



# The New Bedford Museum of Glass NEWSLETTER



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## Glass Museum Finds Home at New Bedford Antiques Center!

NBMOG is excited to announce that it will be moving this winter from its development office on North Water Street to occupy approximately 4,000 square feet of space in the Wamsutta Mill complex, located just off the Route 18 connector between I-195 and downtown New Bedford. The Museum will share space in the building with the New Bedford Antiques Center, which maintains booths for collectibles on the 2nd floor and a ground floor furniture gallery adjacent to the space designated for the museum.

The move comes at the generous invitation of antiques center owner and New Bedford native Jeff Costa. Mr. Costa has been a strong supporter of the effort to establish the new glass museum. In 2007 he donated space at the antique center's old location in the Fairhaven Mills (directly off Route I-195), where NBMOG was able to mount educational exhibits in three beautiful display cases donated by museum member Pam Levine. When the Fairhaven Mill building was scheduled for demolition last fall, Mr. Costa relocated to 61 Wamsutta Street and invited the museum to move with him.

The new space, for which the museum will pay a nominal rent during the 5-15 year period covered by the lease and renewal options, is currently being painted by an industrious team of volunteers headed by NBMOG member Bret Morey and Bob Vogan. Schematics for the installation have been drafted by another volunteer, architect Eric Nelson (brother of museum director Kirk Nelson), and construction of display cases will begin later this month. The new cases will supplement the three Levine cases and eleven large cases donated by the Bennington Museum of Bennington, Vermont, which is currently renovating its galleries. Fortunately, the plan for the new space will not require NBMOG to dismantle its extensive display of his-

