

AFTER THE

Gold

It all happened at the first annual Memorial Conclave.



BY DAVID
MCDONALD

David and Robin McDonald own and operate Avila Sign & Design, a custom sign shop in Grover Beach, Calif. They may be found on the Internet at www.avilasigndesign.com.

I WAS INVITED to John Studden's studio this February 6-8 to honor and celebrate the life and legacy of Mr. Rick Glawson. February seemed like the appropriate time of year to host the first annual *Memorial Conclave* because it was the beginning of that month that Rick Glawson and Lola Grey of Fine Gold Sign Company and Esoteric Sign Supply hosted the annual California Conclaves.

Rick and Lola opened their doors to anyone who was interested in learning about gold leaf and related products, techniques and the sharing thereof. The Conclaves started in 1986 and continued through the year 2003 — 18 in total.

A NEW ERA OF GATHERING

The year 2004 would mark the beginning of a new era of gathering, sharing and giving in the form of "the first annual Memorial Conclave". There was talk in the aftermath of Rick's passing about trying to carry on the February gatherings of gold enthusiasts — as we all knew that Rick would not want all that he shared and lived for to come to a halt. It just didn't seem right!

John Studden came to my neighborhood and between us we tackled a gold leaf on glass job and during his stay we talked about the possibility of a memorial gathering in Rick Glawson's name. We were sensitive to the fact that the California Conclaves were a thing of the past — a wonderful time in history — and it could not in any way be replaced. But as we talked that evening over a pint I came to realize that John was probably the best man to put something together in Rick's name.



Killer glass project by Larry White.



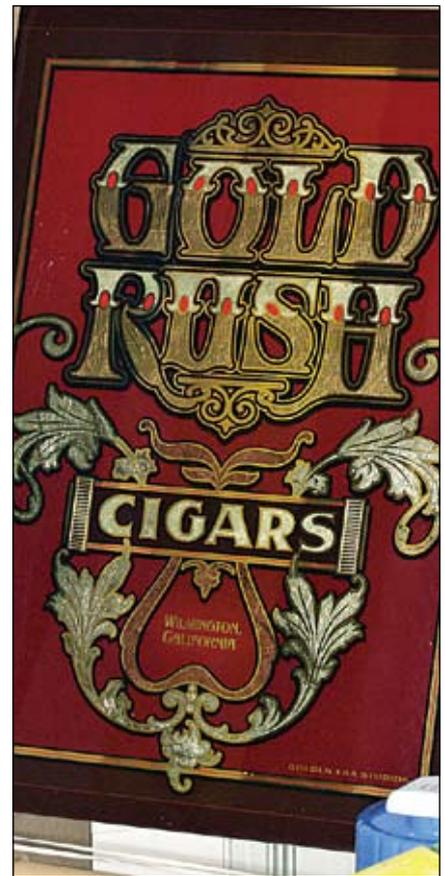
Awesome surface gilding panel by Greg Heger.



John Studden and Haydn Whornton acid etching David Butler's design.



Lola Grey



Although he could not attend, Mike Jackson sent along this glass piece.

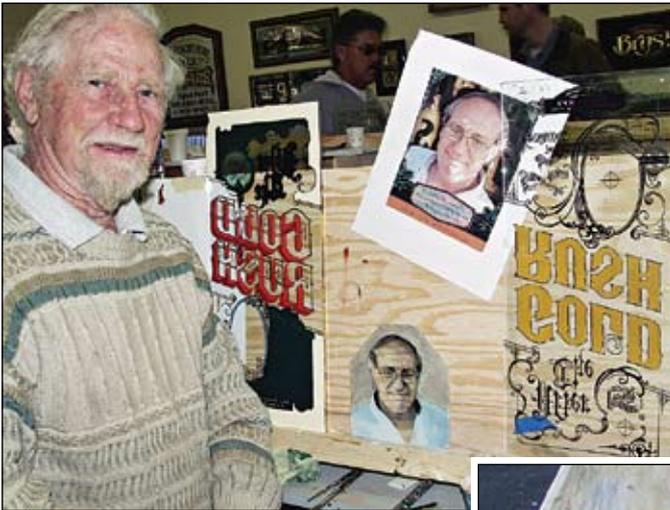


Pat Mackle sandblasted these nice mugs for everyone!



Noel Weber's classic design.

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John Jordan takes a break from his projects to allow this photo-op.



The wild bunch! Greg Heger, Noel Weber, David Smith, John Studden and Gary Godby.



John McDonald (my son) painted this faux rusted iron sign.



Gary Godby and crew working diligently.



Modern Options sophisticated finishes—chemical patina.



Young Mr. Ingram assembling his project.

— almost as if leading us there. It was quite a sight and I thought of Rick.

