

The Paperweight Chase

Newsletter of the Ontario, Canada, Paperweight Collectors Association

Number 4

October 2003

PCA 50th Anniversary in Texas

2003 PCA Bulletin tells the story

It started in 1953 when seventy-five applications were received as the result of an advertisement being placed in *The Magazine Antiques* by the newly formed Paperweight Collectors Association. The idea got going when Palmer Hart, a friend of Paul Jokelson, mentioned that paperweight enthusiasts didn't have an association, unlike collectors of books, porcelain, watches, and glass. Just one year later Jokelson was reporting in the first issue of the Bulletin, May 1954, that the PCA now had 280 members.

You can read the whole story in the 2003 Paperweight Collectors Association Bulletin. This history of the PCA was researched and written by Kathy Moyer.

That serves as an appropriate introduction to a report on the Texas Convention. Weather was great. (hot) Food was excellent. Convention facilities first class. The Artists Fair kicked off proceedings and it was the best layout that we've seen in the past six conventions that we've attended. There was lots of room, you didn't feel crowded and some new faces,



PCA Ontario members at San Antonio, Texas, Convention are from left to right, Claire Jobin, Art Jobin, Cathy Weary, Tracy Willson, Glenn McCall, "B" McCall, Jane Wright, Ken Wright, Phyllis Helfand, and Harry Helfand. Missing are Rick Willson, who took the picture, and Darlene & Brian Hicks

along with our old artist friends, made it a good start to the next few days.

Canada had its largest contingent ever, at the Texas convention. PCA Ontario was represented by Phyllis & Harry Helfand, Claire & Art Jobin, "B" & Glenn McCall, Tracy & Rick Willson, Jane & Ken Wright. Our Michigan members Darlene & Brian Hicks rounded out the Canadian contingent. And of course we had a great visit with former Toronto member Cathy Weary (Steets), now living in California.

You can read more about the Convention in the report by Tracy Willson about the June 28th PCA Ontario meeting, on page 2.

The Stars of Texas

The Paperweight Collectors Association of Texas organized an exhibition and catalogue of one hundred and fifty of the finest weights from Texas collections. Each person (or couple) received a copy of "The Stars of Texas" exhibit catalogue. A great addition to our library and



something that will remind us of this brilliant exhibition for years to come. The Stars of Texas Exhibit then moved on to the MSC Forsyth Center galleries at Texas A & M University where it will be open to the public until the end of November, 2003.

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Meetings Report

March 29 Rick Ayotte

See Jeff Elsie's excellent article on Rick Ayotte's appearance at the 3rd Annual Brocklebank Lecture at the Royal Ontario Museum. It appears on page three in this issue of the Paperweight Chase.

April 26 Sandra Aynsley

Sandra spoke to our group about her very successful Dale Chihuly exhibit which took Toronto by storm. It was in the old Gooderhan and Worts distillery building which has recently been restored and is now home to various artists, restaurants, art galleries and so on.

June 28 Notes by Tracy Willson

The June meeting recapped the PCA Inc's 50th Anniversary and annual convention in San Antonio, Texas. Those who had been to San Antonio shared their experience with members.

Harry ran the slide show with Phyllis, Tracy & Rick providing commentary. Slides by Ken. There were numerous photos from the trip, including the charming Riverwalk. Of course some of the pictures captured certain members of our Canadian contingent cruising and dining.

There were, in total, 256 attendees in San Antonio (down from 325 attendees in Corning in 2001). Five were from Germany, 2 from Poland, 15 from the U.K and our 11. We Canucks were outdone in attendance by the Brits. They challenged us to outdo them in numbers at the next PCA Convention in Neenah, Wisconsin, USA, May 18-21, 2005.

As many of us were first timers attending the PCA convention, we were invited to a welcome lunch with the artists and PCA hosts. We made new friends, and the Texas volunteer organization made everyone feel comfortable.

Larry Selman shared personal memories of Paul Jokelson who passed away this past year. This convention was the 50th anniversary of the PCA which was founded by Paul. Mrs. Jokelson and her daughter were there, and there was a special tribute made to Paul at the banquet.

At the Dealers Fair, we spotted some of Virginia Wilson's weights for sale by Nancy Alfano of Portia Paperweights, Chicago. There were 17 other dealers represented, and hundreds of weights of all kinds to see. An ID clinic was held for those 'unknown' treasures and a panel of experts gave their best insights.

There were opportunities to spend time with old friends. Rick and Clara Ayotte (and their daughter Melissa who is working as a glass artist with her father), Al & Marion Bates who attended our last year's BBQ and spoke to us on souvenir and advertising weights. (Al has now retired as PCA President. William Gaskill was appointed as the incoming PCA President.)

