

# From the Editor's Desk:

## *The Good of the Craft*

Long-time readers of this publication may remember two articles that I wrote quite a number of years ago about the Kansas City Renaissance Festival and how we put together a team of people to put on demonstrations there building stained glass windows. It was a very popular demonstration, and people were fascinated by the fabrication process. The Kansas City Renaissance Festival used to be a benefit for the Kansas City Art Institute. It has since been sold to a for-profit management company.

When it benefitted the Art Institute, my wife and I were both heavily involved in offering various demonstrations at the Renaissance Festival. Hardly a weekend went by when we were not out there with our friends. As I write this, though, I realize that yet another season has gone by and I didn't even bother going out there one time. Sure — things change, and, when it was something that benefitted art, I was glad to be a part of it. However, when it became about making money, I quickly lost interest in it. Now, I'm not saying there is anything wrong with money... it's just never been what motivates me. And there is a very different feel when dealing with an organization that is motivated primarily by money compared to an organization motivated primarily by art.

I suppose that is one of the things that makes me very fond of the Stained Glass Association of America. It's not perfect, but its motivations are right. It puts what is good for the art and the craft of stained, decorative, and architectural art glass first, and by doing that, it benefits its membership universally. An organization like the SGAA will always be a work-in-progress because the needs of the art and of the membership are constantly evolving. Therefore, the Association has to work constantly to make sure that it is meeting the needs of the art and of the membership to the best of its ability.

At the Annual Summer Conference held at the Elms in Excelsior Springs, Missouri, back in June, the SGAA made some bold changes to its membership levels. Among those changes was one — I have to admit — I thought I would never see, but I applaud it. The Affiliate level became Affiliate Members. Previously, the term "member" was not applied to this level, and now it is. That may seem like a small change, but it represents a recognition of



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*The dalmatic I am wearing in this picture was an ordination gift from the SGAA Board.*

the merit of this level of membership in the Stained Glass Association of America.

Even more fundamentally important, though, than recognizing Affiliates as Affiliate Members is the reduction in the price of Affiliate Membership in the SGAA. The annual cost for this level of membership was cut in half: it went from \$100 to \$50 per year. This is exciting because it demonstrates that the Stained Glass Association of America is more interested in the good of the art and craft than in the money and that the SGAA recognizes that one of the best ways to benefit the art and craft of stained glass is to encourage a greater participation in the activities of the Association.

It is now easier than ever to be a member of the Stained Glass Association of America. More voices and more participation in the Association will help the SGAA to accomplish its primary goals and objectives.

According to SGAA bylaws, objectives of the Association are: to function as the recognized organization of distinction and to conduct its affairs in a manner that will reflect credit upon its image and craft; to maintain the highest possible standards for excellence in craftsmanship, integrity and business practices; to provide facilities offering active membership participation, extensive craft training, organizational and craft-related information, and trade-related consulting and documentary services; to research and develop new products, processes and techniques for the advancement of innovative craft expression; to act as the authoritative historian and archivist for its craft in America; and to defend and protect its craft against unwarranted regulation restricting its freedom of use as an architectural art form.

Meeting those objectives will be better accomplished by more participation than it could ever have been accomplished by money alone. *Bravo, SGAA, for boldly working to meet the long-standing objectives of this venerable organization in new and vital ways.*

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