

THE MICHIGAN STAINED GLASS CENSUS NEWSLETTER NUMBER 5 \* MAY 2004

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A bimonthly e-mail report on activities and other stained glass news from the Michigan Stained Glass Census at the Michigan State University Museum, East Lansing, MI 48824 \* <http://museum.msu.edu/museum/msgc/index.html>

The Michigan Stained Glass Census has been an advocate for the documentation and preservation of architectural stained glass since 1992. Michele Beltran, Barbara Krueger and Betty MacDowell, Co-Directors.

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VANDEBURGH GIFT ADDS TO THE MSU MUSEUM COLLECTION OF STAINED GLASS ARTIFACTS

Sketches and cartoons made by the late John Vanderburgh, a well-known Michigan stained glass artist, have been donated by his family to the MSU Museum for its collection of stained glass-related artifacts. These materials represent Vanderburgh's preparatory work for many windows he created during more than fifty years in our state. It was his wish that his drawings be preserved in the MSU Museum collection. We are deeply grateful for this generous gift of artifacts that help to document the life work of a Michigan artist who made a significant contribution to our stained glass heritage.

John Vanderburgh died on March 31, 2004 at the age of 87. Born in The Hague, the Netherlands, on August 5, 1916, he entered his uncle's stained glass studio as an apprentice at the age of 16. He later graduated from the Royal Academy of the Arts in The Hague. In 1951 Vanderburgh came with his wife Swany and three children to the United States and settled in Zeeland, Michigan. He worked for the Grand Rapids Art Glass Company for several years before opening his own Vanderburgh Art Studio in 1960 in Zeeland, where he designed and fabricated many windows for churches and other buildings, often doing all of the work himself. In 1995 he demonstrated his stained glass artistry at the Festival of Michigan Folklife, held on the Michigan State University campus. At that time, Vanderburgh said, "Working with stained glass has made life exciting for me and it is still fascinating. I know I'm creating things that will be around much longer than I will." The April 2004 Window of the Month on the MSGC web site features a window created by Vanderburgh in 1953 while he was associated with the Grand Rapids Art Glass Company. Another one of his windows, made to celebrate Zeeland's Sesquicentennial, was featured on the web site in May of 2000. (See Recent "Windows of the Month" below.)

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RECENTLY REGISTERED WINDOWS

MSGC 00.0020 Central Avenue Christian Reformed Church, Holland, Michigan. Twelve windows made in 1953 by John VanderBurgh (1916-2004) of Zeeland, Michigan. Registered by Ray Naber of Holland, Michigan, with photography by Stuart Westing of Holland.

MSGC 04.0006 St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, Hubbardston, Michigan. Thirty-one windows, made in 1905 by the Detroit Stained Glass Works and in 1990 by James Hopfensperger of Midland, Michigan. Registered by Joanne Burns Howard of Sheridan, Michigan.

MSGC 04.0008 Private residence, Lake Angelus, Michigan. Twelve windows made in 1929 by an unidentified (possibly English) studio and one window made in 2003 by A World of Glass Studio of Waterford, Michigan. Registered by Leslie Pielack, Orion Historical Society, Lake Orion, Michigan.

MSGC 04.0009. Michigan League, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Seven windows designed by the building's architects, Irving K. Pond and Allen B. Pond, and fabricated by Linden Glass Co., in 1929, both firms of Chicago, Illinois. Registered by Ralph Beebe and Sheryl Szady of Ann Arbor, Michigan.

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RECENT "WINDOWS OF THE MONTH" ON THE MSGC WEB SITE

April, 2004. Central Avenue Christian Reformed Church, Holland. The travels of Bunyan's allegorical pilgrim Christian as told in the "Pilgrim's Progress" are depicted in this 1953 window. It is the work of Michigan artist John VanderBurgh, during his tenure with the Grand Rapids Arts Glass Company.

<http://museum.msu.edu/museum/msgc/apr04.html>

May, 2004. St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Jackson. This ca. 1946 window by the Payne-Spiers Studio of Patterson, NJ memorializes soldiers who lost their lives in World War II.

<http://museum.msu.edu/museum/msgc/jun04.html>

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WINDOW OF THE MONTH "FLASH BACKS"

April, 2003. Lutheran Home, Monroe. A 1993 window by the Judson Studios of Los Angeles depicts the ascension of Christ and hides a memorial tribute through the clever use of iconography.

<http://museum.msu.edu/museum/msgc/apr03.html>

May, 2002. Detroit Institute of Arts (Formerly of First Unitarian Church), Detroit. Opalescent stained glass master John La Farge's only known work in Michigan, these striking 1890 lancet windows depict the themes of faith, hope, charity and brotherly love.  
<http://museum.msu.edu/museum/msgc/may02.html>

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#### STAINED GLASS ON THE WEB

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Roman Catholic Church, Wyandotte, MI  
[http://www.ourladyofmountcarmel.org/munich\\_windows.html](http://www.ourladyofmountcarmel.org/munich_windows.html)

Ely Stained Glass Museum, Ely, Cambridgeshire, U.K.  
<http://www.stainedglassmuseum.com/>

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#### MSGC ACTIVITIES

Barbara Krueger's article, "John Hayward: A Modern Classic," was published in the Spring 2004 issue of the Stained Glass Quarterly, Vol. 99, Number 1. The article discusses the work of Hayward, an English stained glass artist, and focuses especially on his Great West Window at Sherborne Abbey in the Dorset area of England.

