

President's Message:

Innovation and the Challenge

Innovation

Three, two, one, blast off! With 70 new Associates and new innovations, the Stained Glass Association of America is ready to launch! Thanks to the new *Discover the SGAA* program implemented by Katei Gross, we look forward to watching our success soar.

But before we are able to marvel at our advances through the back of our *Kaleidoscope*, we must remember that we are far from our final position in orbit. *We need more members!*

With more than 3,000 stained glass studios in the United States alone, the potential for more professional members exists. With more than 30,000 architects, room for Associate Member and Related Professions Affiliate growth becomes apparent. Art schools, galleries, institutes and museums will be our next focus.

Let's begin by setting some goals. I am proposing the goal of acquiring 25% growth in studio members; recruiting 5% of architects; and 10% of gallery professionals and institute members into our Association by the summer of 2009 conference.

Meeting this goal will result in the addition of thousands of new members within a time frame of a year and a half. This is a stretch. I cannot do this alone; the SGAA staff cannot do this alone. But the Board of Directors is an innovative and energetic group dedicated to the Association. Together, *as a team*, we can attain this goal.

We have been stagnant for all too long. Joseph Grant Jr. at *keyresultsconsulting.com* has published a recent article that hits the SGAA's nail on the head. In this article, Grant proposes that groups like the SGAA will "benefit by expanding their strategic scope, eliminating processes that stifle innovation, fostering a structure where innovation can thrive, and



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building leaders who can communicate the value of new ideas.”

These words are just the motivation we need to proceed from planning to dispatch. Since becoming actively involved a number of years ago, my biggest pet peeve of our Association has been the lack of consensus on new creative, energetic direction due to rules, procedures, and people afraid of change. Everything seems to be tabled till the next meeting six months later. If we allow ourselves to act like a large for-profit organization that tends to “bog themselves down with policies, processes, and templates,” we will not achieve our goals.

Our team has a new core focus: *“Seize the moment; make it happen.”* Our core objective is: *to better serve the members and improve the value of membership.*

Many of us, not to mention prospective new members, may shy away from becoming “Accredited” members due to the costs associated with it. I am not even talking about the annual \$500 Fully Accredited dues but am instead referring

to the requirement to attend a Conference one out of every three years. Since day one, I was opposed to this requirement. Instead of requiring attendance, I have always recommended that we make the Conferences more valuable and more fun. Clearly they have evolved into valuable and fun events that people want to attend and are attending in record numbers.

The Challenge

I challenge all members to come forward with your specific thoughts and innovative ideas about ways to acquire new members. *Will this mean eliminating the “requirement” to attend Conferences? Is there a way, despite any change in requirement, to still achieve larger, more successful conferences?*

More than ever, we value relationships and communication. I hope to hear from you personally. Calls for ideas and suggestions are traditionally answered by one or two people who want to vent their anger or frustration but who offer little constructive criticism and offer even fewer positive ideas for growth; as an industry we can do better than that. The stained glass craft is blessed with many creative and intelligent people. If we all work together, we can make the Craft better for everyone involved and create an environment in which stained glass can experience a renaissance of growth. Please email me at *president@sgaaonline.com*; this address has been created specifically to facilitate communication between the SGAA President and the members and affiliates of this organization.

This is an exciting time for the Association. Thank you for your energy.


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