

# Jones Creek Glassworks

## Quarterly

### Notes From The Cutting Edge

July 1, 2009

Volume 2, Issue 4

# Repairs

The word inspires discomfort for most every stained glass artisan I've ever met. "I never do repairs," or "I only repair my own stuff," are common statements when the subject comes up. Honestly, I would not have done my first repair had it not been for a little encouragement from a *could-be* repair customer.

Once the doors of Jones Creek Glassworks opened, several could-be repair customers wondered if I would look at a broken art piece to see if I could fix it. My love of a challenge finally got the best of me and I began taking on repair jobs. At first, I stuck with copper foil method repairs (my main area of "expertise" in construction). As I gained confidence, whatever came through the door was enthusiastically welcomed. If I worked a little longer than estimated, well, that was tuition. Now, with the same enthusiasm, I have a more realistic view of repair work and my estimates are closer to the mark.

Recalling the start when repairs were high on my list of things *not to do*, I see the large volume of repair work I've done over 2 years, from very simple to extremely complex projects, and realize that I have come to love a process I formerly resisted with all fours dug in.

Each repair job is a Pandora's Box where inside live many learning opportunities. It is stimulating to estimate a strategy, to dive into someone else's work (sometimes finding novel methods of stained glass construction), to find

the replacement materials, to reassess the strategy (maybe several times), and to complete a repair project that seemed, at first, on its face to be impossible.

With all that said, it's time to share some of the things I think about as a repair unfolds. These are a few basics that seem to cover most repair jobs. You may notice that I avoid absolutes. Nothing is *always* anything. So, even as you consider guidelines stated by me or anyone, be sure to prepare for surprises.

**Make a working sketch or etching of the piece.** If it is 3D, like a lamp, box, or house (yup, I repaired a glass house made in China that was knocked to the floor by a cat), take several photos from many angles. Once you begin dismantling, you will need a reference to get you back. Memory is rarely good enough for small details in odd corners of a project.

**Create a strategy and be flexible.** It's a little like making a plan to navigate a labyrinth, but don't be discouraged by that. You are in charge and can revise your strategy every 30 seconds if you need to. As you get a few repairs under your belt, your strategies will be more durable. What's important is that you know the end point for the whole project and at least one possible beginning point. Then, you just start.

**Collect appropriate tools for dismantling and preservation.** You may think that

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(**Repairs** continued)

melting solder and pulling the glass out of or away from the piece is the best way to work. It *is* a method tried and true. But, there is much to be said for using a small hacksaw, especially on the border glass. Holding a hot soldering iron on glass of delicate or unknown quality and/or age may create more breakage. An older piece that has been moved a few times in its life may have a few hidden micro-fractures in addition to the obvious breaks. Sometimes the working temperature of a soldering iron can encourage further breakage.

A good glazing hammer comes in handy on occasion; drafting squares of different sizes are helpful; a lamp positioner and sponge blocks are very helpful for lamp repairs; artist paint brushes, toothbrushes, an exacto knife, small blocks of wood, horseshoe nails, wire, aluminum strips cut from a pop can, an emery board, a solder wick – your tool needs become apparent as you go along. Yes, you probably *will* need the kitchen sink.

**Keep an open mind.** A good working knowledge of stained glass construction is helpful. You know how *you* construct stained glass. What you will learn is how others construct stained glass and there may be a few surprises. Rather than thinking to yourself, “What kind of a nut would solder BB’s into a gap to fill up space?” a more productive thought may be, “If I cut the replacement glass to fill in the gap, will it ruin the intention of the artist?”

Keeping an open mind is a lot about accepting that maybe your way is not the *only* way. Keeping an open mind may be about allowing yourself to embrace the intentions of another artist and trying to stay true to those intentions as you repair their work.

Expressing my own artistic proclivity is one of the strongest pulls I deal with while working a repair. The idea of “fixing” the art or sorting out the manner of construction in a

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way that conforms to my own methods rather than simply repairing the piece is a tendency I *work* to avoid. The goal of repair should be to deliver the art back to the owner in as close a state as possible to the original condition - not transformed into something else.

**Learn your glass** in order to find replacement material easier. Sample sets are very helpful if you plan to do a lot of repair work. There is the “show-off” factor of immediately recognizing a piece of glass; the “nuts and bolts” of knowing glass is simply being able to confidently order it by factory and number. Knowing what to substitute is an extension of that glass knowledge.

**Don’t be afraid** to try new ideas and methods. Do some research on the internet, or in books and magazines, but do not be limited by the opinions of others. If, as you experiment, you find a method that works, it doesn’t really matter what a self-appointed expert on the internet says against your “discovery.”

