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## PAPERWEIGHT COLLECTORS' ASSOCIATION

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Vol. 8 No.4

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### ANOTHER ADVENTURE FROM THE CORNING PCA CONVENTION 2001:

How the Mannings, Hollister, Lucille  
Ball and **Das Boot** Helped Reunite the  
British Royal Family  
by William Drew Gaskill

[Editor's Note: This article is reprinted, by permission of the author, from Glass Tidings, Volume 7 Number 1, August 2001, the newsletter of the Northern California Paperweight Collectors Association. Further Editor's Notes are found in brackets within the following article.]

Going to PCA national conventions is always a great experience. My first was in Neenah, Wisconsin in 1989. I was especially looking forward to coming to Corning because the Internet has so significantly increased my communication with other collectors. There was magic in ending an email with: "See you tomorrow", knowing that the person lived 2500 miles away and that we would meet for the first time after years of emails over the Internet.

I flew from San Jose [CA] to Buffalo [NY] and drove down to Corning the next morning - it was a beautiful day and the lilacs were in bloom. I drove by fields that were already planted or being prepared for planting. Green is such an ecstatic color! In California, we have a lot of brown due to the lack of water (marketing people will tell you it is "Golden California" but trust me, it's brown). Because I arrived late at night, the car rental gave me a very, very large car (boat might be the better description), which I promptly named the *Lusitania*. I floated into Corning, found the hotel, and docked the car (it was easy to park the first day).

One of the first people I ran into in the hotel was the President of my local group (Northern California),

Larry Manning. He said that we had over 24 people from Northern California planning to be at the convention and I was pleased that our association was well represented. He also said something that stopped me in my tracks. He asked, "Do you still collect those green things? Those green paperweights with figures of people in them?"

I am used to being kidded about my collection of English bottleglass folk art paperweights (another marketer at work, everyone else calls them *dumpies*) and I thought he was kidding - he had been over to my house recently and patiently endured a "tour" of them, with a special emphasis on a recent addition, a King Edward's Coronation weight with an eight inch sulphide of the late King. So I thought I would go along with him. "Sure", I said. "Why do you ask?" "Well", he continued, "when Judy and I drove here, we stopped in this small antique mall about two hours from here and saw a couple of them and thought of you". Now my interest was piqued and I asked, "Who were the people in the weights?" He responded immediately: "Queen Victoria, Queen Alexandra, and a little boy on an elephant". I was speechless (very rare for me, actually this was probably one of the first times). My jaw dropped like a *dot.com* stock. "Who?" I sputtered. He repeated the list. He also had a map to the shop and the number of the row and cabinet where they were. He handed them to me. He also knew of a secret parking lot. This was one of those moments where the music of the spheres is in perfect harmony and another collector, rather than being an adversary (or at least a competitor), was an ally in the paperweight chase.

These weights were something I was specifically looking for. The *boy on an elephant* weight had intrigued me for over 15 years. In 1985, I made my first trip to Larry Selman's in Santa Cruz. He sold me a Millville umbrella and some other weights and insisted that I buy the Hollister book [*The*

*Encyclopedia of Glass Paperweights*] - it opened my eyes to the breadth of paperweights that were available. The *boy on an elephant* is pictured in the book [Page 179. It is also found in Cloak's *Glass Paperweights of the Bergstrom Art Center* on Plate 33 following Page 100 and in Casper's *Glass Paperweights of the Bergstrom-Mahler Museum*, Figure 437 on Page 9.]; I booked marked it and have returned to it over the years as I collected the bottleglass dumpies. This particular picture, and Hollister's warm appreciation for this folk art form, began my collection of this green treasure; I now enjoy over **300** of them. I have actually worn out the binding of that book and had to replace it recently: it is one of the great treasures of our hobby. In a like manner, the Metcalfes of Sweetbriar Gallery fame also instigated the search for weights of King Edward and his Consort, Queen Alexandra. The pursuit was on! I did manage to find a King Edward coronation *dumpy*, one of the few I have that is dated (1902). Queen Victoria was Edward's mum and although I suspected a weight would exist with her likeness, I had never seen or heard of one.

