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PAPERWEIGHT COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION

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September, 2002

Just ONE Murrina!

by Stanley B. Kruger

(from an idea suggested by Andrew H. Dohan, Esq.)

It is unlikely that the full story behind Andy Dohan's two year long project (read struggle) to develop and produce 30 Delaware Valley 10th Anniversary Commemorative Weights, to celebrate completion of our first ten years of quarterly meetings, will ever be told. Here, however, from someone only tangentially involved, is the tale behind just one of the portrait canes, known as murrine (in the plural or murrina, singular), encased in these delightful and unique collaborative weights.

Around September, 2000, Andy, with his vast knowledge of the entire art glass field, contacted 23 glass artists who had some familiarity with, and competence in, designing portrait canes similar to the work of Italians Franchini, Bucciloni and Bigaglia in the first half of the 19th Century. Have you ever dealt with an artist, trying to commit him or her to a particular course of action over a specific time frame? If you have, then you will understand why it took Andy about a YEAR of continual contacts to cajole 14 of these artists into agreeing to participate in the project, by producing at least one murrina for inclusion in our Commemorative Weight. Andy's article, "A 10th Anniversary Commemorative Weight for Delaware Valley", in our March 2002 Newsletter listed the artists who collaborated in this project and I repeat his list here:

"The murrine artists who participated in this commemorative weight project are: Mike Edmondson, who made the signature date cane and the close-packed miniature millefiori cane; Sue Fox, who made the hot air balloon cane, which, regrettably had annealing issues and could not be used [save for one weight which was given to Sue]; Dinah Hulet, whose geometric looking cane is actually a circle of flying birds; Isis Ray, whose portrait cane is of a Greek figure, perhaps Bacchus, the god of wine; Milissa Montini, who produced two similar swirl designs centered with hearts; Sumiko Motoyama,

whose picture cane is a view of Mt. Fujiyama; Janice Peacock, whose peacock cane is actually her signature cane; Emiko Sawamoto, whose cane looks like a Japanese Kabuki mask; Will Stokes, with his flower cane; Loren Stump, with a portrait cane of a girl [in a blue dress]; Jessie Taj, with four different canes, not all of which appear in the same weights, being a flower, a castle, moon and stars and a beetle; Pati Walton, with her girl in green portrait cane; Jim Wuerfel, with his male/female portraits in the Oriental yin/yang pattern; and, last but not least, Genny Zbach, with her "happy" word cane."

Andy requested these artists to use only Murano glass so their products would be compatible and then selected Jim Hart for the encasement. When Jim Hart had problems with his supplier, Andy provided the millefiori cane for Jim to make the other canes, some of which contain silhouettes. The end result is that our Commemorative Weights each contain a minimum of 14 murrine, while some have as many as 17 canes, both portrait and complex, in them. One will be featured in Larry Selman's Fall 2002 Auction but the other 29 were sold off through a Sealed Bid Auction at our Summer Meeting on July 13, 2002.

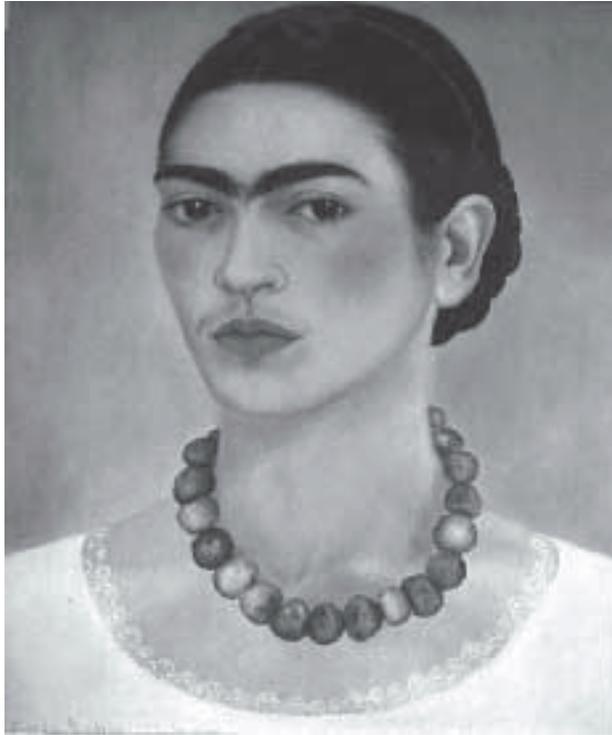
Here, then, is the story of just one murrina in our Commemorative Weight, the portrait cane by Isis Ray. She is a glass artist based in Carnation, WA, and Andy ran across her through a recommendation from Dinah Hulet. Isis agreed to participate in the project and made a murrina of a bearded male profile surrounded by bunches of grapes and grape leaves, "Bacchus, the god of wine" in the excerpt above. However, this cane had annealing issues and Jim Hart's attempts to encase it were failures, because of air bubbles and fissures created in the attempt. It was then March 2002, a year and a half down the road, already very late for Isis to create another murrina. But she did, Fed Exed it directly to Jim Hart, and in time to be included as one of the most recognizable murrine in the Commemorative Weight. It is the portrait of a woman with jet-black hair, full red lips, heavy, connected eyebrows and a dangling

