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Oral history interview with Fritz Dreisbach, 2004 April 21-22

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Fritz Dreisbach on April 21 and 22, 2004. The interview took place in Tucson, Arizona, and was conducted by Susanne Frantz for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This interview is part of the Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America.

This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

SUSANNE FRANTZ: This is Susanne Frantz interviewing Fritz Dreisbach at the home that he shares with Pamela Vandiver in Tucson, Arizona, on April 21, 2004 for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, disc number one.

Fritz, we should mention that you published an overview of your career in the 2002 *Glass Art Society Journal* on the occasion of your lifetime achievement award. And just to mention it because it's a good reference for researchers, even though it won't be as detailed as this interview.

I'd like to start by establishing a chronology of the places that you've lived and your education, the background, so could you just please tell me when and where you were born?

FRITZ DREISBACH: I was born January 23, 1941, in Cleveland, Ohio.

MS. FRANTZ: Okay, and please describe your childhood and your family background.

MR. DREISBACH: My parents were both teachers and other members of my family—grandfather, aunt—were also teachers, and so I was surrounded by educators and I was strongly influenced, I would say, by education as a career. And I decided that I wanted to teach as early as I can remember thinking about something like a career, which probably started somewhere at the end of high school or beginning of college, somewhere along in there.

The idea of being a teacher and of seeing the students progress as they learned from my father and my mother and so on, and how they would come back and thank my parents—their teacher—for the help that they were given when they needed that help, as a young student was a strong influence on me and a very, very positive influence, I think.

MS. FRANTZ: Your parents were teachers?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, my dad taught chemistry in college level, chemistry and a little bit of physics. My mother taught high school and grade school, a little bit of English but mostly her field was music. And her father, my grandfather, was a math professor in a small college in Pennsylvania, in Grove City [Grove City College, Grove City, PA], I believe it was. And my Aunt Eleanor—who was very important to me in my growing up years—my Aunt Eleanor was a school teacher in a one-room schoolhouse in West Virginia originally, and then taught in various other schools until she married my uncle.

So that was a way of life, and I could see that—I could see the disadvantages as well as seeing the advantages of being a teacher. I was not surprised by the fact, that the salaries were so incredibly low. The rewards were quite high. And a story I remember quite well and tell often is of one of my father's former students coming back to visit dad. As he was on his way driving on the interstate highway, he got off and took a 30 or 40-mile detour to come just to say thanks to my dad, and to introduce my dad to his family and have them thank my dad for setting his career in a path that this former student was very happy about. He was a medical research scientist.

And I think I could have scraped my father off the ceiling he was so high after that. I can remember getting the keys to the car that night without any trouble at all. So I said to myself, there's a career choice that needs to be made here. I think this is a good idea.

MS. FRANTZ: And do you say your aunt and uncle helped raise you?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah. My aunt and uncle didn't have children of their own and they lived right across the street, as I said, and so they adopted my two brothers and myself, John and Paul. I didn't describe them, they're—Paul is the youngest, is a musician and a part-time scientist. And my brother John, the middle brother, is a scientist. And so we all kind of split up between the areas of arts and science, and I also, the oldest, am involved in not

only the art of working with glass, but I love the science of the projects, figuring out how to make certain colors and so on. And we'll get to some of that later in the interview.

But all of those influences came out of my family background. And the fact that dad was a dyed-in-the-wool scientist and mom was an artist allowed me to see both worlds, right brain, left brain, whatever descriptive motif you want to use to get the idea across. It's a big contrast.

MS. FRANTZ: Where did your dad teach?

MR. DREISBACH: At Hiram College, a small private school in Ohio. He got his undergraduate—did his undergraduate work there, got his degrees there. He had a triple major: physics, chemistry and mathematics. And then did his graduate work at Western Reserve University, before it had joined with Case, up in Cleveland.

And a very important story that we'll tell later in the chronology here of my choosing a graduate school comes from the fact that my father was forced at that time period, which—let's see, I'm going to try to guess—it was about 1934, '35, somewhere along in there. Physics was pretty much a dead subject. It's hard to believe today with the way the science world is today, but chemistry was the kingpin back in the '30s. And physics was a dead—not a dead subject, but it was—it was not given the support financially that chemistry was. So when dad went to graduate school he was eligible to apply for an assistantship in both chemistry and physics but there was only one physics graduate assistantship and there were 20 in chemistry.

And you couldn't even apply for the physics assistantship until you'd already been in the school for a year—in the program for a year. So dad had to do chemistry, and that was something that he—it wasn't his first choice, but he had to do it because of financial reasons, and that sort of affected him. And he always would slip into the physics side of chemistry whenever it was available to him, whenever it was possible to do that. But we don't always get to do what we want.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, I read somewhere that your interest in glass making developed in high school, is that correct?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, that's not actually as true as—I gave that false impression because I described the event of working with copper enameling with my teacher in high school. His name was Denis Chasek, and I was extremely lucky as a high school student to have for my teacher in the art classes a practicing, exhibiting artist. This man was a potter and he had a potter's wheel right there in the high school and he would come in and throw pots between classes and during study hall and so on.

When he didn't have other things that he had to be doing, he was making his pots and firing—glazing them and firing them right there in the high school. It's interesting that he was a potter and yet I never touched clay in his class. I don't know why that was, whether he just didn't let any students do the clay, or whether it was me and I just didn't want to do the clay. I don't know what reason.

But I did fall in love with the copper enameling, especially when he would allow us to open the door to the kiln after it had reached temperature and the glass particles had all fused and become a molten mass sitting on top of the copper sheet. We could put a big glove on and hold a dental pick in there and play with the glass, actually dip and roll it around and move it and make swirls in the piece that would be impossible to make if you just were working with the dry powders before they were fused.

And I loved that, and so that reference shows up on the pokal that I was commissioned by the Rakow [Leonard S. and Juliette K. Rakow] Commission for the Corning Museum of Glass. That little enameling kiln and Denis Chasek's name and stats are engraved on that because it was very important to me. He treated us like real art students. When I got to graduate school and studied art I realized what an incredible exposure I had as a high school student.

We would have exhibitions. We had critiques. We learned how to mat and frame our pieces and hang them on the wall, and how to do the little nametags, all this stuff that you don't normally get in high school art programs because you don't normally have a practicing artist for a teacher. And this guy was great and he really helped me to start a career as an artist. I got a jumpstart by being in his high school class.

MS. FRANTZ: What years were those?

MR. DREISBACH: I graduated from high school in 1958, so I studied with Denis Chasek from '54 to '8. I took four years of high school art.

MS. FRANTZ: And did you go to college right after that, or did you—

MR. DREISBACH: Immediately.

MS. FRANTZ: Okay.

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, my father was *absolutely* opposed to *any* break of *any* kind in education, because he was afraid that if we earned any amount of money at all out in the real world or did any traveling out in the real world that we would never come back to college. He was just deathly afraid that that's what would happen. And, of course, I have seen examples of people doing that, but I've also seen just the opposite, where after a little bit of exposure to the real world you *run* back to the academic world where you can try to better your situation and so on.

MS. FRANTZ: You have quite an extensive university education, and I wonder if you've ever heard this quote.

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, yeah.

MS. FRANTZ: Let me read it; let me read it. It's from Harvey Littleton during his own Archives of American Art interview with Joan Falconer Byrd in 2001. And here's the quote: "In 1970, 70 percent of our graduate students of the University of Wisconsin had come to art with other degrees. I always use Fritz Dreisbach as an example because in 5,000 years of glassmaking Fritz was the first glassmaker who handled the blowpipe with five university degrees on his back." End quote.

Now, how accurate is that?

MR. DREISBACH: Well, it's a stupid thing that he said because nobody knows what other glassblowers had degree-wise and nobody really cares. I sort of poke fun at the fact that I have so many degrees because it just shows how slow I was to learn what I wanted to do and how long it took me to get there. And I was lucky enough to get the support that I could stay in school and try a number of things and then reject them and go on, and not have to get locked into a position that I didn't like or that I was unhappy with.

And that's exactly what happened after my—well, see—okay, we should probably do—do you want to do these dates on the schools?

MS. FRANTZ: Yes.

MR. DREISBACH: Okay, so 1958 to '62 I got a BA degree—double major BA degree in art and a BA degree in mathematics at Hiram College in Ohio. We'll just do the list and then I'll come back to it. 1962 to '63 was getting the MAT degree, Master of Arts in Teaching, at Oberlin College in Ohio also, and that was in mathematics. And then 1963 to '65 was the MA degree, Master of Arts, at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, and that was in painting.

And then the last degree was '65 to '67, and that was the MFA, the Master of Fine Arts, which is for the studio arts, the terminal degree. And that was at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, in glass, with a concentration —I think the way they say it is you don't get the degree *in* glass, you get the degree with a concentration in glass. I think that's the way they say it.

MS. FRANTZ: Okay.

MR. DREISBACH: Okay. So backing up, why did I have two—two majors in college? Well, it turns out in high school I also had two majors, you might say. I had four years of math and I had four years of art. And I loved them both and I was encouraged to do them both and I was better than adequate in both and so I got good grades in both, and then when I got to college decided that I would continue in both.

Well, I think part of it goes back to my two parents, my father being the scientist, my mother being the artist. It was sort of nice to have one foot in each door. And my father wasn't really wild about my adventures in art, but he was very happy that I was doing so well with mathematics. He did not require me to take science classes. He especially did not require me to take any chemistry classes, which I avoided chemistry classes like the plague because I was afraid of anything that my father was *that* good at. I didn't want to be sitting at that dining room table getting those quizzes on chemical reactions.

So, anyway, art and math. And then towards the end of my college career, undergraduate—in other words around 1961—we all realized that the threat of the Vietnam War was extremely strong. And I knew that—and, as I said earlier, I had by this time made a strong commitment to be a teacher. I wasn't sure exactly how I would teach but if it was—if I taught mathematics, it would have to be—no, I hadn't made this decision yet. I could either teach art or math.

But if I was teaching art I could just see those people jerking me right into the Army out of the studio—the art studio. However, if I was teaching mathematics there was a real good chance that I could avoid ever having to pick up a rifle and that was extremely appealing. And I had as a role model both my father and my uncle, who were refused induction in the armed services during the Second World War because they were both working with rubber companies, rubber factories. And my father in the scientific research end of rubber, and my uncle in

a production facility of manufacturing rubber tires for airplanes and trucks and tanks and things—not tanks but other vehicles that use rubber. And so they *had* to stay in their jobs. They weren't allowed to go carry a rifle, which was pretty cool and lucky for us.

MS. FRANTZ: Did you ever actually teach math?

MR. DREISBACH: Oh, yes, I did. As a part of this MAT degree you had one full semester of full-time high school teaching, a full load, five courses. I taught five classes of 10th grade plane geometry in Elyria High School, a high school that was bigger than most colleges that I had ever seen at that point. Anyway, they had a math department—they had as many math teachers at that high school as we had students when I was in undergraduate school—math students. [Laughs.]

MS. FRANTZ: It looks like you made the jump from math to painting quite quickly.

MR. DREISBACH: Well, so—so the idea was to get the certificate and have this good, strong grounding in how to teach high school math, and then my hope was to work in art and if I was threatened then I could jump back into teaching high school math. That was my—that was my overall plan. And what happened was after that full semester of teaching I happened to be at home and my father noticed that I was kind of moping around, I guess, or being real quiet and not happy about life and so on. And he said, "What's the matter?" And I told him that I really didn't like this high school math teaching. And he said, "Well, what is it that you really want to do?" And I said, "I want to be an artist and I want to go to art school."

And that's when he must have remembered what happened to him in Ohio when he had to take chemistry instead of physics. And he said, "Well, there's some family money we got. A debt was repaid to the family that we'd all written off. We never expected to get that money; it's now just being realized." He said, "I will pay for you to go to graduate school for one year, any school you can get into and study art." And that was a miracle. That was an absolute breakthrough miracle.

So as soon as I finished the MAT degree—well, while I was still working on it, of course, I had applied. And I finished up in August of '63 and in September of '63—early September I was enrolled and studying art at the University of Iowa in Iowa City. And I chose Iowa over the other schools that I was also accepted because it had the strongest reputation of being a teacher preparation school. And more teachers in the arts came from Iowa City than any other single school in the United States back in the '60s and '70s. And I assume they're still probably quite strong, although maybe they're not the strongest.

But Iowa City was on every single person's list that I asked, who—where should I go—who should I study with? Where should I study? You want to be a teacher? Go to Iowa. It was on the list. Not at the top of everyone's list, but it was on everyone's list. And so I chose that school. And it was tough, because they didn't accept me completely. It was a provisional acceptance, a restricted acceptance based on my performance the first year. So it actually took me two years to get an MA degree instead of one, and it was because my undergraduate preparation was a little weak, shall we say?

MS. FRANTZ: Who did you study with at Iowa?

MR. DREISBACH: At Iowa my painting professor was Stuart Eddy. I took printmaking with Mauricio Lasansky and his crew.

MS. FRANTZ: Eddy is E-D-Y?

MR. DREISBACH: I think it's maybe two Ds. I'm not sure.

MS. FRANTZ: Okay, and Lasansky?

MR. DREISBACH: Oh, boy.

MS. FRANTZ: Probably like how it sounds?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah.

MS. FRANTZ: Okay. Mauricio.

MR. DREISBACH: And then after my first year there I was accepted completely, and I applied for and was lucky enough to receive an assistantship. And I worked in the gallery—the school's gallery hanging shows. And my supervisor for that was the chairman of the art department, Firestone. Evan Firestone? I'm not sure of his first name. Firestone, I remember. Especially since I was born and raised—I mean, since I was raised in Akron, Ohio; Firestone was a name we all knew very well.

So where was I?

MS. FRANTZ: What was your painting like there?

MR. DREISBACH: Landscapes. I was strongly influenced by the impressionist painters for color. I had a pretty good academic preparation for being an arts student in undergraduate school but not much in the way of practice. In other words, I knew a lot of color theory and drawing theory. Perspective and all those kinds of things, I had that down cold. But I didn't have anyone showing me how to paint or showing me what to paint, so I copied masters. I didn't know what else to do. That seemed to be a good approach.

When I got to Iowa they wouldn't stand for that. I needed to have my own independent point of view and my own direction, and I was exposed to a lot of modern artists instead of looking at the old dead guys, as I had been in undergraduate school. And Eddy was a professional painter. He had lived and worked in Iowa—in New York City for 20-some years before hiring on at the faculty at Iowa City.

Before Firestone, and before I got to Iowa, Grant Wood was the chairman of the art department at Iowa, and he brought a whole bunch of real artists—I mean serious, way up in the art world, exhibiting painters to Iowa City to be the professors. And so Stuart Eddy, who had barely finished high school, was a full professor with tenure and a complete retirement program. That's what drew him from New York City to the wild cornfields of Iowa.

MS. FRANTZ: So you finished up there in '65. I wonder, had you heard about Littleton's first workshop at the Toledo Museum of Art in March and then June of '62?

MR. DREISBACH: Well, yeah. Let me—we're spending an inordinate amount of time on Iowa City here, but I guess that's where I got started so maybe we should spend that time. So after that first year, where I was provisionally a graduate student—a provisional graduate student, that summer I decided I wanted to take more classes and stay in school as my dad had trained me.

And so I talked to my painting professor, Stuart Eddy, and I said, what class should I take—classes should I take? And he knew about the assistantship, so he knew that I needed to have a certain number of credit hours. And if you didn't have the right number of hours—sufficient hours—then you didn't get the full assistantship; they would dock your pay, as it were. So I don't remember how many hours I needed, 12 hours or something like that.

And so we went down the list of things to take, and he said, "Now, I don't want you to take the painting class this summer." And I said, "Why not?" He said, "Well, I just don't want you around this guy. They hired this guy to teach in the summer and I don't want you to be in his class because I don't want you to go off and start in another direction. I want to come home and find you just where I left you." Well, I behaved. You know, I did just what I was told. Unlike some students that I have today, I didn't challenge my teachers. I did what they told me to do. I didn't go there if I didn't want to do that.

So anyway, I went to Iowa to learn, and I did what Stuart Eddy told me to do, and he forbade me from going in the classroom where this man was teaching. He even wanted me to not enter the building where the class was taught. And, in fact, he preferred that I stay *on the other side of the Iowa River* where the sculpture and ceramics and other things were taught. I mean, this guy really bent over backwards and I never did figure out why, exactly why he didn't want me to study with him. But some of my painting friends studied with him.

MS. FRANTZ: And who was it?

