

Featuring the latest from the American Glass Guild

The American Glass Guild's Dedication to Education



by Tony Glander

Those visiting the American Glass Guild (AGG) website will find its mission statement in the very first line: "We are an inclusive organization that actively seeks the participation of all people with an interest in stained, leaded, and decorative glass and its preservation and restoration." Just one of the inspiring ways that AGG makes a difference in the stained glass community is by offering scholarships. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Guild's dedication to raising and distributing educational funds in the form of scholarships. Jim Whitney, a stained glass artist who strongly believed not only in educating for our future, but also in using education to bring people into a community, inspired the scholarships. Recipients enjoy the stained glass educational opportunities made possible by the scholarships. Behind the dedication are also a fair amount of good times experienced while raising and using these funds.

The AGG holds an auction at its annual summer conference to raise funds for the scholarships. Members begin collecting items from the stained glass community over the winter months. The auctions consistently feature more than 100 items for sale, including artwork, materials, supplies, and services. In previous auctions, donated artwork has been responsible for a large amount of the funds raised. Two incredible examples consist of the stained glass piece of a miner by Michael Mezalick and Matthew Kibert and the 3-D theater piece, *Tosca: Act I*, by Celeste Parrendo. Both pieces inspired high bidding. Education is also a fundraiser at the conferences. Many classes, from traditional painting to screen printing, are auctioned as a means of promotion. The auction has become a highlight of the conference, since it offers an evening of fun, good-natured competition, and great items.

Scholarships Provide Invaluable Opportunities

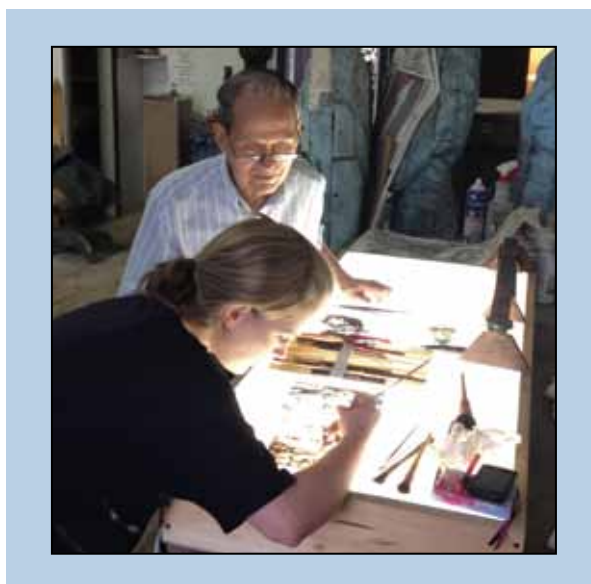
The funds raised through the annual auction are distributed each year through the James Whitney Scholarship Fund. Since 2007, the AGG has awarded 68 full and partial scholarships for educational opportunities, such as conferences and workshops. At the 2013 conference, 16 scholarships were awarded for learning opportunities across the country and even internationally, such as 12 days of glass painting with Gianni Bracciali, in Italy.



Auction panel by Michael Mezalick and Matthew Kibert. Photo by Tony Glander.

Paul Jurgens of Jacksonville Art Glass used his scholarship to attend a glass painting workshop led by J. Kenneth Leap and Kathy Jordan in historic Wheaton Village in New Jersey. "By the end of the week, each person had completed between two and four pieces that they were able to take home. That in itself is noteworthy, but I feel I brought home something even more important—a more profound knowledge base of stained glass painting techniques to be built upon and referred to for future projects as well as memories of good times and friendships." Ekaterina Reier used her scholarship for the same class. "We learned; we laughed; we exchanged experiences. And none of that would have been possible for me and several others in the group if it were not for the scholarship fund."

The scholarship awarded to Whitney Capps allowed her to embark on a "glass odyssey." The odyssey included travels from Boston, Massachusetts, to the Big Easy. "None of those experiences would have been possible without the James C. Whitney Scholarships I received from the American Glass Guild and its generous members. I'm happy to say that I can see improvement in my work and am a more confident glass artist today than I was a year ago," said Whitney.



AGG workshop at Hunt Stained Glass led by Nick Parrendo attended by students using AGG scholarship funds. Photo by Tony Glander.

Education, Dedication, and Inspiration

The education, camaraderie, and dedication to the craft described by the participants would have made the scholarship's namesake proud. Whitney was a strong supporter of the American Glass Guild during its inception. He approached his life, craft, and art with great passion and a high level of integrity. His zest for life and his pursuit of excellence have inspired many artists to increase their understanding and love of stained glass.

The 2014 scholarship deadline is January 31, 2013, with notification of awards by February 28, 2014. Information and applications can be found at the AGG website as well as information on the 2014 conference, which will be held at Bryn Athyn College June 26–29, 2014.

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Visit www.americanglassguild.org for more information on becoming a member of the American Glass Guild.

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