

PCA, INC. Bulletin  
Sampler

*Excerpts from the 2004 and 2005 editions of the  
Annual Bulletin of the Paperweight Collectors Association, Inc.*



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# A Plethora of Pansies

## *How Pansies Picked Me*

**By: James Lefever**  
*Photography by John Hawley*

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Over the past ten years I have focused my paperweight collection on the wide variety of the pansy paperweight. I did not start out that way, and in fact I am not sure when it started. One day I was looking over my paperweight collection and noticed a large percentage of pansies, so I guess you could say pansies picked me.

The pansy is a beautiful flower both in real life and in a paperweight. I am sure that this is why they caught my eye as well as the eye of the paperweight makers. Almost every factory and maker used pansies in their designs and it is still a popular subject among the contemporary artists. In this article I will limit myself to sharing pansy paperweights from the classic period [1840-1860] to the early twentieth century.

Paperweights were a popular gift item in the classic period and the pansy flower was a good subject for giving. It was one of a number of exotic [for the time] plants imported to France in the 1840s. There was a lot of symbolism in flower giving in this era, and the hidden meaning of a pansy was “you occupy my thoughts” or “I’m thinking of you” in modern day language.

The three major French factories produced many pansies of different designs; Baccarat was the most prolific followed by Clichy with the balance from St. Louis. The two pansies in the weight of Figure 1 are in the style of what is known as a Type I Baccarat pansy. This style is characterized by the arrowhead canes in the



*Figure 1: Baccarat bouquet featuring two Type I pansies, a clematis, and a buttercup. 3 5/8" dia. Formerly Dee and Evan Pancake collection.*

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lower petals. The nice large Type I example of Figure 2 features an unusually large bud and an accompanying fantasy flower made with arrowhead canes. Both flowers have a honeycomb center cane. What is different about this pansy is that the two upper looped petals (yellow with a wide band of deep purple) are most often used as the lower petals of what is commonly called a Type II Baccarat pansy [Figure 3]. The Type III is the most common Baccarat pansy; these feature yellow lower petals with purple tips and three dark lines originating at the central cane. However, the one shown in Figure 4 has leaves with a



*Figure 2: Baccarat Type I pansy with bud and fantasy flower. 3 1/8" diameter.*

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*Figure 3: Baccarat Type II pansy with garland of millefiori canes. 2 7/16" diameter.*

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very unusual glossy metallic look [Figure 4a]. I believe that the effect is in the green glass as opposed to an iridescent coating applied to the leaves and stem. I have never seen these types

of leaves on another antique weight from any factory. Pete Lewis, a Millville paperweight maker, made some lampwork weights in the 1970s that have a similar look.



*Figure 4: Baccarat Type III pansy. 1 3/4" dia.*

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*Figure 4a: Leaves of the Figure 4 Baccarat pansy; note the unusual glossy metallic look.*

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# New Findings

## Facts and Figures for the Curious Collector

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- Heart silhouettes in New England Glass Company weights are fairly common, but the white on black variety illustrated in Figure 1 is quite rare. The four previously known designs are shown in “The Hearts of New England” by John Hawley in the 2003 *PCA, Inc. Bulletin* (pg. 24). *Private collection. Photo by John Hawley.*

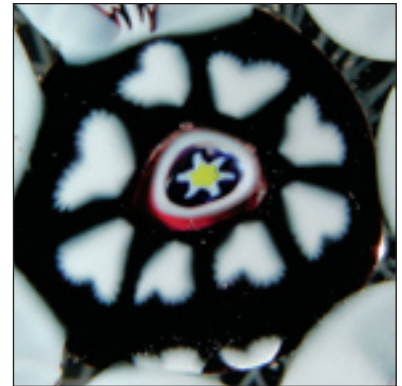


Figure 1: NEGC white hearts

- Baccarat used many silhouettes in its classic period paperweights; these include renditions of flowers as well as leaves and shamrocks. In Figure 2 we find the first sighting of what appears to be a fern. *Karen & Paul Dunlop collection. Photo by John Hawley.*



Figure 2: Baccarat fern

- Those of us who collect Boston & Sandwich weights are very familiar with the Nicolas Lutz rose cane. What wasn't known until now was that Sandwich used another rose cane as a centerpiece of their flowers, a nice hollow tube variety [Figure 3] that has a Bohemian ancestry. *Collection of and photo by John Hawley.*