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earring in her ear. It is Isis's portrait of Frida Kahlo. Frida WHO?

Those of you who surf the Internet will understand when I say that, using the Google search engine, I found 54,000 websites either devoted entirely to Frida Kahlo or, at least, that contained some information about her. And did you happen to see the lead article in the Travel section of The Philadelphia Inquirer on Sunday, July 14, the second day of our 10th Anniversary Celebration Weekend? Entitled "A Brush with Frida", the article describes the tempestuous marriage between Frida and Mexico's best known artist, Diego Rivera, he of the sweeping, historical, heroic murals, many of them located in American institutions. Frida was also an artist, but her themes, with their shocking depictions of physical and emotional anguish, were as intimate as Rivera's were monumental. Her canvases were as small as his were enormous. It was, obviously, a mating of extreme opposites, artistically speaking, at least.

Born in 1907 to a German-Hungarian Jewish father (Guillermo, a photographer) and a mother of Spanish and American Indian descent (Matilde), Magdalena Carmen Frida Kahlo y Calderone was their third daughter. She was also rebellious, openly bisexual, and a fervent communist most of her life. She was destined for a long series of physical traumas, and the first of these came early. At the age of six, she was stricken with polio, which left her with a limp. Nevertheless she was a fearless tomboy, and her father's favorite. He had advanced ideas about her education and in 1922 she entered the most prestigious educational institution in Mexico, the National Preparatory School, which had only just begun to admit girls. It was there that she met her husband-to-be, Diego Rivera, who was 21 years her senior and then married to Lupe Marin. He had recently returned from France, and was commissioned to paint a mural at the School. In 1925, at the age of 18, Frida suffered the serious bus accident that was to set the pattern for much of the rest of her life. She was traveling in a bus that collided with a tramcar. As a result, her spine, abdomen, pelvis and right foot were severely traumatized, wounds that led to lengthy hospital stays, many operations, and, eventually, her death. The accident also made it impossible for her to have children, although it was many years before she accepted this. It also meant that she faced a life-long



Frida Kahlo: Self Portrait with Collar, 1933

battle with pain. During her initial convalescence, in 1926, she painted her self-portrait, the first of a long series in which she charted the events of her life and her emotional reactions to them. Over time, this artistic gift enabled her to give meaning to the physical and emotional pain she was to endure for the rest of her life.

In 1928, she met Rivera again. His marriage had just ended and the two found themselves to have much in common, their art talent and their politics, for both were communist militants. They married in August 1929.

Kahlo was later to remark: "I suffered two grave accidents in my life. One on which a streetcar knocked me down. The other accident is Diego." Never considered a classic beauty, Frida nonetheless cut a striking figure, with her long dark hair and distinctive batwing brows that arched over magnetic black eyes.

In 1930, both to avoid the deteriorating political climate in Mexico and because Rivera's reputation was expanding rapidly, they left for San Francisco, then went to New York, in 1931, for the Rivera retrospective organized by the Museum of Modern Art. In 1932 Rivera was commissioned to paint a series of murals for the Detroit Museum, and here Kahlo suffered a miscarriage. While recovering, she painted Miscarriage in Detroit, the first

of her truly penetrating self-portraits. The style she evolved was entirely unlike that of Rivera, being based on Mexican folk art and, in particular, on the small votive pictures known as retablos, which the pious dedicated in Mexican churches. Rivera praised her work as "a series of masterpieces...which exalted the feminine qualities of truth, reality, cruelty and suffering." From Detroit they went again to New York, where Rivera had a commission to paint a mural for the Rockefeller Center, a work that erupted into a major scandal when the patron ordered the half-completed painting destroyed because of the political imagery Rivera insisted on including. But Rivera lingered in the United States, which he loved, and Frida now hated. When they finally returned to Mexico, in 1935, Rivera embarked on a love affair with Frida's younger sister, Cristina. Although they eventually made up after this quarrel, the incident marked a turning point in their relationship. Frida knew that Rivera had never been faithful to any woman and now she began a series of

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extramarital affairs with both men and women that were to continue for the rest of her life.

