

President's Report

First of all, I want to thank Phillip Legge for organizing a great Symposium at Lido Beach Resort in July. He put together a great program at a fantastic location. An added extra benefit was that the Symposium once again netted a nice profit, which really helps the Society remain financially sound.

I also want to thank Vic Matthews for volunteering to head up next year's Symposium and all of you on the Board for your assistance in this endeavor in Eugene, OR. I encourage all of you to keep on top of your assignments to help make this Symposium truly memorable! This should be another excellent educational event in another beautiful location, with the potential to draw in many members of the local glassblowing community.

The Society's operations have been running very smoothly until recently when our webhost Websketching experienced server problems. These problems effected our website which in turned has caused operational problems at the National Office. Things still aren't settled and we are in hopes that the issues will be fully resolved before our annual membership drive kicks in high gear.

Since July, I have asked Benjamin Revis to Chair the IT Committee and have asked Mike Wheeler to stay on in an advisory capacity. I have also asked Steve Moder, Jim Hodgson, Gary Coyne, Matt McDonald and Mike Schiafinno to serve on the IT Committee to help us move forward on all issues pertaining to our website. I am in hopes that more hands make little work for all.

Our website continues to be a big concern to many in the Society, especially those who have to interact with it on a daily basis. I believe we have many members who have a great vision as to what we want our website to be. The problem, as I see it, is that we are Glassblowers who have full-time jobs and personal lives to live. We have been doing the Glassblower/Web Developer experiment for several years now and are still many months or years away from attaining the vision we have for our website. Does this remind any of you of Einstein's quote, "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again expecting different results?" I believe that we are definitely insane if we do not go in another direction on this issue.

We have been managing our money well and have been putting money in the bank over the past few years. We also have a substantial amount in our investment account. Additionally, we have promised our members a better product as far as our website is concerned. I am convinced that now is the time to invest in a professional product to help our National Office staff do their job and improve our main mission, disseminate educational information and provide training to benefit our members.

There are web development companies who specialize in managing associations' websites. I have looked into a couple of different companies and they provide exactly what we are looking for. I do not look at this as an expense. On the contrary, it would be an investment which could potentially attract many new members. It could also attract many new vendors to invest in Fusion advertising because we would be able to reach out to more and more glassblowers all over the world. I am in hopes that we can move forward on this issue during this Board Meeting for the betterment of our Society. I am going to ask the Board to vote to provide sufficient funding to the IT Committee to research and provide our Society with the best website we can afford.

Other issues that have come up since July is that we no longer have a Safety and Hazards Chair or an Outreach Committee Chair. We will need to discuss a possible replacement for Art Ramirez or if we should continue to have this committee, as I cannot recollect any issues that have been submitted for discussion in this area for several years. As far as the Outreach Committee goes, I would like to change the scope of the committee and perhaps its name to Marketing Committee. I have had several discussions with Mike Souza about this issue and I have asked him to establish an ad hoc committee to investigate improved marketing through Facebook and Fusion.

We are also still in need of someone to help Mike Souza out with the Junior Member Workshop Program. Joe has volunteered to help Mike out this year, but we need someone to step up and co-chair the program with Mike. The 2 Co-chair positions need to have new people rotate into these positions, every 3 – 4 years. Please discuss this with your members at your next meeting and let them know that we need everyone's help to make our Society work.

I have had the opportunity to attend the Pacific Northwest and Southern California Section meetings in October. It was great to talk to many members who I haven't seen in a long time and meet many members for the first time! Thanks to Vic Matthews and Gary Coyne for the invitation to join you this year.

I want to also thank all of you on the Board for your support this year. Please continue to try to get more members from your section to volunteer for elected positions or on different committees. It is getting harder and harder to find people to fill positions.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Cornell