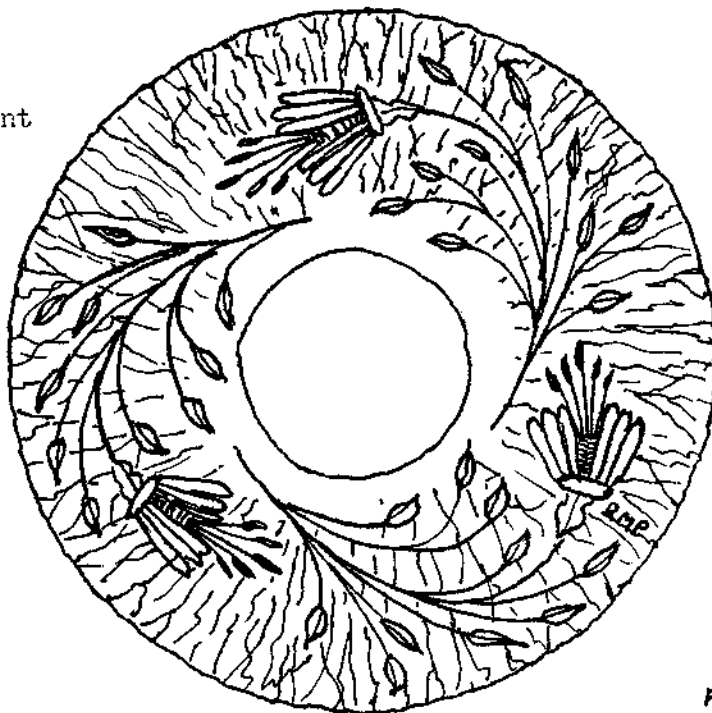


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STRETCH GLASS SOCIETY

N E W S L E T T E R

JANUARY 1976

A message from your President . . .

By the time you receive this copy of your newsletter you will be in a new and exciting year. Exciting because you have such a fine hobby to pursue. Exciting because the new people you will meet will make it so. 1975 was a good year. 1976 will be better! Our newsletter is the best in any hobby. We are going to make it better by informing Paul of our new and exciting finds. We are going to make it better by asking questions about our hobby and receiving answers. We are going to make it better by writing exciting articles for each of us to share. Aren't we???

Our convention site is super! We can sit around the pool in our swim suits and view the beautiful displays of glass in the windows of each room with snow on the ground. (It never snows in April in Kentucky)! "Solar Dome" another wonder of this marvelous age. Please don't miss this convention.

Everyone is working to make this an exciting and enjoyable event. Get those reservations in right away! Send your articles to Paul!

In this newsletter you will find a postage-paid card to be sent in for your reservations. These were furnished by the Northern Kentucky Convention Bureau and they will help at the convention free of charge. They will register members and type up badges. How's that for "Southern Hospitality?" A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR TO EACH AND EVERY MEMBER!

James R. Farr, President

In the last newsletter we promised to give you the technical side of the making of Stretch Glass. The article below was published in The Antique Trader, Dubuque, Iowa 52001 in the July 1, 1975 issue and was written by Russell and Kitty Umbraco. It is brought to you, both the article and pictures, by written permission from Mr Kyle D. Husfloen, Editor, The Antique Trader and the authors, Russell and Kitty Umbraco. If you have any specific questions that you would like answered regarding anything you do not understand, the authors would be pleased to help you with them. Be sure and enclose a SASE for your answer.

- - - - -
Reliving History . . .

FENTON ART GLASS COMPANY
MAKES LIMITED RUN OF
NEW STRETCH GLASS

By Russell & Kitty Umbraco

For the first time in forty years, stretch glass was again made at a commercial glass factory. Don't worry, stretch glass collectors, as this was a very special run yielding 69 perfect pieces with all pieces being signed. What was even more exciting was that the Stretch Glass Society members were allowed to watch the making of the new stretch glass. It was a wonderful way to start the celebration of our exciting Country's Bicentennial. The excitement was felt by both the workers and spectators.

The setting was a cool Spring day. A beautiful time for a rebirth of a special type of glass that reflects the colors of Spring with all the clean radiant glow of Spring flowers. The time for experimentation was April 17, 1975, in the Fenton Art Glass Company factory with Mr. Frank M. Fenton, President, anxiously watching the workers' progress with the making of the new stretch glass. Would it turn out as expected? Yes, it did. However, not all of the pieces were perfect and some had to be discarded. On April 18, 1975, the members of The Stretch Glass Society who were attending the second convention in Marietta, Ohio, went across the Ohio River to see their beloved stretch glass being made for the first time in approximately 40 years at the Fenton Art Glass Company factory, Williamstown, West Virginia.