MR. DREISBACH: And that man's name was David Hockney. And David Hockney was right out of school—right out of graduate school. And he, like other summer faculty at Iowa City, was anxious, I'm sure, to have an opportunity to teach in such a reputable school. And he didn't probably know how miserably hot and humid and horrible the weather is in Iowa City in the summers. That's why all the senior faculty leave and then they bring in the young kids to teach for the summers. So, yeah—so who knows, maybe David Hockney helped me be a glass blower.

So we were going down the list with Stuart Eddy, and he said, "Okay, now you've got 10 hours. You need two more. Let's see; let's see. Oh, here's a class that's two hours. It's called glassblowing. Why don't you take that?" And I said—I can sort of remember saying something to the effect, "What do you think that class is?" And he said, "It doesn't matter. It's two hours of credit. Just take it." And it's a 3D [three-dimensional design] class. He did want me to take more 3D classes because most of the people after they leave Iowa City end up teaching in smaller school facilities where you don't have five or six painters on the staff. You might have one person who has to teach a little bit of ceramics and a little bit of painting, or a little bit of sculpture and a little bit of painting or something like that. So he thought I should have some 3D courses. And he was right, that was a good idea.

So I took the class, not knowing and, you know, not challenging him. I just showed up the first day. And the class

was taught by Tom McGlauchlin, who had attended that '62 workshop—the first one in March—and was—actually functioned more like a TA, I guess you'd say, to Harvey. Both he and Clayton Bailey were former Madison graduates in clay and they were the TAs.

MS. FRANTZ: So there was—was there a hot glass studio at the University of Iowa?

MR. DREISBACH: There was a Quonset hut which was used by the sculpture department, and they cleaned out one room of the Quonset hut, about a third of the total floor space. And when we walked in the room there was a pile of bricks in one corner and a one-inch gas line with a cap on it in the other corner and that was it. And we had to build the whole studio. That was the first thing you did.

So we were building this thing, this big monolith out of bricks and so on, and I had no earthly idea what it was for, what we were going to do with it. I didn't have any idea. McGlauchlin showed us blowpipes and shears and jacks; I didn't know what they were and I didn't know what you did with them. We didn't have an annealing oven, so we stole—I mean we borrowed one from ceramics.

MS. FRANTZ: Was this the first class in glassblowing taught at the University of Iowa?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, the very first and I just happened to be there—1964. And you know what was on the jukebox in 1964? "I Want to Hold Your Hand." And I thought that I would die if I had to listen to that Goddamn song one more time. Anyway, now I love The Beatles but then I didn't.

So, I thought—well, so I started looking at books, and I saw these fantastic goblets that were made in the seventeenth and eighteenth century—Venice, Murano. And I thought, wow, those are very, very, very expressive, fluid movement kind of things, but I had no earthly idea how to make one. And so I kept turning the pages until I came to the stained glass, and I thought, well, now, stained glass, that would relate to my painting experience. Here I could be painting with colored light. And so I thought when I got into this thing originally that the thing that I would probably end up doing is becoming a stained glass person, although I didn't know what that meant, but that I would make stained glasses—stained glass window type pieces and paint with light.

And I started immediately reading about and trying to understand how to color this material, because what we were using was a round marble for cullet. It was called Johns Manville 475, a formula that was developed by Nick [Dominick] Labino for JM [Johns Manville]. And the process of making fibers—for some reason they make the glass in one furnace in one state, in West Virginia, and then they'd make it into marbles in that factory. And then they ship the marbles up to Ohio, where they reheat the marbles and blow them into fibers. And I think there's some reason for that process, but it escapes me right now what that might be.

But at any rate, we would capture the marbles before it got to the fiber machine and Nick was kind enough to help all of us get started. That was one of his major contributions to the American glass activities of the second half of the twentieth century.

MS. FRANTZ: Was he around? Did you meet him then?

MR. DREISBACH: Almost. So, I would ask McGlauchlin questions like, well, what happens if we put cobalt in? You'd get blue. What happens if we put copper in? Well, it depends. It depends on what? Well, you can change it because if you change the formula—well, what's the formula of these marbles? I don't know, but I know who knows.

And because McGlauchlin had been at the Toledo workshop in '62—and had told us a little bit about that—he knew Nick, knew him quite well. So he introduced by mail and telephone, introduced me to Nick, and then I wrote to Nick a letter where I asked him—told him that I was blowing glass and trying to learn how to do this stuff, and that I wanted to color the glass, and that I wanted to know, if it was not proprietary information, if he could just tell me what family this glass was in. I just said you don't have to give me the whole formula but just some of the things that are in it, so I know what I can't do and what I can do.

So he wrote back to me and he said, fine, come and visit, no problem, gave me a map and so on—or arranged to have a map made for me. And later, many, many—and so I did that. After that class that summer, I went to visit Nick on my way to see my mom and dad in Ohio.

MS. FRANTZ: Was that in Bowling Green?

MR. DREISBACH: Just outside of Bowling Green in Grand Rapids, Ohio. He lived between Bowling Green and Toledo. And so Nick has—over the years he used to introduce me as the guy who came for an afternoon and stayed for a week and that is literally what happened. I was so excited to meet someone who was so knowledgeable about the chemistry and physics of glass, and not only of glass in general but of specifically that formula. He knew inside and out what that formula would do and could do and so on.

And then he had been blowing glass longer than almost any of the other Americans at that time, unlike Tom McGlauchlin, who I've always said had been blowing glass about five hours longer than I had when we both started, really. Nick had been blowing consistently every day or every evening for two years at that point—one and a half years, two years. That was a *huge* amount of glasswork that he had made by then—by that time, hundreds of—literally hundreds of pieces.

So, he was way ahead of us on a lot of things, and so this was like going to Mecca for me. And I did, in fact, plan to spend only an afternoon. And, in fact, I remember I stopped in Bowling Green and got a haircut before I went to his farm and studio because I thought I needed to be presentable because he was the vice president in charge of research and development for Johns Manville. He had a very, very high position, very—so this was a senior person in the science world of glass, and definitely also in the arts world, the glass art business, although it was only a couple of years old at that point.

MS. FRANTZ: Was this—

MR. DREISBACH: So I drove in—I got—I just got to tell you this story. And there was this old guy—not old, but there's this white haired—gray haired fellow with a moustache mowing the yard in overalls. And I could see the house and I could see a shop way down at the end, but I didn't know what the shop was at that time. It kind of looked more like a barn. It was just a metal shed—not a shed, but a metal building, and it looked like it could be a barn rather than a studio or a laboratory.

And so I asked the guy that was mowing the yard where I could find Nick Labino—Dominick Labino—Mr. Labino, I think I may have said. And he said, yeah, I'm Nick. Are you Fritz? And he said—and he made me welcome right from that very, very moment. And so we went out to the shop and we looked at things, and he did give me the formula. He said, "Now, it's okay for you to have this formula." He said, "It's not okay if you try to make fiberglass and sell it. Johns Manville will be all over you like a wet blanket." But he said, "This is a public—this is not a proprietary formula that we're trying to keep secret from anyone. It's already in print." I didn't know that. Actually, I'm glad I didn't because I'm so glad that I got to meet Nick from those earliest years.

MS. FRANTZ: So, this was still your first summer blowing glass?

MR. DREISBACH: This is—I had been blowing glass for about a month and a half.

MS. FRANTZ: So it was the summer of '64?

MR. DREISBACH: Summer of '64.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, tell me about his studio.

MR. DREISBACH: Well, I will. I will. But should we—I don't know where to put this, but I think we'd better go back and do McGlauchlin and take care of that thing first, and then we'll jump to Nick.

MS. FRANTZ: Perfect.

MR. DREISBACH: And, actually, there are some other people that show up in this story, that same first summer. It's *unbelievable* what happened to me that one summer. It was so important.

Okay, so we're in there, we build the furnace and then we start gathering glass on the end of a metal pipe or stick.

MS. FRANTZ: Was it a pot furnace?

MR. DREISBACH: No, it was a tank because in the '62 workshops when they couldn't make good glass that first couple of days, Otto Wittmann brought Nick in to see what was going on. And Nick said, "Well, I think we can get you blowing glass today if you'll turn that pot furnace off, throw away the crucible, line it with bricks, two of you come with me down to the factory and I'll give you these marbles." And then he said, "I know that formula will work for you. It's the right temperature range, the right viscosity ranges."

He knew that glass. He knew it cold and he knew that it would make a blowable material and melt very fast, very safe, you know, almost no toxic materials coming off of the melt. It was an ideal material to start with. And, in fact, they did and that night after they charged that furnace with the marbles, all of the big shots, Otto and Harvey Littleton and Nick and all those guys went off to have dinner and cocktails and so on. And they made McGlauchlin and Clayton Bailey stay and monitor the furnace. Well, monitor it they did, but they monitored it with blowpipes. And they blew glass that night. *They* were the first ones that blew glass in Toledo. *Not* the hot dogs. The hot dogs were all out martini-ing. These guys were in there and blowing bubbles and just stacking them in the garage. You know, and so it was like—

MS. FRANTZ: There was no annealing?

MR. DREISBACH: No, no, just thin—you know, I mean, nobody even thought about that. It was just like trying to figure out how to quit blowing—how to blow and get it to start—it's like a balloon. You have to give it a little bit extra in the beginning, but if you give it too much then you get a light bulb type.

Okay, so anyway, they made a lot of basically cullet and filled the room, and then they charged the marbles, and then they melted the second melt. When those guys showed up the next morning there was new glass all ready for them. But I would have given almost anything to have been a little mouse in the corner of the room on that first night, anyway, to see the successes of that.

And so from that moment on nobody built pot furnaces for quite a long while, for a number of years. Everything was a tank, it was fired from the top, and that was the furnace—that *is* the furnace that I call the Labino-style furnace. Other people refer to it as the Toledo furnace, but that's really not—not—the name that I like to use is the Nick Labino furnace because it wasn't just Toledo that came up with it; it was Nick that came up with the idea. A top-fired burner lined with alumina bricks—mullite or alumina bricks. And they would last a number of years, four or five years—two or three years for sure, sometimes four years, five years, if you melted cullet, and didn't hit it too hard with the burner.

MS. FRANTZ: And that's what you built in Iowa?

MR. DREISBACH: And we built those everywhere. We built them in Iowa. They had them in Madison. They had them all over the United States, *and then* they started showing up around the world, in Europe, and eventually even over in New Zealand and Australia, the Orient. It's just amazing.

MS. FRANTZ: I have a slide of Nick Labino's furnace and I wonder if this is the one that you're talking about?

MR. DREISBACH: No, that's the annealing oven. That's the annealing oven. The furnace is over here. It's hard to see in this photograph.

You've got some good slides here. I remember now.

MS. FRANTZ: So I had heard that the annealing oven was on top of the furnace. Is that—

MR. DREISBACH: That's ancient, ancient, ancient technology. I mean, we're talking B.C.

MS. FRANTZ: So Labino never had an annealer on top of—it was always a separate—

MR. DREISBACH: Completely separate controls. The annealing oven was electric fired. The furnace was gas fired. And no one in these days—in the days of the '60s, 70s, I would guess even into the '80s nobody used them, or almost no one tried to use the waste heat of the furnace to heat the annealing oven. But they did do that in the 12th century. I bet the Diderot Encyclopedia has pictures of it. In places like that you'll find drawings—they didn't have photographs yet—of furnaces with the annealing chambers up above—or what's perceived to be, what's guessed to be annealing chambers.

We don't really know a lot about those furnaces. You'll see the Diderot drawing and the whole furnace is there, but when they go to excavate to a site where there's been a glass furnace they only find a foot and a half of bricks. The rest—the whole crown is gone. It's all collapsed in so they can just guess as to how it's structured by the way it collapsed and so on.

At any rate, we don't have total record of those pieces—of those operations, but we do have a little bit of written material and, of course, we know—you and I know that glass must be annealed if you're going to take out the strings that are put in during the process of manufacturing. You have to anneal it to get those strings back out, otherwise the piece is like a time bomb and you never know when it's going to crack. So we know that most all glass had to have been annealed somehow. It might be just a pile of hot ashes, and you'd thrust the piece into those hot ashes and then let that dissipate—that heat dissipate. That might be slow enough that you could get some minor amount of annealing.

MS. FRANTZ: I heard at the Toledo workshops they used sawdust and—

MR. DREISBACH: Vermiculite, not sawdust.

MS. FRANTZ: Oh really?

MR. DREISBACH: Sawdust would burn and also mark up the glass terribly. So you used vermiculite. Vermiculite is expanded mica. It's flat plates of silicon dioxide that existed—that grew in the earth and then that material is mined. There's some big mica mines down near Spruce Pine, North Carolina, as a matter of fact. There's a little

town called Micaville, as a matter of fact. And a lot of that material then is heated enough that those plates separate from each other enough that you get trapped air—see it's the air that's the insulation. It's not the mica. Fiberglass insulation—it's not the fiberglass that's the insulator; it's the air that's around each fiber. That's what makes it insulate. Why do bums sleep under newspaper? The air between the sheets of paper, just like the mica. Duh!

MS. FRANTZ: [Laughs.] Okay, so it was the summer of '64—

MR. DREISBACH: Anyway, we're really agitating everybody here, I don't know why, but, yeah.

MS. FRANTZ: It's helpful.

MR. DREISBACH: So, yeah, we had the brick lined furnace, top-fired—actually, the one in Iowa City was still side fired, now that I remember all of that. But by the time I got to Madison we were all running top-fired. And at almost every other place those early years was top-fired, and that came—that design came from Nick Labino. Also came from Nick, not only the furnace design—which I think was the most important contribution that he made—but also those marbles were extremely important. That we had a consistent, safe, easy-to-handle source of glass was a major contribution.

And then the annealing oven that he designed was used in many places, or variations on it. And the controlling device that he used to bring the annealing oven down slowly was also very clever, using a mechanical clock to rotate a rheostat, basically, to dial down the electricity that was sent into the elements, so that the oven would cool at a rate—you could carve a wooden wheel to be any—and make it cool at any rate you wanted, depending on the thickness of your pieces and how soon you needed to open the oven and so on.

MS. FRANTZ: What do you mean carve a wooden wheel?

MR. DREISBACH: Well, the system that he used, you made a pulley—I said wheel but it's actually more like a pulley—and slip that over the shaft of the rheostat. And then the motor on the clock, time clock, pulled that shaft down with a string wound around that wooden pulley, wooden wheel. And if you made the wheel big you got a slower turndown than if you made the wheel small.

MS. FRANTZ: And did Labino invent that? Or adapt it?

MR. DREISBACH: Well, he—yeah, he invented it. I mean, he's probably not the only person that figured out a system similar to that for turndown ratios, but he's the one that we all knew who did it, and he's the one who did it for the American glass people. But I'm sure that's not—that's not unique to the American glass artists; it was probably used in other industries or in industry, period, as well. Lots of things have multiple inventions, so I say, yes, he did invent it, but there may have been other independent inventions of the same exact—

MS. FRANTZ: So back to the summer of '64.

MR. DREISBACH: Okay, so we started blowing glass in that summer. The first thing that I noticed—and this is important to me, to this interview—the first thing I noticed was this material is acting in a different way than any other material I had ever worked with. I'd tried clay, I'd tried plaster, I'd tried steel, I'd tried bronze, I'd tried all kinds of materials to make three-dimensional sculptural objects, and none of them had the fluid plasticity—plasticity of molten glass.

Molten glass was different. I didn't know why but, you know, now I do. Now I know the science, I know the physics of why it's different. Then all I knew was it's different and I like it. Now, it's hot; I didn't like that quite so much but I did like the fire a little bit. I told you about the enameling kiln in high school. Well, also what I didn't tell you is we used to burn scrap. Before the EPA was invented you took your scrap out in the backyard and you had a burn pile.

MS. FRANTZ: Scrap wood?

MR. DREISBACH: Scrap stuff out of the kitchen and so on, you know—I know it's ugly to think about, and we would just burn that stuff. Now, it's of course totally illegal, you're not allowed to do that, and rightly so, you shouldn't be. But I loved to burn the scrap. That was one of my favorite jobs, was to get the—I felt like Brer Rabbit, you know, when he told Brer Fox just the one thing he didn't want him to do was to throw him in the briar patch because that—when you threw me into the—to the burn—burning the scrap it was like throwing me in the briar patch. And I loved doing that, especially if I could get a tube, you know, and make the fire come up the—shoot up that tube. [Laughs.]

MS. FRANTZ: So you're a pyromaniac?

