

The Paperweight Chase

Newsletter of the Ontario, Canada, Paperweight Collectors Association

Number 6

June 2004

Wheaton Village Weekend

“Small Glass Works: A Special
Collectors Weekend”

Millville, NJ – May 13-15, 2004

Attendees at the “Small Glass Works” weekend in Millville, New Jersey, had a full schedule of events to cover in three days. Registrants included approx. 130 from the US, Canada, England, Scotland, Germany and New Zealand.

Collectors, artists and dealers enjoyed workshops, demonstrations, presentations, museum exhibits and socializing. Many seized the opportunity to try their hand at flamework, encasement, or making their own paperweight assisted by skilled artists.



Alan and Helen Thornton from the UK join American author, George Kuller, to share the paperweights they created at a hands-on workshop.

William Gaskill, President of the Paperweight Collectors Association, Inc. gave a talk entitled, “*They That Go Down To The Sea In Ships*”. His accompanying slideshow illustrated numerous weights carrying a nautical theme created by various factories. Historically, the materials used by glass furnaces often arrived to the factory via water, and ships were common motifs appearing in early American weights. He is an interesting and knowledgeable speaker.

Josh Simpson, a well-known American paperweight artist, gave an inspiring talk which took the audience back to his humble beginnings. He has come a long way from his first studio in Vermont where he lived year-round in a teepee and worked out of a drafty shack made from salvaged wood.

He is fascinated with astronomy, perhaps even more so now that his wife is one of the US NASA space shuttle astronauts. The colours of space and sky and water inspire him as he strives to create new effects in his glass creations. Delighted by the marbles he unearthed by chance in his garden, Josh has traveled the world and has hidden thousands of his “Planet” weights as part of his Infinity Project. He hopes that someone will wonder at

the discovery of a piece of glass left by chance. One may find a Josh Simpson weight on the ocean's floor, in the ice of the Artic, in a cave or stream or in the forest and marvel at how it came to be there.

Artists Jim Donofrio, Gordon Smith and Debbie Tarsitano joined in a panel discussion entitled, *"The Future: Artists' Perspective"*, moderated by sculptor Anna Boothe. Here we heard of some of the challenges facing artists today as they strive to grow their skills and explore their creativity in producing innovative work which, at the same time, will be pleasing to collectors. In time, the traditional paperweight form may be challenged as artists branch out into more innovative designs and techniques. The enclosure of a design within the glass dome remains a fascination for artists and collectors alike.

Tony DePalma, demonstrated the making of a "Millville Rose" crimp rose paperweight. For Tony, this was to be his last public presentation as he officially retires. Many family and friends were present for the demonstration in the Glass Studio followed by the auctioning of Tony's weight. It may have been the most expensive crimp rose made at Wheaton, fetching a price of \$4,700, the proceeds donated by Tony back to Wheaton Village.



Many were on hand to watch Tony DePalma's last public "Millville Rose" demonstration.

John Hawley gave a talk on "Boston & Sandwich Glass Co. and New England Glass Co. Flower Paperweights". Through detailed facts and actual weights on hand, he illustrated the fine differences in the weights produced by the two American factories. He slideshow illustrated closeup differences that one might not ordinarily see.

In a "Glass Jam" session held in the Glass Studio, artists combined their different design talents and skills in a demonstration session. Jim Donofrio, Melissa Ayotte, Gordon Smith, Debbie Tarsitano and Anna Boothe were among those joining the skilled Wheaton Village glassworkers to create several collaborative pieces. Given the success of the event, we are certain to see more collaboration by talented artists as they combine their ideas, skills and talents to create more glass forms.



Pictured are Gordon Smith, Melissa Ayotte and Debbie Tarsitano working collaboratively in the "Glass Jam" session.

Dealer booths each day displayed a vast array of paperweights, contemporary, traditional and antique, as well as paperweight related objects, books and small glass works. Such a delightful opportunity for any collector to see so much in one weekend!

Ken Brown, American paperweight artist, presented “*A Collection of Antique American Paperweights*” and Gay LeCleire Taylor, Curator of the Museum of American Glass, presented “*Survey of Contemporary Glass*”.

Wheaton Village hosts the Museum of American Glass which was the venue for the closing event. Surrounded by paperweights, depression glass, Tiffany glass and other wonderful displays, the artists, dealers and collectors together enjoyed a dinner and evening of socializing.



Canadian members, accompanied by their ‘honorary member’ visiting from the UK, celebrated a wonderful evening surrounded by the glass exhibits in the Museum of American Glass.

Recent Meeting Highlights

May Day came on May 1st when **Melissa Ayotte** spoke to the Ontario Paperweight Collectors Association at the John Locke Branch of the Toronto Public Library. An enthusiastic group listened as she walked us through a Power Point presentation of her family’s work in the art of glass paperweights.

Melissa may have been born among glass rods and the roar of the torch; however, she is no mere apprentice to her famous father, Rick Ayotte. Initially, her curiosity about psychology and understanding human motivation and behaviour, pulled her in other directions than glass. During the time she was finishing her Masters program at Antioch New England Graduate School she was

apprenticing in the studio with Rick. After she received her MA Melissa worked in clinical psychology and also carried on her work in the studio. This busy life included taking more and more glass and art classes and she soon realized this was her true interest. Following in the footsteps of her father, but creating her own space in the glass art world.

In the year 2000 Melissa decided to make glass art her full time work. “*I consider the limitations imposed by the spherical shape of the paperweight to be very liberating in the sense that I am forced to reckon with the boundaries of the glass and develop new ideas, techniques and creative approaches for expanding those boundaries. The shape itself provides a structure from which I can evolve my own sense of creativity, ultimately aiming to evolve the art of paperweight making in general.*”

Clara, Melissa’s Mother, joined her for the trip to Canada. After the lecture the two women, along with their friend Priscilla, laid out a ‘sale’ table full of Ayotte weights. PCA members took home some great treasures. On the Sunday following the meeting Jane and Ken Wright introduced the three New Hampshire women to the joys of Niagara Wine Country and let Melissa have her first look at Niagara Falls. All done on a rainy day but the wine tasting was excellent and our American friends were introduced to Canada’s famous ‘icewine’.



Melissa Ayotte

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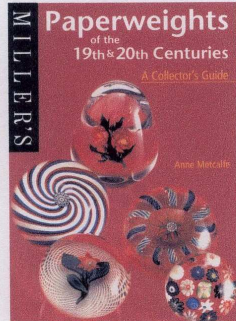
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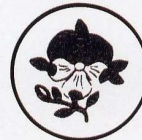


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Annual Fees**PCA Ontario, Canada**

July 1 (current year) - June 30 (following year)

___	Single Membership	\$20.00
___	Couple	\$30.00
___	Mailings only	\$15.00

Cheque payable to:

Paperweight Collectors Association - Ontario

Mail Application to:

Paperweight Collectors Association - Ontario
 16 Salisbury Avenue
 Toronto, Ontario M4X 1C2
 Canada

Phone: (416) 921-9586

E-mail: twillson@sympatico.ca**Upcoming Events**

Date	Event
June 12, 2004	Meeting, 2:00-4:00 p.m. Lillian H. Smith Library 239 College Street
August 14, 2004	Summer BBQ, Cambridge
October 16, 2004	Meeting, 2:00-4:00 p.m. Locke Branch Library 3083 Yonge St. at Lawrence
November 6-7, 2004	Coach tour to Corning, NY
December 4, 2004	Holiday Social
May 18-21, 2005	PCA Annual Convention Bergstrom-Mahler Museum Neenah, Wisconsin

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