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Guide for the Novice Paperweight Collector

by Zoralyn Stahl

My addiction...I refer to my passion for collecting paperweights...began in 1970 when a friend gave me a very old paperweight. My first paperweight purchase was a very old (as described by the seller) paperweight which sold for \$21. Shortly thereafter I went to a local house wares gift show where this very old paperweight appeared in several displays, all of which had an oval "Made in China" paper label on the base and a \$3.99 price tag. When I attempted to get my money back from the person who had sold me the very old weight, she told me that she didn't know anything about paperweights and she wouldn't refund my money. At that time, \$21 was a not inconsiderable sum and would have bought me

two pairs of jeans or many, many gallons of gasoline. I then asked myself certain questions: Did I want to buy paperweights? Answer: "Yes, yes, emphatically yes". Did I want to continue to be a victim of people who didn't know what they were selling? Answer: "No. no. no!" What should I do about this situation? Answer: "Simple; learn about paperweights." However in 1972 this was easier said than done. I didn't know anyone who collected paperweights. The only paperweights I had ever seen were in a display table at The Art Institute in Chicago, which I looked at a lot in the 1940s. In fact my insistence on visiting these paperweights every time I was at the Art Institute was responsible for my being given the paperweight in 1970.

Fortunately for me and my wallet, one of my mother's cousins worked for Hobbies Magazine. When I showed her my two



My first Paul Ysart weight, May 1972.



My first antique weight, a Clichy purchased November 1971.

paperweights, she gave me a copy of the latest issue of the magazine and a free ticket to an antique show sponsored by the magazine. I spent two wonderful days at the show, meeting and talking with paperweight dealers, holding and looking at genuine antique French and American paperweights and purchased two books about antique paperweights. I also bought two paperweights, a Baccarat scramble and a Perthshire, learned about the existence of the Paperweight Collectors Association, found out that my first gift weight was an antique New England Glass Company scramble worth (then) \$35 and joined the Paperweight Collectors Association for exactly \$0 as membership was free in 1972.

In 1972, I was self-employed with very limited funds to support my habit. I had decided that I wanted to collect antique paperweights. I sent postcards to the paperweight dealers advertising in Hobbies Magazine stating that I was a beginning collector and that I could spend up to \$300 for an antique French paperweight.

Thirty-six years later paperweight collecting continues to be my primary addiction. In the beginning finding antique paperweights involved attending antique shows, scrounging through flea markets, browsing through antique shops and meeting up with dealers who might have weights for sale. All this took time, energy In 2001 I acquired a new computer (my old

laptop didn't have a Windows program) and I quickly found the World Wide Web, the Internet and, Glory Be!, eBay! There they were, hundreds and hundreds of paperweights, right before my eyes, in full color, all the paperweights I could want to see while sitting in an easy chair in my own home. No more chasing around trying to find antique shops that were open at hours convenient to me or waiting for antique shows to arrive. I also discovered that the sellers on eBay were and are similar to the sellers I encountered when I first started buying paperweights. There were lots and lots of Murano, Chinese, Ohio and Indiana paperweights, from sellers who thought they were all worth thousands of dollars.

This guide is for beginning, that is, novice, paperweight collector(s), those who want to learn about the paperweights being offered for them to buy. There is much more information available to you today than there was for me when I began, and for that you should be grateful. There are reference books galore and people willing and able to help you, many of them on eBay. In just 13 years...eBay began in September 1995...eBay has changed the entire business of buying and selling antiques and collectibles but that is another story. Here is my Guide for the Novice Paperweight Collector. I pray this makes your paperweight collecting odyssey easier, more pleasurable and eventually more rewarding.



1972 Perthshire, acquired in 1972.



Baccarat with a "Clichy" rose.

1) BUY WHAT YOU LIKE! DON'T BUY WHAT YOU DON'T LIKE! In other words, buy what "sings" to you. Remember, when considering the things that appeal to you, you only regret the things you don't buy!