MR. DREISBACH: I was—I've always been. So, I did like that but this was mighty intense heat because I would

say it's probably 1800 degrees at least when we were standing in front of that furnace. The inside of the furnace was 1800, so the front of that door was bloody hot. But I loved that plastic movement. I loved it. And I realized that I could do with glass—or that glass would do for me what I had tried to have these other materials do; I had to force it. To make wax look like it's a fluid material you have this problem of when you melt it it's fluid and then when it stops flowing it stops instantly. It's like a sudden change, which we call freezing.

In general, water, we know what that's like when liquid—when water is in the liquid state it runs, and then when it gets frozen it's hard and it happens all at once. And the crystals grow and now you have a new material called ice and it doesn't move. And, so, to get it to look like it had movement is not easy because it looks like a solid not a liquid. Glass, unlike those other materials, never freezes. It never crystallizes. It always has the random pattern of molecules and atoms that it had when it was fluid. It still has that when it's hard as a rock. That's what differentiates glass from these other materials, that's how you define glass—or the glassy state—as opposed to solids or gases.

MS. FRANTZ: Did you know this in the summer of '64?

MR. DREISBACH: I did not have a clue. But I said, I now know that difference. And so anyway I was taking advantage of that and loving the way it moved and I was having fun. And I wasn't very excited about some of my other classes. In fact, I was actually a very poor student. I was taking ceramics at the same time. So, I had Clayton Bailey for my ceramics teacher and Tom McGlauchlin for my glass teacher in Iowa City in the summer of '64 and those two guys in the summer of '62 were the TAs for the very first glass workshop—not in the summer, in March, the spring of '62.

And so Clayton knew how to blow glass and had blown some, and actually after the '62 workshop had built a little furnace at his house in Whitewater, Wisconsin. And Clayton encouraged my glasswork and, in fact, at the end of the summer session he made a deal with me. He said if I promised to never touch clay again in my life that he would give me an "A" for that class, based on the work I did in glass, not the clay. He said, "Don't ever show anybody this stuff and don't ever do it again." [They laugh.]

And on a periodic basis every few years I send Clayton a notice that says, "I still haven't touched clay and I still love glass," and I usually try to send him a little flyer of what my new works looks like. And he's always been extremely appreciative that I do, in fact, remember all of that and that I have behaved. [Laughs.] I was a good student and that—it was a good idea that he gave me the A because if he gave me a true—the true grade for which I deserved, I wouldn't have been able to have that assistantship. That's what it would have cost me if he had given me a C.

MS. FRANTZ: Your assistantship—

MR. DREISBACH: A C is an F in graduate school.

MS. FRANTZ: Your assistantship in painting?

MR. DREISBACH: My assistantship was in the—in the museum, in the—

MS. FRANTZ: Oh, that's right.

MR. DREISBACH: —art museum, yeah. But that's what allowed me to go school the second year. See, Dad gave me the one-year free ride but he said, then you're on your own, so without that assistantship I couldn't have made it. But I did make it.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, how long did that class last in the summer? Was it four weeks?

MR. DREISBACH: It was—no, I think it—no, it was two—probably eight or—eight or nine weeks, something like that. So we were about three or four weeks building everything up and then we had about three or four weeks to blow. But then McGlauchlin made an arrangement with the university that he would be able to use that same furnace and their gas bill and blow glass himself every day for a month—or three weeks or something—until we had to tear it all down and move it out of the way so that ceramics—or so sculpture could use that space again.

So I, because I lived there in Iowa City, would go in and unload the annealing oven for him and turn it on because he had a long drive. He had about an hour's drive to get to Iowa City.

MS. FRANTZ: From Toledo?

MR. DREISBACH: From—no, from Cornell. He was teaching at Cornell University—Cornell College, I mean. Cornell College in —

MS. FRANTZ: Ithaca College?

MR. DREISBACH: —Mount Vernon—

MS. FRANTZ: Oh, excuse me.

MR. DREISBACH: —Iowa. A small private school, a very good high-quality school, and he was teaching ceramics and art history there. And he didn't have the funds. He had a kiln for his pottery but he didn't have the funds to build a glass furnace at home. So this was very important to him to have access to a glass furnace that he could use free—well, he had paid for it by being the teacher. I'm sure that his salary was meager in those days. So he got to use that studio and then I started putting a piece or two in the annealing oven before he got to work in the morning, and then by the end of that month I had half the oven full by the time he got to work. [Laughs.] And I really pumped out the work.

And that was—then after that experience was when I went to Nick Labino's.

MS. FRANTZ: Oh, okay.

MR. DREISBACH: So, I did have—I mean, I could handle glass on a stick. I had the touch. There were people that never really got it very well. They couldn't do it. They couldn't get it to stay where they wanted it and it just—I wasn't that way at all. I always seemed to have the touch, and it's been that way for me always. And I guess that's how I got down the road where I am, was because I had that touch.

But to back up, just at the end of that class—before the class ended, McGlauchlin invited Harvey to come down for a day to Iowa City and we got to meet him. And the man that was teaching the summer program at Iowa—in Madison that summer was Erwin Eisch. So Harvey and Erwin drove down—it's about a two-and-a-half, three-hour drive down to Iowa City—and so I met those two guys that summer. And I gather McGlauchlin pointed me out somehow to Harvey, and so then the next summer the same thing happened and that's when Harvey offered me the assistantship at Madison.

So I could leave Iowa City and go study glass for real, because in Iowa City I could do the painting fine, no problems, but the glass was only a summer gig and it was an adjunct teacher, not a real professor. And so there was no clout and no real support for the glass thing. They liked the idea but they weren't willing to hire somebody on full time to teach it.

MS. FRANTZ: Did Erwin and Harvey do a demo?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, they did.

MS. FRANTZ: Together?

MR. DREISBACH: Well—boy, I don't remember.

MS. FRANTZ: Could Erwin—

MR. DREISBACH: All I remember was Erwin blowing.

MS. FRANTZ: Could Erwin—Erwin was blowing?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, oh, yeah.

MS. FRANTZ: Could he speak English?

MR. DREISBACH: Very little. Very little. But I was absolutely thrilled with the photographs that they brought of his work that were—they were just so expressive. And if you remember those black figures with the legs and the arms—just absolutely drove me right over the edge. I knew that I was in love the moment I saw those pieces, that—that that was saying to me what can be done with glass. And he was a role model in that he was a painter; that was his career training before he started blowing glass. Of course, he had gone to school and done the—did he go to—

MS. FRANTZ: He went to the Art Academy [Academy of Fine Arts, Munich], I think.

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, but before that I think he went to the glass tech school in Zwiesel [Germany], didn't he?

MS. FRANTZ: Zwiesel Fachschule [Glasfachschule, School for Glassmaking].

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, yeah. But at any rate, he—so he had this art background and it was just—he was the perfect role model for me. And also, of course, Harvey saw that as a role model for what Harvey wanted to do and wanted to become.

Yeah, so, that was—in '64 I met Harvey, Erwin, Nick, Tom McGlauchlin, and Clayton Bailey. I mean, what is the chance? In two months, I met all of those guys. In two months.

MS. FRANTZ: Amazing.

MR. DREISBACH: And got to know some of them quite well.

MS. FRANTZ: So at the end of the summer, when school started again you had—

MR. DREISBACH: In the fall, you know, I just had to give up glass and go back to painting.

MS. FRANTZ: The studio was torn down—

MR. DREISBACH: The studio was gone, yep.

MS. FRANTZ: —or the furnace was torn down. So you painted all through the—

MR. DREISBACH: Painted all through the nine months and then got everything ready for my show and—

MS. FRANTZ: This was your graduate show?

MR. DREISBACH: My graduate show. And then conned the school into allowing me to do a technical thesis instead of an art history-type thesis. And my thesis was on coloring glasses.

And I worked with Jim McKinnell who was the ceramics professor at Iowa City. McKinnell, Nan and Jim. His wife Nan was the thrower and he was the finisher. He would trim the pots. She would throw them, he would trim them and glaze them—or and make the glazes up and she would glaze them. They were this, you know, incredible team.

MS. FRANTZ: So, you wrote this thesis?

MR. DREISBACH: So, I wrote the thesis, you bet. I wrote the thesis and
that—and I've always said that copper ruby got me all of my important positions in my glass career. Copper ruby —because Harvey had a show at the Chicago Art Institute—about '64, '65 somewhere along in there, somebody should look that up to be sure, but at any rate—and the reviewer was quite bored with his colors, shall we say, to be polite as I can be on this interview. [Laughs.]

MS. FRANTZ: Because they were the fiberglass marbles?

MR. DREISBACH: They were the fiberglass marbles with, you know, two or three ingredients and they were always the same ingredients and they got real bored. I got bored right away myself and—

MS. FRANTZ: Pale green.

MR. DREISBACH: —so I wanted to—I wanted to push that aspect. So, I wanted to understand how to do these colors and so on. And I think that that's why he had me come to Madison, so that I would make colors.

MS. FRANTZ: Was it all through trial and error and through Labino that you learned—

MR. DREISBACH: No, I read—I studied and studied and studied the books.

MS. FRANTZ: What were you studying?

MR. DREISBACH: Well, the first and the most important book was Sam Scholes *Modern Glass Practice*, the little one, the little red one, written in 1958, the original. And then later Charles Green—Dr. Green at Alfred did a second edition. But it's fatter and it has a lot more information in it but—and he updated a lot of things, but he also made it a little more scary. I liked the original the best. At any rate, one—and there was a whole chapter on color.

But there were other chapters on things that I needed to understand before I could understand the colors. I had to understand how glass actually goes through the process of turning from white powder into molten material in the furnace. How does that happen? Why? And what are the problems and so on, so on, so on? So, along the way I had to read all of that, of course, and try to understand as much as possible. And then the bible was Woldemar Weyl's *Coloured Glasses* [Sheffield Society of Glass Technology, 1951]. Weyl was a professor at Penn State. And that thick book is—was until 10 years ago—was the bible for glass colors for me.

MS. FRANTZ: What was his first name?

MR. DREISBACH: Woldemar, W-A-L-D-M-E-R [sic] W-E-Y-L. Weyl. Woldemar Weyl. Yeah, that was a—that book is still used today, but oh boy is it tough to read. I mean, really tough to read.

Do you know, I had experience in math with tough-to-read books. I remember my friends that were taking English classes would carry around books that were three inches thick, and people who were studying history were carrying around books that were two and three-quarters inch thick, and people who were studying sociology had books that were three inches thick. And my math book was one-half an inch, and yet we studied just as hard and as many days and hours and years with that little tiny book because it was so precisely written. And in the math formulas you could say volumes in one line. But it took sometimes weeks for me to get it for it to—so I had to do the same thing with the Weyl book.

MS. FRANTZ: Did you keep on communicating with Labino and—

MR. DREISBACH: Yes. Yes, I did.

MS. FRANTZ: —Littleton through that second year of graduate school?

MR. DREISBACH: Oh, no, no, not then. No. No, then I gave up glass. I had to in order to get that degree. And I was—already had spent a whole year on it and I'd promised the school that I was going to, you know, be a good boy and get my degree in painting and so on, and they'd given me the assistantship, and et cetera. There was too much on the line, so I had to like literally forget the glass—just don't deal with it. Except I did take that one course on glaze calculations from McKinnell so that I could learn how to color glasses, which glazes are really glasses, no difference. And the colorants or the coloring agents are the same. It's just that with a glaze the glass is only, you know, microscopically thin glass.

MS. FRANTZ: Did you know you wanted to go on with glass?

MR. DREISBACH: I did, but I didn't—but I wasn't willing to admit it to myself yet. But I did want to. And then I finally made up my mind and made the decision after the second summer in Iowa City that I would push real hard to go to Madison and get that assistantship and get the MFA. That I would not stay in Iowa City and get an MFA, that I would go to Madison to get the MFA.

MS. FRANTZ: Was the second summer in Iowa City pretty much like the first summer? Build the furnace—

MR. DREISBACH: No, no. The furnace, we just pushed it to the side. It was still there so we didn't have as long a start up.

MS. FRANTZ: Oh, you didn't—

MR. DREISBACH: We got a lot more blown that summer, the second summer.

MS. FRANTZ: You didn't have to tear down the furnace?

MR. DREISBACH: No, we didn't tear it down. We just got it out of their way.

MS. FRANTZ: I see. Well, when did you decide to go to Madison?

MR. DREISBACH: That second summer we went up to Madison—we made a pilgrimage up to Madison. And, of course, Eisch wasn't there that summer, '65, but we got to see the studio at the school and go out to Harvey's studio on the farm in Verona.

MS. FRANTZ: So, there were two furnaces?

MR. DREISBACH: Two set-ups. I can't remember how many furnaces there were but at least one, maybe two furnaces in each place. And I think we even blew a little bit of glass and then I remember—this is a weird story. I don't know why I remember it. We decided to get beer, bring beer to the farm, because I think Bess was going to make lunch for us, or something and we wanted—

MS. FRANTZ: This is Bess Littleton?

MR. DREISBACH: Bess Littleton, Harvey's wife. We wanted to bring something, so we stopped and got beer and—in throwaway bottles because we didn't know any better in those days. And we brought in these cardboard boxes full of 24 bottles of beer, opened them up and started to drink the beer. And I noticed—we all noticed immediately, the bottles were bright ruby red. I'd never seen a red beer bottle before or since.

Now, I brought this story up with some other people that were in that and they swear that I was full of baloney, that there never were any red beer bottles. Now, we threw them away because we didn't know they were

valuable but now on-line you can find references to those bottles. It was an experimental—

MS. FRANTZ: What brand were they?

MR. DREISBACH: That I can't remember. It could have been Schlitz.

MS. FRANTZ: You weren't tempted to throw them into the furnace and—

MR. DREISBACH: No, they're too stiff. By then I kind of knew some of the differences between industrial machine blown glass cooling curves and hand blown glass. You can do it but you've got to be real fast because they're designed to set up instantly when they—as soon as they hit that mold they just get hard as a rock on purpose. And for hand working glass you don't ever want that.

MS. FRANTZ: So, did Harvey offer you a TA-ship right off the bat?

MR. DREISBACH: You know, I have—I don't have the best remember for some of these details. I seem to remember that there was a question about that, that he offered it and then maybe it wasn't going to be there and then—and I think I ended up having to do a little pushing and shoving in order to get it. But, at any rate, I got it. That's the important thing. And it was a very strange assistantship. I assumed I'd be the assistant and I would be, you know, kind of managing the hot shop at the school. No, this was his personal assistant at his farm, in his studio.

MS. FRANTZ: And the school paid for it?

MR. DREISBACH: And the school paid for it. And they did that for other people, he wasn't the only one. I mean, it was just that was done, that was one of the things —

MS. FRANTZ: So this was the autumn of '65?

MR. DREISBACH: That would be September of—I started in the September of—I started in the September of '65, yeah, and then ran for two years.

MS. FRANTZ: Was Harvey the only one teaching—

MR. DREISBACH: Yes.

MS. FRANTZ: —in the glass program?

MR. DREISBACH: Yes.

MS. FRANTZ: And you were the only assistant?

MR. DREISBACH: I had the only assistantship, yeah. There was not—there was not an assistant in the hot shop at school and, in fact, we were all told that we were all the assistant, and we all had to maintain the shop and make sure it worked.

How are we doing on time on that thing?

MS. FRANTZ: I don't know. Let's turn it off and just—

MR. DREISBACH: See where we are?

MS. FRANTZ: Yeah.

MR. DREISBACH: I'd love that.

[Audio break.]

MS. FRANTZ: This is Susanne Frantz interviewing Fritz Dreisbach in Tucson Arizona on April 21, 2004, for the Archives of American Art.

We are now—okay, Fritz, let's start talking about your time at the University of Wisconsin. You finished up in Iowa in '65 and you finished up your painting—excuse me, not in '65, in—

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, that's right.

MS. FRANTZ: Okay, in '65—what brought you to the University of Wisconsin?

MR. DREISBACH: Well, I could not get a degree in glass at the University of Iowa. I could get a degree in painting. And they did not have a glass professor and were not going to be hiring one. So the person who had started the glass activities was Harvey Littleton and his program at the University of Wisconsin was the oldest in the country, so it made sense to go there if possible.

And after meeting Harvey when he and Erwin came to the Iowa City studio for a visit that first summer, and then meeting him again the second summer of '65, either I asked him or he asked me, or maybe McGlauchlin set it up to—the idea of me being a graduate student of Harvey's and get an assistantship—which I needed because I needed that in order to stay in school. And I was basically given to understand that I would get that assistantship at Madison if I wanted it and applied for it and so on, and so, in fact, that's what happened. And I was Harvey's personal assistant out at the farm in his studio, not at the university glass house.