The process in making stretch glass that the Fenton factory used was as follows:

1. The hot molten glass is wound on the end of a punty rod which is a long steel rod with a clay ball on the end, by a man called a 'gatherer.' This man is very important in the making of all handcrafted glass (handcrafted glass is glass that is made by men who are experts through years of experience in the making of glassware). Today, in our modern world, most glass is made completely by machines with men just supervising. The 'gatherer' is very important as he must put the correct amount of molten glass on the end of the punty rod.

2. The molten glass on the punty rod is given to the 'presser' - another skilled craftsman. Then the molten glass is put into a mold. The 'presser' cuts off with special shears, the glass that is dropped into the mold from the glass that is on the punty rod. The 'presser' lets the end fall into the mold which sometimes makes a



Molten glass poured into a mold.
The worker is releasing the mold.

"scar" in the finished piece. This "scar" is correctly called a shear mark but many people call it a "straw mark." We should add that no straw is ever used in the cooling of the glass.

The 'presser' gingerly pulls the mold machine lever with the exact pressure and the proper amount of time (this skill must be learned from practice). Without doing everything exactly right, the 'presser' can and will shatter the glass if he uses too much muscle power and pressure; with too little pressure the mold will not completely fill to make the desired shape.

Mold No. 638 was used to make the new stretch glass pieces. A similar, but smaller mold was used to make many pieces of the old stretch glass.

3. The molded piece is then reheated and is handed to the chemist or 'iridizer' who sprays it with an aqueous metallic salt solution to make the iridescent surface on the piece. This spray has to be exactly right or the piece will turn out with too little or too much iridescence.

4. The piece is again reheated in the glory hole, which, with a temperature of around 2,000°F., burns off some of the metallic salts shrinking those left to make a crepe or stretched finish.

5. At this point the piece is complete with iridescence and 'stretch' finish and in the shape of a bowl. But to make the other shapes, the 'finisher' takes the still hot and pliable piece and makes it into a desired shape and size. At this stage of the process, the piece of stretch glass is still very hot, hot enough so that the 'finisher' can, with the use of the tools of the trade, make each piece more interesting and individual. He mainly uses a cherry wood paddle and a tool called a 'pucellas.' A few pieces of the new stretch glass were not worked by the 'finisher' just to see what would happen. These pieces turned out very well with a very good stretch and iridescent finish, just like the other pieces that were worked and shaped by the 'finisher.' The 'finisher,' of course, looked slighted at not having the chance to work those few bowls.

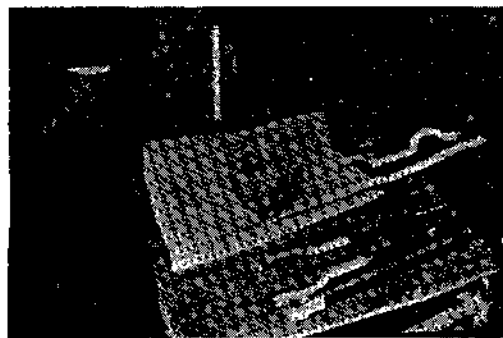
6. Some of the new pieces were made into "swung" vases. The vase 'swinger' takes the bowl from the man who has reheated the bowl to give it the stretch finish. While still on the snap end of the pontil rod, the 'swinger' swings the bowl and rod around like a skilled majorette, forming a vase. Every movement must be in perfect harmony with the glass that is swung around in a circle. After the desired shape is formed, the vase is handed to the finisher.

7. After the glass is finished, a handler takes it to thelehr (annealing oven). This again heats the glass to near melting to remove any stresses so that the piece will not easily shatter. The piece is then slowly cooled for a period of 2-1/2 hours.

8. 'Selectors' then carefully examine the pieces to make sure that each piece that reaches the public is perfect in shape, color, and size.



The molten glass is being sprayed to make the iridescence and later will be reheated so that it will make a stretched effect on the surface.



A finished yellow stretch glass opalescent bowl that was not handled by the finisher.

9. Many pieces of glass are hand-decorated at this stage, but none of the new pieces of stretch glass were decorated.

The Fenton Art Glass Company started out as hand-decorators in 1905, so it stands to reason that the company is still proud of the hand-decorating done on the new pieces in their regular lines of commercial glassware. The hand-decorated pieces go into anotherlehr to make the decorations permanent.

Back to the new stretch glass pieces; all were made from the mold No. 638. All pieces also have the embossed Fenton trademark, an embossed "FENTON" in script in an oval on the bottom of each piece. The new pieces were made in colors of white (crystal), blue, red (ruby red), yellow opalescent (topaz opalescent), and green.

The Stretch Glass Society bought all 69 pieces of stretch glass for \$8.00 each. Each attending member was allowed to buy one piece for \$8.00 with all of the unsold pieces going into the Society auction for members to bid on above the basic \$8.00 price. Each attending member was allowed to draw a number from a hat with the corresponding number on the new stretch glass pieces which were boxed so that they were still a mystery until the boxes were opened. All of the pieces that were unchosen went into the auction and were fair game for all. Fair game is the right word as several sold for around \$47.00 each! All of the money went into the treasury of the Society where it was most welcome.