2) FOLLOW THE CARDINAL RULE OF "BUYER BEWARE!" Don't believe anything a seller tells you. Sellers want to sell. If you make a mistake, you pay for it, plus shipping, handling, and insurance.

EXAMPLES FROM RECENT EBAY LISTINGS: "Antique French Baccarat Pansy Paperweight", which was really a 1930s Chinese copy of a Sandwich poinsettia; "Millefiori Baccarat Overlay Paperweight Signed" which was really a 1970s Murano concentric with a fake acid etched Baccarat logo; "Baccarat flower", another Chinese copy. Beware the terms "rare", "beautiful", "gorgeous"; "must be old because of wear on the bottom", "colorful"... these are the seller's unknowledgeable opinions. Only you, the buyer, can determine rarity, beauty and pertinence to a particular collection. My personal opinion --- most of the sellers pictures of their offerings make it extremely difficult to recognize a "winner".

DEFINITIONS:

Antique paperweight – Weights created over 100 years ago (by Baccarat, Clichy, St. Louis, Pantin, St. Mandé, New England Glass Company, Boston and Sandwich Glass

Company, Union Glass Company, Mt. Washington (Pairpoint) and some Whitefriars, Millville, Bohemian, Italian, Russian. The vast majority of these WERE NOT SIGNED AND/OR DATED. Be wary about diamond pen signatures; this tool was not available in the period 1840-1920's.

Vintage paperweight – Weights made more than 35 years ago. Thus the Perthshire I purchased in 1972 can now be described as a "Vintage Perthshire paperweight".

For simplicity paperweights made after 1970 by Baccarat and St. Louis (Clichy's factory burned down in the 1850's) usually are signed and dated. This applies also to paperweights made by Charles Kaziun, Paul Stankard, limited edition Perthshires, Ray and Bob Banford, Rick Ayotte, et al, and early Paul Ysart weights (1930's-1991). Therefore, this Guide is to help you sort out which paperweights are antiques and which are merely vintage.

I've learned that books about paperweights, with lots of pictures, are helpful. The first dollars you spend are for books ... my first purchases were Paul Hollister's "The Encyclopedia of Glass Paperweights" published in 1969 and Evelyn Campbell Cloak "Glass Paperweights of the Bergstrom Art Center" also published in 1969. Over the years I've added many, many more. The digital

Continued on page 8



St. Louis mushroom with ring of roses.



Paul Ysart signed mini-weight.



PAPERWEIGHT COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION

Review of Events

16th Anniversary Celebration Weekend July 12 & 13, 2008

DVPCA's 16th Anniversary Celebration Weekend began officially at 10 AM on Saturday, July 12, 2008 with a Summer Meeting at Williamson's Restaurant in Horsham, PA, our usual venue. Thirty-six had registered but only 33 actually attended, in sharp contrast to the 53 that had participated in DVPCA's Summer Meeting the year before. Later, 29 of that number attended the Garden Party/Catered Cookout at the home of loyal member Andrew Dohan in Wayne, PA, about 15 miles from Williamson's, which ran from approximately 4:30 to 9 PM.

From 10 AM to 11 AM members perused the paperweights that were brought by Guest Dealer Roger Jacobsen, ably assisted by Ben Drabek. Also on view were members' displays of paperweight books and weights, some of the weights being made by the

members themselves. Danish, coffee/tea and fruit were made available for members during this Social Hour period.

At 11 AM, President Stanley Kruger called the meeting to order, noting that Joan Parsley was the long-distance winner, having traveled from Wauwatosa, Wisconsin to attend. President Stan then quickly launched into his PowerPoint presentation, The American Flag in Glass Paperweights, some of which is quoted below:

Of all the patriotic icons available to U.S. citizens – Uncle Sam, the Liberty Bell, Old Abe, the American Bald Eagle, the Statue of Liberty, military and political heroes, etc. – the American flag is the ultimate patriotic symbol and has been in all its combinations and permutations since the founding of this country 232 years ago. From the moment in June 1776 when Betsy Ross reported to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania that she had sewed the first American flag until the present day, the flag has been an enduring symbol of the freedoms we enjoy in this country and has prompted immigrants from all parts of the world to venture here. As an illustration of the flag's impact on this society and, indeed, on the world community, a recent poll of the 100 most famous and important war photographs of all time, ranging from the American Civil War to the war in Iraq, found that Joe Rosenthal's February 23, 1945 photograph Raising the



Looking over the paperweight display by Guest Dealers Roger Jacobsen and Ben Drabek, 7/12/08.