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## Tips and Tricks

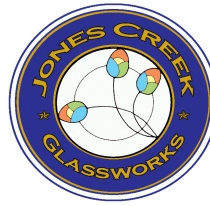
- To separate a soldered seam, cut a strip of aluminum from a pop can; heat the seam with your soldering iron at full working temperature, work the aluminum strip into the seam. As the solder cools, a separation will occur since the solder will not stick to the aluminum. (Caution: this is not as easy as it sounds, but it does work.) For safety, wrap one end of the strip with tape to help avoid cutting your fingers as you perform this maneuver.
- Having a little trouble getting that stiff metal came over your edges? When you solder the seams, leave a 1/4" to 1/2" from the edge free of solder. Your panel will hold together just fine while leaving a nice flat edge to put the came over. Pick up the soldering on the seams when connecting to the came.
- When working with older lead came, have a fine surface emery board handy to buff off the oxidation before applying flux.

Please come in and let me know about tips and tricks you have heard or developed for working with glass. All points of view are valued; all readers are welcome to submit comments for print in the "Quarterly."

### (Repairs continued)

The "how-to" of doing any repair is, for the most part, dependent on the project in front of you. That is the challenge of repair work. There may be classes on doing repair work, but after doing several repairs, I would have reservations about an all-encompassing methodology. Likewise, it may be a mistake to assume that anyone who knows how to construct a stained glass panel would know how to fix one. There is a certain elusive element of desire for unraveling mysteries that must be kindled and burning.

The personality trait that has served me most in stained glass repair (aside from my challenge "jones") is that I love to pull things apart to see how they work (which is not always followed by the desire to put them back together—just ask my husband about the washroom plumbing). You may have similar drives which would work well for stained glass repair. It's not



Just A Note . . .

Summer is upon us and the slow march of the recreational vehicles is easily observed from all parts of town. The Oregon Coast is a popular destination and we can all benefit by getting our artwork out there to be seen. Let me know if there is anything you need to help complete your stained glass projects. It's always a pleasure to supply the needs of this artist community!

If you are a hobbyist "fuser" who would like to see Jones Creek stock your favorite supplies, stop in and let me know what you would like to be able to pick up on short notice. You probably have many desires in common with other local fusers.

As always, your business is appreciated. Thanks for letting me serve you

R

for everyone. But, sufficient desire and curiosity can overcome many initial technical obstacles. Go ahead, dive in.

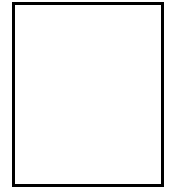
Approach repair as a unique experience every time. Each piece of glass art has its own "genius" if you observe closely enough. Look at each piece of glass, each connection of came and solder. Get a feel for how the piece was constructed. Touch everything with your fingers; eyes can miss breaks, especially in dark glass. Details are so important.

If you've done a good job, you will be nearly as intimate with the art as the artist who made the piece. You will gain knowledge that will serve you as you construct your own art, you'll be proud of your repair work, and you'll be a good steward of stained glass art as well as stained glass artists. - R

JONES CREEK GLASSWORKS WILL BE CLOSED  
ON THE FOLLOWING DATES THIS SUMMER.

SATURDAY, JULY 4  
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19

*Jones Creek Glassworks*  
*419 SW Coast Hwy.*  
*Newport, Oregon 97365*



### July “Quarterly” Newsletter

Sale at Jones Creek Glassworks ~ Clear textures 25% off July 1 through October 1, 2009

## **Semi-Private Lessons\*** **Copper Foil Method ~Beginners Welcome!**

**☞ Lessons may be scheduled for, Wednesday,, Friday, and Saturday. Normal lesson time is 5PM until 7PM, however, special arrangements can be made if needed. Lessons are located in the studio area of the shop. (\*Room for two students per session)**

Lesson scheduling is extremely flexible. Schedule your first lesson to get started; when you're ready for the next step, schedule for your next lesson. Any time interval is fine. You choose!

**☞ The cost is \$25 per 2 hour session. Depending on your project, you will need 3, 4, or even 5 sessions.**

Factors that may affect the number of sessions needed are the number of pieces in your project, whether or not you have tools to use at home, and the difficulty level of your project. If you are a beginner, I encourage you to pick a project of fewer than 30 pieces (preferably 15 to 20 pieces).

**☞ Jones Creek Glassworks provides the use of hand tools, grinders, and a selection of bulk glass to use in your project. Tools and glass are also available for purchase at Jones Creek.**

**Questions? Call Paula at 541-265-2444 or visit [jonescreekglassworks.biz](http://jonescreekglassworks.biz).  
Gift Certificates are available at Jones Creek Glassworks**