Columbus, OH.

Also participating will be: The Glass Art Gallery of Toronto, Ontario; Judy Youens Gallery of Houston, TX; Miller Gallery of Montclair, NJ; The Stein Gallery Contemporary Glass of Portland, ME; Grohe Glass Gallery of Boston, MA; Marx Gallery of Chicago, IL; L. H. Selman, Ltd. of Santa Cruz, CA; and West End Gallery and the Book Exchange of Corning, NY. There will also be an exhibition of past CGCA Fellowship artists.

The Creative Glass Center of America (CGCA) is a non-profit resource center dedicated to promoting interaction among contemporary glass artists, educators, students, and collectors. CGCA is internationally recognized for its primary program of providing fellowships to emerging and master artists working in glass. Funds generated by the Glass Weekend will be used to support the fellowship program.

Niggling Nellie



Sylvia A. Lyon



The man I bought it from said it's an extremely rare end-of-day piece, because it was made right after lunch!

Nature's Wonders In Glass Exhibit At Corning

Exquisite glass models of sea creatures, plants, and flowers will be featured in the 1991 special exhibition at The Corning Museum of Glass.

"Nature's Wonders in Glass: The Art of the Blaschkas" will bring together for the first time more than 100 works by Leopold and Rudolf Blaschka, a father-and-son team of lampworkers from Bohemia.

The exhibition, which will be shown only in Corning, will be on view through October 20.

Between 1863 and 1936, the Blaschkas supplied museums and colleges around the world with glass replicas that were so accurate and lifelike that they were used for teaching natural history to generations of students. Today, these models are acclaimed for their craftsmanship, their meticulous attention to detail, and their beauty.

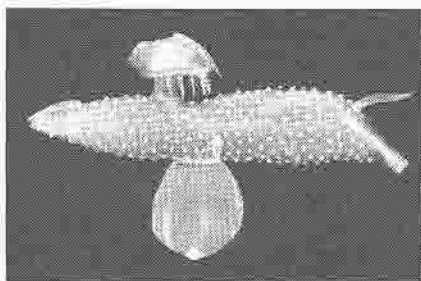
Leopold Blaschka's lampworking skills afforded him a unique means of expression for his interest in nature. In 1863, he was commissioned to make models of marine invertebrates (animals without a backbone) for display in a Dresden museum. These models, which laid the foundation for a thriving business, were made of colorless glass and painted to resemble living creatures.

Rudolf Blaschka was his father's only assistant, and together they fashioned replicas of more than 600 species of invertebrates—including jellyfish, sea slugs, and octopuses—that are too fragile to be preserved and displayed satisfactorily. Many of these models are now owned by the Division of Biological Sciences at Cornell University, which is lending the best of them to the Corning exhibition.

The show will also include outstanding objects from the world-famous Ware Collection of Glass Models of Plants at Harvard University. The Blaschkas supplied Harvard with nearly 850 botanical models and more than 3,200 magnified details. The result of this immense labor is breathtaking: these models have leaves that appear to be as supple as the real leaves, petals with the translucency of real petals, and colors that faithfully match those of living plants. The Ware Collection, Harvard's greatest tourist attraction, draws nearly 100,000 visitors annually, and it has been described as "an artistic marvel in the field of science and a scientific marvel in the field of art."

"Nature's Wonders in Glass" will also explore the Blaschkas' glassmaking techniques, their methods of marketing their replicas, and the simple but effective manner of packing that allowed these fragile creations to be sent to destinations thousands of miles away. Above all, the show will provide a unique opportunity to admire the life's work of two of the most fascinating craftsmen in the history of glassmaking.

The show may be viewed in the Museum's Special Exhibition Gallery daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.



This glass model of a marine animal (Carinaria mediterranea) will be featured in the special exhibition "Nature's Wonders in Glass: The Art of the Blaschkas" at The Corning Museum of Glass. The exhibition will be on view April 20 through October 20, 1991.

The model, made by Leopold and Rudolf Blaschka about 1885, is on loan from the collection of the Division of Biological Sciences at Cornell University.

For Your Information

If you are a collector of perfume and scent bottles, you may be interested in joining an organization known as "Perfume & Scent Bottle Collections" . . . dues are \$15.00 a year and a newsletter offering information on new perfume finds, collections in museums, etc., is included in the dues. For further information write: Jeane Parris, P.O. Box 85824, Las Vegas, NV 89185. Annual meetings feature speakers knowledgeable in this field of collecting.

Membership in the Glass Music International Club is a must for those with an interest in glass music instruments. Information on joining may be had by writing GMI, 2503 Logan Drive, Loveland, CO 80538. A quarterly newsletter features articles on manufacturing and playing glass instruments, armonica concerts and annual festivals.

**The National Early
American Glass Club
Box 8489
Silver Spring, MD 20907**



NEAGC NOTES

Memorial Fund gifts are still solicited to help finance our annual seminar-Memorial Lectures. If you wish to contribute in memory of a loved one, send your donation to NEAGC Treasurer, Betty Iber, 339 Selborne Road, Riverside, Illinois 60546.

If you wish to have a piece of glass identified, send a good photograph of it to Dorothy-Lee Jones, 171 Douglas Mountain Road, Douglas Hill, ME 04024. Be sure to enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope for her reply. This service is free to members of NEAGC; at last report there was disappointment that members haven't taken advantage of this opportunity.

Have you made a videotape of your collection, complete with commentary on each object? If you feel it is suitable as a program for NEAGC, send a copy to Kirk Nelson, Box 2226, Sandwich, MA 02563.

Address changes, errors and name changes . . . even summer addresses, should all be sent to Bill & Nancy Sheriff, 1222 Pinecrest Circle, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

Would you like to contact a person who also collects in your area of interest? If so, send your request to *Glass Shards*, Box 57, Fishers Hill, VA 22626, and it will be published here.



Glass Gaff

"Perfect Burmese Peachblow miniature pitcher, beautiful shiny custard, blown mold from wood." (Excerpt from "glass for sale" ad.) If you see a "Glass Gaff," please mail it to *Glass Shards*.

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