I thanked Larry profusely and looked at my watch. I had to get to that shop!!! It was too late that evening. The following morning, the PCA Convention was to begin with the plenary session at the Corning Museum of Glass Auditorium. What was a collector to do? Almost immediately, two little spirits appeared on my shoulders: on the right was my 'better' nature and on the left, of course, my collector's nature. My 'better nature' pointed out that I was supposed to be present at the sessions and to attend the 'first timers' lunch, an important function to welcome new attendees. The 'collector's nature' would have none of it and whispered: "There is a whole auditorium of paperweight collectors and this is probably the only time in your life you can get away with saying 'I can't be there because of this paperweight' and have everyone understand". Even though that argument was on target, I realized that I had to go to the first sessions of the convention. My 'better nature' was pleased while the 'collector nature' grumbled most of the night. The next morning the sessions were really great and I was glad I attended. After the lunch, however, it was time to find the antiques mall...in Salamanca, New York.

SALAMANCA! --- If you said it loud enough it was almost magical, like Ali Baba opening the treasure cave by shouting "Open Sesame"! This treasure run

was too exciting to make alone. Sort of like Jason heading out for the Golden Fleece by himself: I would shanghai a crew to man the *Lusitania* (which probably should have been renamed the *Argo* at this point to keep the metaphor straight). I explained the situation to Jim Lefever and he signed up as navigator. On our way out, we ran into the Schwabs (of the Paperweight Shoppe)[Betty and Larry Schwab, advertisers in DVC-PCA Newsletter]. They had been in the same mall in Salamanca and confirmed the Mannings' sightings and they were returning to get some other items in the shop. Competition! And just what were "the other items"? We had to move quickly.



Queen Victoria

Driving from the hotel in Corning to the mall in Salamanca was not complicated, even for those of us that can get lost in our garage. We [in Corning] were a quarter mile off of Route 17 and Salamanca was a quarter mile off of Route 17 [about 100 miles west of Corning]. Jim, the navigator, showed up with a "state-of-the-art" computer and GPS (Global Positioning System) attachment that used signals from four or five US satellites to

determine where we were. The laptop had a map application that showed EXACTLY where you are on the highway, how fast you were going, and what the altitude was, all in brilliant color. Jim could use the application to zoom in on the town of Corning as we left and scan the route to the destination.

Once we cleared the populated areas around Corning (two minutes), we had some fun with the GPS system. We compared our speed and altitude with roadside signs that gave the altitude of specific points along the highway. It began to drizzle. I looked in my rear-view mirror and saw a very large, white Town Car behind us. It paced us. When I sped up, it sped up. When I slowed down, it slowed down. If life provided a sound track, I suspect that the da-rump, da-rump music from the movie "Jaws" would begin to play softly in the background. Could it be another collector trying to kidnap the Royal Family from Salamanca? I kept a wary eye on them - I know how the Captains

who led the ships across the North Atlantic during the wars felt. That amidst the gray mists and rolling waves (work with me here, the car rolled like a boat on the highway) was their greatest fear: U-boats! I had my own *Das Boot* following me like a shark stalking its prey. I pointed the U-boat out to Jim and we idly speculated on who it might be... It continued to follow us.

Thanks to the GPS and the fact that we didn't have to make any turns, we arrived at the outskirts of Salamanca in excellent time (Fifth Amendment issues prevent me from boasting here). Just as we approached the exit, *Das Boot* screamed past us, sped up the exit ramp, and turned right. "He's turning right, straight for the Antique Mall!!" I screamed (my voice was pitched so high that unseen dogs for miles around started barking). We did our very best California rolling stop and followed *Das Boot* - right into the parking lot behind the mall - they knew the secret parking lot! All was lost. We got into the parking lot and I flung open my door ready to make a flying tackle on anyone who was going to enter the mall before I did. Jim convinced me to close the car door first. That accomplished, I mustered all the decorum I could and walked to the door. They got there first. But they didn't go into the mall! They went to a different facility in the same building. I began to breathe again.

Jim and I entered the mall and tried to look as casual as possible. Running up and down the aisles like the Keystone Kops would tip them off that we knew what we were looking for. But alas, there was no Cabinet 276 on Aisle G. I grimaced and began to look for Cabinet 276. We didn't actually need the number - it was the only glass cabinet that was covered with nose prints. There were enough nose prints on that cabinet to hide a 747 inside. Obviously, paperweight collectors had been here.

