SHARDS OF WISDOM

"Heard it Through the Grapevine"



Lifetime Passions for Life, Antiques All of it can end with a closing of an eye and a whispering of words like...Rosebud*

By Ralph Finch - Comments? Tell me at rfinch@twmi.rr.com?

A year or two ago, I started an article about fluters—(irons to shape ruffled shirts—which I also collect...see page 12 this issue). This story is because a recent auction offered "the 60-year Americana collection of a woman from Pennsylvania." I wonder if the woman was alive to attend the passing of her life's work before her own passing. Within a few weeks, at another auction, was "a 50-plus year illation of a Nebraska collector," and then, a 60-year collection "of a Lady from Florida." Again, did this "lady" attend the sale? How many of us who collect for a lifetime live long enough to pass on our "passions" to a new generation of "caretakers"?

By the way, "Rosebud" was the last word spoken in the movie Citizen Kane, perhaps the most-honored U.S. film of all time. At the end of the film, when the secret of the word "Rosebud," uttered by Charles Foster Kane (Orson Welles) before he died, is finally revealed. At that point, his lifetime of accumulations (that a workman describes as "junk") are being tossed into a furnace, including his childhood sled named..."Rosebud." The point of this is that Kane dies an empty life. With luck, readers of this article will not end with an empty life; we have our...old sleds, tons of other items, and—more importantly—friends and families to share them with.

Those of us who collect have a choice (one of mine, my whole life, has been: a new car or an old bottle. And I have never owned a new car). Another choice most of us has is to not die not knowing what happens with our collections, hoping it isn't sold in a garage sale by "Uncle Harry," who never liked you and thought your stuff was stupid. Many of us choose to watch our collections pass on and to even have added to the sale by attaching bits and pieces of information so that the new caretakers might appreciate more of what you had.

I was a bit sad when my collection of Old Sachems went, (knowing it was missing an aqua example), or when my Sandwich colognes were packed up and taken away...sniff...(But Norman Heckler produced for us a wonderful poster of the auction; come and see it.)

Perhaps the hardest to say goodbye to was my (almost) lifelong collection of 250 different glass target balls and related ephemera. It hurt, but with two years of work, with wonderful wife Janet and American Glass Gallery's John Pastor, a catalog was produced that, likely, will last long after I'm gone but will show others what—and why—I had acquired target balls.

In mid-March (2022), the long-popular Ohio house of Garth's offered (edited) an Americana auction "featuring the 50-plus-years personal collection of AnnaMary and Richard York, Lincoln, Neb., along with items from the 60-year collection of a woman from Florida with American decorated and formal furniture" and a ton of stuff. I wonder if any of the collectors witnesses the sale. Do you think it is better—or worse—not to see it all go?

And sold on April 22 (2022), "the sewing collection of Mildred Jarvis, Kennesaw, GA; the 40-year sewing clamp collection of so-and-sos Lyle and Dennis Drier of Oconomowoc, Wisc.; part one of the Dean and Leann Lindsey collection, Phoenix, featuring American and European art glass; and part three of the collection of Larry Spradley of Beaumont, Texas, comprising more than 500 glass, ceramic, and miniature metal lamps of all types; fairy lamps; plus more." (How many fairy lamps do you have before people consider you are one?) How many years did Larry spend to collect these 500 items, and how many auctions did it take to hammer them down? In a few hours, a lifetime of collection went…dark.

Some Glass News [submitted by Willy Van den Bossche]

Last December 9, the *Seven Glass Wonders* were presented in the closing ceremony of the International Year of Glass (IYOG2022). This activity, coordinated by Teresa Palomar, researcher from VI-CARTE (Portugal) and ICV-CSIC (Spain), and the artist Lothar Böttcher, aimed to select the seven objects, buildings and places of the world where the glass was the protagonist or had a fundamental role. With this purpose, each proposal was assessed in function of its originality, innovative character and historical, cultural and industrial character.

Glass professionals from different areas such as arts, architecture, science and industry formed the prestigious international jury. They were Lothar Böttcher and Pfunzo Sidogi (South Africa), Alicia Duran (Spain), Dedo von Kerssenbrock-Krosigk (Germany), Jerzy J. Kunicki-Goldfinger (Poland), John Parker (UK), Maria Grazia Diani (Italy), Peter Malatt (Australia), Kathy Jordan, Susie Silbert and Lauren Fair (EEUU), Amanda Pinto (Brazil), M^a Eugenia Díaz de Vivar (Argentina), Long Zhang and Fang Zheng (China), and Mohammad Al-Asad (Jordan).

After weeks of deliberation, the jury agreed that the Seven Glass Wonders were:

(1) **Glass from the Tomb of Tutankhamun**, currently at the Egyptian Museum, Cairo and, from 2023 also at the Grand Egyptian Museum, Gizeh (Egypt).