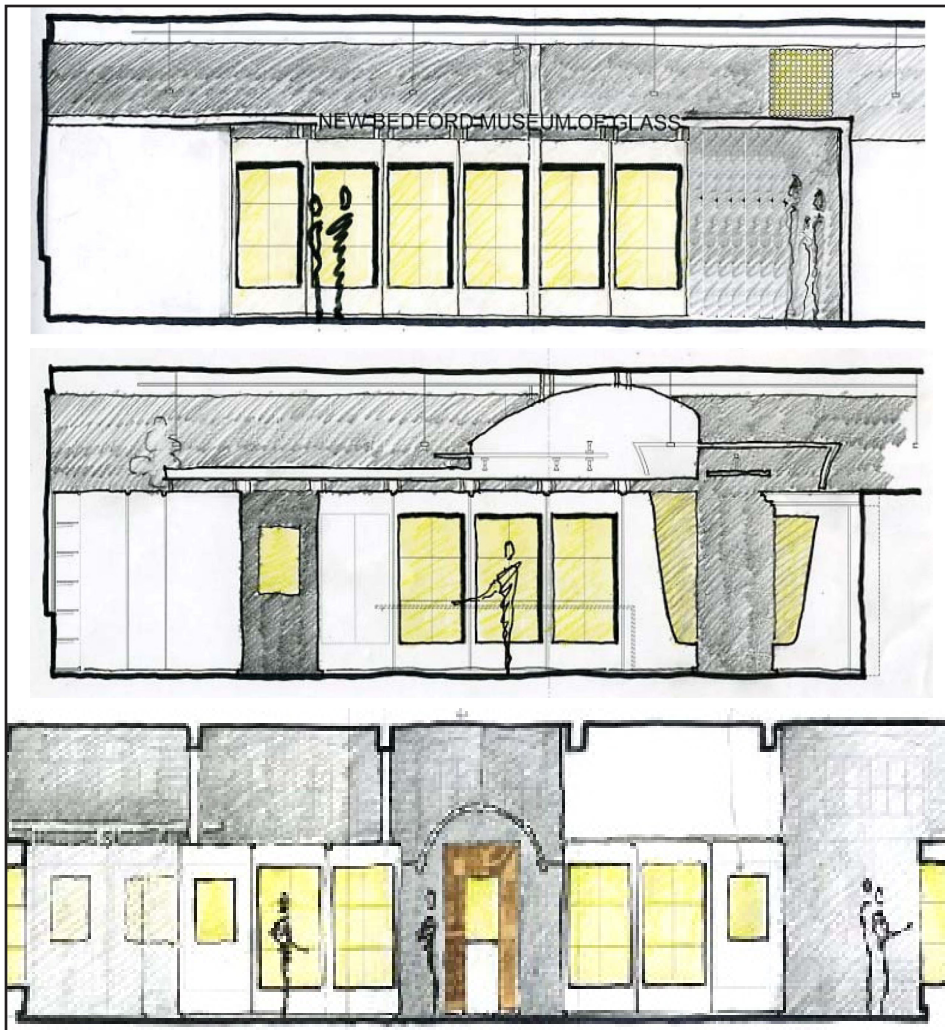


torical glass at New Bedford City Hall. This ongoing installation, the largest of its kind in the country, is housed in beautiful display cases donated several years ago by museum trustee Bill Pitt and the late Louis O. St. Aubin, Jr.

Funds to cover most of the start-up expenses at 61 Wamsutta St. has been raised by the museum's Board of Trustees, and special thanks go to

**Figures 1-3.** Exterior and interior illustrations of the new space are shown above. To the right antiques center owner Jeff Costa joins the painting volunteers! Mr. Costa is donating much of the space and will receive a nominal rent for the remainder. By this generous arrangement the museum has overcome the biggest hurdle to opening its new gallery facility.





details. The shop could be ready to open as soon as late December, while the installation of the galleries is expected to be completed early in 2010.

**Figure 4-6** (left). Plans for the entrance to the museum gift shop from the antiques center space (top left), the entrance from the gift shop space into the museum galleries (middle left), and the gallery center arch (bot. left) drafted by NBMOG member Eric Nelson, whose architectural firm is located in Winchester, MA (web: ena-ma.com) and who teaches architecture at Boston Architectural College.

**Figure 7** (below). The iconic chalice vase shape was made in New Bedford for many years in a wide range of colors and decorative treatments. Architect Eric Nelson has employed the distinctive shape in his innovative design for the museum entrance (see plan middle left). Cobalt vase with bubble ball stem, Pairpoint Corp., New Bedford, MA, c. 1920-1938, H: 11 7/8", gift: Phil Gardella; acc. #2006.092



museum member Carl Barron for donating the services of his legal firm during the writing of the lease. Special thanks also to members Ellen Guenette, Irwin Nebelkopf, Gene DesLandes, Nancy Griswold, Phil Chasse and Ken & Sylvia Lyon for their helpful suggestions and support during the planning stages of the relocation.

In addition to gallery display

space, the new facility will include a research library, changing exhibition space, paperweight study center and museum shop. Featured in the shop will be a consignment corner where antique glass will be offered for sale. Museum members with glass to sell are invited to contact Executive Director Kirk Nelson at (email) knelson@nbmog.org or (tel.) 508-984-1666 for

NBmuseumOG

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## Volunteers!

As the museum prepares to occupy its exciting new space, volunteers are sought to help in the shop, research library and galleries. Museum director Kirk Nelson will offer volunteers an optional, "hands-on" glass appreciation course covering the history of glass using treasures from the museum's permanent collection and research library. This will be a fun learning experience for you and will provide a vital service for the museum. We also need a volunteer coordinator and volunteers to help with curatorial research and membership. Please join the team!

## Web Site

Last fall NBMOG launched its web site, [www.nbmog.org](http://www.nbmog.org), which has been very favorably received. One popular feature, the "Forum," offers visitors an opportunity to share their glass research queries and discoveries. Another feature, "Links," can bring the visitor to literally hundreds of important glass sites on the internet. By clicking photographs on the NBMOG site, visitors are brought to in-depth essays about the various items illustrated. New essays are being added on a regular basis, and an email notification system is in place to announce each post.

## Book Drive!

Do you have books about glass that you can donate to NBMOG? The museum's new facility will allow us to double the size of our library, and we are looking for both new editions and duplicate copies to expand the library collection. Recent generous gifts have come to us from Steve Early, Dick & Lesley Harris, Norman Heckler, John & Barbara Imbrie, Roger Jacobsen, James Julia, Jim Lessig, Malcolm MacNeil, Ed & Abbie Meyer, Ross Nelson, David Peterson, Doris & Harvey Robinson, Gail Ryan and Deborah Truitt. Please let us add your name to this distinguished list!