One of Kahlo's more serious early love affairs, while still married to Rivera, was with the Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky, who had been offered asylum in Mexico on Rivera's initiative. Another, who would gladly have had an affair with Frida but for the fact that she was not attracted to him, was the French Surrealist, Andre Breton. Partly through his help, Kahlo was offered a show at the fashionable Julian Levy Gallery in New York late in 1938, which show was a triumph, about half of her paintings being sold. In 1939, Breton suggested a show in Paris, but did not follow through; this show was rescued by Marcel Duchamp and, with Frida present, opened about six weeks late. Although reviews were good, this show was not a success, even though the Louvre bought one of the paintings. Kandinsky and Picasso also praised her work but Frida always denied that she had aligned herself with Surrealism, remarking "I never painted dreams. I painted my own reality."

Early in 1940, for reasons unknown, Kahlo and Rivera divorced but continued to make public appearances together. In May, after the first attempt on Trotsky's life, Rivera thought it prudent to remove himself to San Francisco. After the second, successful attempt, Kahlo, who had been a friend of Trotsky's assassin, was questioned by the police. Then, she, too, left Mexico, rejoining her ex-husband. Less than two months later, while still in the States, they remarried, possibly because Rivera recognized that Frida's health would inevitably deteriorate and that she would need someone to care for her. Frida's health grew visibly worse from 1944 onward and she underwent the first of many serious operations on her spine and her crippled foot. In early 1950, her physical condition reached a crisis state and she went into hospital in Mexico City, remaining there for a year.

During the decade of the 1940's, Frida's artistic reputation continued to grow and she was included in prestigious group shows in the Museum of Modern Art, the Boston Museum of Contemporary Art and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. In 1946, she received a Mexican government fellowship, a prize from the Annual National Exhibition, and she began teaching at the new experimental art school, La Esmeralda, becoming an inspiration to her students. In 1951, after her return from the year in hospital, Frida became an increasingly fervent Communist, but, sadly, her paintings now grew more clumsy and chaotic, due to the joint effects of pain, drugs and drink. Despite this, in 1953, she was offered her first solo show in Mexico

itself, the only such show held in her lifetime. At first it seemed that she would be too ill to attend but she sent her richly decorated four-poster bed ahead of her, arrived by ambulance, and was carried into the Gallery on a stretcher. It was a triumphal occasion. Also in 1953, threatened by gangrene, Frida had her right leg amputated below the knee. It was a tremendous blow to someone who had invested so much in the elaboration of her own self-image. She learned to walk again with an artificial limb and even danced at celebrations with friends, briefly and with the help of pain-killing drugs. But the end was near. In July 1954, she made her last public appearance and soon thereafter died in her sleep, apparently as the result of an embolism. Her last diary entry read: "I hope the end is joyful - and I hope never to come back. Frida"



Frida Kahlo murrina by Isis Ray

Along with her husband, Diego Rivera, one of the 20th Century's greatest painters, Frida Kahlo came to be seen as a symbol of a post-revolutionary Mexico struggling to define its identity through education and the arts. For four decades after her death, her name, her image and her art lay dormant but in the last ten years there has been a rebirth of interest. Casa Azul, the cobalt blue home, now museum, in Mexico City, where Frida was born, died and lived for 13 years tumultuously with her spiritually loyal but physically faithless spouse, is the main gathering place for Frida fans and she is today considered a feminist icon, about whom one critic said, on the occasion of the only solo exhibition held in Mexico during her lifetime: "It is impossible to separate the life and work of this extraordinary person. Her paintings are her biography."

In Frida's self-portraits, she almost always painted her left ¾ profile; perhaps she thought that was her better side. The viewer, then, sees her ear on the right side of her head. Rarely did she paint both ears or a ¾ right profile, in which her ear would appear on the left side of her face. So, one final, technical note about murrine: Obviously, the colors in the image go clear through the slice of cane. Also, each slice must be polished on both sides in order to avoid any ill effects (air bubbles) from the encasement. So...in some 10th Anniversary Commemorative Weights, you will see Frida's ear on the right; in some, on the left (when the encasement artist flipped the cane slice, either deliberately or inadvertently). We pray you enjoy the version in your weight!