The Middle East is the place of origin for glass making. More than 3,500 years ago, practitioners in modern Turkey, Iraq, Egypt and other places succeeded in producing outstanding colorful glass objects and vessels. Only in Egypt, however, in the tombs of the Pharaohs, did these items survive without any wear. Some look as bright as if they had been made yesterday. This is particularly true for the finds from the tomb of Tutankhamun, which was discov-

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ered in 1922, more than 3,300 years after his death. The treasure of glass artifacts from the tomb is exceptionally exquisite, ranging from thousands of elaborate glass inlays, that not only adorn more than 150 pieces of jewelery but also the king's throne, weapons and even chariots, to full-scale head rests made entirely of glass. The blue stripes on the mummy's mask also consist of glass—some of them are more than 50 cm long, and demonstrate the superb level of glass technology already at this early stage of its history.

(2) Lycurgus Cup, The British Museum, London.

This cup displays a miraculous colour effect. Under normal lighting, the glass appears jade green, but when lit from behind, it turns ruby red. Scientists have researched that this phenomenon is due to gold and silver nanoparticles in the glass. While ancient Romans certainly had no concept of nanotechnology, they were capable of using its effects in ways that could not be replicated for millennia. As amazing as its colour effects is its relief cutting. The figures of King Lycurgus, the God Dionysos and others have been carved from the thick-walled blank in a three-dimensional way. The cup is one of the few and most luxurious glass vessels of Roman times, the cage-cups, where the glass blank was painstakingly cut and ground to leave the motif, as a "cage," suspended from the surface. Among these, the Lycurgus cup is the only well-preserved example with figures.

(3) Sainte-Chapelle, Paris, France

Stained-glass windows in Medieval churches collect the outside light and turn it into shapes that glow in the most striking colours inside the church. Windows are often prominent in Gothic cathedrals, but in no other medieval building are the windows as dominant as in the Sainte-Chapelle. It was commissioned by King Louis IX of France as the royal chapel and built in record time from 1242 to its consecration on 26 April 1248. Together with the rose window, 15 stained-glass windows cover a surface area greater than 700 m². 1113 biblical scenes tell the story of the world from its beginning to the arrival of the relics of the Passion of Christ in Paris. While a lot of the glass had to be repaired over time, nearly two-thirds are still the original glass panes dating back nearly 800 years, truly forming walls of light.

(4) **The Ware Collection of Blaschka Glass Models of Plants**, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA

The Blaschkas brought the art of flame-working glass to an extreme, and demonstrated that there is nothing in the natural world that could not be perfectly imitated in glass. This exceptional collection, better known as the "Blaschka Glass Flowers," was commissioned by George Lincoln Goodale, the first director of the Botanical Museum at Harvard. Leopold (1822–1895) and Rudolf Blaschka (1857–1939) were a father and son team of Bohemian glass artists active in Dresden, Germany. Over fifty years, from 1886 to 1936, the Blaschkas produced 4,300 glass models that rep-

March - April 2023

resent 780 plant species in their finest detail. The Blaschkas were already renowned for their invertebrate glass models, known to educational institutions and museums around the world, before they commenced on their epic and intricately detailed glass models of plants.

(5) The Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, New York, USA

The largest glass collection in the world, combined with a library that seeks to build a comprehensive collection of books, archival, and rare materials about glass, and a studio where artists teach their art of glassmaking: This outstanding institution was originally conceived by Arthur A. Houghton, Jr. (1906–1990), whose family owned Corning Glass Works, now Corning Incorporated. The Museum opened its doors in the small town in the Finger Lakes region of upstate New York in 1951. Despite its distance to large cities, it welcomes more than a quarter of a million visitors from all over the world each year. The museum is an independent non-profit institution that preserves and expands the world's understanding of glass, with an educational and aspirational mission: to inspire people to see glass in a new light.

(6) Optical Fibres

A glass rod, when heated, can be pulled into an ever thinner and seemingly endless glass thread. It was known since the 19th century that these fibres could transport light, but it took until the 1960s for researchers such as Charles Kuen Kao to set the stage for a technological revolution. Since the 1970s, glass fibres about as thick as a human hair are being used to transport huge quantities of information, functioning, in simple terms, as light bouncing in a tube. The network of optical fibre is ever expanding throughout the world. This extensive and invisible network of cables stretches over 1.2 million kilometres globally, delivering emails, news, your favourite films and cute videos of cats almost instantaneously.

(7) Hubble Space Telescope

The Hubble Space Telescope is the first dedicated observatory launched and deployed into orbit by the space shuttle Discovery on 24 April 1990. Two mirrors, made of ultra-low expansion glass (kept at 21°C to avoid warping) offer Hubble its optical capabilities. A primary glass mirror of 2.4 m diameter and weighing approximately 800 kg reflects its light on the 0.3 m secondary mirror. Hubble has revealed crystal clear views of our universe—from distant stars and galaxies never before seen, to detailed observations of the planets in our solar system. Many Hubble observations have led to breakthroughs in astrophysics, such as determining the rate of expansion of the universe. The Hubble Space Telescope is an international collaboration between NASA and the European Space Agency (ESA), and has made more than 1.5 million observations during its 30 years of service.