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#### OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP

Volunteer photographers are needed to provide images (or better images) for completing some of the reports registered in the Michigan Stained Glass Census. The images can be slides (preferred), color prints or digitized images on CDs. Reports needing images are from these communities: Bloomfield Hills, Bronson, Concord, Copemish, Flint, Grand Rapids, Ishpeming, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Marquette, Mount Pleasant, Newberry, South Branch, Stanwood, Traverse City, Trenton and Ypsilanti.

Volunteer census takers are needed to complete other files by providing more information about the windows and buildings in which they are located. These are listed as "Incomplete" in the list posted on our web site, or you can check with us to learn about incomplete files for buildings in your area.

Volunteer census takers are needed also to register stained glass windows in Michigan counties not yet represented in the Michigan Stained Glass Census. Reports have come in from 77 of the 83 counties in Michigan. The windows of

the following six counties should also be included in this major statewide inventory: Crawford, Kalkaska, Lake, Missaukee, Roscommon and Schoolcraft.

If you can help the Michigan Stained Glass Census by providing images or information for incomplete files or by registering windows in any of the above listed counties, contact us at stainedglass@museum.msu.edu.

NOTE: Registrations of windows in ANY of Michigan's 83 counties are always very welcome!

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#### OTHER MICHIGAN STAINED GLASS NEWS

"The Curious Windows of the Scripps Mansion" was the title of an illustrated talk given by Leslie Pielack at the annual meeting of the Orion Historical Society on Saturday, April 24. She discussed the stained glass windows of the fine home built in the late 1920s in Lake Orion, Michigan, for the William E. Scripps family. Her presentation explained the windows' types and themes and their meaning for the Scripps family. Leslie has registered the windows in the Michigan Stained Glass Census. They will be featured on the MSGC web site in July. A public tour, "Art, Autos and Architecture at the Scripps Mansion," will be held at 1601 Joslyn Road on Saturday and Sunday, July 24-25, with a pre-event dinner on Friday, July 23. More details about the tour will appear in the July Newsletter.

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#### OTHER STAINED GLASS NEWS

Dr. James Yarnall, Assistant Professor of Art at Salve Regina University, Providence, Rhode Island, recently received a Presidential Faculty Award for the next academic year, which will allow him to devote his time to writing a book on John La Farge. His co-author will be Julie Sloan, who will teach the history of American stained glass at Salve Regina in September. Yarnall and Sloan say that their book, which should appear in 2006, "will focus on about 100 major La Farge windows, each discussed in the context of La Farge's career and catalogued thoroughly. Illustrations will be primarily in color with an anticipated 300-400 total. We hope that it will be as lavish as it is scholarly." In the meantime, they continue to be active in lecturing and writing on La Farge stained glass, both jointly and separately. Yarnall's article in the next issue of the American Art Journal discusses the collaboration of La Farge with architects McKim, Mead & White on glass and mural decorations.

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Bill Judson, of The Judson Studios, has completed his architectural studies and joined the Claremont Environmental Design Group in Claremont, CA. In his master's thesis on architecture and spirituality, Bill explored different spiritual traditions to find common threads and developed a "Spiritual Center," an expression of archetypical symbols of religious traditions. He also studied restoration, re-use and "green" architecture, and hopes to design religious architecture, in conjunction with Judson stained glass. David Judson, Bill's brother, is now the director of The Judson Studios, following the unexpected death of their father Walter in January of 2003. In February Dave gave several gallery talks at the Getty Museum in Los Angeles during the "Images and Light" stained glass exhibition. The Judson Studios, currently a Business Sponsor of the MSGC, has created several windows for Michigan churches, including the April 2003 Window of the Month, listed above under Window of the Month "Flash Backs."

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BLENKO, A FAMILY NAME IN GLASS. Recently the Blenko family business was featured in the Parade section of many Sunday newspapers. Most of us have known Blenko as a maker of glass for the stained glass industry. More recently, Rick (Richard D.) Blenko, the fourth generation of the family to run the company, turned to PBS and filmmakers to document "hot" glass as the important product of the firm.

William J. Blenko brought his knowledge of the glass industry from England to the United States in 1893, worked for a time for Kokomo Glass, and then opened his own business at Milton, West Virginia, in 1921 at the age of 67. In 1923 his son William H. Blenko Sr. (Bill Sr.) joined the firm. By 1929 the Depression was upon them and they began making handblown vases and tableware to compete with imported Italian glass. After becoming the exclusive supplier of handblown tableware for Colonial Williamsburg, the firm began making these products full-time. William H. Blenko Jr. (Bill Jr.), now 82, took over the family firm in 1969 upon his father's death. He is one of only twelve lifetime members of the Glass Art Society and a lifetime member of the Stained Glass Association of America. Going to Blenko to pick out glass has always been an adventure, to see Bill and his late wife Jeanne and now his son Rick, who joined the business in 1976. As a member of the younger generation, Rick saw great potential in custom designed "hot" glass items, which demand a high price among collectors and are often found on e-Bay. The documentary film on Blenko has helped to raise interest.

