

# Flame Off

2006 Tucson, AZ

Written by Vern West

Photos by Vern West, Laurie Nessel,

Michelle Parohinski & Kathryn Guler

The annual Best Bead Show, held in conjunction with the Tucson Gem & Mineral Show was Jan 30 - Feb 4, 2006. The competition held on Friday night at the Sonoran Glass Art Academy.

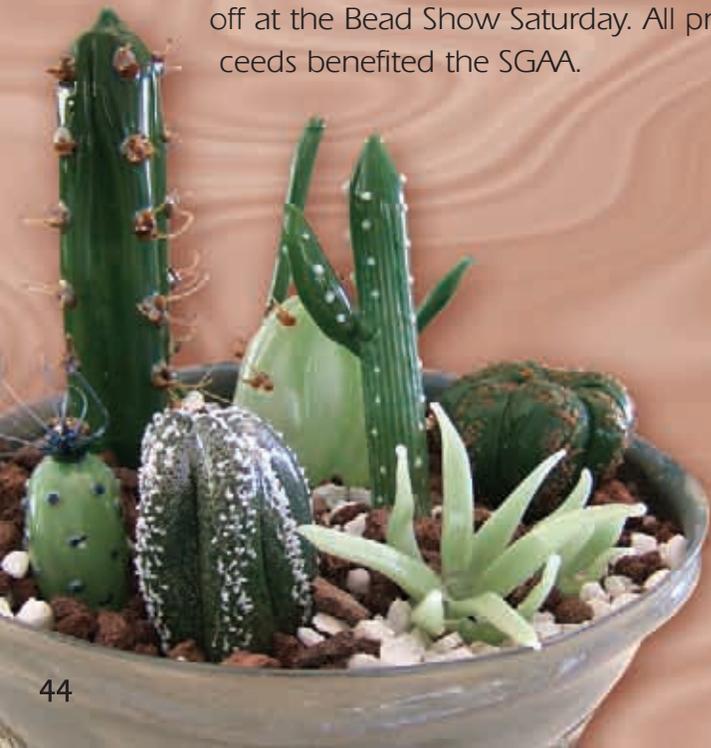
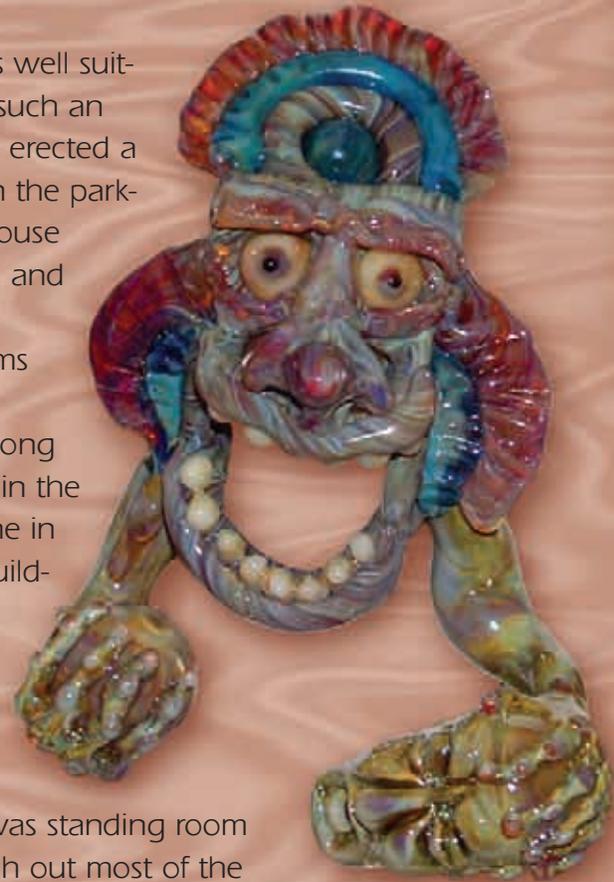
The SGAA, a non-profit, 501(c) 3 organization, is affiliated with both the University of Arizona and Pima Community College. They offer beginning and intermediate accredited glass blowing classes. In addition, internationally renowned glass artists are brought in to teach master classes in various glass art disciplines. Many shorter classes in bead making and sand casting are offered to the community. SGAA was co-founded by Tom Philabaum and David Klien in 2002.

There were 13 teams of two people working under a two hour deadline in two sessions to produce a finished artwork to be judged and auctioned off at the Bead Show Saturday. All proceeds benefited the SGAA.

The SGAA is well suited to hold such an event. They erected a large tent in the parking lot to house competitors and the excited crowd. Teams were setup along two long tables, one in the tent and one in the main building. There were far more spectators than bleacher seats so it was standing room only through out most of the competition.

Over the course of the evening, SGAA assistants moved through the gallery bringing bid sheets so spectators could bid on the objects being made. Periodically, David Morden the Executive Director of SGAA, would give a short biography of the artists involved.

Morden said, "The Flame Off is a great celebration of art. It is a way to let people around the country know they can come here to hone their skills. We also have professional artists come in to share their knowledge."





There seemed to be many other glass artists in the gallery as well as many general art enthusiasts. It was a very raucous group! There was much cheering and encouragement for the teams. A party atmosphere reigned and there was much interaction between the crowd and the contestants.

This year's judges were Zach Jorgensen, Eli Aller and Lewis Wilson. This was the first year where glass artists were used as judges. The team of Seth Hawkins and James Lynch from Phoenix Arizona took first place. They produced a seascape that was a hit with spectators also. The second place team of Bandhu Dunham and Jeremy Guerrero produced an intricate marble run. The team placing third consisted of Paul Kowan and Ravi Ballew and their art was a reverse axis encalmo vase with flowers.

Sponsors for the event provided either cash donations or materials and equipment for prize packages for the Flame Off winners. This is a list of these companies:

**Nortel Manufacturing Ltd, Crystal Myths, Hot Glass Color and Supply, Olympic Color Rods, Carlisle Machine Works, Glasscraft & Glow Glass.**

**The teams consisted of:**

Eusheen Goines & John Mims, Harvey Carlton & Bill Rasmussen, Bandhu Dunham & Jeremy Guerrero, Bryce Majors & Filip Vogelwohl, Paul Kowan and Ravi Ballew, Seth Hawkins & James Lynch, Laurie Nessel and Rocky Hoff, Wayne Robbins and Jeff Rogers, Keith Bryan and Doug Remschneider, John Holaway and Luken Sheafe, Jason Gunn and Rashan Omari Jones, Andy Ray and James Yuan, Jared DeLong and Akihiro Ohkama.

Bill Rasmussen was one of the contestants and is one of the original glass artists in this country. He was featured in *The Flow* back in 2003. Teaming with Harvey Carlton, they quickly and affectionately garnered the name *The Old Farts*. Spectators were mesmerized by the ease and skill with which Bill crafted three female dancers to hold aloft a sphere that Carlton made.



**Guide to Photos:**

Previous page, upper right artwork by Luken Sheafe and John Holaway, artwork featured on the lower left by Bryce Majors & Filip Vogelwohl, goblet by Keith Bryan and Doug Remschneider, sea scene by Seth Hawkins & James Lynch.

Photo on this page top left to right: Keith Bryan and Doug Remschneider, Akihiro Ohkama and Jared DeLong, James Lynch, Harvey Carlton & Bill Rasmussen. Lower photos left to right: Jeremy Guerrero & Bandhu Dunham's marble run, Jared DeLong and Akihiro Ohkama beautiful sculpture, Harvey Carlton & Bill Rasmussen's sculpture of 3 ladies holding a sphere.

