



2020 Annual Membership Report



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Let us appreciate the special sort of person which it takes to excel at stained glass artistry: with its essential function being that of service, and to a large extent ecclesiastic in nature, the stained glass maker must live in a place of tension between her own ego and a kind of collective psyche, a holding down of himself and a lifting up of their fellow beings; the private image manifested in the public place with skill and subtlety, and above all, with a special kind of humility. Perhaps this is why, no matter our own religious preferences, we can look upon the artwork surrounding us in a special space and appreciate the grace, the skill, the luscious beauty of the windows: because they are a gift to all of us from those who work together to create them.

Excerpt from "The Appreciation of Stained Glass,"
from *The Appreciation of the Arts/9*; 1977 by Lawrence Lee b. 1909-2011



By Megan McElfresh, SGAA HQ

It's easy to write off 2020 as one long string of crushing challenges and nearly overwhelming grief and exhaustion. As if the losses caused directly by COVID-19 weren't enough, the usual sorrows caused by sickness, separation, hardships, age, and accident could, at times, be crippling.

Every day, I am immensely grateful to work for this industry. It will take the strength of all of us to heal, and I know that we have the tenacity and patience to do so because I get to witness it every day from my unique vantage point working for all of you. We will build on that strength to develop our mission for 2021 and the coming years of recovery and rebuilding in the spirit of community, collaboration, and connection.

I know that we will all grieve for the members—our friends—that we lost in 2020 for uncounted years ahead, but it is for their sake that we forge ahead in new ways. As always, we stand on the shoulders of giants, rely on our community's strength, and continuously share the gift of our knowledge and skills.

2020 IN REVIEW & LOOKING AHEAD

The work of the SGAA in 2020 was a vastly different kind of creative than what we had planned. Still, in many ways, we are fortunate that we were already in a sort of “challenge and rebuild” mode here at the office and with our dedicated, long-time Board and Committee members. Digging into the organization's foundation and embracing change has been the routine

here since January 2018. So while we certainly have felt disappointed at times not to be on the path we envisioned, we're still proud of all we accomplished.

HERE'S A QUICK LOOK BACK AT SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2020:

- We launched a new member resource platform to help with office efficiency and enable us to upload and house our SGQ and other publication archives for our members to access and use.
- When faced with the challenge of working remotely, we embraced efficient technology, streamlining so that we could transition seamlessly between locations, cutting overhead costs both in the short-term and for our future.
- We launched a new education initiative offering webinars focused on stewardship education, all of which surpassed attendance expectations.
- We received funding to invest in a professional Zoom account to better connect with members and even Zoomed over to France with Verrerie de St. Just's Barbara Derix and Simon Ballagh.
- We engaged in significant new connections with organizations that share our vision and beliefs.
- We built and launched a new Foundation for our organization focused on public appreciation and public education for architectural art glass.
- We moved to a new location that helps us better focus on our mission. It provides more resources in a better area with more community connections allowing a significant portion of our overhead expenses to support our mission and our members' work.

THERE WERE EXCITING THINGS THAT HAPPENED IN OUR INDUSTRY AS WELL:

Youghioghenny announced their purchase of the Uroboros formulas and equipment in the Spring of 2020, got it all moved to their factory in Pennsylvania, and have started production. Uro by Yough will be an exciting new chapter for all glass artists who love and depend on the Uroboros glass line.

The SGAA attended some of the first-ever Virtual Glass Expos. Anything in Stained Glass in Frederick, Maryland gets our applause for bringing together such a large part of our industry online—their Virtual Expo was a success for both vendors and attendees. The owners created a seamless, painless process for everyone, and on top of that, it was free.

Across the industry, the SGAA has tracked an average 30% increase in sales and new activity. Makers of all ages are embracing the rewarding process of stained glass.

In support of our entire industry, encouraging passion everywhere, many great instructors are embracing the challenge of bringing instructional videos online. Kudos to every single teacher learning something new themselves and support the exploration of others.

Many studio owners and instructors continue to work together to completely rethink and retool their spaces to make it possible to welcome limited, small classes as it is safe to do so.

Suppliers have had to rethink shipping and learn curbside pickup, doing everything they can to make picking out that perfect sheet of glass possible.

Our Sourcebook Project experienced growth in member participation, distribution, and educational outreach exceeding even our pre-pandemic expectations. We positioned ourselves to offer a webinar series in partnership with other organizations, ensuring our resources were getting far more circulation than usual. We have already begun scheduling webinars about responsible stewardship practices and guidelines for restoration for 2021 and look forward to continuing to build that educational tool permanently into our "SGAA Sourcebook" program.



and national partners in the years to come. Our rent dollars now support this historic sacred space and this community’s goals to restore its stained glass windows and other interior space elements.