For those who have not used Blenko handblown stained glass, it takes a little time to get used to. It cuts like butter but, due to the varying thickness, requires a bit more care in leading up the glass. The depth of

color is lovely and intense, due again to the varying thickness of the glass.

The Blenko Visitor Center has attracted carloads and busloads of interested people, who can walk through the observation area and watch molten glass being heated, blown into vessels or flattened into stained glass. Milton is located halfway between Huntington and Charleston, just south of I-64. On the Blenko web site are directions on how to reach Milton, places to eat and local motels. <http://www.blenkoglass.com>

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An unusual use of stained glass was in the news recently. Wilhelmy Musical Instrument Services, located in Staunton, Virginia, has created a set of stained glass organ pipes that stand more than ten feet high and include an American flag in their design. Owner Xavier Wilhelmy explains that the pipes were designed and built as a memorial to those who were killed in the attacks on September 11, 2001. They were used as a model for a proposed Ground Zero monument that would contain more than 3,000 pipes, one for each person who died. Although the design was not selected for the monument, the pipes will be featured at the American Guild of Organists (AGO) National Convention, opening in Los Angeles on July 4. Three views of the stained glass pipes are shown on the firm's web site, starting at [http://www.wilhelmyorganbuilder.com/New%20for%202004/New\\_01.htm](http://www.wilhelmyorganbuilder.com/New%20for%202004/New_01.htm)

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Subsequent to its publication of STAINED GLASS IN CATHOLIC PHILADELPHIA (reviewed in our November 2003 Newsletter), Saint Joseph's University now has a web site "gallery" online, featuring 32 stained glass windows that were collected from retired Philadelphia churches. The virtual gallery represents about half of the windows in the University's collection, which includes 33 windows from closed and consolidated churches in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and an equal number of windows collected outside of the archdiocese. The goal is to create a permanent exhibit of windows in a campus gallery, "to preserve and commemorate something of the spirit of the parish communities and their working-class immigrant roots-the same roots from which Saint Joseph's originated 151 years ago." You can visit the gallery at [http://www.sju.edu/sjupress/pages/SG\\_html/stained\\_glass\\_home.html](http://www.sju.edu/sjupress/pages/SG_html/stained_glass_home.html)

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#### THE STAINED GLASS BOOKSHELF

RHODE ISLAND STAINED GLASS: AN HISTORICAL GUIDE by Paul F. Norton  
Published in 2001 by William L. Bauhan, Publisher, Dublin, New Hampshire  
ISBN 0-87233-128-8

Hardbound \$29.50, softbound \$25, check only, from Dr. Paul Norton  
(pnorton@arthist.umass.edu)

In 1989 the late Dr. Jane Hayward began the survey of Rhode Island stained glass that was the origin of this book. Dr. Hayward was an early member of the Census of Stained Glass Windows in America and later worked at the Cloisters in New York City. Dr. Paul Norton joined the survey in its early stages and completed it after her death. Norton, Chairman Emeritus of the Art History Department at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, holds degrees from Oberlin and Princeton Universities. The survey received funding from the John Nicholas Brown Center for the Study of American Culture and the Committee for Rhode Island Humanities.

In his Introduction Norton notes, "Rhode Island is truly a museum of stained glass windows." He discusses 320 buildings "with windows worth seeing," mostly religious structures. There is an Alphabetical Listing of all the cities/towns, with the individual buildings listed alphabetically. The book contains floor plans of many buildings, with the windows numbered to coincide with their descriptions. Black and white window photographs are scattered throughout the book, which also includes 32 pages of full color photos.

As with the book, STAINED GLASS IN CATHOLIC PHILADELPHIA (discussed in the November 2003 Newsletter), there is extensive biographical information about the artists and studios identified as designing and fabricating stained glass in Rhode Island. Some are virtually unknown outside of Rhode Island (as would be the case in many states), but many are moderately known and well known studios from Canada, Europe and the United States. Some biographies offer additional interesting glimpses of information about an artist or studio, such as the connection between Carroll Whittemore, Joseph Serpentino and Napoleon Setti.

After purchasing his book some years ago, I contacted Dr. Norton to see what church he would recommend my seeing in the two short hours I would have in passing through Providence, RI. One of his suggestions was to see a church with the stained glass of Italian-born Guido Nicheri (1887-1973), who moved first to Montreal and then to Providence. Shortly after my visit, Nicheri's nephew wrote an article about his uncle for the Stained Glass Quarterly, so seeing Nicheri's work in person was a real highlight of my trip. I still keep that MapQuest map in the book!

When asked what changes he would make if doing the book again, Dr. Norton mentioned that, if funds allowed, he would include more color pages and footnotes. This book received a 2002 Award of Merit from the American Association of State and Local History. It should be on the shelf of every stained glass artist or historian.

Reviewed by Barbara Krueger

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Please send comments, questions and suggestions to  
stainedglass@museum.msu.edu.

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