The cabinet contained only paperweights. Through the glass darkly, I saw three large, green paperweights. Out of one stared the stern face of Queen Victoria - looking like she had not been amused in some time. Out of the other, looking more like an ancient statue of Astarte, stared a bug-eyed Queen Alexandra - her plaster sulphide showing the many strands of pearls and diamonds for which she was famous. The last paperweight, set on a lower shelf, had a small boy perched on the back of a baby elephant. Hurrah! The sound track was playing the "Hallelujah Chorus."

Several other types of paperweights including two with

"sold" signs surrounded them. We got the 'key person' to open the cabinet and I gently rescued the green weights; their price tags told a story of loneliness and neglect. All these weights had been there for some time and were subject to the 'markdown' process - how humiliating it must have been to go from over a thousand dollars asking price each to a significantly lower number after a series of four "reductions". What an ignominious way to treat paperweights! I was delighted! Queen Victoria had been used as a doorstop and showed the characteristic wear ring on the sides of the weight; the little boy on an elephant had been loved but not abused through its lifetime, but Queen Alexandra was perfect: the small air bubble that often forms over a sulphide after it is inserted provided that interesting silver, metallic sheen that was present in many of the objects back in the special exhibit in Corning ["Objects of Fantasy: Glass Inclusions of the Nineteenth Century" curated by Dena K. Tarshis]. While not as important or impressive to some, King Edward would have his Consort, his mother, and a symbolic weight of himself as Prince of Wales during the Raj. The Royals would be together again.

Jim and I picked up a couple of other interesting weights and headed to the check out counter. At the counter, we ran into the Schwabs, who were picking up those two items marked "sold" in the display cabinet. The cashiers called the sellers and informed



"Boy on an elephant"

us that there were more weights in the seller's home and we were welcome to visit them, that very day. They lived in Jamestown, New York, the home of Lucille Ball. This should have tipped us off about the next part of this adventure: it would be like an *I Love Lucy* rerun. The sellers invited us to their home but would not give us their names nor would they give us their street address. For security reasons, they elected to give us vague information: there was a blue truck and a white car in the driveway - on South Street, between two larger thoroughfares. The Schwabs were checked out and ready to roll. And they did.

(continued to page eight)



## PAPERWEIGHT COLLECTORS' ASSOCIATION

### REVIEW OF EVENTS

9th Anniversary Celebration Weekend  
July 14 & 15, 2001

The Summer Meeting of DVC-PCA's 9th Anniversary Celebration Weekend began at 10 AM on Saturday, July 14, 2001 with a Paperweight Fair featuring Guest Dealer Jim Lefever's collection, a dozen Gordon Smith weights presented by Leo Kaplan, Inc. and a display of members' Gordon Smith weights as well as weights for sale from -and by- members. President Kruger called the meeting to order at 11:10 AM, recognizing members and guests from afar - glass artist Gordon Smith from Cornville, AZ, Patty Mowatt from Emerald Isle, NC, Bonnie and Gary Geiger from Beaver, PA, Elliott and Roslyn Heith from Flushing, NY, Frank Gardner and Jim Perna from northeastern PA and Henry and Una Blake from Baltimore, MD. Dealers Leo and Ruth Kaplan and family were still on their way from New York City, having run into heavy traffic on the NJ Turnpike, and arrived later. Phil Edelman, also from New York, represented Leo Kaplan's display of Gordon's weights. Then VP Leo Kvalnes took over the podium to introduce the Morning Program speaker, Jim Lefever, and his topic "Confessions of an Advertising Weight Collector or The Heresy of Collecting 20th Century Advertising Paperweights". There are three general categories: 1) Weights of material made by the company, for example, pressed sulfur, ingots of solder or other metals such as lead, zinc and aluminum (Phoenix Metal, Dutch Boy), items encased in acrylic, balls of rubber, miniature bricks, chrome plated steel and cable slices, many with the company name incorporated.