- Speaking of Bohemia, we've known to look for horse silhouettes in weights from that region, and now we should also be on the lookout for bulls [Figure 4]. *Karen & Paul Dunlop collection. Photo by John Hawley.*

- Giacomo Franchini made word canes in the mid-1800's, and Paul Stankard incorporates them in some of his paperweights today. The Chinese canes of Figure 5, found in a contemporary scramble weight, leave no doubt as to its place of manufacture. *Photograph courtesy Gary McClanahan.*

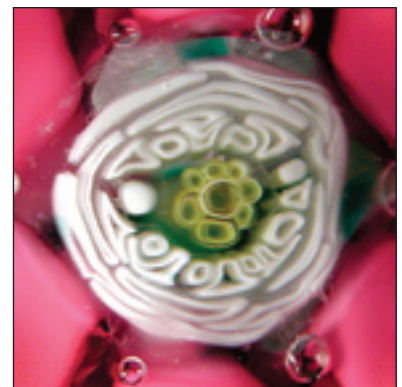


Figure 3: Boston & Sandwich hollow tube rose



Figure 5: Contemporary Chinese word canes



Figure 4: Bohemian bull

# A Gallery of Paperweight Related Objects

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*Figure 1: A New England Glass Company vase with blue threading at the lip, engraved flowers, and a paperweight base featuring a concentric millefiori design (with one running rabbit silhouette cane) on white latticinio. 6 3/4" high, base 2 5/8" dia. Private collection. Photograph by John Hawley.*

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# The Buonomo Family Union Glass Paperweights

By: **Bernard A. Drabeck and Roger G. Jacobsen**

*Photography by the Authors*

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The Union Glass Company in Somerville, Massachusetts, manufactured a full line of flint glass products during its seventy-four years of operation (1853-1927). These ranged from ordinary household glass to art glass (Kew Blas) and magnificent cut glass pieces like an extraordinary and large (27 inches across, 25 inches tall) thirty gallon punch bowl for Tiffany & Co., exhibited at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893.

Paperweights were among the specialty items crafted at the factory, although most were not a production item. The 1874 catalog, for example pictures only silvered glass paperweights offered at \$6.00 a dozen for plain and \$9.00 a dozen for fancy (engraved).

The paperweights most commonly associated with the Union Glass Company, however, were magnum spheres (3 to 4 1/2 inches in diameter) containing inscriptions and featuring a variety of flowers (some simple, some complex), flags, emblems, and other decorative items. Most were made to commemorate events like weddings, births, and deaths; sites, such as Weymouth Air Base (with two small dirigibles, one above and one below "WAB"); and historical events such as the beginning of World War I.

Many of these folk art pieces were the handiwork of an artisan at Union Glass named Philip Buonomo. Philip was born May 29, 1886, in Itri, Italy. After some years as an apprentice in a glass factory in France, he emigrated to this country in the early 1900s. He arrived in



*Figure 1: Newly married Philip and Raffaella Buonomo (seated)*

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Somerville in 1913 at the age of twenty-seven and began employment at the Union Glass Company in the same year. On April 21, 1918, he married Raffaella Saccoccio [Figure 1] who bore him fourteen children, twelve of whom survived to adulthood.

Buonomo worked at Union Glass until the factory closed in 1927. During that time, he produced wares as a glassblower as well as the specialty paperweights that characterize much of the factory's production in that line.

Several of his weights survive, some unblemished, some bruised, among members of his family in the Somerville area and among his wife's kin in Rhode Island. Recently, we visited both locales to learn about and photo-



*Figure 2: Eldest son Philip Buonomo and daughter Annette Fahey holding weights made by their father Philip Buonomo*

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graph pieces Philip Buonomo had created for his relatives and his wife's family.

In the summer of 2002, we met with several members of the Buonomo family at their homes in Somerville. Arranging these meetings were

two of Philip's children: Philip, his eldest son, and Annette Fahey, his youngest daughter [Figure 2]. Also responsible for arrangements was Philip's son John, Register of Probate in the Middlesex County Division and resident of Newton, MA.