Sandy and Marty Mikelberg and President Stan with Roger Jacobsen's weights, 7/12/08.



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Flag on Iwo Jima occupied the Number 1 slot, winning the Pulitzer Prize for photography that year, the only photograph to win that prize in the same year as its publication. It is quite possibly the most reproduced photograph of all time.

Stan then went on to explore six categories of weights containing large representations of the American flag: 1) Mid-West American flag weights; 2) Union Glass American flag weights; 3) Toledo, Ohio (Libbey Glass) American flag weights; 4) Modern American flag weights; 5)

Other American flag weights; and 6) Unknown (or test) American flag weights. He noted that Toledo, Ohio is in the American mid-West, defined by Gary McClanahan as extending from the Ohio River to the Mississippi, bounded on the south by the Ohio River and on the north by Canada, but Stan had separated the two categories to allow for a more efficient showing. Some 94 weights comprised the presentation, the most unusual of which was a 48 star Czech sulphide flag probably dating from the 1920s or 1930s. This program was well received and cleverly



Gordon Smith and other members at the Summer Meeting, 7/12/08.



Guest Dealer Roger Jacobsen and Jim Lefever, 7/12/08.

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At 11:40 AM, those members who had attended Paperweight Fest 2008 at WheatonArts and had acquired items there were called upon for a "Show and Tell" of their acquisitions. Each collector described their weights and their significance. The most spectacular acquisition, by Joe Freeze, was a 20" by 30" shadow box of a compass rose design composed of thousands of millefiori and lampwork examples from a large number of artist, all identified by name in the design.

Just at noon, the program was halted so that members could again peruse the various paperweight displays until lunch was served at 12:30 PM. At 1:30 PM, President Stan announced that the Corning Museum of Glass was soliciting for two positions, Glassblowers at Sea to give live, narrated glassblowing

demonstrations on Celebrity Cruises and a Facility Coordinator at the Museum. Stan then read a letter sent by Eric Hansen to both WheatonArts staff and DVPCA thanking us for including him in the program at Paperweight Fest 2008. Quoting: "Well, just when I think I might slow my glassmaking down, I am energized to take it another step with all this new information whirling about in my head. It was an honor to meet all of you and hope to see you next year."

Stan next mentioned a fundraiser from the Texas PCA of a double deck of playing cards with Parabelle weights pictured for \$15 per set. He also implored the attendees for DVPCA program ideas, which led to some discussion and one viable idea, that Andrew Scott do a talk on Displaying and Cataloging the Collection. Stan also requested articles for the



Ben Drabeck, Diane Atkerson, 7/12/08.



Pat Ackerman, Guest Speaker Kathy Moyer at the Garden Party, 7/12/08.

quarterly newsletter, lead articles being three pages in length with pictures. He asked how many planned to attend on Sunday, July 13 for the guided tour of the Heritage Glass Museum in Glassboro, New Jersey and the Museum of American Glass in Millville, New Jersey and found only six hands up. Finally, the Today's Raffle Prize winners were chosen by lot number, three of the prizes being donated by the Guest Dealers Roger Jacobsen and Ben Drabeck.

At 1:50 PM, President Stan introduced the PM speaker, Kathy Moyer, former Vice President and Publications Director of PCA,, Inc, speaking on "Beauty and the Beast: Important Paperweights at Auction". Kathy narrated a detailed PowerPoint presentation (after a suitable laptop had been obtained through the combined efforts of Andrew Scott and Rob Campe) picturing the highest priced weights at auction over the past century. The highest priced of all, at \$258,000 on June 29, 1990, was a Clichy basket, and at a figure that is not likely ever to be exceeded.