Rick described Gary McClanahan's "'magic box'". Gary is an expert dealer/collector from California. He gave a presentation on the trials and tribulations of photographing glass paperweights with the associated lighting problems and loss of detail due to glare from the flash. His simple solution to the problem was demonstrated by Rick . . . and it appears to work! Rick will be happy to share (the process) with anyone who is interested.

Helen Carothers told us of the passing of a former PCA member whose daughters plan on selling portions of their mother's collection. They will be invited to attend one of our upcoming meetings with a plan to sell some of the weights.

Show and Tell featured newly acquired treasures including a fabulous upright botanical Paul Stankard design that Claire brought home from San Antonio.

Refreshments provided by Claire Jobin.

August 16 Summer Barbecue

Held this year at the home of Stephanie Jobin and Etienne Cornu in Cambridge, Ontario. It was organized By Tracy Willson and Stephanie and as usual it was a great afternoon of socializing and sharing paperweight stories and showing off our latest treasures.

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ROM Lecture Glass Artist Rick Ayotte Lectures at the Royal Ontario Museum

Jeff Elsie

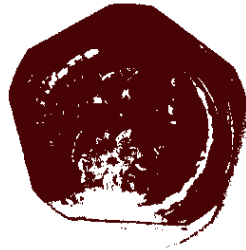
American glass artist, Rick Ayotte, recently visited Toronto to speak at the Royal Ontario Museum's 3rd Annual Brocklebank Lecture. The ROM,

with monies from the Brocklebank Fund, had commissioned Rick to create a new paperweight to update their collection of his work, and this new piece was unveiled as part of the Day's events.

The morning session, hosted by Brian Musselwhite, the Assistant Curator of ROM's Western Arts and Culture department, was a hands-on talk where a small group of paperweight enthusiasts engaged Ayotte in an informal discussion. The collectors were allowed to have a close-up look of the weights which included a large number of early Ayotte pieces, as well as very recent ground breaking work.

The afternoon session, open to the public, and members of the paperweight Collectors Association of Ontario and Glasfax, was when the more formal Brocklebank lecture was given. More than 50 people attended this session, including a group of glass art students from Sheridan College.

During the 1980's the Brocklebanks made many trips to Ayotte's New Hampshire glass studio to add to their extensive collection. Rick said their support meant a lot to him as he was at the beginning stages of his career and, he believes, that it is the most important time for a collector's support. Rick started as a scientific glass blower in



1962 as an apprentice for a local company near his home in Nashua. He set up his first studio in his basement creating Pyrex figures. In the early 70's Rick, along with his friend Paul Stankard, decided to "seriously look in the inside" of a paperweight. Rick decided to study birds as Paul was working on flower weights. Rick achieved great success, by putting the birds that he studied in their natural environment, into these fine works of glass art. During the lecture he said that his goal is to "capture a moment in time".

Rick Ayotte uses Schott crystal that does not contain lead, but instead a hint of cobalt blue to make the clear glass shine - "the crystal makes the glass come alive". He found that lead eats up certain colours, like reds. He uses many different coloured glasses such as Moretti, Reichenbach, Gaffer, and stained glass. He uses a longer annealing process than normal as many of the colours have different co-efficients of expansion - this means a 20 hour soak before the climb down in temperature. Ayotte says the crystal and the rounded form of the paperweight are very forgiving when dealing with different co-efficients.

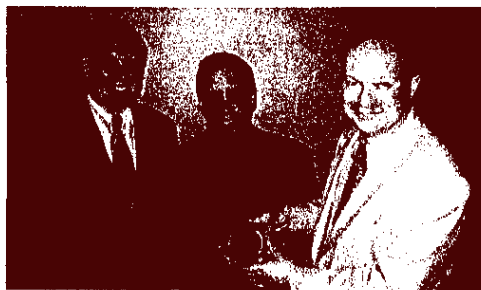
Rick Ayotte's study of nature allowed him to perfect his crystal encased glass birds. His New Hampshire Purple Finch now resides in five museums. Rick has been a glass artist for close to forty years - "when you have a passion for it, that's when you bring it up to an art form". Over this period of time his glass passion evolved into a family business with his wife Clara managing the business and daughter, Melissa, working with him at the bench.

The Ayottes have a Canadian connection in that both Rick and Clara's Grandparents immigrated from Quebec to New Hampshire. The Ayottes have a summer home in Magog, Quebec, where they retreat for inspiration. . . *contd. page 4*

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Rick Ayotte usually has about five designs that he is working on at any one time and forty others in the back of his head. He believes that trial and error is the best way to develop his craft and everyday he tries to push the limits and create new techniques, this has resulted in many break throughs in glass creation. His work has evolved into complex representations of nature. It encompasses flowers, birds, and insects with stunning colours and accuracy.