While in Somerville, we photographed Buonomo paperweights made for members of his family. First was the weight Philip made to mark his mother Alexandrina's death on December 26, 1926 [Figure 3]. The eye is immediately drawn to the bold block white letters and numbers that are the most frequently found and visually arresting feature of these commemorative paperweights. Ornamenting the weight and completing the design are flowers more complicated than the simple blooms often found in Union paperweights of this type. In this example, a white cross dotted with blue accents is superimposed over a large central gold-spotted red poinsettia with green leaves. Two other crosses flank the central flower.



*Figure 3: Buonomo weight commemorating the death of his mother Alexandrina.*

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*Figure 4: Buonomo weight commemorating the birth of his wife Raffaella.*

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# The Hidden Gallery

## New Discoveries in the Wonderful World of Antique Paperweights

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Figure 1: *Bacchus concentric with six Queen Victoria silhouette canes. 3 5/8" diameter. Collection of Rena and Stephen Jacobson. Photography by John Hawley*



Figure 2: *A St. Mandé closepack with a central StM signature cane, the fourth known signed specimen. 2 3/4" dia. Density = 3.0 gms/cc. Photography by and collection of Philippe Frère*



Figure 3: *Baccarat enameled pansy bouquet, 6x1 faceting. 3 3/16" diameter. Private Collection. Photography by John Hawley*

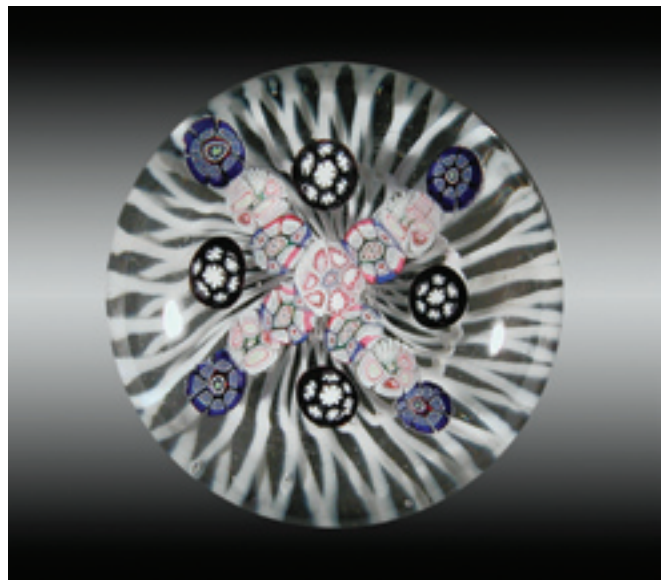


Figure 4: *New England Glass Co. 4 spoke concentric with 24 eagle canes. 2 1/2" dia. Private collection. Photography by the owner.*



# A Sulphide Sampler

## *Opening a Window on History*

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*My Luve*  
By Robert Burns

*O my luve is like a red,  
red rose,  
That's newly sprung in  
June:  
O my luve is like the  
melodie,  
that's sweetly played  
in tune.*

*As fair art thou, my  
bonie lass,  
So deep in luve am I;  
And I will luve thee  
still, my dear,  
Till a' the seas gang  
dry.*



*Till a' the seas gang  
dry, my dear,  
And the rocks melt  
wi' the sun;  
And I will luve thee  
still my dear,  
While the sands o'  
life shall run.*

*And fare thee weel,  
my only luve!  
And fare thee weel  
a while!  
And I will come  
again, my luve,  
Tho' it were ten  
thousand mile.*

*Figures 1 (above) & 2 (right): A vase  
with a sulphide of the Scottish poet  
Robert Burns, by John Ford & Com-  
pany, Holyrood Flint Glass Works,  
Edinburgh, Scotland. 6 3/4" tall. Pri-  
vate collection. Photography by the  
owner.*

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*Robert Burns (1759-1796) is most  
famous for his Scottish poems which  
describe the town and country life he  
knew best. He also rewrote dozens of  
Scottish folk songs, and this helped to  
revitalize Scottish pride and culture  
at a time when it was greatly needed.*

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# Contemporary Showcase

## The Latest Creations from Today's Paperweight Artists

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Figure 1: "Twisted-stem Bouquet"  
by **Andrew Byers**. 3 1/4" diameter.  
Photo courtesy L.H. Selman Ltd.



Figure 2: "Pineland Pickerel Weed Orb with  
Honeycomb and Honeybees" by **Paul Stankard**.  
5 1/2" dia. Photo by Douglas Schaible Photo.