We were all told, all of us that were in that program, that it was important that we run that glass shop ourselves and that Harvey did not want to oversee how things were taken care of, and he wanted to make sure that all of us did it. And I think that was probably a good idea to have each of us take a certain amount of personal pride in the way things were handled and how it was operated and we all had to—it was expected that all of us would eventually set up glass studios around the country. And, in fact, most of the graduates from the program while I was there did in fact go out into the world of teaching and set up glass shops, or some of them set up glass and ceramics. And some of them actually went back to ceramics and abandoned the glass after a while, but they did glass for a while.

Let's see, we can talk about some of those people that were there. I consider the group that I went through Madison with to be sort of the second wave, the first wave being people like Kent Ipsen and Marvin Lipofsky and Monona Rossol, Sam Herman. Those folks had already graduated by the time I got there. Doug Johnson was another one of those. And they'd—I think all of those people except Monona had set up shops in schools and were starting to teach by 1965 when I got there.

S, the group of people that were in school during the two years that I was there were Michael Boylen, Michael Whitley, Bill Boysen, Dale Chihuly, Audrey Handler, Joan Byrd, Kurt Hoard, Roger Lang, Bob Barber, Roland Jahn, Don Hartman, Fred Marcus, Boris Dudchenko, and Jimmy Tanner. And there probably were a couple of others that I can't—

MS. FRANTZ: Audrey?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, I mentioned—I think I mentioned Audrey Handler.

MS. FRANTZ: Oh, excuse me.

MR. DREISBACH: But I'm not sure; there might be a couple of others that I missed out of that list. There were basically 12 of us in the shop. Some people would say it might be the dirty dozen, other people would say that we were the disciples who would go out and spread the gospel of glass. And all but a couple of those folks did, in fact, go into the teaching field. Very few people set up their own private studios. Audrey Handler was one the people that—one of the earliest people to set up a hot shop private studio outside of the academic world. And she still operates the same studio, actually. It's called the Cheese Factory up in Verona, Wisconsin—great studio. So—

MS. FRANTZ: How was Harvey as a teacher?

MR. DREISBACH: Harvey was—I always thought of him as being better at things like administration and being connected with the university's MAT and museums of art around the world, and especially in the United States. And his role—I'm sure if anybody was assigning him a project—was to promote this glass thing and to help set up and get schools interested in glass, and place his students in teaching positions as they graduated and moved out.

I can remember writing to about 20 schools telling them that they should hire me to run their glass shop that they didn't have yet, but that they should start because otherwise they couldn't keep up with schools that were as forward thinking as Madison, Wisconsin.

MS. FRANTZ: Was Harvey the only faculty member in the program?

MR. DREISBACH: Harvey was the only faculty, yes. There were a couple of people in clay, but only one in glass.

MS. FRANTZ: Where did you get your equipment from, like blowpipes?

MR. DREISBACH: Well, Harvey had a connection with the Putsch glass tool company in Germany, and imported tools through his little company that he owned, Paoli Clay Company, it was called. Paoli is a little town nearby

Verona and Harvey, when he was still in the pottery teaching business, had set up a business to sell water to the public school system. By that, I mean he would buy dry clay in bags and run it through a pug mill or some kind of mixing device, and put water with the clay and sell it as wet clay, ready to use, to the high schools, who didn't want to—each of them didn't want to buy a big pug mill, a very expensive piece of machinery. So we always made fun of him for selling water.

MS. FRANTZ: What was the setup of that—oh, excuse me.

MR. DREISBACH: And so the company already existed and it was easy for—well, not easy, but it was possible for the company to import the tools, pay the duties and so on, and write the letters in German that needed to be written, and write the checks, and get the money exchanged into Marks and so on. And it would have been a lot trickier if we each had to do that on our own. And no one knew about sources of supply yet from the American toolmakers, although, we all know that there had to have been toolmakers because we had factories—hand factories in Corning, New York, and in Milton, West Virginia. And other cities in West Virginia and southern Ohio had hand factories.

We just didn't have contacts yet. But since he knew about the German tools—probably through Eisch, I'm guessing that. And Putsch is still manufacturing glassmaking tools and comes to the Glass Art Society [GAS] conferences on occasion and has a booth, and I'm a big supporter of their tools.

You started to ask me—

MS. FRANTZ: What was the setup in Madison in the hot shop? What did you have there?

MR. DREISBACH: We had a great big building, a high ceiling metal building, cement floor, and it was a good safe place to put glass furnaces that are running. As we all know, you have to keep them running all the time, 24 hours a day. And so having a tall ceiling was important to get the fumes and stuff away from all of us and out of the building. And the furnaces were the furnace design of Dominick Labino, a top-fired burner and a front opening door, except in the earliest days when it was just a pile of bricks in the front, we didn't even have doors yet.

And at some point we built a pot furnace while I was there, I think, and there was even an attempt to build a glory hole, but I don't think I ever used it. I don't think it ever actually functioned while I was still there, but a few years later people talked about the glory hole at Madison. And then, I think, we had three annealing ovens, which were essentially electric kilns, ceramic style kilns, top loaders, morning, afternoon and evening ovens. Pretty basic.

And we had one or two grinding wheels that were horribly dished out, couldn't really do much in the way of cold working at all. Though Harvey was getting interested in it, none of us were—well, let me say I wasn't very interested in it at the time. It's interesting how things change.

MS. FRANTZ: But you were interested in glass chemistry. And what was that story about ruby glass?

MR. DREISBACH: Oh yeah, the ruby. I've often told people that copper ruby got me my most significant jobs over the years, the first one being that assistantship at Madison, because I started experimenting with color. Even before I could blow very much in the way of glass, I was intrigued with color, and I think because I was a painter that was kind of a natural direction for me to pursue.

The idea of making something like a stained glass window, where I was painting with light—colored light instead of paint was very intriguing. So I wanted to understand how to do all of that. And so I started experimenting with one of the trickier colors, which is the copper reds, and I made three pieces. I remember taking them out of the annealing oven and finally getting the red to work after a number of weeks of experimenting, making really awful, awful brown, ugly colors, green, greenish brownish yuck colors and throwing them all away.

And then finally got the red, and I put those three pieces in the big picture window that was right beside the front entrance door to the glass studio. We called it the lab. [Laughs.] I laugh because it wasn't much of a laboratory; it was actually a studio. Harvey came in for that class and walked right past the window and didn't look out through the window, but went down to the other end of the room—

[Audio break, tape change.]

—where it was warm and comfortable down by the furnaces, and we were talking and talking. And then as he turned to leave and headed back towards the door he saw the big window and he saw those three ruby red—bright ruby red pieces and said, "Who did that?" And I said, "I made them." He said, "You be at my studio this afternoon, out at the farm." And that was—and that's all she wrote. That was the first step of many.

And if this recorder is still working when we get to a time period a little later in my career, we'll find out about that copper ruby and how it influenced my jobs in Seattle, Washington.

MS. FRANTZ: Okay. Do you see much difference between university trained glass artists and those who learned through apprenticing or coming up through industry?

MR. DREISBACH: This is a really difficult question to answer. I'm very prejudiced to the system that I grew up in, as I think many people would be. And so I feel strongly that the university system is a good system. Although of course everything has drawbacks and so on, I do see the advantages. And part of the advantages of growing up in the university system was that I was exposed not just to glass blowing techniques, which were important but not the end product, certainly—I was exposed to many art forms, many artists working in many art forms.

I was exposed to a lot of art history. I was exposed to the way an artist develops a series or a progression of work and how to set up exhibitions and so on. And I think that that kind of exposure, understanding the history, contemporary art history as well as ancient art history, was an important step for me, and I feel that it helped me get to the place that I am. So I don't think it's a bad idea to be an apprentice by any means. And there are good examples of people who have not gone through the university system and who are very "successful," and I say successful with quotation marks around it. They're very successful in the marketplace, and yet they did not go through a formal university art training program.

So we know that it's possible to do it that way, it just seems like it should be easier to do it through the university system. Although the university system is probably scary to some people, maybe so scary that they don't do it. And I haven't—I don't know that I can add anything more than to remind you that I said my prejudice, which is for the university system.

MS. FRANTZ: Would you consider yourself to be a form of an apprentice to Dominick Labino?

MR. DREISBACH: Well, maybe in the few times—there were times when I had a project or I had a question and I could go to Nick and I was able to go to Nick, and he would help me see my way through that and walk me through it and help me through it, and in that sense he mentored me. But no, he didn't take apprentices. And he made that very clear, that he was neither a teacher nor a master who worked with apprentices.

He grew up in industry. In the glass industry things tended to be very secretive and he was not as open as college professors would be. And I think he probably wasn't as open as an apprentice master person would or should be. So, no, I don't think so. It wasn't the classic—let's say it was a variation on theme.

MS. FRANTZ: In Madison, the glass that you worked with, was it strictly the Johns Manville fiberglass marbles?

MR. DREISBACH: Four-seventy-five fiberglass marbles, yeah. It was the 475 formula from JM, and that's what we used at Madison and that's what I used when I got to Toledo. I didn't start working with other cullets until—well, of course when I went on the road I would blow whatever people had in their furnace. And that was part of the challenge of doing the workshops and traveling around, was to utilize whatever people did and utilize their glass and sort of push it and show them what could be done or what might be done with that material.

So I had—it required a certain amount of versatility, technical.

MS. FRANTZ: Did Littleton ever mention to you the glassmakers in places like Arkansas who had built their own small furnaces at home for making paperweights?

MR. DREISBACH: Those people were—not ridiculed, but they were not—they weren't shown to be any role model for us. We were art students. We were artists and our role models were other artists who were working for the most part in other materials, I would say exclusively. We didn't look to any glass artists that I can think of, except a few of the old dead guys like [Emile] Galle and [Maurice] Marinot and [Jean] Sala and so on, until I met Erwin Eisch. And then he became a very important model for me and others, many others, and then as we got to know other European artists they also influenced us in a very positive way.

But no, those people were more—in our opinion those people in Arkansas and West Virginia and so on that had their own furnace in the backyard that was just really a shrunken version of the big factory furnaces were more like hobbyists than they were artists. They weren't creating new designs so much as they were reproducing the same stuff they used to make when they were in the factory. That was our attitude. Right or wrong, I feel that was our attitude. And I personally didn't run into any that were really exciting people to see their work or to watch them work.

MS. FRANTZ: You mentioned Maurice Marinot. Did you ever see the film of Marinot making glass?

MR. DREISBACH: Yes, that's a wonderful old black and white film with howling French music in the background.

Wow. It was—there weren't very many movies about glass. There wasn't much in the way of material, weren't so many books, weren't so many exhibitions of glass in the '60s, so we glommed on to that one. And then our all time favorite movie of all movies was the Leerdam [Netherlands] movie called "Glas," G-L-A-S, which would play back and forth between the hand factory and the machines that made glass, and had a fantastic jazz music background.

And that movie became a role model for everyone that ever tried to make a movie about glass from that point on. I don't know when the date, that must date from around the middle '50s, I would guess [1958].

MS. FRANTZ: Did you pick up any tricks from any of those movies?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah. Yeah, as a matter of fact the Marinot, he did a move with the back end of the jacks, the spring end of the jacks, into the hot glass that he had just gathered. And I started using that same move and then—I don't know whether Tom McGlauchlin saw what I was doing or whether he saw the movie or whether he just came to it independently; he then took it to yet another dimension.

MS. FRANTZ: What was the move?

MR. DREISBACH: The move is to drag the glass up near the shoulder and thin it out, thin out the wall in the middle of the wall in a stripe, in a vertical stripe, and then do it again and then do it again all the way around. You could do it as many times as you had room to pull up. And so you created a thick and thin optical effect that was very interesting to me, allowed the light to bounce around between the thick glass and the thin glass. It was a nice variation.

And I liked that. I liked it when I saw Marinot do it, and I loved doing it, it was fun to do. And then I liked the end result, looking at it.

MS. FRANTZ: What do you remember about Dale Chihuly as a student?

MR. DREISBACH: Well, my first remembering—my story of my first memories of Dale was coming into the glass lab at Madison, and Dale was blowing glass in the studio all—I think he was all by himself; I don't think anyone was working on the other bench. And he was standing in the center of this huge room with a very tall ceiling, and he had a pretty good-sized gather on the blowpipe, and he was in the center of the room, nowhere near the furnace, nowhere near the bench, nowhere near the marver, but in the center of the room where there was nothing obstructing him, and he was spinning around in a very tight circle, and he had the blowpipe extended horizontally away from his mouth—I assumed he was blowing a little bit into the pipe, but not very much, just enough—and as he turned his body and spun that blowpipe, the bubble, instead of drooping down, extended out horizontally. It was like he had invented—he had developed some way of manipulating glass that was defying gravity. It was absolutely incredible.

And my memory of Dale will always have that at the top of the list of the many, many, many developments that he came up with over the years, and is still coming up with, that he's so famous for. And there was—I also had a taste of his ability to promote his work and others' and his interest in many different art forms, not just glass. I tended to look at other glass for inspiration; he would often look at other materials and gather inspiration from those.

And he says in one of his books—he kindly acknowledges the assistance that I gave him in those early days, and that was at a time when most of us felt that it was important to blow glass all by ourselves without using any outside help of any kind: no one to open the door, no one to put a punty on, no one to bring a handle. We had to do it ourselves. It was important that we did it ourselves; it helped define what we were doing in a way. And Dale didn't buy that for a minute, not even for a moment. And so he was thankful that I was there to help him a little bit at some point. That was in Madison.

MS. FRANTZ: Where did the idea come from that you had to work strictly by yourselves?

MR. DREISBACH: Well, I've had an argument with some of my colleagues about that. I feel that it was our attempt to differentiate who we are, who we were at that time—this is the middle '60s—differentiate what we were doing and who we were from factory workers that might be way, way better glass blowers than we were but who maybe didn't design the pieces, who mostly worked from designs that were handed to them by an artist or a designer, who often wore a coat and tie and worked with a pencil on paper. And that's how they thought. And then the craftsman was expected to produce something that represented that drawing out of molten glass. But the craftsman was not expected to think up or invent or design the piece, except in rare occasions.

So when the Toledo Museum decided—I mean, they were very forward thinking in helping start this glass thing in 1962 when Otto Wittmann invited Harvey—well, it was probably late '61 when he invited Harvey to set up a workshop there at the museum. That was a pretty gutsy thing to do. But then, four years later, after only four

years of people trying to make glass this way in America, the Toledo Museum held a national competitive exhibition of glass called "Toledo Glass National One." It was kind of neat because they already knew they were going to do it more than once or they wouldn't have called it number one, you know what I'm saying?

So they did "Toledo Glass National One" in the fall of 1966. So it was literally four years and a few months after those two '62 workshops—four years. And there were, I don't know, 60 people that submitted work. Well, they had a restriction in that. You had to sign a piece of paper that said, I made this piece all by myself; no one opened my door. And in fact—then they did it again in '68, and there was a piece of glass that was rejected by the jury out of the 1968 exhibition because the jurors could not figure out how any one human being could make a piece of glass with a blown foot. Now, I know who made it. His name is Bob Naess. And I know how clever he is. Naess made that piece all by himself. He would have made that piece all by himself whether the Toledo Museum had a restriction or not because that's how he blew. He blew at night and there was no one to help him. [Laughs.]

And so all of us blew by ourselves and we all did all of those moves on our own. And Naess was just one of those people who got punished for being smart—yet another example. And I have a slide of it that I like to show sometimes when I'm showing slides of those early years. I throw that one up on the screen and say, "Can anybody here in the audience figure out how this piece was made all by himself, without a helper?" And of course now we all know. You use a preheat box or a color box, and you put the cup—you make a cup and put it in upside down and that becomes the foot. That's the blown foot. And then you blow a bubble and you open it up and go down in and stick it to the foot and away you go.

And it's nothing to us today, but this was 1968, probably blown in '67. So that was very, very—the difference in what was impressive to all of us in the '60s and what gets people's attention now in the '00s is amazing, the difference. And the biggest change of course is the Italians coming here in the late '80s. And they blew the socks off of whatever we had done up to that point. Technically we were like babies and they were mature adults. They weren't even teenagers; they were mature adults when they got here.

MS. FRANTZ: They changed everything?