At about 3:10 PM, Ken Brown, Ben Drabeck and President Stan formed a "Stump the Dummies" panel with four mystery weights to be examined and identified. The most mysterious weight was that put forward by Pat Ackerman, a weight heavily scratched and chipped but found beneath the surface scratching was a Boston and Sandwich floral waiting to be discovered and repaired by a

master craftsman. The Summer Meeting was formally adjourned at 3:45 PM and most everyone then followed directions to the Dohan home in Wayne, PA for the Garden Party/Catered Cookout. Although it was a hot summer day, the trees and foliage around the Dohan home provided natural air conditioning so that the late afternoon and early evening affair was quite pleasant.

The next day, Sunday, July 13, 2008, six members, Joan Parsley, Andrew Scott and Nancy Kenna, Pat Ackerman and Stan and Toby Kruger met at around 10:45 AM at the Heritage Glass Museum. There Mary and Bill Kephart, Museum Board Members, gave the group a one hour guided tour of the revamped Museum. A picture taken of the six appeared in the Gloucester County (NJ) Times on Thursday, July 17, 2008 and is available in DVPCA's Library.

Five of the six then drove to WheatonArts for lunch at the Paper Waiter restaurant after which they toured the Museum of American Glass special exhibit, Paperweight Perspectives from the Gaskill Collection. This was a self-guided tour as the signage in the exhibit was wonderfully clear and explicit. Thus, came to an end DVPCA's 16th Anniversary Celebration Weekend.

Respectfully submitted,

Martin Mikelberg
Secretary



The Catered Affair at the home of Andy and DeeDee Dohan, 7/12/08.



Digging in to the Catered Affair, 7/12/08.

Continued from page 3...

camera is the greatest tool for beginning collectors. You can train your eyes to recognize what you are dealing with and looking at. Many novice collectors avoid this step and make many costly mistakes because they don't know what they are doing and fall victim to unscrupulous vendors. The following seven books represent a basic paperweight reference library, at a total cost of much less than a thousand dollars: Hollister, The Encyclopedia of Glass Paperweights; Kulles, Identifying Antique Paperweights: Millefiori; Kulles, Identifying Antique Paperweights: Lampwork; Selman, All About Paperweights; Selman, The Art of the Paperweight; Melvin, American Glass Paperweights and Their Makers: Revised 1970 Edition; and Casper, Glass Paperweights of the Bergstrom-Mahler Museum. These are all in my "library".

Everyone makes mistakes. They are an essential part of the learning experience. But another old saying is "Knowledge is Power". Even with my reference books and fought-for expertise, I still make mistakes but I don't pay for them because I always consult with my fellow collectors before making a purchase. Two or more heads are better than one, as all the game shows can attest. In my collection are three or four paperweights that I haven't been able to identify, but I like looking at them. Remember that this Guide is for the novice

collector. Once you have met a certain paperweight dealer and come to know him and/or her and rely on his information, one can reduce the level of "Buyer Beware" when dealing with that dealer. However the first rule above remains in effect for all time: BUY WHAT YOU LIKE! DON'T BUY WHAT YOU DON'T LIKE! Based on my personal experience over my collecting years, I strongly suggest that you make a plan....decide whether you want to collect antique and/or modern, flowers, animals, certain colors, magnums or miniatures, etc. This is how I ended up - paperweights containing roses from Pairpoint, Clichy, St. Louis, Baccarat, and Ayotte; blue and turquoise are my favorite colors; millefiori canes because they were more interesting; miniatures! AND MOST IMPORTANTLY (IN MY CASE) I NEVER BOUGHT A PAPERWEIGHT for the purpose of making a profit. However, over the years I have upgraded my collection by trading and/or exchanging paperweights.

Good luck and God speed on your paperweight collecting odyssey!

About Zoralyn Stahl.....I held and looked at my first paperweight in 1934 (a snow globe given to me by my Hungarian grandmother). I was 4 years old. 10 years later I met the Mrs. Potter Palmer paperweight collection at The Art Institute (in Chicago). I attended my first Paperweight Collectors Association, Inc.