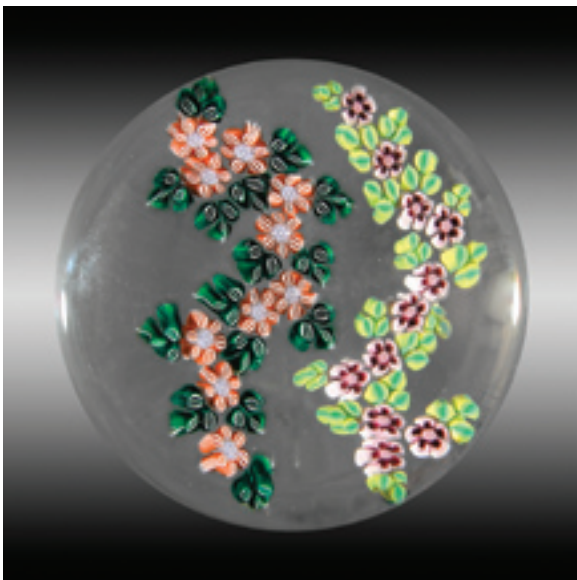


Figure 3: "Bouquet"  
by **Drew Ebelhare**. 2 5/8" diameter.  
Photo by John Hawley.



Figure 4: "Bouquet on Lace Ground"  
by **David and Jon Trabucco**. 3" diameter.  
Photo by the artists.

# Art as Practice

## Melissa Ayotte Explores Nature and Creativity

By: Lawrence H. Selman

Photography courtesy L. H. Selman, Ltd.

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**M**elissa Ayotte may have been born among glass rods and the roar of the torch, but she is no mere apprentice to her father. In fact, the same curiosities that drew her father to the artistic medium pulled her in other directions. Her interest for many years has been in psychology, understanding human motivation and behavior. With this interest in mind sciences leading the way, Melissa found herself more and more interested in the Arts. She began taking photography and sculpture at the New Hampshire Institute of Art while also delving into her own self-study of painting, poetry, and the creative process.

While finishing her Masters program at Antioch New England Graduate School, she apprenticed in the studio with Rick, and it was then that her interest in glass began to take hold. Impossible to miss in the Ayotte household, glass demanded her attention in the studio where she could work on Rick's pieces, pull colored rod, or assist in design. Upon obtaining her M.A., Melissa began pursuing a career in counseling and clinical psychology while continuing her work in the studio.

Glass initially served as a refuge from the day to day of her career. But as her aptitude developed into skill, Melissa started taking more glass and generalized art classes, soon realizing she had found her true interest. Glass moved into the leading position, with her love of mind sciences serving as a strong foundation to her creativity. In the year 2000 Melissa spent time assisting at the Stankard Studio and



Figure 1: Melissa Ayotte creating nature in glass.

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then began full-time at the Ayotte Glass Studio, where she continues to create.

In taking to glasswork and learning to capture these small, still moments of life, she is discovering the most human of motivations: to create what was not there before. Melissa aims to push the limits of the paperweight, creating novel pieces which reflect her sense of Nature - earthly, human, and divine.

At a time when many paperweight artists are "expanding" out of the spherical format into other three-dimensional shapes, Melissa has made a deliberate choice to stay close to the traditional form. *"I consider the limitations imposed by the spherical shape of the paperweight to be very liberating, in the sense that I am forced to reckon with the boundaries of the glass and develop new ideas, techniques, and creative approaches for expanding those boundaries. The shape itself provides a structure from which I can evolve my own*

sense of creativity, ultimately aiming to evolve the art of paperweight making in general.

*The more I become aware, open and awakened to the Natural world, the more closely I align with my true creative intention. By allowing my quest for expanded consciousness to lead my artistic expression I hope to develop new ways of understanding and experiencing not only glass, but life.*

*My art is my practice, an alchemical experience of bending and shaping a solid - glass - into a liquid form, then creating a sculpture from this change in material. I believe the glass artist is more than craftsman or artisan alone, rather a practitioner of a higher-aim transformation. This transformation happens in the glass artist as she creates it, within the material while it changes shape and also, I hope, within the viewer when he engages the sculpture."*



Figure 2: "Vine Bouquet." 3 1/4" diameter.

## *A traditional form reflecting her sense of nature.*



Figure 3: "Narcissus." 3 1/4" diameter.



Figure 4: "Hidden Jewel" with "pate de verre" Buddha sculpture. 3 3/8" diameter.