The magnum paperweight presented to the Royal Ontario Museum's Brian Musselwhite is a



Brian Musselwhite, Royal Ontario Museum Assistant Curator, Western Art & Culture, receiving the new weight from Rick Ayotte, artist extraordinaire, from Nashua, New Hampshire, with Ken Wright, President of PCA Ontario, looking on.

multi-layered pond scene with 'pate de verre' turtles swimming and lazing about in the underwater flora - it is truly a masterpiece of the glass artist's work.

(The above article, written by PCA member, Jeff Elsie, originally appeared in the August 2003 edition of Glass Gazette, published by the Glass Art Association of Canada (GAAC) and is kindly reproduced with their permission)

PERTSHIRE

The following article originally appeared in the June 20th 1971 edition of The Business Observer, a UK publication. Because of the closing of Perthshire Paperweights earlier this year we thought it was an interesting look back in time. (We thank our neighbour, and friend, Shirley Scarlett for passing it along to us)

The Other Kind of Weight Watchers

There was an embarrassing moment at a well-known London fine-art auctioneers not so long ago. Some of Mr. Stuart Drysdale's output turned up accidentally in a catalogue as Baccarat paperweights. Why embarrassing? Because paperweights from the Baccarat factory, like those from Clichy and St. Louis, were made between 1845 and 1860 by French glass workers in their spare time. Mr. Drysdale's were made in Crieff in Perthshire, where his firm, Perthshire Paperweights, was set up in 1968.

Mr. Drysdale is a solicitor. He still runs a law practice with his brother. "I live on that," he says. "The paperweights are just fun". The firm began in a convent school in Crieff, with a cross on the roof and a rent of L100 a year. At that time there were three apprentices and two senior craftsmen, one a Scot and the other a Bohemian who had lived in



Stuart Drysdale and Paperweight:
"Terribly difficult to discover old techniques"

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Scotland since he was seven. Today there is a brand new factory and a staff of 20. The firm is run

as a joint venture on a profit-sharing basis. "How else do you get quality?" he says.

The skill of making weights, blobs of solid glass with a mass of tiny glass flowers embedded in the center, all but died with the waning of Victorian interest in them. "Its terribly difficult to discover the old techniques," says Mr. Drysdale. "Most of the books about it were written by collectors, and they tended to make a great mystique about it."

His finest weights are collectors' pieces. They sell for anything from a few pounds up to L125, which is peanuts compared with the L8,500 which an antique weight recently fetched at Sotheby's. The weights are made in limited editions, and the reject rate is enormous. The firm may make 600 of the finest weights to end up with 150 for sale.

The best of Mr Drysdale's weights have the date etched in minute figures on the head of one of the flowers, to prevent others from making, wittingly or unwittingly, the same mistake as the fine-art auctioneers. Spink's stocks the largest selection of the weights in London, and Pat McCowley, their paperweight expert, remembers a group of Indian customers who took infuriatingly long over choosing a Drysdale weight. "Finally," she says "I prized the truth out of them. They were looking for one without a date. They went away without one."

ROBERT HARRY KEENE October 9, 1927 - October 4, 2003



It is with great sadness that we advise you of the death of PCA Ontario member Robert Keene. He died in his home on Saturday, October 4 and his funeral service took place at McDougall & Brown funeral home on what would have been his 76th birthday, October 9th.

You've all tasted his great shortbread at our various meetings, we knew he was very involved in Scottish dancing, and we've all listened to this somewhat quiet, gentle person when we've sat beside him at meetings. We watched his new enthusiasm for paperweight collecting grow over these past few years.

His eulogy by Reverend Doctor Malcolm Sinclair of the Metropolitan United Church shared some of the things that he did in the other parts of his life. What many of us might not have known was that he was an avid gardener. His home backed onto the Scarborough Bluffs which meant that he had all of Lake Ontario as a magnificent backdrop for his garden. We also might not have known that he was a firm believer in royalty. This was born out by two pictures at his funeral. The two Queens, Victoria and Elizabeth II. Its fitting to say goodbye to Robert with one of his own sayings . . .

"Mind How You Go"

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Doris W. Burns

She purchased her first paperweight in 1932 from a barrow-man near Charing Cross Road in London, England. Doris Burns was on her way to a book store when she spied the barrow-man and stopped to have a look at his wares. She continues her own story . . . "Nothing really interested me; I was out to buy a book! However, I noticed a lump of glass. Round and smooth with bright red and white green leaves floating inside. It fitted into my hand as if coming home! My first paperweight. I still have it!"