NOW, would you like to hear about the significance of Sumiko Motoyama's View of Mount Fujiyama?



PAPERWEIGHT COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION

REVIEW OF EVENTS

10th Anniversary Celebration Weekend

July 13th and 14th, 2002

The two-day celebration of Delaware Valley's tenth anniversary began at 10 AM on Saturday, July 13, 2002, at familiar Williamson Restaurant surroundings in Horsham, PA. Members and guests snacked on Danish and fruit, coffee and tea while studying the many displays by members and by Guest Dealer Nancy Alfano of Portia Paperweights, Inc., Chicago. At 11 AM, President Kruger called the 10th Anniversary Celebration Weekend Summer Meeting to order. He introduced two paperweight authors in the audience, our own Andy Dohan (The Dictionary of Paperweight Signature Canes: Identification and Dating) and, from Hernando, FL, John D. Hawley (The Glass Menagerie: A Study of Silhouette Canes in Antique Paperweights and The Boston & Sandwich and New England Glass Companies). Other attendees introduced included Stephanie Donahoe from MD and Guest Dealer Nancy Alfano, both first-timers, Patty Mowatt from NC, Elliot and Rosalyn Heith from NYC, Bonnie and Gary Geiger from Beaver, PA, Marty and Beverly Schindler from VA, and Dennis and David Briening, paperweight making brothers from NJ and DE.

After a brief introduction, and donning a second hat, Guest Dealer Nancy Alfano spoke on a favorite topic, Miniature Antique Weights. She first began collecting weights when she married a man who was a charter member of PCA, Inc. She began with antiques and later moved into contemporary American pieces. She established Portia Gallery in downtown Chicago about ten years ago, carrying paperweights and other forms of glass art. Her shop is now known as Portia Paperweights, dealing exclusively in antique and modern weights. One of her earliest interests was miniature antiques, which, by definition, must be under 2" wide, usually 1 3/4" to 2" in width. Living in the Midwest, she had met maker Ron Hansen on a trip to

Upper Michigan. He arranged for her to meet collector and dealer Franklin Schuell, of Indiana, who first showed her and her husband antique miniatures. He called them "the gems or jewels" of a paperweight collection.

Nancy has spent considerable time researching this paperweight niche and disclosed that she has never seen Pantin-like lizards or snakes in the miniature format, but most other designs were created as miniatures by Saint Louis and other classic era factories. Bohemian, Chinese, Murano and French weights were all made as miniatures, although she knows of no English miniatures. Even sulphides, such as St. Madelaine of Paris, were made as miniatures, but, of course, far fewer miniatures were made than standard sizes. There is much information about miniatures in PCA Bulletins. Mr. Schuell wrote an article in the PCA 1985-1986 Bulletin ["Jewels Which Grace the Crown", pages 42-47] explaining his attraction to miniatures and picturing 68 from his collection. He had acquired many of his miniatures from Mexico and Spain and wondered how they ended up there. Miniatures are harder to find now;

there are not many collectors who have specialized in antique miniatures and because there are so few, little research has been done.

As her talk ended, Nancy noted that some weights become miniatures after being polished down from an original larger size. She challenged the audience to inspect her display of miniatures, about 40, and determine which two were not made as miniatures, the winner of this contest to receive a prize.



Dottie & John Shaddinger

At 11:25, Andy Dohan began the process of announcing the winning bidders and distributing the 10th Anniversary Commemorative Weights, each with a box and special stand. This promotion so far had grossed \$7558 and netted \$3638, from 21 bidders. Georgette Most, as highest bidder, received first pick. Each weight was slightly different and eight remained after all 21 had been selected. During the selection process, from 11:30-11:55, members were free to examine the various displays and socialize. Promptly at noon, lunch was announced, choice of crabcake or grilled chicken with raspberry glaze, whipped potatoes and assorted ice creams and sorbets for dessert.

At 1 PM, President Kruger called the business meeting to order. John Zecca was the winner of the cut-down miniatures contest, the only member to correctly identify the two weights, both sulphides, that had started life as