Some of the stretch glass pieces that were made the first time.

The new 'one lot' of Fenton's iridescent stretch glass in the style of the old "Florentine Line" was an interesting look at the reliving of history. According to Mr. Frank Fenton, there are no current plans to produce any new stretch glass for today's market. End.

(Ed. Our thanks to Russ and Kitty for the loan of the pictures in this newsletter. They are the original ones printed in the article in the Antique Trader.)

From the mail . . .

Thank you for your letter of October 18 and the six issues of The Stretch Glass Society Newsletter. I have read them with great interest and will incorporate them into our reference material.

I was especially interested in the biographical data on Harry Northwood and will look forward to additional information on this subject. If I find any sources which I think may be of assistance I will be happy to pass the information along.

Please accept my thanks on behalf of the Division of Ceramics and Glass as well as my personal appreciation and best wishes for your courtesy and consideration in making these newsletters available to us.

Sincerely,

Paul V. Gardner, Curator
Division of Ceramics & Glass
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D. C. 20560

Your letter made us feel very welcome and you asked how we found out about the Stretch Glass Society. It was through The Antique Trader. After reading the "Glass for Sale" column first, I always read the rest of the articles and ran across the item on the Farr's opening a new shop and their association with the SGS. It gave their address for further information. We dropped them a line and they gave us your address, so here we are!

It seems like I became interested in Stretch Glass quite by accident. A few years ago I had picked up a few pieces of Imperial crystal at garage sales and thought I'd check with a local antiques dealer to see if he had any more. I didn't know what I was getting into. He has his shop in his home so over I went and asked to see his Imperial glass. He looked surprised but smiled from ear to ear. You guessed it - he thought I meant Imperial Jewels, and downstairs we went. He brought out a beautiful pink stretch bowl. You can imagine my amazement, it was probably one of the prettiest types of glass I had ever seen, never having seen Stretch Glass before. That was it! The pink bowl, along with a few other pieces, went home with me.

Now when we have the opportunity we're off on the search to add to our small collection. We don't have much that you would consider out of the ordinary, two signed Imperial vases, one orange and the other amethyst. Pink tumble-up, orange six-sided compote, two 8" amberina 14 panel plates, cobalt blue nappy type of dish. The rest are plates, bowls, compotes in vaseline, pink, a few blue and a little mint green. My mint green server has a heart-shaped handle.

Usually you can find a piece or two at flea markets and antique shows around the Area in Spring and Summer, but again, nothing unusual - at least not that we've found so far. Colors usually seen are vaseline, mint green and the blue colors. We see very little pink, which is possibly my favorite color. As most of us have seen, each year the prices are higher.

A local dealer had a vaseline perfume bottle and stopper and I've seen a pair of salt and pepper shakers also in vaseline. There is a dealer in Denver who has a pink cup and saucer included in her own private collection of art glass, and I'm working on her to part with them.

How I wish we could be at your second annual meeting, or convention. Hopefully we'll make it. If anyone has a single vase candleholder in pearl white 8" high similar to KU-166 in Umbraco's book, please let me know.

We have found the newsletter to be most valuable in our learning process and I am eagerly looking forward to the next one.

From the snow covered Rockies - Happy Hunting,

Herbert & Carol Smith
2716 - 17th Street
Greeley, Colorado 80631

(Ed. Thanks so much for your very informative letter, Herb and Carol. It would be nice to hear from any of you who have noticed the underlined "cobalt blue nappy" as listed above. The only cobalt blue that I have seen have been the NEW pieces coming from W. Germany, along with the red. Both are very beautiful and if we haven't gone into this in a previous NL - the pontils are ground, many are signed often in misspelled words as Oreen, de Renee, and even LCT, etc. The edges of the "new" imported Stretch are of a lighter shade. There may be other colors but I have not seen them. Anyone know? A cobalt cup and saucer has been seen but no pink. To my knowledge no cups and saucers have been reported before and no salt and pepper shakers. Thanks for this information and good luck in acquiring the pink cup and saucer AND the S&P shakers. Let us know.)

STRETCH IS GREAT

We certainly enjoyed our brief visit with all the nice "Stretch" people at the Lafayette Motor Hotel in Marietta, Ohio, on April 18. We do regret very much not remembering to join and attend the entire convention. We know we really missed a wonderful time and were so sorry we could not go to the Fenton factory for the special tour and the history-making event of seeing new stretch glass made for all members attending the convention.

We appreciated the back issues of the newsletters which we have read with great interest and have learned more about the unusual glass called "Stretch" than we have known heretofore. We really enjoyed the many displays we hurried to see as our time was so limited due to previous plans to visit relatives in Ohio.