Paul Ysart floating bouquet.



1970s era Pairpoint.

convention in 1973 (in Chicago). At this convention, I decided to concentrate on antique American and French paperweights, and met Beverly and Marty Schindler, who went with me to the Bergstrom Museum in Neenah. I started a paperweight collectors club in 1975. In case you're wondering...my collection of paperweights - 275 (plus some received as gifts, which I don't like or care for). As antique paperweights went up in value over the years, I started collecting early Paul Ysart weights, Pairpoint Glass, and Perthshires. I do not own any weights made by Charles Kazium, Paul Stankard, Ken Rosenfeld, Bob or Ray Banford, or Debbie Tarsitano (not because I don't like them but because they were too costly). I chose to put my money on antique paperweights. My life began in 1970 --- I started collecting paperweights I loved and treasured friends who share my love of paperweights.

INVITATION TO MD-DC-VA MEETING ON OCTOBER 5, 2008

MD-DC-VA PCA invites you to join them for their October meeting. It will be held at the home of Jim and Delania Lefever in the Lancaster, PA area. The meeting is planned for 1:30 PM Sunday, October 5, 2008. Jim will have the majority of his paperweights out on display that day. Jim's collection of more than 1000 paperweights is an eclectic collection of

antique and modern paperweights with an emphasis on the "unusual". There is also a small sub-collection of other glass objects and whimsies.

The meeting will start with a hot meal that Jim and Delania will provide. Lunch will be followed by a talk on scramble paperweights and a short MD-DC-VA business meeting. There will be plenty of time to peruse Jim's collection. There is no charge for lunch but please RSVP to Jim with a head count by October 1 so he knows how to plan.

Meeting is located at 810 Mount Joy Road, Manheim, PA 17545. Call 717-665-4881 or email mrglass@redrose.net to RSVP and for more detailed directions if needed.

Directions from Philadelphia area: Take PA Turnpike west and get off at the Lancaster/Lebanon Exit, Exit 266. Take Route 72 south 5.7 miles to center of Manheim. At square turn right on West High Street, Rt. 772, and go one mile. Our house is #810. A brick ranch style on the right at the top of the hill.

People, here is a great opportunity to visit with one of the largest private collections of paperweights in the United States and within easy driving distance of Philadelphia. Toby and I plan to attend and we hope you will consider doing so yourselves.



Baccarat mini-weight with two silhouette canes.



New England Glass Company concentric.

THE SCRAMBLE:

THANK YOU...Again, we pay tribute to the generosity of our loyal members for their contributions: the Krugers for a mantel clock, a four-lobed bowl and two silvered goblets; the Suttons for the paperback *Glass Paperweights of the Chicago Art Institute*; to Diane Atkerson for four wine glasses; to Roger Jacobsen and Ben Drabek for an early Chris Buzzini weight, an Allan Tillman auction catalog and a Caithness weight. All of these items, and more, became Today's Raffle Prizes at DVPCA's Summer Meeting on July 12, 2008. Thank you all!

PCA, INC, CONVENTION, MAY 20-23, 2009, TOLEDO, OHIO...If you are not a member of PCA, Inc. you cannot attend the group's biennial convention, next year in Toledo, Ohio, with the magnificent Toledo Museum of Art and Glass Pavilion as part of the Convention program. DVPCA needs a concerted effort to make a great showing at this Convention. If you are not yet a member of PCA, Inc., consider joining now!

PROGRAM IDEAS...Can you suggest a program for DVPCA in the next 12 months? What would you like to see or who would you like to hear from? All suggestions given serious consideration. Could you yourself give a talk about your collecting activities? Think about it!

DAN MCNAMARA...DVPCA's Guest Dealer in April 2005 and April 2006 passed away in late July, 2008 and DVPCA sent a Sympathy card to his widow, Therese McNamara. He will be missed.