Guest Dealer Jim Lefever

2) Weights with the product encased, for example, miniature roll of paper, slice of steel bar, cable clamps screwed onto a base, metal tin of bag balm, Perrier bottle, watch parts, rectifiers from an electric plant, a memory piece from an early computer. Some are encased in glass and some in acrylic because some of the enclosures would not survive encasing in hot glass. 3) Commemorative weights (often for new items or anniversaries), for example, batteries, items from a copper byproduct from the restoration of the Statue of Liberty, a slice of the radio tower from a Pittsburgh station, ceramic doorknob from a pottery festival, alko-magnets from GE, an encased rifle bullet for a retired teacher (?!), a piece of Skylab from NASA, pieces of the Berlin Wall in both glass and acrylic, a stockholder's prospectus in miniature, shredded currency and dirt from Graceland (?!) A Question and Answer period followed: How do you keep acrylic from yellowing?



Past Treasurer Andy Dohan,  
Founding President Eileen England

Keep out of the sun. Crazying? Nothing helps. Scuffing? Use plastic polish. After appreciative applause, the audience returned to viewing the Paperweight Fair until lunch was served at 12:15.

After a delicious lunch with choice of fish or chicken entrée, President Kruger called the meeting to order at 1:15. He announced a new paperweight puzzle available from the Corning Museum of Glass and the June 21-22, 2002 Marble Artists and Collectors Conference at Wheaton Village; spoke about this year's PCA Convention at Corning, NY, noting that our membership constituted about 10% of the attendees; mentioned that health concerns kept Theresa and Arthur Greenblatt at home but they would

welcome a letter or phone call (4 Northfield Court, Lambertville, NJ 08530, (609) 397-1177; and

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reminded all that our next meeting will be October 27 at Wheaton Village but that we would be meeting the following day, Sunday, July 15, at Wheaton Village's Glass Weekend for the closing event of our 9th Anniversary Celebration Weekend. Directions to the Mikelberg home for the Garden Party/Catered Cookout following the meeting were given out by Sandy and Marty M. Twenty "Today's Raffle" prizewinners were chosen and three "Silent Auction Item" winners were announced, too many to be named individually here (list on request).

Glass artist Gordon Smith and VP Lee Kvalnes collaborated to present the Afternoon Program, "The Undersea World of Gordon Smith". Lee has extensive scuba diving and undersea photography experience and taught Gordon to scuba dive. Gordon began his career in glass in 1980 at Kontes Glass. Jim and Nontes Kontes encouraged him to work at Wheaton Village. By 1982, he was making floral weights and by 1986, marine weights. In 1994, he relocated from

Mays Landing, NJ to Cornville, AZ (near Sedona). He wants his weights to be an accurate depiction of the fragile undersea world. Gordon spoke first. He has a one-man shop in an outbuilding beside his home. Through slides, he illustrated lampwork techniques - the use of the flame and hotplate to prevent thermal shock and how to build rock from glass. Some glass is drawn out into a rod, some, crushed as fine as talcum powder. For scaly animals



V.P. Lee Kvalnes, Clarence Brunner, Past VP Len Kornit, Guest Artist Gordon Smith

like fish and snakes, Gordon starts with a clear rod, applies individual scales in a series or row, then rotates the rod in the flame and flattens the scales to the body. Placement of scales is critical. Snakes are often a

foot long and take much more time to make than fish. Fish are shaped in three dimensions; fins and

(continued to page six)

bulbous eyes are added. It takes several hours to create scales and make a fish, three days to make a snake. For the first six months, all his snakes broke, due to incorrect technique.

One of Gordon's slides showed a set-up on a metal disk. The composition is created by arranging the various elements, which have been annealed quickly so he can arrange them cold, on the disk. To encase the lampworked elements into a paperweight, he first heats two blanks of optical crystal, uses a 1/2" rod to dab crystal on its end, picks up more glass, heats it to the consistency of honey and drops the crystal onto the set-up. This takes all of 15 seconds. A vacuum pump helps encase the set-up and eliminate bubbles. Because Gordon works without an assistant, he uses mechanical tools to attach the crystal base onto the weight. He then shapes the weight with a cherry or apple wood paddle, adds a pad of colored glass onto the base, puts in a signature cane, punit up the bottom, heats up one rod and pulls it away from the top of the weight, heats and shapes the top of the weight in a wooden form, and places it in an oven at 1200 degrees to anneal, after knocking it off the punty. Distortions sometimes occur during the encasing process, but Gordon heats the design to 970 degrees so the set-up won't crack when the liquid crystal hits it. Distortion is usually avoided because the set-up can't melt fast enough to distort and has no place to go because it is so quickly surrounded by encasing crystal. Gordon makes about 50 weights a year. He may lose three or four, but he is careful to avoid accidents.