We could not be more delighted to be a part of this passionate, active, open-minded community of parishioners and tenants. The SGAA Board of Directors and Office Staff sees this very much as a move that will directly result in our growth and renewed energy for brighter days ahead. We look forward to welcoming more local volunteers and very likely our first several interns in the coming year, a direct result of our new space.

Learn more about Trinity Episcopal Church on their website trinitybuffalo.org and also here at BuffaloAH.com and mark your address books with our new address: 371 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14202.

THE SGAA MOVES TO TRINITY CENTER IN DOWNTOWN BUFFALO.

“Wouldn’t it be great if even our expenses somehow supported our [the SGAA] mission?” This question came up at our 2020 Winter Board Meeting, and it didn’t take much research to figure out how our rent could do precisely that. After a short search, we discovered the available office space at Trinity Center, part of Trinity Episcopal Church in downtown Buffalo.

Trinity Church is one of only two places in the world where the work of two art-glass pioneers—John LaFarge and Louis Comfort Tiffany—sit side by side. Altogether there are five Tiffany windows in addition to ten superb items of LaFarge. There are also windows from Mayer & Co., Munich, Hardman & Co., London, and W. Gibson’s & Sons, NY & London.

In this inspiring new home we gained a more 20th-century office that speaks to our evolving mission. The communal office space will help us control our overhead for years to come, and the meeting space available to us on-site will be a great resource as we look toward hosting cooperative events with both local

THE SGAA BOARD, COMMITTEES, AND COMMUNITY

Given the continuing unprecedented circumstances, the directors have agreed to continue serving in their current capacity until we can come together in person.

That said, there are many ways to get involved, do satisfying work (often with generous portions of laughter), and have an active voice in our future. In the coming weeks, we’ll be sharing polls and asking for your input on new programming, and we hope that if you have any interest at all in those programs, you’ll reach out to the office and get involved!

One thing that is remarkably clear in all of our work is that this is genuinely an exciting time to challenge ourselves, rethink programs, and engage with one another and our passionate public in new ways. If event planning, fundraising, member outreach, or nerding out with fellow glass lovers sounds like your thing, we would love to have your input on any number of committees. Reach out to Megan at megan@stainedglass.org, and let’s take the almighty restoration project that is 2021 by the ox horns.

SGAA ANNUAL CONFERENCES LOOKING FORWARD AND FORGING NEW CONNECTIONS

One of the core pillars of the SGAA's mission is coming together to share and learn. There is no virtual experience that can rival the cumulative knowledge we experience in person at our annual conference. Still, we cannot ever refuse to put the safety of our members at risk. We are determined to not only build on what we started in 2020 but to find new ways to serve our community as it grows. We can not only maintain the strong bonds of friendship and camaraderie that exist now, but we can also share that passion with a broader audience and use the challenges of the times to welcome new faces to our historical association.

Like most of the country in Spring of 2020, we thought we would merely be postponing our Summer 2020 Conference a few months, possibly a year. As the entire nation began rescheduling events for 2021, we found ourselves in one scheduling difficulty after another, not just in moving our 2020 conference but then moving the following years' conferences that had already been scheduled.

One way the SGAA works to secure better rates for our conferences is to work three to five years out. By the early Fall of 2020, after seeking counsel from both our legal and insurance advisors, it became increasingly clear that we needed to scuttle both our 2020 and 2021 conference plans, pivoting our focus on other ways we could connect until 2022.

It took most of 2020 to successfully navigate the process of canceling those conferences and recovering deposits and whatever other early investments we possibly could, all to get those monies back to our members and sponsors. It has been tough to give up on our Philadelphia and Salt Lake City conferences for now, but we look forward to rescheduling with those hosts in those cities as we can do so.

2020 BY THE NUMBERS

In 2020, SGAA connected with more than
42,000 people

164
NEW MEMBERS
WELCOMED

1,500
NEW NEWSLETTER
SUBSCRIBERS

38,075 UNIQUE VISITORS TO
STAINEDGLASS.ORG

Our new stewardship
webinars connected
us with participants in

50 + 3
STATES
CANADIAN
PROVINCES

50
PARTICIPANTS
ON AVERAGE AT OUR
6 FALL PRESENTATIONS

Thousands
of users accessing our website's
"Find a Studio" tool to learn more
about stained glass and access
Accredited Professional and
Professional studios' profiles.

Opened a dialogue about resources and education for owners and caretakers of architectural art glass across North America with

4 major insurance companies
3 funding companies
Multiple religious institutions

VIRTUAL PROGRAMS FOR 2021

With so much of the rescheduling process finally wrapping up, we are looking forward to connecting virtually with members in several ways. It was difficult to continue our zoom meetings in the Fall, but we are very hopeful that we will pick those up again in Spring 2021.

Looking into a more structured “virtual conference,” we feel very strongly that a multi-day virtual event was a format that simply could not be successful for us. We are an enthusiastic, passionate crowd, but not one that seems to enjoy extended periods on our screens. There is undoubtedly business to attend to and, more importantly, educational opportunities that we should make an effort to explore. Still, we have decided to spread our time together out across the year versus packed into two or three long days.