MR. DREISBACH: They changed everything, absolutely everything. All the rules changed. It affected me personally; I had to take a step back because until they come over here I looked pretty damn good. [Laughs.] And then when they got here—and this is great that they came. I mean, it's the best thing that you could ever hope for happening. And I would beg them, if anything, come earlier rather than not coming. I lost my train of thought.

MS. FRANTZ: How they changed everything.

MR. DREISBACH: It did. It changed everything for the better because it opened up doors, it opened up places that we could go, that we could make things that we never would have been able to figure out without a few generations under our belt, and look what they had. They had who knows how many dozens and dozens of generations under their belts. So you get pretty good after a while.

MS. FRANTZ: Did it raise the bar for quality, what was acceptable as good?

MR. DREISBACH: Absolutely. Absolutely. And the popularity of those classes compared to a class that I teach, for instance—sometimes it's really hard for me to fill a class. That's a real ego downer because I used to feel quite proud that my classes were sometimes the first ones filled up and now there are times when I don't even get a full class. But if Dante [Marioni] or Lino [Tagliapietra] or somebody like that is teaching a class, it's the way it was for me in the '70s. And it's just their time, and it's right that it should be that way.

And I still have a direction that I feel strong about in my work, and I hope that other people pick up on that, and we'll talk more about that as we get into the pieces that we're going to talk about on another tape.

MS. FRANTZ: Okay, you graduated from Madison in 1967.

MR. DREISBACH: I graduated from Madison in 1967, in the fall of 1967. That summer I went to North Carolina [at the Penland School of Crafts] and taught a—I was scheduled to teach the first session in glass blowing, a two-week session, and then I was just going to be a tourist and visit the Outer Banks of Carolina and maybe go down to Florida and check out some alligators and so on just to have a holiday because that fall of '67 I was due to start teaching classes at the Toledo Museum school.

But in fact, when I got to North Carolina and taught that class and met Bill Brown and got the feeling of the place, I just fell in love with it and decided that I would figure out some way to hang out there and do whatever jobs needed to be done just for the privilege of hanging out. And it began at that point. It started a very long relationship with Bill, and the opportunities that he was able to set out for me were fantastic.

And even though I had problems, many problems with the Toledo Museum and the mindset and so on there, I have to always acknowledge the fact that they—by giving me that opportunity, my first full-time teaching opportunity, I was connected with one of the leaders of the glass activities. And that meant that a lot of people came through town and I got to meet people that I would not have met had I been off in some podunk school somewhere in the boondocks.

That was important. That was very important for me. Career-wise that was extremely important. And we did build a fantastic glass shop there, bigger and more expensive than anyone else's glass shop. But that in fact worked against things for me because I disliked teaching in that facility. It was virtually impossible to keep your eye on everything at the same time. And so I ended up leaving there, very happy to head out to a small, tiny private art school way up in the mountains, isolated, but with a large community of glass artists.

MS. FRANTZ: And you're talking about Penland?

MR. DREISBACH: Penland, North Carolina. Mark Peiser was there, Richard Ritter was there, Billy Bernstein was there. And it allowed me—and I think Rob Levin had by then moved down there.

MS. FRANTZ: What year was that?

MR. DREISBACH: No, no, excuse me. Not Levin; Levin wasn't there yet. He came later. That was '71. I left Toledo, Ohio, on New Years' Eve and arrived in North Carolina on New Years' Day, 1971.

MS. FRANTZ: And I believe you had two companions when you—

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, I had so much stuff in Toledo—bricks and burners and glass and boxes and boxes of books and so on, tools—that I got a couple of guys to help me drive the—we had two trucks, two vans loaded to the gills. And fortunately we were very heavily loaded because we ran into a snowstorm in the Blue Ridge Mountains when we got the mountains and had to literally plow our way along the road, and having that extra weight on board was a big help.

George Thiewes drove his van, and Jack Schmidt, who was my main man in Toledo, he was my great helper—and really I have always said that Jack was my first and best student that I've ever had. He was somebody that I'm extremely proud of today for his glass career, his spectacularly wonderful work that he makes.

MS. FRANTZ: Just to jump back to Toledo before we leave there too quickly, you had to build the hot shop yourself when you first got there, and then—

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, the little one. I built the little one.

MS. FRANTZ: And then when did you actually start teaching classes? And this is the—this would have been the first formal class offered at the Toledo Museum of Art, and that was in—

MR. DREISBACH: After the '62 workshops.

MS. FRANTZ: The '62 workshops.

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah.

MS. FRANTZ: And that was in—

MR. DREISBACH: So that was in the fall—they hired me in the fall of '67; I started building the stuff. I went out to Nick's and he helped me a lot. Al Melis, who was a professor of jewelry and small metals, small sculpture there, was also very helpful and was my mentor as far as learning how to be a reasonable teacher and how to deal with the administration or how to duck and avoid as many of the problems with them as possible and not get caught.

And Al was a great friend. I always called him my Big Daddy. He's a large man and he was—he definitely took me under his wing. And that was a big help. So I got there, we had a few bricks, and Al actually had started building a furnace, and I changed things around a little bit with his approvals. And we got the furnace lit somewhere around my birthday, January 23rd, 1968. And so that fall semester that I was there, I was teaching design classes. And then in the spring I taught one or two design classes and two glass blowing classes, or maybe three. I guess three—two university student classes and one what they called adult education, which I didn't think I would enjoy very much but in fact was totally wrong. It turned out that those adults that were in my adult education class, people like Brian Lonsway, Bob Packo and others, were a very big help to me.

To be around people and to have them get excited about glass spurred me on to be an even better teacher and to help them in ways that the university students, because they were so young really—was the only thing they had that held them back. They were smart enough; they just hadn't been around the block. These guys, some of

them, Frank—I can't remember Frank's last name right now but I will. Frank was one of the leading glass technology people at the Owens-Illinois tech center.

Lonsway worked in the tech center research laboratory, building equipment. I mean, the guy was—not a genius, but he was very clever at putting together things. And in fact he built what he considered to be, and I don't know that he's wrong, one of the world's first completely self-contained mobile glass studios. And I love telling the story in my slideshows; I always show Brian's furnace, or his studio on wheels, and tell the story of him blowing glass in a parade down Monroe Street in front of the Toledo Museum of Art, blowing glass walking at parade speed.

And he would reheat while he was walking along, and then to neck the piece in he would run and catch up to the front of the trailer and jump up on the trailer where there was a bench with arms and jacks. And he would then neck it in, and then after he had it necked in he'd jump off the trailer, and as the trailer went past him he would stick the bubble in and start reheating again and walk along at whatever parade speed is, three and a half miles an hour.

MS. FRANTZ: And someone's driving—

MR. DREISBACH: And someone else was driving the car that pulled it, and Brian, just because he was so good, he didn't just make an ordinary car and an ordinary trailer; he had a 1932 Chevrolet sedan that pulled a trailer that he had got the fenders and the wheels identical to the '32 and built the trailer himself so that it went with the car. It visually related to the car. And then sitting on top of that was the propane bottle, the glass-melting furnace, which also was used for reheating, the bench and the annealing oven, all on that trailer.

MS. FRANTZ: Was this during the early '70s?

MR. DREISBACH: This would have been in 1970—'71. Maybe 1971.

MS. FRANTZ: How many years did he do that?

MR. DREISBACH: He ran the mobile rig for about 10 years and then cut it up and decided he wasn't going to do that anymore.

He got tired of going to craft fairs demonstrating and watching people buy other folks' glass. He said, they'd watch me blow and then they go next door and buy, instead of buying his work. He couldn't ever figure that out. Well, I never could figure it out either, but at any rate he finally just—it wasn't fun anymore, it was a job, and that's when the welding torch came out and he just cut it up. He built his own studio many times over, and he was a dedicated glass blower until he died. We lost him two years ago to a massive cancer invasion.

But he went out in style. I have a '67 Chevrolet Malibu convertible, and he had a 1966 Ford Galaxy convertible. His was bright red, mine's bright blue. And we did occasionally drive together with the cars one in front of the other. And he went to the hospice; his last ride was in the convertible with the top down in January.

MS. FRANTZ: Were you there?

MR. DREISBACH: No, but I only heard about it from his wife. They went out to drive him to the hospice. They finally decided that this was the day that he had to go, and that it was time. And they tried—two other cars wouldn't start, but the Galaxy started up. And so he said, "As long as we're in it the top comes down." And what a way to go.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, when you were teaching in Toledo, which was really your first real teaching job, you were also still making your own work. What was that like?

MR. DREISBACH: Well, I had this philosophy about teaching: that you have to do it. If you're going to teach it you should know it, whatever the subject is, if it's chemistry or glass blowing. And one of the ways that I needed personally to be sure that I knew it was to do it. And so to me, making glass on an almost daily basis was mandatory to being good enough to be considered a teacher.

If I wasn't doing it and wasn't facing the same things that my students were facing on a daily basis—and in fact it was interesting using their equipment, not my own private studio that was somewhere else where I had complete control over everything. I used their furnace, or they used the same furnace that I used. We all used the school furnaces. For every place I've ever taught that's always been the case.

And some of it was because it was awfully expensive; I didn't want the responsibility and the expense of building a shop. But other reasons that I sort of try to justify a little bit, that it was good that the students saw me working with the same equipment that they used. They knew that I wasn't getting away with something, that I didn't have some magic trick that they didn't have, and that therefore my glass was better than their glass or

da-da-da-da whatever, dot-dot-dot.

MS. FRANTZ: And you were making vessels?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah. My thing from day one when I first started blowing glass was vessels. And Harvey was always trying to encourage all of his students to make sculpture and to get away from vessels. Well, he grew up in pottery and most of the other students in the class also were potters. Audrey Handler and I were two of the people that were not. And in fact I think the two of us were the only two that did not do ceramics.

Oh, actually, Fred Marcus, I don't know whether he—I think he was maybe not a clay guy. He never looked like he was a clay guy; he was always too clean. His clothes were too clean. But all the rest of those people—isn't that amazing? I didn't realize this, but now I'm looking at it, every single one of the rest of them except for the three of us were clay.

So they'd done their vessel making in clay; they didn't need to do it in glass. And in fact, it was good for them probably to get away from the things that were associated with clay. And I'll tell you, I do avoid opaque glasses for the same reason. I think when I see a lot of opaque glass vessels they end up looking like pottery to me. And that doesn't say glass. So I'm almost always—most of my work is either translucent or transparent colors.

And I went through a phase of just working with crystal, sort of minimal—it was my minimalist period. Not minimalist in terms of shape and form, but minimalist in terms of no color. No pretty colors. I was sort of forcing myself to make pieces that were still attractive visually but they didn't depend on pretty colors that my grandmother would like.

MS. FRANTZ: So you stayed at Toledo until 1970?

MR. DREISBACH: The end of 1970. I left on the 31st of December 1970.

MS. FRANTZ: And it turned to 1971.

MR. DREISBACH: It was '71 when I woke up in North Carolina after plowing through the snow with Jack and George. And we set up—I got one of the grants from the Penland school, which was, I think, the very first grant to be awarded in the crafts area. The very first National Endowment for the Arts grant to be awarded in crafts went to Bill Brown to—went to Bill Brown, not the school. It went to Bill Brown—

MS. FRANTZ: He was the director of Penland.

MR. DREISBACH: —to set up a program to allow the artists, teachers, that had been coming to the school for a number of years to have a time period of three or six months, something like that, to do research in areas that they couldn't afford to do. Couldn't afford the time, couldn't afford the money—either or both.

And so I got one of those, and that's what allowed me to leave Toledo with dignity. I didn't just—what do you call it, break and run, although I was. I mean, it looked like I wasn't doing it.

MS. FRANTZ: You were ready to go?

MR. DREISBACH: Oh boy, was I ready. Yeah, yeah. It was time. It was starting to hold me back. That's almost always why and when I end up breaking and running is when I feel constrained, when I feel like something is not working for me. Then I start looking around for a new opportunity or a new direction.

And so off I went to the mountains in North Carolina. I didn't know what I would do after the grant ran out. I knew that it was a fixed time period and once it was gone then I had to pay my own way. And what had worked out—I didn't know this at the time, but what eventually did happen was I talked Bill Brown into the concept of letting me teach the fall and spring classes that were eight weeks long at Penland school, in glass. They were already experimenting with classes—those long classes in ceramics and weaving, and so I encouraged them to expand it to include glass as well. And then they later did jewelry and then photography, and I don't know what else they do nowadays.

MS. FRANTZ: How long did you stay in Penland?

MR. DREISBACH: I stayed there until they fired Bill Brown, and then I got so mad I left. And that was '84, '85 that year.

MS. FRANTZ: And you were teaching the whole time there?

MR. DREISBACH: No, I would come and go. I had this incredibly wonderful relationship with Bill that allowed me the flexibility that I wanted and needed, felt that I needed. So I actually would take a break from teaching at

Penland and I'd go teach somewhere else. I filled in sabbatical leaves for various people. And that allowed me to go to different studios and be around different students and get their approach and so on, steal their ideas—I mean, observe their development—[laughs]—and take that information and go back to whatever, Penland or wherever I was going back from.

MS. FRANTZ: Were you still in touch with Labino?

MR. DREISBACH: I did stay in touch with Nick. In 1971, another one of the milestone years for me—'64 was an incredible milestone year that we talked about already, and '71 because of the people that I connected with—'71 we started the Glass Art Society in the spring in Penland, and that was another case of Bill Brown supporting the glass arts. And when Peiser and I asked Bill if we could have a gathering of glass people come to Penland in the spring when—the snow was off the mountain, pretty much, but the summer classes hadn't started so there were still plenty of beds.

And in 1971 we weren't talking about a whole lot of people. In fact, I think we ended up with about 18 folks at that first GAS conference.

MS. FRANTZ: Why did you want to have a glass conference?

MR. DREISBACH: Well, interesting. Now, I want you to refer also to Mark Peiser's response to that question. I'm sure that Henry asked that question in his interview with Mark. I remember it this way, and it's slightly different than Mark's but I think Mark is also correct in thinking that it resulted from a visit that a number of us made to California in 1969 at the NCECA conference [National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts]. And then it was followed—right after that NCECA conference there was a big California Glass Symposium that included Tanner, Chihuly, Peiser, Myers, and myself.

MS. FRANTZ: This was at [University of California] Berkeley?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, at Berkeley and CCAC [California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland]. He was still teaching at both places, and so we did workshops in both schools.

MS. FRANTZ: Marvin Lipofsky was teaching?

MR. DREISBACH: Marvin Lipofsky was teaching in both places, yes. And Mark remembers being at Jim Wayne's house, one of the local artists there, glass artists there, and people tumbled to the idea that the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence syndrome was occurring because the California folks thought that all the really cool stuff that was happening in glass was happening out East. And all of us out East thought that all the really cool stuff that was happening in glass was happening in California. And what we needed to do was go to one place and share, or otherwise there's all this traveling.

So that was the way he remembers wanting to start it. What I remember was that we were coming to Penland as teachers—the teachers would come down to the school—you'd always try to overlap the guy that was after you and the guy that was before you so that you could have this little time for a day or two to exchange ideas and information and drink a few cold ones and blow a little glass and celebrate and have fun and party.

Well, I thought, you know, it'd be really great to expand on that and I thought of the idea of role modeling after NCECA. Now, I had already at this point been on the board of NCECA. I was one of their board people that—I was their token glass guy.

[Audio break, tape change.]

—did you know that?

MS. FRANTZ: No, but since you never were in ceramics it seems a bit strange.

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah. I'm saying—now, they—unlike what happened to them—what happened to the ceramic artists, and teachers who were members of the American Ceramic Society, Design Division, they got squeezed. The American Ceramic Society kept giving them less and less support and less and less time at the conferences. They finally threw in the towel and said, never mind, let's get out of this thing and we'll start our own organization. And they started NCECA.

So when the glass people—of course, as I said earlier, most of the glass people were ceramics first and then glass, so they all went to NCECA meetings because that's where all their ceramic guys were and friends were, and they would go there. And there was nothing yet for glass so they would go there and there would be enough of them often times they'd end up with a room where they could talk about glass issues.

And what did NCECA do? They encouraged it. They said, we'll make sure you're on the program. We'll put one of

you on the board and we'll make sure that issues that deal with glass are dealt with in our conference. You will not be treated as we were.

MS. FRANTZ: So why didn't you just stay with NCECA?

