

Vaseline Glass Collectors, Inc.

<http://www.vaselineglass.org>

National Convention San Antonio, Texas October 11-14, 2007

By Kent Washburn

A fish out of water would have felt more comfort than I did when I approached the registration desk at the Holiday Inn Select. I had received several personal invites and even an email invitation from Alice Venables, the Convention Chair, who resides in San Antonio. Vaseline glass, (foreign or domestic), is not my strong suit. The distinguished gentleman behind the desk gave a welcoming smile and asked if I were interested in Vaseline glass? This fish fighting his way back to the comfort zone of the sea managed to gulp a weak, "yes."

The distinguished gentleman asked someone to man the registration table for him and he became my guide to the wonderful world of Vaseline. As we entered the Rio Grande Ballroom, the room was totally ringed with table after table of gorgeous, fluorescent glass displays. With great pride, my guide showed me the table that highlighted four rare pieces. One was a Vaseline fish bowl with a dark green frog prunt. The 1920 fish bowl hung and swung in a metal floor stand. (see photo pg 9) The second a cameo cut scenic 17-inch perfume from about 1910. The ocean sounded a long ways away when he went on to indicate that it was a signed piece that had been made at the Loetz factory for the Galle Company and was marked Richard. The third, a red and yellow geode, was a one-of-kind made by Belgian artist Yves Braun. The perfume and geode were from the collection of Texas Collectors, Frank and Melissa Keathley. The fourth item was an art glass paperweight with an attached snake curled around the top, made by one of the artists at Orient and Flume Art Glass.

My gracious host ignored my ignorance and inability to breathe regularly and went to the next display, "The Yellow Rose of Texas" which featured the Rose pattern produced by the Tiffin division of U. S. Glass Company in the 1920's. If I leave out the word Vaseline just assume it was Vaseline. The Rose display had a Texas theme including an armadillo drinking a Texas beer, a skull and horns of a Texas long horn bull, barbed wire and a commemorative custard Alamo mug. A beautiful display by any standard! Those ocean waves sounded closer.

There were Fenton displays of Lilley of the Valley and Opalescent Thumbprint. There is no way that I could remember or list all the displays. One that I found particularly informational had a nice grouping of Metropolitan Museum of Art items: To see that some pieces had the MMA molded in some boldly and some faint and some had the MMA needle etched. It was very interesting to see the four different pieces that Northwood had finished from one mold. I know that the ocean waves has swept in that I was in my comfort zone when I saw the L G Wright Vaseline Frog butter dish which became my favorite piece. Not the most sophisticated choice but one is hooked once the light goes on.

There were displays of Belmont Pattern #100, Val Saint Lambert glass, Murano figural sea creatures including a 20 inch shark and an 8inch octopus, refined English pieces and the list continues. I was introduced to David A Peterson, author of the books, *Vaseline Glass, Canary to Contemporary, The Lost Chapters*, and *Vaseline Glass Rarities*.

Vaseline Glass Convention (cont. from pg.8)

He is a fountain of knowledge and was actively sharing it with everyone. He gave a piece of glass off his display to an adolescent girl in hopes of encouraging her to become a collector.

My guide was a warm individual who welcomed a stranger with whom he shared his love of glass. It was only much later that I learned that he was Tom Foozer, the outgoing President of the group. No wonder they have such a strong organization.

There were over fifty items on their Silent Auction to support the club. One needed football gear to approach the tables to enter a bid in the last half hour that the auction was open. It appeared to me that most of the items brought at least full retail and many a significant premium.

The only seminar that I had the time to attend was by Sherry Stevenson on "Czech Glass." It was entertaining and impressive with the detailed knowledge that she possesses of the artists and companies involved. It is one not to miss if you have the opportunity.

I would recommend if the Vaseline Glass Collectors Convention comes to your area, even if it means moving outside your comfort zone that it is well worth attending. It is both educational and very enjoyable for anyone who loves glass.