We have turned to several of our planned panelists and speakers from 2020 and to experienced members to get their thoughts. With their help, we are very excited to be putting together monthly programming that we hope to launch in very early Spring 2021: panelists, speakers, and roundtable discussions, easy to attend 90-minute sessions every month.

ANNOUNCING OUR TRANSITION TO A NEW FOUNDATION

The Stained Glass School (SGS) has served our Association for 40 years as our 501(c)3 organization responsible for educational manuals and in-person programs, offering scholarships and workshops and bringing passionate members together to pool their knowledge into fantastic publications. However, the SGS did not allow us to seek grant funding and achieve more Foundational work as we looked to expand our programs.

Our initial hope was that the Stained Glass School could evolve and retool to meet our members’ needs. Still, after extensive research and lots of legal advice, we felt that we needed a completely fresh start to expand our mission and serve our entire community.

In the Summer of 2020, we created the Stained Glass Association of America Foundation, Inc., our new 501(c)3, which legally acquired the assets and the Stained Glass School’s scholarship responsibilities.

This Spring, the SGS Board of Trustees will officially become the SGAA Education Committee, with Sr. Kelly now being Committee Chair vs. School Director and trustees becoming equal committee members.

We are very excited by this development. It will open doors to safeguarding and using our archives, creating educational programs for stewards and caretakers of our work, supporting emerging artists, and finding new ways to engage with the restoration of our nation’s stained glass treasurers. In all of our 2021 and 2022 *Stained Glass Quarterly* issues, we will keep you informed of how we are progressing with the Foundation, how you can get involved, and the opportunities this new energy will undoubtedly bring to our industry.

Thus, the foundation’s educational activities focus on the stewards and guardians of our work—the provenance of significant installations, the archives of stained glass in America, and the information historians and caretakers need to maintain architectural art glass properly. Moving forward, the work of the SGAA Foundation will also focus on scholarships fostering emerging artists and the restoration and new work that serves our local, regional, and national communities.

SCHOLARSHIPS NOTE

The Stained Glass Association of America and our scholarship program—now under the SGAA Foundation’s stewardship—are enormously grateful for the continuing support of the MALDEB Foundation and Ellen Madelbaum’s support. Thanks to the help of the MALDEB Foundation and other anonymous individual donors, we provided 2020 scholarships and will offer 2021 scholarships as well. Joyful news amid long years with us missing the camaraderie and support we are used to having!

Ellen Mandelbaum was one of the early voices we sought in our journey of evolving the Stained Glass School’s mission into the Foundation’s future, and she has been an enormous supporter of our work to make that a reality. As it became clear that the pandemic would derail our 2020 Annual Summer Conference, the loss of our Annual Auction Fundraiser for our Scholarship program became clear. Ellen Mandelbaum immediately agreed to support our 2020 Scholarships, and her spirit of generosity is an inspiration to us all.

The new SGAA Foundation makes it possible to fundraise in new ways and begin efforts to develop our scholarship funds into accounts that can grow more quickly and serve more applicants as a result. While we continue to believe that collaboration and community are critical to moving our industry forward, we also know that it will be increasingly difficult to break into our profession. We must do all we can to inspire and educate the next generation of passionate and talented emerging artists who find satisfaction in the work we do.

The family of Dorothy Maddy, Helene Weis, and Ellen Mandelbaum, through the MALDEB Foundation, have continually provided a rock-solid foundation to our scholarship efforts that we look forward to growing in the coming years, ever in honor of their generosity. ■

Leslie Hartman Scholarship Announcement

On top of the difficulties that COVID-19 caused our global community, we were devastated to learn of the tragic, sudden death of one of our Affiliate Members, Leslie L. Hartman of Denton, TX. Megan McElfresh and the Board of Directors did not need a single moment to question the possibility to honor Leslie’s memory when her local glass community reached out to us.

“When people face barriers to achieving their full potential, the loss of talent, creativity, energy, and productivity is a burden for not only the disadvantaged, but for communities, businesses, governments, and the economy as a whole.”
—Ani Turner

Led by her dear friends and fellow stained glass colleagues in Denton, TX, the SGAA has established a memorial scholarship fund in Leslie’s name. Given Leslie’s struggles with handicap and accessibility, we want Leslie’s memory to be honored by creating a scholarship that grants access to stained glass work to those that might struggle with it due to any handicap or impairment.

Her family and friends are selling Leslie’s tools and supplies to raise the initial monies to start the new scholarship fund. More details and the fundraiser can be found at bit.ly/HartmanScholarship.

Please help spread the word by sharing a link to the sale on your own social media channels. Updates to the Leslie Hartman Scholarship fundraiser occur daily as Christie Wood documents the glass and tools and uploads them to the website.