

Glass Cutting Provides Profitable Hobby

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SALISBURY (Somerset Co.)

— Accepting the inevitable scrapes, cuts and occasional minor burns, Dixie Otto finds the craft of working with stained glass brings her both satisfaction and enjoyment.

She creates lovely lamp shades for lamp bases that she purchases separately; unusual shades for nightlights, attractive sun-catchers, glass Christmas tree ornaments and eye-catching pencil holders.

"I really enjoy it. To me it's not work... well, it's pleasurable work," she adds on second thought.

"I think the first thing I had a problem with was worrying about getting cut," she recalls, scurrying around her economical space in search of a particular piece of glass, "because we're taught from childhood, 'don't touch this or that.'"

The compact shop, located in the basement of a friend's home, is equipped with the necessary conveniences for creating a top-notch glass product. Handy electrical outlets, good lighting, and nearby water faucets are a must for this job.

The volume is turned low, but one hears Cheers airing on the small black and white television set nearby. Obviously, some electronic companionship is an effective tool to stop the monotony of working in solitude.

"Some glass is more splintery than others," she explains, saying that she buys the glass from Youghiogheny Glass in Connellsville.

A larger piece of glass is placed on top of the Morton glass cutting board, which is about 18 by 24 inches of firm white plastic with tiny hollow squares for catching chips or shards as Otto works.

Taking a plastic pattern for a section of a future nightlight cover, she deftly draws on the design with the tip of a colored marker to match the stained glass which might be a delicate blue, lavender, green or another darker color. With the appropriate tools she scores, cuts, then breaks the glass apart.

The pair of protective pastel blue gloves, seen hanging nearby, Otto has chosen to disregard, opting to work with bare hands.

She exercises meticulous care in fitting the segments together. "It's very important that everything is accurate," she says. "What you are trying to do is to get your pieces as even as possible."

This is where the electric grinder saves time over using a hand

file. The grinder is filled with water before Otto arranges a large piece of heavy brown paper around its back and sides to absorb the inevitable splashing from the running grinder. With this step Otto can file the rough edges and perfect the fit of each section to the others before joining them.

Next Otto thoroughly washes the glass to remove surface oils. She uses Joy dishwashing liquid because she says her instructor recommended the product when Otto was a student at a glass class held at Carole's Craft Corner in Boswell.

She removes the paper backing from some narrow copper foil which comes in rolls, and attaches it to the edges of the cut glass. Using a flux and a soldering iron, she then seals the edges. Sometimes she will use came, pronounced kam, which is a grooved lead strip also used to fasten pieces of glass.

Finally, the glass is washed a second time and ready for the application of a finishing compound to bring out its fine lustre, says Otto.

The lamps for which she has created shades appear wonderfully antique and perfect for occupying a small desk or pretty boudoir table. They are displayed for sale at a local art gallery.

Like the upside down gores of a skirt, the nightlight shade sort of flares around it in three small sections to shield the tiny bulb from view.

"The prettiest things are when you hold them to the light," she says, lifting a sun-catcher to illustrate what she means.

Other crafts enjoyed by Otto are photography, oil painting, and arranging dried flowers.