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normal sized pieces. We have our first international member, a lady in Canada, prompting President Stan to suggest three new categories of membership for International Singles, Households and Business members, at \$5 more than the current categories. The MD/DC/VA group, headed by June Morfe, is taking a bus trip to Corning, Toronto's Royal Ontario Museum and the Trabucco Studio, now scheduled for October 10-13. We still need a V.P. candidate, although President Stan might be willing to accept the title, while promising to do "almost nothing". For our 11th Anniversary Celebration Weekend, Nancy Alfano will sponsor an emerging millefiori artist, Jim Brown, from Mt. Juliet, TN. The second day activity will be a visit to Glass Weekend at Wheaton Village on July 13, 2003. New member Dennis Briening, coordinator of glass activities at Salem Community College, announced that next March Loren Stump would lead a two-week course on marble, bead and paperweight making at the College. Treasurer Don Formigli announced that our treasury totals \$8475.41, less today's approximately \$1000 cost. Andy Dohan gave members a last chance to buy one of the eight remaining Commemorative Weights, for a flat \$300, before he bought them all himself. When all eight sold quickly, the last to Pat Reilly, Andy proposed that we use the profit [eventually a grand total of \$5000] to establish a Memorial Scholarship Fund at Wheaton



Stephanie Donahoe, Patty Mowatt, Beverly Schindler

Village, \$500 per year for ten years. This motion passed with enthusiasm. President Kruger acknowledged the great service Andy had performed in creating and bringing to fruition the 10th Anniversary Commemorative Weight promotion.

Raffle tickets had been sold, as usual, during the lunch hour, and the 17 prizes were won by 16 attendees, Len Kornit being the lucky two-time winner.

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At 1:35, President Kruger introduced Loren Stump, a paperweight maker with almost 30 years in glass. He was in stained glass for 20 years, then segued into



Three “STUMP THE DUMMIES” panelists, one interloper
Andy Dohan, (Len Kornit), John Hawley, Ken Brown

lampworking and has pursued that for eight years. Loren narrated a slide show of his work, starting with beads with Japanese images, thus resembling “ojime” beads. These are patinated with a tea solution, dried in a toaster oven, then left for a year to achieve permanency. They are signed with a signature cane. Some beads are small sculptures, 3” tall or so, made for bead collectors, but they stand on their own as sculptures. Loren found that bead fish did not sell well because potential buyers thought the fins looked fragile. He uses the murrine (glass picture slices) technique in almost everything. Some of his pieces are: 1) a set of “O.J.” cars, a white Bronco with license plate and O.J. inside holding a gun to his head, a police car, hearse, etc.; 2) human faces in 3-D, made by pushing a flat murrine slice forward; 3) a shell pendant, 3 ½” in diameter with murrine fish, skin divers, dolphins and/or mermaids floating inside; 4) small eggs, 1½”-3” tall, vacuum-encased with a sight window into the core showing setups and scenes inside.

Loren discussed his technique. Murrine can be pulled down to very small diameters, but he usually leaves them large as they can always be pulled smaller. A slice must be polished on both sides and the edges beveled, or, when encased, it leaves a visible haze. A slice is 1/16” or less so when you look from the side you don’t see a thick edge. Loren derives inspiration from the work of Giacomo B. Franchini in the 1840’s. Loren makes his portrait canes from actual lampwork, not bundled rods (which show the ends of the bundles). He starts in the center of the image, breaking the image down to the smallest unit or base component (nose, eyes, mouth, hair, bow)

made large, pulled down to pencil size, then built together with “brushstrokes” of molten glass in front of the torch to complete the scene or setup. Some images involve as many as 280 components. These components cannot be too large or the entire setup becomes so large it is difficult to melt together. He rubs one shade of molten glass into another to create a third color so there is blending without color separation. Bundled rods often have air pockets; when forcing out this air, distortion occurs, another reason Loren doesn’t use the bundling technique. He has created 12” fused plates with murrine components and teaches this technique at Corning. He has made weights of butterflies with murrine wings over a gold base. The larger the object, the harder to encase. Glass wants to flow around small objects; it cools down when it hits a large setup, but Loren prefers to encase large items. He doesn’t do repeats or limited editions...he just wants to satisfy himself that it can be done. He uses softer Moretti glass, which is different from the glass most weight makers use. Recently he has been inspired by an amethyst crystal geode to make weights that look like crystals containing inserts such as flowers.

These pieces have deliberate stable cracks, not stress or annealing cracks. These are made by plunging the weight into water, then healing the cracks by re-heating in the flame of the torch. These are faceted like irregular faceted crystals. One was made with multiple crystals. Loren has also made statues 5” to 22” tall and weighing up to 53 pounds. Images include an Indian multi-armed goddess, Japanese samurai and geishas, and a comic series of “No Fear” surfers and animals. All were experimental to see how many murrine could be added.