It was great to see so many States represented and to see the enthusiasm displayed by all we were fortunate enough to talk with. We feel the Society will grow as it becomes known to glass collectors. The glass is beautiful and different than Carnival yet it goes so well with Carnival that one thinks of it as a near and dear relative.

The Presznick auction, too, was a nice get together of both the Stretch and Carnival members. The Presznick hospitality is hard to beat. At the Carnival preview on Saturday night everyone had a great time eating delicious food and visiting with their many friends. On Sunday the auction went well with Rose and Joe in command.

Back to Stretch -- we think it is a great Society. It has come a long way in one short year and all the officers deserve praise and a vote of thanks. Anyway, we loved being with everyone and look forward already to the entire convention in 1976.

Two New Members,

Grace and Byron Rinehart
Charleston, West Virginia

(Ed. Thanks Grace and Byron for your good article. As this is being written, Rose Presznick is confined in an Akron, Ohio, hospital undergoing tests. Let's all send Rose a get-well card and remember her in our prayers.)

- - - - -

We would like to join The Stretch Glass Society and would be pleased if you could let us have any back numbers of your newsletter.

Having seen Umbraco's collection in California on our trip to the USA, we realized that we had a few pieces of Stretch Glass in our Carnival collection and have slowly built up a wee small collection of our own.

I have always felt it to be most elegant - and it's beauty is in its uncluttered simplicity. It would be some time before I could contribute anything useful in the way of a letter or article for the newsletter, but who knows, I may find some very collectible item which I could write about.

Stretch Glass here in Australia is in very short supply and in our 8-1/2 years of collecting Carnival glass - only ten pieces of Stretch have come to light. I will be waiting impatiently for the back issues and remembering that surface mail to Australia takes around nine weeks - so please air mail them.

Sincerely,

Muriel and Bill Triplett
Australia

1976 STRETCH GLASS CONVENTION

Holiday Inn - South
Ft. Mitchell, Ky. 41017

Banquet - Thursday Evening (April 22, 1976) \$5.95

Menu

Appetizer
Roast Breast of Turkey
Cornbread Dressing, Country Gravy
Tossed Salad (Choice of Dressing)
Potato
Vegetable
Rolls, Butter
Beverage
Dessert

Breakfast - Saturday Morning (April 24, 1976) \$4.00

Menu

Choice of Juices
Choice of Two Meats
Grits
Scrambled Eggs
Hot Biscuits
Coffee

Room Rates

Poolside Single	\$20.00
Poolside Double	\$27.00
Non-Poolside Single	\$18.00
Non-Poolside Double	\$24.00

No Charge for Children under 12 years old

Please write on your Reservations Card either Poolside or Non-Poolside.

The Holiday Inn Office must receive your Reservations Card at least two weeks prior to the Convention to guarantee you a room in the section reserved for the Convention. They MUST receive your card at least two days prior to your arrival to assure you of any accommodations!

This Holiday Inn is located on I-75 South of Cincinnati. The Solar Dome covers quite an area of recreational facilities and rooms face this area. Be sure and state on your Reservations Card if you want one of these Poolside rooms.

Perhaps we can give you a map of this Area in the next NL. Also a more detailed Schedule of Events. Next NL will be issued in March. Negotiations are in progress for a most knowledgeable guest Speaker for this Convention. There may even be two Speakers.

DON'T MISS THIS CONVENTION! START MAKING YOUR PLANS NOW!

STRETCH GLASS
IN COLOR

By Berry Wiggins

This is the first book on Iridescent Stretch Glass for immediate mailing. Who made Stretch and how to identify Stretch Glass are answered in this book. Articles on Fenton, Imperial and Northwood taken from original catalogues and old magazines.

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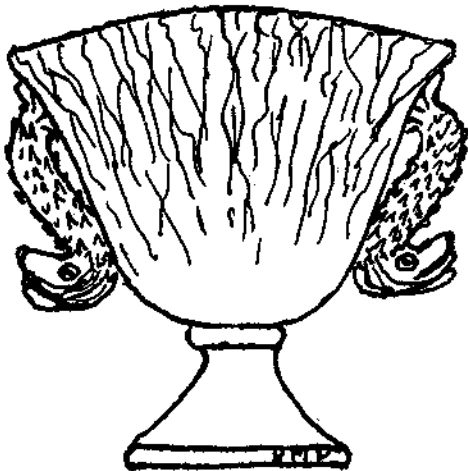
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Word has just been received of the untimely death of Mr Ed M. Gaida, 1317 Goliad Drive, Victoria, Texas 77901 on January 4, 1976. He was President of The International Carnival Glass Association. SGS extends deepest sympathy to Mrs Gaida and the family.

Return to: Paul B. Miller
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