

# From the Editor's Desk:

## An Exciting Time for the SGAA Stained Glass School

The SGAA's Annual Summer Conference is always exciting, but this year, with SGAA President Jack Whitworth's announcement that the Stained Glass Association of America, together with the SGAA Stained Glass School, has purchased two-and-a-half acres of land on which to build a permanent headquarters, teaching facility, and research center, the excitement felt by all of the members in attendance was palpable, indeed.

While there are still many decisions to be made and plans to be created, purchasing land is a major step toward the ultimate goal of creating a world-class teaching and administrative facility for the Association. For many years, the Association has been headquartered in makeshift facilities that, while they have served the day-to-day functions of the SGAA, have not allowed so many of the extra things that a trade organization like the Stained Glass Association of America can and should be doing.

Teaching, of course, is at the forefront of that. It is up to the professionals that make up the professional trade organization for our craft to train the next generation of professionals in techniques appropriate to work in a production studio. While it is possible for someone earnestly seeking deeper craft proficiency to learn some of these techniques on their own over a period of years, these are skills that are best learned at the bench, using the tools of the craft in the manner in which professionals use them under the instruction of a highly skilled teacher.

The SGAA Stained Glass School has a history of offering valuable one- and two-day classes at the Annual Summer Conference. Those certainly are beneficial, and they will, I hope, continue even after the new SGAA Stained Glass School is built. However, a six-hour painting workshop set up in a hotel meeting room



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certainly does not give the same exposure or benefit that a six-day painting workshop in a facility designed specifically for painting on glass would provide. It's not even fair to compare the two, they are so radically different.

The SGAA Stained Glass School is to be applauded for its hard work in bringing classes to the Annual Summer Conference, and it has been an honor and a privilege to have taught a class at a conference. But as important and as valuable as these classes are, they pale in comparison to the value received from a multi-day or even multi-week format. In addition to having a focused environment for intensive learning, one can make friends and contacts at these workshops that will last a lifetime. In this respect, it's not unlike the network of friendships that is formed by those who attend the SGAA Annual Summer Conference.

What are the steps to building a world-class teaching facility? That's a question that the board of directors of the SGAA Stained Glass School is working to address right now. Certainly, there are many decisions to be made, and none of them should be made hastily, since the foundation now being laid is one that

should endure for many, many years to come. There is no reason why the school built now could not endure for generations into the future, enduring long after all of us here now are gone.

The goal is clear; the path to reach that goal is one that will take thoughtful deliberation. Jerome Durr, of Syracuse, New York, served with distinction as Director of the SGAA Stained Glass School in recent years and with the assistance of the School's board of directors brought it to where it is now and helped oversee the purchase of land. Jerome has now been elected First Vice President of the Stained Glass Association of America and has handed on the Directorship of the SGAA Stained Glass School to the capable hands of Bob Markert of Louisville, Kentucky.

Bob brings many years of experience in teaching art and craft to the table. In addition to being a Fully Accredited Artist/Designer Member of the Stained Glass Association of America, Bob has served for several years as the Apprenticeship Committee chairman and has worked extensively on the Association's apprenticeship efforts, bringing them up to date and forming training schedules that, when implemented, will allow the craftsman to achieve certification at the Apprentice, Journeyman, and Master levels.

It is a truly exciting time for the SGAA Stained Glass School. While major and historic steps have already been taken, there is much more to do. The SGAA Stained Glass School is moving boldly into the future; it is a wonderful time to be a part of the Stained Glass Association of America.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard H. Gross". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Richard H. Gross, MTS