## Bennington Museum Glass Collection on Loan to New Bedford

The Bennington Museum of Bennington, VT, has offered to place a large portion of its renowned glass collection on loan to the New Bedford Museum of Glass while it reorganizes its galleries and refines its interpretive focus. An initial group of items already has been transferred to New Bedford. It was featured last September in a special exhibition mounted by NBMOG at the UMass-Dartmouth Art Gallery to coincide with the conference of the Mt. Washington & Pairpoint Glass Society. Attendees were delighted with the display. NBMOG is extremely grateful to the Bennington Museum for its support as we work to establish the new museum, and we also thank art gallery director Lasse Antonsen for making his beautiful facilities available for the September conference and the present installation. The glass will be moved to the museum's new facility at 61 Wamsutta St. as soon as arrangements for its display are completed. Art glass treasures include examples by Tiffany, Steuben, Quezal, Durand and, of course, the Mt. Washington Glass Company of New Bedford. Examples of early American glass include lily-pad, beehive, colored lacy, pattern glass, whimsies, paperweights and much more. Items from the collection will be illustrated and discussed in greater detail on the museum's web site, [www.nbmog.org](http://www.nbmog.org).

**Figures 8-9 (right).** Highlights from the Bennington Museum glass collection exhibited last September by NBMOG at the UMass-Dartmouth Art Gallery, 715 Purchase St., in downtown New Bedford.



## Important Gift from the Late Edith Lawson

Shortly before her passing last February, NBMOG trustee and long-time supporter Edie Lawson donated a magnificent example of Mt. Washington Royal Flemish glass to the museum's permanent collection. The covered ewer measures a colossal 18 3/8" high and features an enameled background design inspired by softly colored stained glass windows, to which the decorator has applied rich gilt ornamentation in the Renaissance Revival style. Royal Flemish is considered one of the preeminent lines of New Bedford art glass. It was developed in 1888 by Albert Steffin, foreman of the Mt. Washington decorating department, and was produced until the mid 1890s. The Lawson Ewer is considered a particularly impressive example. Its donation brings great distinction to the museum's core collection of locally-made glass and helps substantiate New Bedford's claim in the late 19th century to be the "art glass headquarters of the country." It also reminds us of a friend and colorful personality who enriched the glass world in many ways. In addition to her service on the NBMOG Board, Mrs. Lawson and her late husband John were active members of the Mt. Washington & Pairpoint Glass Society, the National American Glass Club and numerous other glass-related organizations.

**Figures 11–16** (Lessig Memorial Gifts): cameo bowl inscribed “L’an neuf au Gui” [The new year in mistletoe], Daum, Nancy, France, c. 1900; L: 5 1/2”; jug, Richardson’s, Wordsley, England, c. 1860, H: 9 1/4”; “Gatto” vase, Toan Klein, Toronto, 1981, H: 7”; Loop sculpture, Harvey Littleton, Madison, WI, 1972, H: 5 1/8”; terrestrial globe & stand, pos. Baccarat or Sandwich, c. 1880, H: 16”; radio lamp, Pairpoint Corp., New Bedford, MA, c. 1930, H: 13 5/8”



## Barbara Lessig Memorial Collection

Earlier this year the museum lost a devoted member and supporter with the passing of Barbara M. Lessig, a nationally-recognized antiques appraiser and glass authority from Brookeville, MD. Mrs. Lessig was a former board member of the National American Glass Club and organized the club’s 75th anniversary party at the conference held in Cambridge, MA in the spring of 2008. Her enthusiasm for glass was unrivaled and her knowledge covered an extraordinary range of subjects, from ancient to contemporary. Mrs. Lessig’s husband Jim has donated an impressive selection of glass to NBMOG in Barbara’s memory, a gift that strengthens the museum’s collection in many areas

at a critically important time as we define our collection goals and begin to occupy the new Wamsutta Mill facility. In addition to the items illustrated above, the gift includes such rarities as a 1785 seal bottle, an engraved finger bowl and tray signed by Webb’s celebrated engraver William Fritsche, an English cameo covered jar, a Mt. Washington Lava glass vase, tableware in the Jumbo and Three Face patterns and a Pairpoint Puffy lamp. Additional donations have been received from Dianne Gregg, Betsy Hewlett, Ross Nelson and Nancy & Bill Sheriff. These pieces and many others from the memorial gift were featured in a special exhibition mounted by NBMOG at the Sandwich Glass Show last September. Over the coming weeks they will be illustrated and discussed in greater detail on the museum’s web site, [www.nbmog.org](http://www.nbmog.org).

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