Toby and President Stan, Loren Stump, Nancy Alfano

These larger sculptures have internal copper armatures for support, as in thin legs, for example. Copper wire keeps the glass upright although it may give from side

to side. The wire won't come through the glass; instead it sticks to glass. It isn't actually compatible but there is no problem with the co-efficient of expansion. Loren has also made blown vessels with dimensional decorations added to the outside. He works these inside a kiln to keep them hot. The pieces are formed, cooled, ground to fit and assembled inside a sectional kiln with a kickwheel to turn the piece and a light shining inside. Unlike most kilns, the top of this kiln is cooler than the bottom. Loren cautions that ten degrees is the difference between a broken piece and a whole one because of the softness of his glass. His gloves, by the way, are oxygen-cooled.



Newlyweds Delania and Jim Lefever

Loren finds it hard to price his pieces, claiming that he makes them for himself, not to sell. He considers himself primarily a teacher of murrine techniques. He wants to educate the public to understand these techniques and thus to recognize what they are seeing. He has works on museum tours. He showed pictures of his studio in Sacramento, CA, set up for work and for teaching, with his variation of a vacuum pump (called the "Stump Sucker"!) and multiple drawers full of murrine components. He is now converting a barn on his property into a larger studio. He showed a picture of his then-six-year-old daughter making beads, one of which has been on display in Japan! Loren concluded at 2:30 to appreciative applause. Our President stated that we have heard from a modern glass master. (More applause.) Loren makes few paperweights now and President Stan held up one of the six Loren had brought to Nancy Alfano for sale today. A Question and Answer period ensued. As Nancy is sponsoring Loren and paying his lecture fee, President Kruger presented him with a memento...a DVPCA T-shirt.

A "Stump the Dummies" panel composed of John Hawley, Andy Dohan and Ken Brown puzzled over four mystery weights that were submitted at this point. The panelists discussed the entries and disagreed good-naturedly on the attributions. Door prizes of three crystal bud vases and ten paperweight exhibition catalogs were then awarded. The last formal meeting activity at about 3 PM was the vote on the new DVPCA logo created by Kevin Kruger, which lost out to the simplified original logo [seen on the front page of this newsletter].

Most of the attendees adjourned to the lovely Doylestown home of loyal members John and Dottie Shaddinger for the now-traditional Garden Party/Catered Cookout following the Summer Meeting. Here we were treated to wonderful food in a delightful outdoor backyard setting with flower gardens, koi pools and quiet fields in the distance, and also we took the opportunity to view the hosts' extensive paperweight collection. The Party continued on until about 9 PM.

The next day, Sunday, July 14, at 11:30 AM, twenty-one members met at the Voorhees, NJ home of our President and his wife. Members toured the home, led by Toby K., and examined the many collections, including

great paperweights. By 12:20, it was drizzling but the Krugers had planned for an indoor brunch anyway. After copious appetizers, a delicious buffet meal followed, including home made salads and desserts. At 2 PM, prompted by remarks from President Stan, members spoke about the "fascinating or memorable" weights they had brought to the assembly. The stories were varied but all were illuminating. President Stan suggested that the club stage a paperweight exhibit at a major area museum sometime in the future, within the next five years or so. Several possible venues were discussed. Len Kornit volunteered to contact a curator friend at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Our President then asked everyone to write up their stories about these significant weights and send them to him (the stories, not the weights!), as the stories would add human interest and background to the proposed exhibit. Rosemary Kozak raised a cautionary point that exposing and educating others about weights, while laudatory, will, by raising awareness, lead to more competition and increased prices. She had seen this happen before in other collecting groups; of course, "Antiques Roadshow" has done that, too. Members began to leave for home at 4 PM, closing out a memorable, activity-packed 10th Anniversary Celebration Weekend.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Sutton, Secretary



PAPERWEIGHT COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION

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A PRAYER FOR D. LEE KVALNES, 1933-2002

*May your skies track fast and true through deep powder
May the water always be blue, with infinite visibility
And the sun always shining, with gentle breezes in the air.
May you be surrounded by beautiful fish,
Nudibranchs and colorful corals in an everchanging seascape.
May you always find perfect paperweights with birds, flowers
and especially fish.
May the fiddle be sweet and the dobro soft and low
While they play Lorena and the Wildwood Flower.*

“Thank you, DVPCA, for your support over the past year. Your cards and prayers were a comfort to both of us. Thank you for the fruit basket and for your generous contributions in Lee’s name to the Scholarship Fund at Wheaton Village. As you know, paperweights were one of Lee’s great interests; when he found a nice one with an underwater theme, he added it to our collection. Thanks for everything.” **Florence Kvalnes**

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