Now, Lee spoke and Gordon commented occasionally. Lee showed slides of Gordon's finished work and corresponding images of marine life. Gordon uses these pictures of aquatic life as guides, though the colors in books may be off compared to real life because the fish are photographed in aquariums and the flash affects color. Real fish may be 12" or so but the glass model is only about 1", looking about 1 1/2" in the weight. Gordon makes glass coral with real-life imperfections like bleaching or breaking; according to Lee, coral is rarely perfect in real life. Gordon's shells are quite accurate, too. Some weights are oriented from the point of view of a snorkeler, looking down on the scene from above.

Some are hockey-puck shaped upright plaques. Gordon's "Chimera" series combines mermaids (or mermen) with forms of dichroic glass which has a chemical coating and retains its shimmering look even when encased. After a standing ovation (strongly urged by the President!), a Question and Answer session followed. Gordon noted that a vacuum pump aids encasement but can also break delicate elements like flower petals or fish fins. He said all his texture techniques developed from his creation of strawberry textures.



Candid Photographer Diane Atkerson, Jim Perna, Guest Artist Gordon Smith, President Stan Kruger

President Kruger then closed the formal meeting at 2:30, inviting the entire gathering to re-convene at 4 PM at the Roslyn, PA home of Martin and Sandy Mikelberg for the now-traditional summertime Garden Party/Catered Cookout. This celebration

of DVC-PCA's 9th Anniversary was a resounding success as some 45 guests wandered through the rooms of the Mikelberg home, admiring the paperweights and other glass and art collections and enjoying the delicious food, until about 8 PM.

The next day, Sunday, July 15, eighteen DVC-PCA members and guests convened at 11 AM at Wheaton Village in Millville, NJ, to continue our anniversary celebration. After being given tickets and an orientation by President Kruger, the group was free to explore the offerings of the Village, including the Museum of American Glass and other permanent exhibits, the T.C. Wheaton Glass Factory, the Arthur Gorham Paperweight Shop and the Crafts Gallery and other shops and, especially, in the Village's new Exhibition Hall, a display of contemporary glass art (including many paperweights) by nineteen American and international galleries--a celebration of Wheaton's Glass Weekend 2001. This proved to be a fitting conclusion to our weekend of glass art and artists.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Sutton, Secretary

*(continued from page three)*

We had to wait until the clerk managed to klutz through the purchase process - I would not be telling the truth if I denied that I was brazen enough to ask an additional 15% off for a group purchase...which was given! It was odd that they would take an out-of-state check but could not master using the credit card scanner. We were delayed a good while. Once the weights were in our possession we headed off to Jamestown. The 'Ricardos' and the 'Mertzes' separately racing off looking for an unknown destination, for an unknown treasure, in an unknown town.

When we finally arrived at the seller's house, I was crestfallen. Indeed, there was a blue truck and a white car. There was also a van with the license plate "PAPRWTS". Not the best development: we had lost the race. When we went into the house, I knew what Papa Bear felt like in the Goldilocks story. All around the room were cabinets and closets with their doors

ajar and paperweights on the floor. There sitting at the dining room table were the Schwabs who looked like they found some paperweights that were "just right". There were still some treasures to be had. Jim and I both found some weights that we wanted and did our best not to look at what we had missed. Probably the best part of this episode is when we vouched for the Schwabs' check and they vouched for ours - curious indeed.

I was the only person happier than the sellers (who could not have expected such a windfall). In the trunk of the *Lusitania/Argo* was golden stuff indeed: three great sulphide dumps, a few painted Chinese weights, a flawless turquoise NEGC poinsettia, a mess of "other" weights, and a great paperweighting story. As we drove back to Corning, we turned the GPS system off. I didn't want to know how high we were floating above the highway.



**PAPERWEIGHT COLLECTORS' ASSOCIATION**

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Address Correction Requested

***Dated Material***  
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