Let me introduce you to Doris Burns, the lady who inspired Helen Carothers to start the Paperweight Collectors Association of Ontario.

Now 92 years old, Doris Burns wrote us a letter earlier in the year, pictured and transcribed below . . .

APR 17 2003
484-6555

Dear Ken Wright and other Paperweight Friends
Thank you for giving me a copy of your
Paperweight Chase. It was a lovely gift and reminded
many happy memories of my late
our stimulating past of my late
There is much to report to you, how I got
involved with paperweights, how I was able to bring
an interest to a great many people, over the years
research, visiting sites all over, buying collections,
on spec, usually) how a club was formed,
eventually folded, etc. I would be pleased to give
you information about any of these fields.
However, I have to explain that it would take me
some time to produce. Perhaps it might be better to
take one part than to cover so much xxxxxx. I
suggest this because I am subject to some
restrictions due to a stroke that I had a few months
ago, but, I could produce a history about the
paperweight clubs for instance. I can always find
someone else to type it for me!

I look forward to maintaining contact with you,
either by phone or mail.

My Best Wishes
Doris W. Burns

April 7, 2003

Dear Ken Wright
and other Paperweight Friends

Thank you for giving me a copy of your Paperweight Chase. It was a lovely gift and renewed many happy memories of what was an interesting and stimulating part of my life!

There is much to report to you, how I got involved with paperweights, how I was able to bring an interest to a great many people, all the research did, visiting sites all over, buying collections (on spec, usually) how a club was formed in Montreal, and how it developed and eventually folded, etc. I would be pleased to give you information about any of these fields. However, I have to explain that it would take me some time to produce. Perhaps it might be better to take one part than to cover so much xxxxxx. I suggest this because I am subject to some restrictions due to a stroke that I had a few months ago, but, I could produce a history about the paperweight clubs for instance. I can always find someone else to type it for me!

I look forward to maintaining contact with you, either by phone or mail.

My Best Wishes
Doris W. Burns

In future issues of the Paperweight Chase we'll bring you more news from Doris. I spoke with her while I was writing this issue and she still sounds hale and hearty - we reminisced about her trips to PCA Conventions, to Baccarat and St. Louis in France, and her continuous hunt for paperweight treasures.

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The Ontario Group eating and drinking on The Riverwalk, San Antonio, Texas.

Current Years' Dues
Claire Jobin asked us to remind members to pay their dues.

*"Baccarat is owned by the
French Champagne
company Taittinger - maybe that's why
they say champagne should be drunk
out of Baccarat glasses!"*

Snippet from "The Gather" - Northern England Newsletter

At the Texas PCA Convention Jim Lefever, Vice President of PCA Inc presented various lists of "Must Have" Paperweight books. This is his Number One Recommended List.

Title

Glass Paperweights of the Bergstrom Art Center
Dictionary of Paperweight Signature Canes
The Glass Menagerie
Boston and Sandwich and New England Glass Co
Encyclopedia of Glass Paperweights
Paperweights
Identifying Antique Paperweights: Millefiori
Identifying Antique Paperweights: Lamporked
Identifying Antique Paperweights: Less Familiar
American Glass Paperweights and their Makers
The Art of the Paperweight
PCA Annual Bulletins
Auction Catalogues

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Jean S. Melvin (revised)
Lawrence Selman

2004

The 25th Anniversary of PCA Ontario

In 1979 Helen Carothers formed the Paperweight Collectors Association of Ontario. She was encouraged in this endeavour by Doris Burns of Montreal, where a chapter of the PCA was already operating. Most of you thought it would be a good idea to celebrate this occasion by creating a limited edition paperweight. We need further discussion to decide on a price range. You also responded to a trip to Corning. We need to form a Committee to look into this and possibly plan it for either the Spring or Fall of 2004. Volunteers are needed.

The 2003/2004 Meeting Schedule

October 18 Antique/Contemporary
French weights
November 22 Christmas Social

THE NEXT MEETING

Saturday October 18th at 2:00 PM at the
George Locke Branch of the Toronto Public
Library
Located at Lawrence & Yonge in Toronto.

Subject:
Antique & Contemporary weights.
Bring samples from your collection
and tell us a story about them.



The next "Paperweight Weekend" at Wheaton Village, Millville, New Jersey is scheduled for May 13, 14, 15, 2004. Call or write Wheaton village for details. Address is 1501 Glasstown Road, Millville, NJ, USA 08332. Phone 1.800.998.4552.

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