MR. DREISBACH: Oh, well, one room, are you kidding? One presentation? You know, three days and you get one presentation. It was good, we needed it to get started, but let's face it, eventually we were going to want our own—I mean, look at GAS now. GAS now is probably the size NCECA was when we're talking about, in the '70s.

So I studied them and we talked to various people, and finally I came to Bill and I said, "You know, we want to do this thing and here's our role model and this is how they run their conferences and we'd like to pattern after that, but of course a much smaller scale." And he said, "Oh boy, I don't like that idea." I said, "Why not?" He said, "Well, glass floors are like horseshit." And I said, "What?"—or you could print in there "manure" if you don't want to use that four letter word. And I said, "What? What are you talking about?" He said, "Yeah, you put a big pile of it in one spot, it stinks, but if you spread it out all over the countryside where you belong, it'll do some good."

I said, "Well, Bill, look, just let us get together for three days and we'll stink a little bit and then we'll all go home and we'll all teach each other and pass on all this information to our fellow—to our students primarily." Because we had decided that we would only have teachers that first couple of years. We had to make restrictions because of the size of the facility and so we decided to draw the line at students. So we only had professional studio owners and teachers and that was it.

MS. FRANTZ: Did you have a program for that first meeting?

MR. DREISBACH: No.

MS. FRANTZ: What did you do for three days?

MR. DREISBACH: One guess. [Laughs.]

MS. FRANTZ: Rhymes with fear?

MR. DREISBACH: [Laughs.] So somehow American Craft Council found out about this, that we were going to do this, and they awarded us a $500 grant to start a new organization, craft organization. That was fine. We cashed that right away. I put it in a bank in Spruce Pine and I cut it in half and we only spent half of that money that first year because I wanted to make sure that we had enough to have two of these things.

And in fact I did the same thing that Toledo did, although self-consciously I think, I don't think I consciously copied them. We had what was called GAS I. And the poster—there are some people, I can't remember exactly when—there were a lot of things in the '60s if you were really there you probably couldn't remember it. Some people can't remember how the name arrived or when the name arrived but there is actually a poster that I made that has G-A-S I, Roman numeral I, and then there's another poster for GAS II with the same format. So we had the name before we actually met that first time. But it was at the second meeting that the officers were elected and that we became serious enough to put together the beginnings of the legal format of the articles of incorporation and bylaws and all those kinds of things.

MS. FRANTZ: And Henry Halem—

MR. DREISBACH: We had a lawyer—one of the fellows was a lawyer, Ron Coles, a glass blower from New York City. I don't know what he's doing. He's doing law these days I'm sure but I don't ever see his name in the glass world any more. But he helped us write it all up and —

MS. FRANTZ: And what were you envisioning? I know you were modeling it on NCECA but what were your hopes for GAS?

MR. DREISBACH: Well, certainly we were going to have a good time. NCECA people always had a good time. But it was a way of connecting with each other and not—and breaking down those grass is greener on the other side impressions, misconceptions that we all faced similar concerns, we all needed good sand, we all needed good galleries, we all needed this and that, and why not share in that? And I've often thought that what we did as the glass art group, not just GAS but as artists working with glass, what we did was pioneering and that we needed to stick together and help each other if we were going to fight off the elements, not unlike the pioneers trying to settle America—not unlike that at all. I also have another saying that there were not very many, almost no shy glass blowers in the '60s. You might even say that today. There aren't very many, if there are any, shy.

MS. FRANTZ: And what do you attribute that to?

MR. DREISBACH: Well, it takes a certain amount of moxy to push forward and make these things happen, and if we had been cautious, if we had been secretive, everything would have slowed down. I'm not saying it would have stopped—I'm not saying you couldn't have glass today but you wouldn't have glass the way we know it right now.

MS. FRANTZ: Do you feel like things are still that way pretty much or have they changed?

MR. DREISBACH: No, they're still—I still see a lot of that today, absolutely. I try to not offend people, I try very hard not to be offensive but I know that if I let my guard down I'm going to finish last. I know I have to stay in the fight. I have to work to keep my name out there. If I don't, I'll just get trampled because the herd is right behind me. [Laughs.]

MS. FRANTZ: Did you think you could really earn a living by being a glass blower or was it always as a teacher that was your profession?

MR. DREISBACH: No. I always had the idea that I would be a teacher until 1980-something, somewhere in the middle '80s. I was looking at myself and looking at my career and what I had done and the teaching and so on, and I was beginning to feel resentment that I wasn't getting enough time to do my work, that I was being remembered or noticed only as a teacher and not as a producing artist and I was not invited to shows and I was not invited to symposia, and I said, wait a minute, this has got to stop.

MS. FRANTZ: Is that when you moved to Seattle?

MR. DREISBACH: Well, that move to Seattle was a part of it. That was definitely a part of it. But that was a sidestep because I wasn't really starting to set up my own studio nor was I planning on making my living completely from the sale of my artwork. I've never done that—still haven't done it. I always seem to have some gig going somewhere on the side that brings in some money, until last year.

So what happened in '85, I had moved to Georgia—left North Carolina and moved to Georgia to be close to my good friend, Gary Noffke, and he and I had done a lot of work together and I was taking advantage of his hospitality and renting a house nearby and getting together frequently to talk about things, go mushroom hunting and so on. And not really knowing exactly what was next, I had made application to places like Wheaton [Glass Studio, Millville, NJ] for some blowing time, and I had of course many friends across the United States I could pop in on and blow glass in their studios whenever I wanted pretty much—not exactly whenever I wanted but, you know, they would fit me into their schedules and allow me blowing time. And that was all set and that was okay.

But I still didn't have the confidence of living from the sale of my work. So when Rob Adamson called me from Seattle and said that he needed help making glass colors, I thought, wow, that's interesting, why don't I do that? A., I love Seattle and have a lot of friends out there, b., the only thing that has stopped me from doing more color research up to that point was money and here's somebody that's going to pay me to do—you know, to jump in a briar patch and do what I want to do.

MS. FRANTZ: Was this for The Glass Eye?

MR. DREISBACH: For The Glass Eye. They at that time had a gigantic—thousands and thousands of dollars billed to Kugler Company every year and they wanted to cut that bill down, and I cut it in more than half and they started producing their own in-house colors. Well, not only did we lower the—I mean, lowering their cost for using the glass was one small advantage but I was also designing colors that gave them the results they were looking for which they could only get accidentally from Kugler. In other words, some Kuglers would strike and others wouldn't. Some would iridize better and others would not.

And I could make colors that did what they wanted them to do. If they wanted a stiff color so that it went on very thin trailing, we could make trailing blue. We made trailing blue for them. These are the same things that Orient & Flume were already doing, that Tiffany had done years prior to that et cetera, et cetera. I wasn't inventing anything, I was just simply bringing them into the twentieth century and allowing them to do what they wanted to do not dependent on someone else.

MS. FRANTZ: Did you have a title at The Glass Eye?

MR. DREISBACH: I don't know, we made up something.

MS. FRANTZ: Chemist?

MR. DREISBACH: R&D, research chemist or something.

MS. FRANTZ: And don't most glassmakers in the United States still depend on Kugler colors?

MR. DREISBACH: Oh yeah, absolutely. And The Glass Eye never dropped Kugler. After a while—they were making their own colors and then after a while they went back to—they quit making their own colors for a few years because the work involved required more attention and they were better off spending the money on Kugler, which was very bizarre to me, very bizarre.

MS. FRANTZ: And hadn't Harvey Littleton said something to you as a student about Kugler?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah. Yeah, he told us we should make color bars or color hunks of color out of each melt that we did in the furnace, but we were so greedy we always lapped up the glass on the blowpipe and never had any left over for making color samples to be re-used, or a color bar the way Kugler is. But Harvey had been to Europe many times at that point. He knew about Kugler and probably had seen how other factories handle that situation when they make colors, because you only have X number of furnaces.

We had two at Madison. Lots of places only have one. So you only have one or two colors at a time and by making color bar or nuggets out of each melt, you can have hunks of cold glass that you can then pre-heat and warm up again and use them on pieces. And all of us do that today, but in the '60s almost no one was doing it. In fact, the first person that I know of that actually brought Kugler back here was Dale Chihuly, one of the major contributions to the contemporary glass activities.

MS. FRANTZ: Brought them back from Germany?

MR. DREISBACH: He brought them from Germany, yes. Went to Klaus Kugler's factory and ordered it up and had it boxed and shipped right to RISD [Rhode Island School of Design, Providence]. And boy, once we saw the 64 Crayola box, we thought we'd died and gone to heaven. I mean, colors that we could only dream about and he was using them every day, on a daily basis and it was just—it was really fabulous.

MS. FRANTZ: But very expensive.

MR. DREISBACH: And that was early '70s. Yeah, it was expensive but, you know, the glass was never cheap. The whole operation was never cheap and as a result, I believe, in contrast to ceramics, I believe, the price of the glass objects was always high. And for that we thank people who had to suffer through $8 pottery prices and then they just—when they started making glass they added a zero. So what was $8 is now $80, and then $800 and then $8,000 et cetera.

MS. FRANTZ: And people say when you ask them about that, they attribute it completely to the higher cost of producing glass.

MR. DREISBACH: Role model. They don't know. See, they don't—well, I'm guessing that the people who say that weren't there in the '60s and didn't know what we were contrasting with and didn't know that it was important that we got—we were lucky enough and smart enough, there were a few of us that were smart enough—a few of them, not me—that were smart enough to make those price jumps immediately—immediately.

MS. FRANTZ: Not because of expenses?

MR. DREISBACH: Well, it was expensive and that was the excuse we used. But I'm certain—inside my brain I'm pretty damn certain that it was, you know, let's not fall in that trap.

MS. FRANTZ: Eight-dollar mug at the craft fair.

MR. DREISBACH: You got it; you got it. We do not want that. We do not want to see that because the clay guys—I shouldn't be talking too much about clay but the clay guys, there were sculptors and then there were potters. Do you know what I'm talking about, the difference? The folk potters, they're great and bless them and so on, but they were promoting the $2.50 coffee mug. And then there were people who made figurative clay sculpture and occasionally made a vase and they tried to get $30 for their vase and $300 for their sculpture, and here's a piece for $2.50. Where are you going to go? What are you going to take home from the craft fair that day?

And so the only way these guys, these $2.50 guys, could make a living was to make eight jillion coffee mugs. And you know who was caught in that trap? Harvey K. Littleton making little bowls and selling them at the Chicago art craft sidewalk sales for unbelievably low prices. And when he started doing glass, inside his brain a switch went off that said, don't you ever sell anything cheap, and he didn't. And he taught us and showed us and demonstrated. You know, when you were asking what kind of teacher was he, well, there's a good example where his experience was translated to us. I don't know how, but somehow we got the point and none of us ever made cheap glass. And today you'll find very few people with folk glass prices; you just don't find it.

MS. FRANTZ: When you got to The Glass Eye, that was your first experience with a production situation, wasn't it?

MR. DREISBACH: Well, I'd observed it but that was my first adventure being hired on in that capacity.

MS. FRANTZ: You'd observed it at Blenko and Fenton?

MR. DREISBACH: Right, and I'd done a little designing at Blenko and —

MS. FRANTZ: Oh, I didn't know that.

MR. DREISBACH: For a week or two. I was a guest designer. They had an exhibition at Huntington Galleries [now the Huntington Museum of Art, Huntington, WV] back in the '70s, middle '70s and six or seven of the glass factories each picked an artist to come and work. The thing was set up with Emerson, Mrs. Emerson—Rita or Reba or something—we'll need to find her name—who was from the Huntington Galleries, and Joel Myers who represented the artists and was known to all the West Virginian people, and they had this big symposium, so that each factory had a guy. And I got Blenko and Joel had Pilgrim and—or Henry had Pilgrim, or Harvey had Pilgrim. Peiser got Fenton and—I don't remember all—

MS. FRANTZ: There are catalogues for those —

[Audio break.]

MS. FRANTZ: This is Suzanne Frantz interviewing Fritz Dreisbach in Tucson, Arizona, on April 21 for the Archives of American Art, and this is disc number three.

MR. DREISBACH: But to go back to the Huntington project, the thing that they were trying to do was a very, very good project. Emerson had this idea, this concept that the factories in West Virginia needed—I shouldn't say needed but could benefit from having real artists involved with their designs and so on and sort of helping them to make more interesting things and that that would then show up in the marketplace. And by the middle '70s some of our glass was starting to sell and people were starting to take note of it and so it was thought that by having the various artists at each of the factories that we could come up with designs that maybe that wouldn't have necessarily tried on their own and that that might encourage them down the road to hire some of us.

Boy, I was so excited when I went to Blenko because all I could see was that this was going to be a golden opportunity for me to go beyond the university and still be able to do workshops and things, do my teaching that way but have this other opportunity to work with glass and do pieces that were bigger, many colors and many ideas and just try a lot of things that I wouldn't physically be able to do on my own but those guys can do. So I wanted that job. I wanted to end up leaving there with a job offer. That was my goal.

It didn't happen. They weren't even remotely interested in hiring me. [Laughs.] You know, they had their agenda, but I still value very highly that opportunity and I have always thanked Bill Blenko for giving me that opportunity and Joel Myers for setting it up and choosing me for Blenko, which I'm sure was the easiest of all the factories to work in because he had been there. They knew a little bit about the wild and crazy artists because Joel had friends coming through there all the time.

At any rate, I enjoyed it very much and I still have some pieces. There's one right there, that spaghetti jar—green and red spaghetti jar, that was one of my designs. And, you know, why that never made it on the line I'll never know because I—when I look at it I think, you know, hey, that's pretty damn good.

MS. FRANTZ: And Blenko was a non-union factory?

MR. DREISBACH: Only one in West Virginia, and when the union guys would come through the rumors were that the workmen would take them out back to the parking lot and lay one upside their head until they got through their thick skulls that they worked for Bill Blenko and Bill Blenko took better care of them than any union ever would and they weren't welcome in that town, and they threw them out.

MS. FRANTZ: I wonder if it's still like that today.

MR. DREISBACH: I don't know. I assume it is but I don't know that for sure. Unions have changed now, so even if it was unionized I'm sure it wouldn't be the worst thing in the world. But in fact they would brag about all the wonderful things that Bill Blenko did for them. He set up hospitals—you know, built hospitals. He bought uniforms for the softball team in the high school. I mean, on and on and on and on. I mean, it was pretty much a one-horse town. There wasn't much else in Milton, West Virginia other than Blenko Glass.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, that was your experience with a factory.

MR. DREISBACH: That was fun. That was my first, yeah. But to get back to The Glass Eye. So Rob [Adamson], who started The Glass Eye—that's another whole story, wonderful story because his idea was to have something for people who graduated from these various schools with glass blowing in the art departments, some place for

those students to go as a transition stepping stone to becoming their own—setting up their own shop and having their own artwork. They needed a place to go and work and he provided that and gave them a salary to blow glass and make things. And this was pretty early on in that kind of activity. It would have been—I think he started The Eye in '74, '75, somewhere around there.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, you said you had moved to Georgia in '85.

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, I went down to Georgia but I only stayed there for a few months and then immediately drove to—took the convertible and drove to Seattle.

MS. FRANTZ: In '85.

MR. DREISBACH: And started working for Rob and it was interesting, I had already promised Henry Halem that I would do a fill-in sabbatical teaching gig for him at Kent State University. Wait a minute; I'm getting my stories all confused. At any rate, it was either the Kent—no, I think it was the RISD gig. I was doing a fill-in sabbatical deal for I think it might have been Bruce by then. It might have been Dale. No, it would have been Bruce. This was the '80s. Chihuly was already in Seattle by then.

MS. FRANTZ: Bruce Chao.

MR. DREISBACH: Bruce Chao—C-H-A-O. He was going on sabbatical and so I was going to teach the classes for a semester. So I went to Seattle with a time limit. I only had six months and then I had to leave and go do this RISD job. And then at the end of the RISD job I could decide whether or not I wanted to come back to Seattle and whether or not Seattle wanted me to come back.

So it was actually a pretty neat deal. So it was a very intense working period. You know, I drove into town and didn't even unload my car. I was already on the calculator starting to punch out formulas for him as somebody else was unloading my car for me. I mean, it was that kind of intensity and we banged out I think six or eight colors that were right on the money, just what they wanted. And then I had to leave after that six months. I went to RISD and I think I was—I probably got as far as Montana and I wanted to go back. I hadn't even gotten to RISD yet and I wanted to go back to Seattle.