When we arrived at John's shop I pulled up close to the open bay door that was filled with people visiting and working with their hands. There were many smiles. John Studden had delegated to me the duty of putting together a project for the group so my truck was full of product, pieces and supplies. After handshakes, hugs and kisses, my truck was unloaded (with much help from the group) in a manner one would find at a perfectly running shipping and receiving dock.

In the first room inside the bay door I noticed silk screens all set up and ready to operate. They were adorned with some artwork that had that great style from the hands of Mr. Noel B. Weber. I was certain of this and it was confirmed.

I continued on, making my way to the back, passing by another room filled with computers, printers, plotters and the like — all was busy! I finally came to a well-lit room, the largest of them all, that was filled with beautiful glass pieces. Some were hanging on the wall, finished from previous gatherings; some were familiar to me and with my eyes, I greeted them like an old friend; some were new and stimulating and I would have to come back and have another look indeed.

There were at least 50 pieces of glass at working eye level leaning against easels — obviously project pieces. I could see

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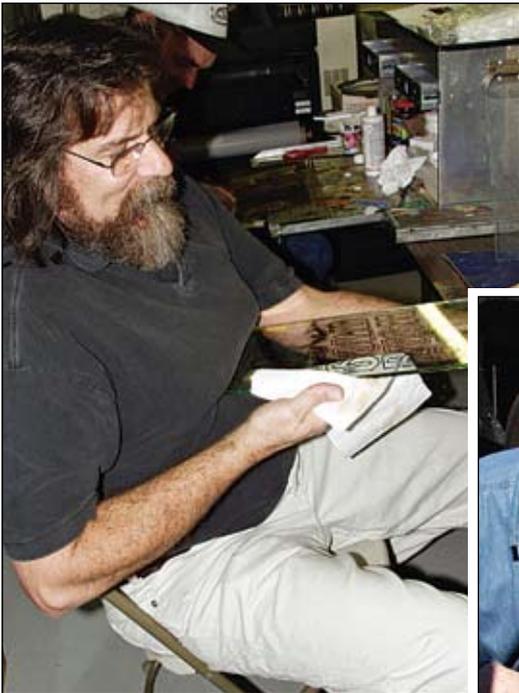
After all, John knew Rick better than I did and longer. Frankly, he knew Rick better than most and he also lived in Southern California where it seemed logical to hold such an event. The loss was so evident to us that evening that Robin and I encouraged John to be the one to host the memorial and we were glad that he and his wife Kathi were gracious enough to open their studio to such an undertaking.

VISITING, WORKING AND SMILES

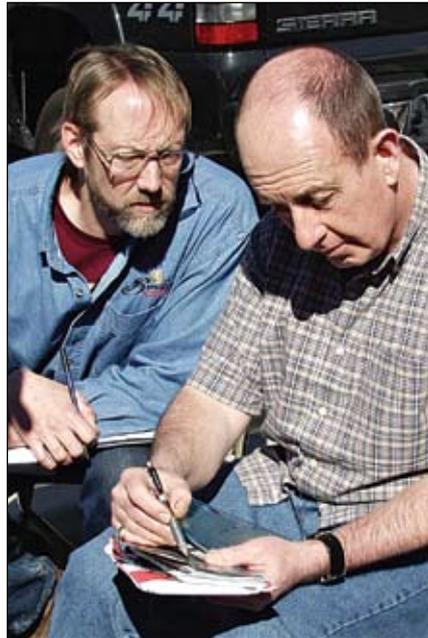
The First annual Memorial Conclave started on a Friday. Robin, my son John and I made the two and a half-hour journey south on highway 101 along the coast to John Studden's studio in Valencia. Along the way we saw dolphins close to the shore frolicking and leaping toward the sky, then returning to the blue waters moving swiftly southward

AFTER THE GOLD RUSH!

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David Butler admiring his reflection in the glass.



Haydn Whornton sharing his wisdom of white acid work with Larry White.



Doug Bernhardt hand lettering a dart cabinet.



John and Emily Studden making their rounds.

that many attendees had been busy as most of the glass pieces were already covered with 23-karat gold leaf, ready to be silk screened with Noel's artwork. I was impressed!

This was a working crowd and it wasn't even noon on the first day, a time that would characteristically be reserved for visiting and warming up to the crowd. I connected with John and we set up some space to get my project started.

I started handing out project pieces and they were disappearing swiftly. I was sure the next day would bring more attendees and I would be disappointing some, but 50 pieces was all I had time to make before the event and there was not going to be more than 50 attendees...yea right!

It was nice to see such a good turnout in Rick's name.

HE JUST WANTED TO HELP

I designed my project to be executed in its entirety over the weekend. It was a simple project (there are probably plenty of people laughing at this point as this never seems to happen at events but it was my intention), made up of three pieces: a half-inch Sintra plaque and two pieces of glass cut to fit in the back of the plaque. The finished piece would be a faux finished bronze plaque to honor Rick Glawson.