RESPONSE FROM THERESE MCNAMARA..."I was truly overwhelmed by the outpouring of your kind expressions of sympathy and support at Dan's passing....Your friendship over the years meant the world to Dan and I will always treasure it. With grateful thanks. Therese McNamara"

CALENDAR:

ADVANCE MEETING DATES AND GUESTS

October 5, 2008 – MD-DC-VA PCA meeting at the home of Jim and Delania Lefever, 810 Mount Joy Road, Manheim, PA. RSVP to Jim at 717.665.4881 or mrglass@redrose.net if you plan to attend.

October 11 & 12, 2008 - Northeast Marble Meet, Marlborough. MA. For details, contact Bert Cohen at Marblebert@aol.com.

October 24, 2008 – Last day to enter initial bids on Larry Selman's Fall Auction.

January 31, 2009 – Winter Meeting: AM: Andrew Scott speaks on "Displaying and Cataloging a Paperweight Collection". PM: Phil Edelman speaks on his career "35 Years a Paperweight Dealer". Guest Dealer: Leo Kaplan, Ltd.

April 18, 2009 – Spring Meeting: AM: Swap Meet – Bring in those items you are willing to sell or trade. PM Jim Lefever talks on "Paperweight Doorknobs". Guest Dealer: Jim Lefever.

April 24, 2009 – Last day to enter initial bids on Larry Selman's Spring Auction.

May 20-23, 2009 – PCA, Inc. biennial Convention in Toledo, Ohio.

July 18 & 19, 2009 – 17th Anniversary Celebration Weekend.

October 17, 2009 – Fall Meeting, with Best Finds Contest of 2008/2009.

ALL SATURDAY MEETINGS AT WILLIAMSON'S RESTAURANT, Horsham, PA...

SAVE THE DATES!!!

Fall Meeting Announcement
October 18, 2008

At Williamson Restaurant
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 (Route 611/Easton Road at Blair Mill Road)
 Horsham, PA
 Located two traffic lights north of PA Turnpike Exit
 343 (Old Exit 27/Doylestown/Willow Grove)
 Telephone (215) 675-5454

10:00 AM Paperweight Fair with Guest Dealer **William Pitt**

11:00 AM John D. Hawley repeats his Paperweight Fest 2008 talk on "Nicolas Lutz and the New England Glass Company".

12:30 PM Lunch

1:30 PM Business Meeting:
 Announcements, Silent Auction Results, Reports from the Floor, Raffle Prize Winners, Treasurer's Report, ELECTIONS.

2:00 PM Guest Artist **Christopher Lee Buzzini** began his glass career in the early 1970s at California State University in Chico, CA. Born in Yosemite National Park, Buzzini launched his professional career at Orient & Flume In Chico but in 1976 moved to New Jersey to work at the Bridgeton Studio for two years. Returning to the West Coast he put in time at Lundberg Studios and CorreiaArt Glass and in 1986 opened his own studio. As a successful independent artist, he has also taught flameworking at Corning Museum of Glass and more recently at Studio First in Ashikaga, Japan in April, 2008. In 2003, Buzzini participated in flamework demonstrations at the 33rd Annual Glass Art Society Conference in Seattle, WA. His detailed

Luncheon Reservations – October 18, 2008

Choices @ \$17.00 each

_____ Number Attending
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 _____ Pasta Primavera, Vegetables, Garlic Butter

_____ \$ Luncheon Total

Name(s) _____

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Please mail this slip with ALL of your selections and check to:

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NO LATER THAN OCTOBER 10, 2008!!!

botanicals encased in fine crystal are found in the leading art glass museums, including the Museum of American Glass in Millville, NJ, the Bergstrom-Mahler Museum In Neenah, WI, the Corning Museum of Glass in Corning, NY, the Currier Museum of Art in Manchester, NH and the Kobe Lampwork Glass Museum in Kobe, Japan. Today, Buzzini resides in Oregon City just outside Portland, OR where his studio and outstanding gardens inspire his extraordinary vision. His topic today: Flowers in Glass and in the Garden.



Buzzini Sunflowers and Berries Weight.



PAPERWEIGHT COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION

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