I did the RISD gig and as soon as that was over I started driving for Seattle to start working again at The Glass Eye and start on a new set of colors and I drove through Tucson, Arizona, one of many workshops that I did for Tom Philabaum. It was really so much fun to be able to cruise around the United States and call up friends and stop in and sometimes do a workshop and, you know, get taken care of, get put up. Sometimes a little check to help pay the gas money and so on and then keep rolling along, and just kind of live that way. I loved that. It's like a Johnny Appleseed phenomenon.

Whatever I learned in one school I'd bring to another school, and whatever I learned in one studio I'd take to another studio. I've always told all of my friends don't ever show me anything that's a secret because I am a blabbermouth. I cannot keep any secrets, just don't show me. If you don't want anybody to know it, don't ever show me because whatever I know, everybody gets that and I've stuck to that pretty much all along.

MS. FRANTZ: So how many years did you stay at The Glass Eye?

MR. DREISBACH: Well, then I was there for two years and they started—Rob was really stretching it to try and find work for me to do. They weren't going to add—when we got to about 12 colors that was it; that was the extent of that project. So then he had me designing pieces for the—and then he had me building equipment and designing equipment, and then he had me do this, and then he had me do that. He was literally, I think, running out of jobs.

And then he came up to me one day and he said, "Hey, you know, those guys over at Spectrum Glass, you know, remember Don Hansen?" And I said, "Yeah, sure," and I remembered them from the early '70s. He said, "Well, Don just called me; he's looking for somebody to do color chemistry for the Spectrum Glass Company." And I said, "Really? Well, I couldn't leave here, could I?" And he said, "Oh, yeah, well, you'll always be able to help me if I needed help"—you know, he was so nice—"I'll call you if I need you. But here's his phone number. Call him up and go get an appointment."

MS. FRANTZ: What were they making at Spectrum?

MR. DREISBACH: Spectrum is the largest manufacturer of colored sheet glass in the world—the world. They make stained glass—raw material for making stained glass windows. But now of course with the fusing activities and with the blowers and so on they've expanded but that's what they're famous for and that's what they have always been. And so the president was someone that I had known and had met back in 1971-'72 when they were—he and his two partners, Jerry and—I can't remember the other guy's name—

MS. FRANTZ: Who was the president?

MR. DREISBACH: Well, the president was Don Hansen.

MS. FRANTZ: Oh, okay.

MR. DREISBACH: H-a-n-s-e-n, Hansen. And those three guys had put together the idea of making colored sheet glass because they saw in the marketplace that there were not enough suppliers making the handmade glass for all the popularity in the '70s. It was stained glass in the '60s and '70s was very popular and people were putting it in their houses and all kinds of places, bars and so on. And there were folks, evidently, according to Don, sitting out on the sidewalk like they were waiting for a rock concert to get the tickets.

They were sitting out in front of the stained glass store to buy stained glass because they knew a shipment had just come in from Marietta, Ohio, or something—in Seattle. And those guys said, "Well, how hard could it be?"

[They laugh.]

When have we heard that before? How hard could it be to make colored sheet glass? And they were working for Larry Pemberthy at the time. And Pemberthy is the guy that's most—I guess most people know of his name through the electric melting furnaces that he designed and built all over the world—but had started there in Seattle.

MS. FRANTZ: And you started working for Spectrum in '87?

MR. DREISBACH: No, it was 80—I've got to look at my resumé, '89.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, if you started at—

MR. DREISBACH: I think it was '89. So, I was with The Eye—

MS. FRANTZ: Four years?

MR. DREISBACH: Three years, because I went out East.

MS. FRANTZ: Okay. And you did the same thing at Spectrum as you did for The Glass Eye?

MR. DREISBACH: Only much, much more so. They had a much, much bigger sandbox and a lot more money.

MS. FRANTZ: Did you love it? Did you like the work?

MR. DREISBACH: I loved it. Do you know what my main job was? Have lunch with Don. Almost every day—not every day but at least three days a week we would go to his favorite restaurant, which was also mine, but he'd been going there before I showed up, and we would have lunch and talk about the problems. And it would like get him out of the factory so nobody could pound on his door, nobody could call him on the phone and he could concentrate on the problems and we could talk about them.

And he could develop a plan in his brain how he was going to attack those problems. And then we'd go back and he would do it. And it worked. The system worked for him and he loved it and he had no one else really that he could talk to about all of this chemistry stuff. The other people—he had people there that knew this and that but they didn't know the color of chemistry and he was the only one. And when you're a one-man horse you only get one point of view and you don't get challenges coming in from the side.

And that was my role and I just loved it. I mean, you couldn't—that—if I thought I had jumped into the briar patch going to The Eye, this was a much thornier, bigger, more protective, wonderful patch, going to The Spectrum. And I stayed there almost 10 years and then the whole administration changed and he—Don's gone and I'm gone and a lot of other people are gone. And they're playing the money game now. They're pinching money and R&D is out the door and they're going to go down. There's no way they can keep it up. It's too bad. But things change and it may be their time to change. Don's not upset. It happened a little sooner than he was ready for, his retirement, but he took it anyway and bailed.

MS. FRANTZ: Did you stay on in Seattle?

MR. DREISBACH: I went back to The Eye, which I didn't see it as a step downward so much as another—yet another opportunity to do things for them that they weren't ready to do yet, before, and now they seemed to be ready. So—

MS. FRANTZ: For example?

MR. DREISBACH: I started melting silver glasses which I—it didn't—wasn't the research money to do that before and I couldn't do that. And Spectrum was scared to death of silver colors because of the contamination of the tanks and the way they had to reuse them. And I was working with crucibles in The Glass Eye and I knew that I could do that but at Spectrum you couldn't use the Crucibles because they were too small so you needed bigger melts for Spectrum to do the products that they were used to making. So we just avoided silver like crazy, and gold.

MS. FRANTZ: Were you able to do gold as well?

MR. DREISBACH: I didn't do gold at The Eye. I probably would have if I had stayed a little longer but—anyway my relationship with The Eye changed because Rob left. And he retired from The Eye and got bought out and—

MS. FRANTZ: When was that?

MR. DREISBACH: Pardon?

MS. FRANTZ: What year was that?

MR. DREISBACH: That was just a few years ago—I don't know, four years ago, five years ago, something like that.

MS. FRANTZ: And that's when you left?

MR. DREISBACH: No, I got—I stayed on for a little while. I transitioned for a little while and then when I met up with and decided to commit to being with Pam and moved to Annapolis, which was really the only way the two of us were going to be able to stay together. A long-range affair—love affair was just not in the big picture for either one of us, especially not for Pam. And our lifestyles and our demands on our time were so such that it was taking away from us even getting together.

So if we didn't live together we weren't going to be together. So she had this spectacular job at the Smithsonian research and—research scientist, senior research scientist at the Smithsonian labs, education labs. And that's the only place in the United States where you can do that is there, and she was all set up. So I have always said that it doesn't matter where I live or where other glassblowers live; you can't make a living selling your glass any place you live. So you can go any place you want as long as UPS goes there. And so I put my money where my mouth was and off I went.

MS. FRANTZ: Was that 2001?

MR. DREISBACH: That was 2002.

MS. FRANTZ: And did you love it there?

MR. DREISBACH: Not exactly. [They laugh.] You're laughing along with me. Yeah, I was uncomfortable. The East Coast has never been a place that I've bragged about living, although I enjoy going there visiting. And I did; I loved the sailing and the water and so on but on a day-to-day basis there were things I wasn't happy about: the climate, the bugs, the poison ivy, there were a bunch of things that weren't—and then I didn't have a big group of close friends either. There were a couple of friends in the—you know, an hour or two drive away but I was used to, you know, being able to talk to people after five minutes. Drive five minutes and I could talk to 20 people. That wasn't going to happen in Annapolis, Maryland ever no matter how long I stayed. Anyway—

MS. FRANTZ: But were you working —

MR. DREISBACH: But I was committed to staying there. Well, we're going to get to my work, I guess, at some point in this. But what I was working on, I had started this series of coal working pieces that I had blown, specifically made pieces in the hot furnace to cut and polish. That's what they were meant for was cutting and polishing. And I'm going to describe that process when we get to that stage.

MS. FRANTZ: And in December of 2003?

MR. DREISBACH: I moved. After 13 months I moved to Tucson, Arizona, because even though Pam had this wonderful job at the Smithsonian, it turns out it wasn't quite what she wanted and what she really wanted to do was teach. And the University of Arizona Materials, Science and Engineering Department offered her a spectacularly wonderful job opportunity to come here. And they kept raising the bar until she said, "Uncle. I'll come." And that's what happened.

And so we packed up and moved here. And I'm hoping I don't have to leave in a few months and go somewhere else; I'm trying to encourage her to have a real good time in Tucson. [Laughs.] And she is. They're treating her

just as good as gold, the way she should be treated and the way we all would like to be treated. And you can't ask for better.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, you mentioned that you missed a community while you were living in Annapolis, and I wanted to ask you about that. There's a quote I'd like to read you also from Harvey again in his interview. And his answer to the question, is there a community that has been important to your development as an artist? And Harvey Littleton said, "Absolutely; I think the communities, like anywhere artists gather together and find a sympathetic milieu, whether it was Paris at the turn of the century or New York in the 1940s or the mountains of North Carolina in the '80s. These are all places where one artist works with another. And because Fritz was up in Penland and I was over here, and we got together, I learned to do overlays. And Fritz went with me to Europe, and so on." What was this trip to Europe?

MR. DREISBACH: That was that Frauenau conference—1980, I believe it was.

MS. FRANTZ: So what about community?

MR. DREISBACH: That was very, very important. That trip was very, very helpful to me. What about communities? Well, I think a little bigger community—I have—so even when I was in the remote mountains, North Georgia Mountains or when I was in Annapolis, I still could maintain contact with a bigger community. I didn't have to actually be living in it, although it's much nicer if I am living in it. But that's why we have e-mail and we have telephones and so on, so that I could stay in touch.

And I miss a lot of my friends from Seattle still today, even though it's been a year and a half since I left. I can't wait to go back out as soon as possible.

MS. FRANTZ: How would you characterize the glass community?

MR. DREISBACH: The Seattle community is the biggest in the world—glass community, it's the biggest in the world. I mean, way beyond anything that anybody else even remotely comes close to.

MS. FRANTZ: Even Murano [Venice, Italy]?

MR. DREISBACH: Oh, well, okay, there may be almost as many people making glass in Murano—on Murano, but there aren't very many artists. There aren't very many people that I can talk to or want to talk to or would talk to. I mean, I'm not dealing with the language situation, I'm just saying that there just wouldn't be that many people that—I mean, it'd be like moving to Milton, West Virginia. There was a lot of glass blowers in Milton, West Virginia, but I don't call them my friends. And they would not be my friends. They wouldn't be the people that came over for barbecues to my house, nor would I be going to theirs.

MS. FRANTZ: Or a pig roast.

MR. DREISBACH: Or a pig roast.

MS. FRANTZ: Where did that tradition get started?

MR. DREISBACH: In North Carolina.

[Audio break, tape change.]

Ron Probst was a potter from Hickory, North Carolina. And he was one of the resident craftsmen at school, pottery, in pottery. And he had learned from going to the socials at the black people's churches where they raised money by having these big pig barbeques on the weekends to raise money for the church. And they would dig big, long trenches and they'd do open pit fired pigs, half a hog. And he picked up the techniques from them—I don't know how—but he knew how to do it and so Bill Brown had him do a pig for every major gathering that we ever had at the school.

Anytime dignitaries were coming or any celebration, birthday for the school or something like that, we always had a pig roast. And I right away started helping him, and then just because I was interested in cooking—oh, I like to eat! So I quickly learned that you have to learn how to cook if you want to continue to eat. So I learned how to do these pigs to the—and I finally got good enough that he turned me out and let me do them on my own. And then it just stuck and it became part of my bag of tricks. [They laugh.] And I still enjoy doing it.

MS. FRANTZ: Did you ever do one in Frauenau?

MR. DREISBACH: I did a lamb. But I did it the same way, you know, above ground on a grate.

MS. FRANTZ: We keep mentioning Frauenau, maybe we should explain what Frauenau is.

MR. DREISBACH: The glass center of the world? [Laughs.]

Oh, boy, that's a—yeah, it's hard to do it briefly, but Frauenau is a small village up in the mountains of Bavaria north of Munich, north and east, right against the Czech border. Literally at the top of the mountain behind Frauenau is the border that goes into the Czech Republic. And all of that area was big in glass—nineteenth century especially—and then as a result of a number of the wars and so on, things got broken up into various countries and borders and split up. But there used to be a lot of travel back and forth. And so, people would build glass factories where there were trees, because that was the primary fuel source for melting the glass in the old days. And they would literally burn up the woods and then they'd move the factory many times, or else the factory would burn down and they would build it somewhere else.

But the reason that we've all—that so many of the contemporary glass guys have been in love with Frauenau is because of the Eisch family, E-I-S-C-H. Valentin Eisch came over—he was a glasscutter—he came over the hill and was cutting blanks that he bought from glass-blowing operations there in Frauenau area and Zwiesel and other little burgs nearby, and then couldn't get enough blanks or there were problems getting blanks, quality blanks, so he decided he'd start his own glass operation, making the glass and then cutting it. And it's a family operation. The grandson, who's name is also Valentin, named for his grandfather, is being earmarked for taking over—that's Erwin's oldest son, oldest child, his son, Valentin.

Along with—well, so Erwin, we've described it, the fact that he was an artist and that he was a painter. He had three brothers and a sister, and each of the children of Valentin Eisch had duties to do in the factory. They had jobs. One was in charge of the cold working area, one was in charge of the finance area, one was in charge of—and Erwin was in charge of the design division because he was, quote, "the artist in the family." And then he became so important to many of us as a role model that we started going over there and visiting, and then they would come over to the states and so on, and so a bond grew.

And they started having these symposia at the museum—they built a museum. They had a wonderful mayor, the burgermeister, Alfons Hannes, big and round and very German with the big red cheeks. What a wonderful man. And he promoted and promoted this whole glass thing and arts in general, but especially the glass. And then—so under his administration they built this beautiful little museum of glass as a tourist thing, but it also documented some things that were important. And they had classes that were inspired by places like Haystack [Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, Deer Isle, ME] and so on, because Erwin had been invited to teach everywhere. And so he got to know what these other places were like and so they ended up building their own place called Bild-Werk in Frauenau.

MS. FRANTZ: Have you ever taught there?

MR. DREISBACH: I have. I have, and I love it, I would dearly love to go back. And then they also have these gatherings, they call them symposiums, every 10 years or so.

MS. FRANTZ: And I believe—wouldn't you say that Erwin Eisch is Harvey Littleton's best friend of if not, one of his best friends in the whole world?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah. You know, I never thought of it, but now that you say that, there could—there is no other name that I could ever put in front of Erv. Nick Labino always called him "Erv" and I've never—what the heck, who's he talking about, Erv? Who's this Erv? [They laugh.] But it's that V-W German pronunciation.

Well, we're a little bit aside from this, so anyway, why is Frauenau so important? Well, because they love glass there and they promote glass there and there really wasn't any place—single place in America where things were quite that homey. You had Corning, of course, and you had Toledo, of course, but they were big outfits and they were too bureaucratic and too academic and too—Frauenau fit me; it fit. I put it on and it fit the first time. Alfons Hannes found out I was interested in finding the—tracing the origins of my name and I told him the story of my father coming over to Germany in the '30s to look specifically to find Dreisbachs and couldn't find people, but he found a couple of villages with the name Dreisbach. And Hannes says, "I'll put my people on it right now."

And he did. He just had his whole staff like going through the phonebooks and so on and he came up with seven villages that have Dreisbach as a part of the name, and then he wrote a letter to the burgermeister—he didn't know who it was—it just said, "Dear Burgermeister," of the village name, and he handed me the seven envelopes and it introduced me, all written in German. And it said—in there in German it said, this is Fritz Dreisbach. He's from America. He's interested in finding his family roots, and so on, and do you know of any people and how he might be able to trace his family heritage, and so on and so on and so on.

Well, some of the villages were so tiny they didn't even have a mayor, a burgermeister. But the ones that did, when they would read the letter they would look at me and they'd look at the letter, and they'd look at me and they'd laugh. And I realized later that it was as if someone came to America and walked up and said, "Hello, my name is Pittsburgh, and could you tell me where the people with the name Pittsburgh live?" Well, there are no

people named Pittsburgh in America. And there were people with the name Dreisbach, but they were so scattered, there was no like real concentration. Turns out there's a bunch of them, concentrated bunch of them, of Dreisbachs in America. There's even a society and it's on the Web and they've got their website and webpage and all that sort of stuff.