I used some vectored artwork from the new "Americana Collection" from Mike Jackson at Golden Era Studios for the plaque artwork, a glass insert with "Daddy Fine Gold" (this is how Rick is known to many) gilded, printed and back painted and another piece of glass with a portrait of Rick drawn from the hand of Mr. Bill Hueg.

Bill's hand-drawn portrait was printed with the Gerber Edge on clear enamel-receptive vinyl with the idea to place it on the back of the glass to be painted as an old black and white photo. I was pleasantly surprised to see the different approach attendees made to these prints.

When we opened the package of pre-cut glass for my project John and I freaked when we noticed that the glass company had sent the wrong glass. It was obscured and semi-opaque! The sizes were right but it couldn't be used on the

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David Smith, Doug Bernhardt and Danny Baronian, working with the angel gilding process.



Gold is everywhere!



Pete McKiernan reading a poetic story to Lola and Letterheads.

project, which was a minor set back. John made the call to the glass company but there was no answer. That put the project at a standstill for the moment and John had his hands full with other duties. It was at this point when Kelly Cassidy asked me how much glass we needed. I replied that we needed a total of 100, fifty of each at this size!

Kelly made a call, then drove off only to return about three hours later with the glass all cut to size and ready for use. He actually went and cut the glass himself and it was the epitome of being a true Letterhead — he just wanted to help! Kelly thanks so much for helping out. You really saved the day!

CONTINUING THE TEACHINGS

Like most Conclaves of the past, David Butler designed the beautiful logo and T-shirts for the memorial event. David's design was acid-etched into glass, sandblasted into coffee mugs, wine bottles — and I saw that John had V-carved

the main text of the artwork into MDF to be placed behind the acid etched glass pieces.

Sarah King with Stained Glass LTD. Came out from Chicago to share her methods of the deposition of gold chloride (angel gilding). Sarah and her husband Mike have developed and formulated a process to carry on what Rick had already re-introduced into our industry. Sarah, Danny Baronian and David Smith were mirroring plenty of glass throughout the weekend and it was nice to see that part of Rick's legacy continuing.

On Saturday morning Yoder arrived escorting Lola Grey to the meet and Lola looked great! It was really nice to see her and her arrival was much anticipated by all whom attended because an event like this would not be the same without her presence. Lola visited with friends, shared stories, gave advice and guidance and sometimes just sat down to put her feet up and rest.

Lola shared with me that she was proud to see everyone working and continuing the teachings that Rick had left us. She was pleased and I could see it in her eyes!

Pete McKiernan gave a reading that Saturday to Lola. He spoke the words with heart and complete vulnerability and it read like a fairytale — the story of a man and his love for gold and the woman who helped keep it all together.

The weekend was definitely a time of sharing but it was also a weekend of giving. Larry White did a spectacular piece honoring Rick and he shared his methods and techniques through digital media on a wonderfully compiled CD. Chuck at Letterhead Fonts compiled a CD with many photos of the past Conclaves and it also included a font. Tony Segale brought some of his best homemade wine to share, which became very appropriate for the eloquent toast that David Butler gave, after which there was a moment of silence.

This was an emotional time during the weekend but was very much needed and I am grateful to David and Susie Butler for creating such a moment.

Sunday was a day of good-byes for most — myself included. We did collect

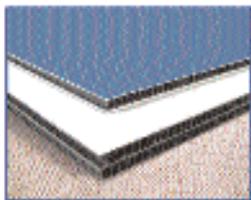
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for a group photo late that morning and it is safe to say that it is a representation of but a small percentage of the whole, as a lot of folks had already gone home. These photos really should be taken on Saturday but that's easier said than done!

I would like to thank a few people that helped me with my project.

A *Special Thanks* to Lola for loaning and trusting me with the nice hand lettered plaque with Rick's signature.

Bill Hueg really stepped up to the plate even though his busy schedule didn't allow him to attend the meet. But he still made time to draw the wonderful line art of Rick's portrait for the project pieces. The group at Denco Sales supplied the Sintra needed for the routed

Rick would have been proud — this is for sure — and it is clear that he won't be forgotten!

plaques for my project. Gretchen Skillman with Modern Options Sophisticated Finishes was exceptionally gracious in sponsoring my project with the products needed to create the beautiful patinas and rust textures on the plaques. As always the people at 1 Shot came through with the lettering enamel needed for the event and we must thank them for their generosity.

I'm left with thanking John, Kathi and their family for putting such a memorable weekend together for everyone to remember for a lifetime. I know there is a lot of work involved in putting a weekend of this magnitude together and it is much appreciated. I am sure all of the attendees share my appreciation.

Rick would have been proud — this is for sure — and it is clear that he won't be forgotten!

Until next time, thanks for listening. ☺

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