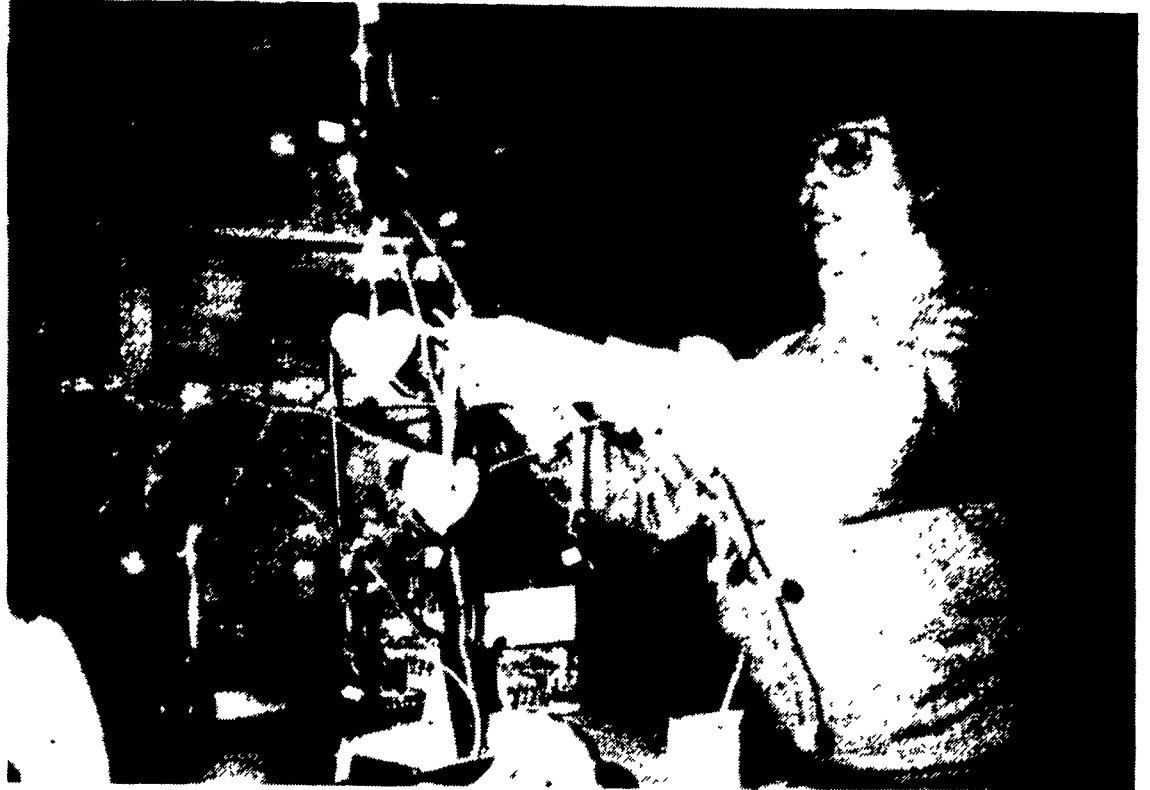
Her photographic entries have won some blue ribbons and she transforms a plain white notecard into a simple work of art with a personal touch just by attaching a sprig of dried flowers to one corner. She also makes small bouquets with dried flowers.

Several years ago a few area persons — Otto was one of them — organized a club and dubbed it the Tub Mill Arts Association, paying homage to a locally respected old stream and landmark known as the Tub Mill Run.

They saw artistic talents in the rural community literally being "hid under a bushel," as one member put it. They wanted to garner publicity and create a sales outlet for the work of those persons.

Says Otto, "We met to organize a club and just sort of all pitched in." She became the treasurer when officers were elected.

To get things rolling they held



Dixie Otto hangs some of the glass ornaments to provide a sun-catching arrangement.



Dixie displays her stained glass wares in the art gallery: lamps, pencil holders and nightlights.

art shows, using space in a local school. They were held the weekends of the Pennsylvania Maple Festival. Although the festival was held in Myersdale, top maple producers located around Salisbury attracted tours to the area. Shows were also held prior to the Christmas season.

While the pressing goal of the association is to permanently locate its art gallery in a large building so they can offer art classes and seminars, they have found

a good temporary location on Grant Street in Salisbury. Just a few feet from the town's only traffic light, the building sits along Route 219 where association members host the facility for visitors from 12 noon to 5 p.m., Wednesdays through Sundays.

Also a musician, Otto, a bank manager by profession, has played piano and organ for years, tutoring many pupils. She says she still sets aside time for a few piano lessons.

She is one of two organists at her church.

She attended Hood College in Frederick, Md., and Norristown Business College, Norristown. After working a while in Philadelphia, Otto says she returned to her home area and began working in a bank, a career which has spanned some 31 years and advanced her to manager's position at Integra Bank in Salisbury.

Pa. Cattlemen Seek Queen

STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) — Applications for the 1992 Cattlemen's Queen are currently being accepted by the Pennsylvania Cattlemen's Association. PCA will be selecting a queen and one alternate during the 1992 PA Beef Expo, March 26 and 27.

The Queen contest is open to any interested female, ages 18 to 23. Contestants must have a working knowledge or have displayed abilities to work with cattle at the on-farm level of the cattle industry.

The Cattlemen's Queen will be crowned at the Annual Awards Banquet, Friday, March 27. She

will represent the Pennsylvania Cattlemen's Association and the beef industry at various events throughout the state.

The Pennsylvania Beef Council will also be selecting "Beef Industry Representatives" for 1992. Serving as the Cattlemen's Queen would not interfere with that individual's opportunity to serve as a Beef Industry Representative.

Applications are available by contacting Sue Clair, Chairman of the Queen Program Committee, 568 Rock Road, State College, PA 16801, or by calling Mrs. Clair (814) 238-1233 or Marie Painter, PCA Sec'y (814) 258-7283.

Homestead Notes