But I did meet an interesting—one of the mayors knew of a man who does trace family heritage—family roots, genealogy, a genealogist—specifically for people with German heritage that live in America. And he told me that nearby there was a young man who came from this village of Dreisbach, and his name was George or something, and the people in this other town would never call him George; they always called him Dreisbach, and he hated it. And, you know, he would just fly into a rage and tell them, you know, my name is George; you will call me George. They called him Dreisbach.

But the most interesting thing was that he told me the meaning of the word dreisbach. Dreisbach is not three brooks or three branches of a river, but rather dreis is the wrong tense—it's not three. Drei is three, but dreis is old German, and this man said that it's old German for the word sprudeln or bubbling. So my name is Fred Bubblingbrook. Do you love it? And my father fell down out of his chair when I told him that; he just loved that. And sure enough, I checked every one of those villages; they're all on a little river or a little stream at a rapids, right where it goes over the rocks, right where the water goes bubble, bubble. Sprudeln. Sprudeln wasser. You go out to have mineral water—you know, they have still water and then they have bubbly water. Well, bubbly water is called sprudeln wasser.

MS. FRANTZ: This is slightly changing the subject, but did the—was that—did Harvey take you to Europe, for your first trip to Europe?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, that was the first trip, yeah.

MS. FRANTZ: And that's when you went to Frauenau?

MR. DREISBACH: That's when we went to Frauenau and that's when the mayor wrote the letters and so on.

MS. FRANTZ: And that was in '80—

MR. DREISBACH: About 1980.

MS. FRANTZ: About 1980?

MR. DREISBACH: About that.

MS. FRANTZ: And you went to Europe to go to a Frauenau symposium?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, yeah. And then toured around.

MS. FRANTZ: Toured around Germany?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, Germany. We went to Sweden, we went to see Ann Warff, we went to Valkema's—

MS. FRANTZ: Sybren Valkema?

MR. DREISBACH: I think Sybren was still alive at the time.

MS. FRANTZ: Mm-hmm. In the Netherlands?

MR. DREISBACH: In the Netherlands.

MS. FRANTZ: Did you go to Czechoslovakia?

MR. DREISBACH: No. We drove up to the border and I said, "I'm not going in there."

MS. FRANTZ: You said that?

MR. DREISBACH: I did. I saw all the machine guns and I said, "No, I'm not going in there." And I just refused to go in. I just absolutely—terrified to go in there.

MS. FRANTZ: Had you met any of the Czech glass artists by then?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, I met them at the Frauenau conference, and they were nice people and I would have liked to have seen their thing and so on; I just was too scared to go in.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, you needed a visa anyway.

MR. DREISBACH: I don't know. No, I mean, theoretical—I don't know, maybe we weren't ever going to go in that day. But anyway, we went up there to Bayerisch Eisenstein, which is the crossing near Frauenau, the closest crossing. And I said, "No, I'm not going there."

MS. FRANTZ: Well, the border is very scary.

MR. DREISBACH: I really couldn't believe that that existed. I mean, I guess I'd seen movies, I guess I'd seen newspaper photographs, but it was different than reality for me. So I was too scared. A lot of my friends went. They—some of them did things that I certainly wouldn't do.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, why don't we leave Czechoslovakia for tomorrow?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, well—no, well, we might leave it for a long time.

[Audio break.]

MS. FRANTZ: This is Suzanne Frantz interviewing Fritz Dreisbach at his home in Tucson, Arizona, on April 22, 2004, for the Archives of American art. This is session two, disc number four.

Fritz, could you please—well, today we want to talk about the fabrication side of your work and about your series. First of all, could you describe your working process and how it's changed over time? I guess we should start with, do you work alone or with others?

MR. DREISBACH: I mostly work with other people, and have really since the '60s. Once I started working with other people it was not possible to make complicated or large pieces all by myself. So as I tried to find ways to make things, it seemed easier if I had a helper. But of course, in the beginning we did work alone, as I've described earlier. So I had the techniques and I had some rudimentary equipment to help hold the blowpipe vertical so the piece wouldn't distort too much while I was working on the handle or a punty or something like that. But working with other people, it's not only—I like working with other people not only because they assist me to fabricate the piece, but also I'm a personable kind of guy. I think of myself as a people person and I like to be with people and talking and so on as I'm working. I like the group activity, the sharing and so on that goes on. So mostly I work with other people.

MS. FRANTZ: Okay, well, could you kind of describe your working process technically?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, there is one issue that comes up occasionally, and it has to do with ownership of the artwork. If it's made as a group effort, or in some cases designed by one person and executed by a team that does not include that person, what's the ownership situation? And my stock answer has always been and continues to be that the person who has the idea for the piece is the owner and the author. And the other people—I liken to musicians playing in an orchestra, and I differentiate—

[Audio break.]

MS. FRANTZ: Fritz, we were talking about your commission work, but let's just take it back a little bit and go through from the beginning—or not the very beginning, but we were talking about this slide I have from the first "Toledo Glass National" in 1966. And one of your pieces received a purchase prize and it's a blue—

MR. DREISBACH: Vase.

MS. FRANTZ: —vase.

MR. DREISBACH: With two points.

MS. FRANTZ: And very simple form. And I guess it was quite an accomplishment at the time. About how big was it?

MR. DREISBACH: It was about as big as the furnace opening. As I remember it got dangerously close to the edges when I was making it. And I don't know if that made an impact at all on the public, but it certainly impressed me that it was that big. And I was very proud of that first exhibition; I received one of the awards.

MS. FRANTZ: Was it about 11 inches tall?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, it was about 11 inches tall or so and it was—what I was interested in at the time, it's a pot; it's a big glass vessel.

MS. FRANTZ: Had you started on what you call your Road Show at that time?

MR. DREISBACH: No. The Road Show happened about two or three years later, maybe four years later, after graduate school, really. My first workshop that I remember doing was about 1966. I taught a workshop at Athens, Ohio, at the Ohio University, for Henry Lin. And I stayed at Henry's house and met the whole family, including his three daughters, including Maya Lin.

MS. FRANTZ: Oh, really?

MR. DREISBACH: Which, I think she was probably about eight years old, and in 1966, something like that, five—eight years old, very small child. But when I met Maya after she was rich and famous—no, after she was famous, she came to Pilchuck [Pilchuck Glass School, Stanwood, WA] and I just sat down beside her—I didn't even know who she was, I just sat down at lunch and people were talking and it came out that her father was a ceramic artist. I said, "What was your father's name?" And she said, "Henry Lin." And I said, "Oh, I knew your father." And she said, "Well, how did you know him?" And I said, "Well, I did that workshop in 1966." And she said, "Oh, I remember that there was some strange person here living in our house that summer." It's amazing, though, the shrinking world, the world of art. That was a funny—

MS. FRANTZ: What was your Road Show? What is your Road Show?

MR. DREISBACH: Okay. It was Billy Bernstein that likened the glassblowers of the '60s to the rock and roll artists. And I was a big proponent of travelling around from school to school doing workshops and exchanging ideas. And it became like a roadie—I mean, like a show that was on the road, driving from place to place, and in some cases I even had roadies with me; I had helpers riding along. And then we would show up in town and do a performance and have a party or two and then get back in the truck and drive on to the next one. And for many years I used the 1970 Suburban Carryall—Chevrolet Suburban. And I even lived in it some of the time, especially when I was on the road. It was big enough to sleep in the back.

And then in 1980, 1981, somewhere along in there, I found the '67 Malibu convertible. And there was such a classic ride that I switched to that, and also I was just getting just a little bit tired of sleeping on a wooden bed. And so a couch, or ideally a motel bed, went along with the Malibu. And I'm still driving the Malibu from workshop to workshop. I still enjoy doing it and keeping that whole activity alive.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, you called some of your work from those shows performance pieces?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, they were because one of the things we were trying to do is get people excited about glass in their earliest years. We were selling the concept of you should try this. Here, here's a blowpipe. Blow on it; see what it feels like. Isn't it neat? And when you add to that the fact that watching somebody blow glass is probably one of the most fascinating of all the craft areas to watch, unlike weaving where you watch it go back and forth, back and forth and almost nothing happens all day long. At the end of the day you've made three or four inches of material. Glass is fast and it's dramatic and it's exciting and fun to watch.

So I would capture people's attention and interest by the way I handled the glass on the blowpipe. But for the students that were interested, they got to see tricks, hopefully, that would inspire them to make their own work. So I would use the techniques that I had learned in other places, previous places, to excite the people in that spot, and then take things from that spot on to the next one, wherever that might take me. And it just progressed that way.

I would say it started in the late '60s and it continued right on to today, so it's 30-some years, 35 years.

MS. FRANTZ: What happens to all those pieces you've made?

MR. DREISBACH: A lot of them stay in the spot where they were made because the schools like to keep some things around to look at. And some of them, I end up with those pieces myself, and I have actually exhibited some of them and they're really amazing. Sometimes, under pressure, I do some of the best work and sometimes the first of a series is the very best one. Other times it's exactly the opposite. The first 20 are dogs and then finally I get the feel for the series and by the 28th piece I'm starting to really hit home runs and the pieces get better with age.

I can show you examples of pieces where the very first one in the series was the very best, and I never got it back again, never found that magic, no matter how many times I tried to reproduce it. There's one piece that I absolutely made up my mind on the spot that I would never, ever try to reproduce it. Now, I know I shouldn't say that. Friends of mine have said, "I'm never going to make another blank again." And then, you know, the IRS or somebody says, you owe us, and then finally they go, "Oh well, maybe I'd better make another series of those because they did sell nicely and people did like them or some museum wanted one because another museum has one." For some reason they go back and make them again with some slight variation on the theme.

But any rate, this piece I'm speaking of is called *A Tribute to Jackson Pollock*. It was a Mongo that had a wide variety of very colorful threads that were picked up on the hot glass and allowed to wiggle around in the fire, and they're very abstract expressionist looking. So when I picked this piece up out of the annealing oven—I remember it was a bright, sunny day, and I held the piece up to the sky and I got the light coming through and I thought, wow, that just looks like one of those paintings that Jackson Pollock did. And I said to myself, you know, if Jackson could ever make glass, I bet he would love this piece. And so, right on the spot I said to myself, this is good, but I'm not going to water this piece down by trying to imitate it.

MS. FRANTZ: Where is that piece now?

MR. DREISBACH: Right there.

MS. FRANTZ: Oh. [Laughs.]

MR. DREISBACH: For the microphone people, I'm pointing across the room. That piece sits in my house. There are very, very, very few pieces that I've held on to, and that piece is not available except in major public collection. Those are the only people I would consider selling it to.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, I think the series of work that people first started remembering you the most for were the ones from the '70s, starting in the '70s, I believe, or late '60s, that relate to—have a strong relationship with American funk ceramics. And I'm thinking of the representational pieces like the hamburger helicopter and the alligators, lobsters —

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, yeah. One of the fun things when I would travel from place to place was to do something indigenous to the area. So when I was in Haystack School up on the coast of Maine, on the Atlantic Ocean coast, I made lobsters, a few of them, and some other things, of course. And when I went to Florida I made a palm tree with coconuts on it. And when I went to Pilchuck I made snails that were like the slugs that crawl all over the ground up there. And in the desert I made a Sonoran tortoise goblet, and et cetera. And it goes on and on and on and on: alligators in Florida and so on and so on in Louisiana, Florida, Georgia.

And it was, again, that's—see, this is a part of the Road Show—it's capturing the audience, getting them excited about what's—as soon as they finally—I'd start making something. I wouldn't tell them what it was going to be; that was always a hooker. If you tell them right away, a., you then have to make it, and b., if you make any mistakes at all they know it because they know what it's supposed to look like. But if you don't tell them what you're going to make and you just start right in and work away like you know what you're doing—which you do—and then they figure it out after you put the third leg on: okay, now I know it's an animal; I just have to figure does it crawl or what. So I did a Chiquita banana when I went to Cincinnati, Ohio, because that's the home of the Chiquita Banana Company. They also are famous—Cincinnati, Ohio is famous for its flying pig sculptures downtown on the river, and so I made a glass pig, flying pig—

MS. FRANTZ: I have a photograph of you and Dan Dailey wearing a cowboy and Indian outfit.

MR. DREISBACH: The cowboy and Indian outfit. Dan was a graduate student at RISD at the time, and he was on a kick at that time—this was 1980 approximately, '79, '80, somewhere along in there. He was on a kick to make life-size objects out of glass, so he made like a telephone that was a life-size telephone and he made an end table where he blew the legs and attached them with metal finials to a slab of glass, all kinds of things that were life-size. And so when we decided to make this—we were going to make a whole cowboy thing and then we decided we were going to send it out west so we needed to—we decided we wanted to be politically correct; we needed to have Native American and cowboy, not just cowboy.

And so then we made this costume, and the idea was it would be the kind of thing you would get in a box under the Christmas tree and you would open the box up and put these things on: moccasins for the Indian and cowboy boots with spurs and so on, tomahawk, six-shot repeating revolver, all the stuff—cowboy hat, headband with feathers. You could put them on because they were the right size, and so we actually did try to wear them or hold them up against our bodies so that you got a sense of the scale of them and then photographed them up on the roof of the Metcalf Building at RISD. And it's a fun photograph.

MS. FRANTZ: I think perhaps the most ambitious one was the farm that you made with Robert Levin in 1975.

MR. DREISBACH: Right.

MS. FRANTZ: Could you talk about that and tell me how it ended up in the collection of the Corning Museum of Glass?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, the museum in Indianapolis—I think it's the Indianapolis Museum of Art—was going to have a fantasy exhibition for children. They invited me to show something and Rob Levin was my TA at Ohio

University. And I said, "Well, we should get him involved in the exhibition also because he makes some wonderful fantastic things that the kids will love." So they said, "Yes, we'll do that; we'd like you both." And then I said, "What if we collaborate on something?" And they thought, yeah, that could be good.

So, I knew how to make pickup trucks and pigs, and Robbie was pretty famous for his chickens that he made, little glass chickens and it didn't take us very long because we were living in Southern Ohio looking at driving through all these farm yards to figure out that we could actually make a whole environment, a farm. We chose milk glass, white glass, because the idea of having to try to colorize all these pieces was too fantastically complicated and I thought this will make it look more like it's made out of glass than plastic. I tried to avoid, at every step of the way through my career, any references to plastics.

And I also tried to avoid references to ceramics; I didn't want my glass to look like ceramics. So, therefore, I almost never worked with dead opaques, except in the case of the milk glass, in which case, I guess some people might think it looks a little bit like porcelain, but it's actually glass. And it's also glass that's worked at the furnace; it's not worked with a torch of any kind. No lamp working in other words, which would have been much easier. But we weren't lamp workers, we were dedicated to the furnace and we were committed to the furnace and that's the way we decided to make them.

So away we went, and we started making a few animals here and a few animals there. And we decided we had to have fencing around the animals so they wouldn't get out so I pulled a lot of fence, made little fence posts so we could lay the rails on the fence posts. And then we started in on various vehicles and we made a truck and we made a tractor—the tractor was real tricky. It would have been easy except that one of the students in my class at that time had just purchased an old tractor and he knew everything about that tractor. He knew where all the parts needed to be and he knew how big they had to be. So when we started making a tractor, I was just sort of faking it, you know? Didn't matter to me whether the flywheel was on the right side or the left side, but oh, no, the student wouldn't allow that to be on the wrong side. It had to be redone.

MS. FRANTZ: I think the tractor's the best piece, though, in the farm.

MR. DREISBACH: Great, great. And so we did cows and horses and—

MS. FRANTZ: Barn.

MR. DREISBACH: A big barn, we did use a mold; we made a wooden mold. Robbie nailed together some boards to make a barn mold and a mold for the house, farm house. And then of course after it came up out of the mold, after we blew the bubble into the mold to get the basic shape, then we put a lot of hot bits on it to represent the windows and the doors and the downspouts and all that.

MS. FRANTZ: I think there's a duck pond too?

MR. DREISBACH: There's a duck pond with eight ducks on it. Making the pond was easy, we just made a big puddle of molten glass on the marver and then made eight little dents in the puddle, and then annealed it. After it came out of the annealing oven we set a duck in each little dent, duck dent. And Norman Courtney was there, he made the motorboat motor—and—oh, a lot of people worked on it. But Rob and I were really the kingpins of that and then the students.

Of all the things that ever happened in that glass studio in Athens, Ohio, that farm scene was the only time that the maintenance department and the police department—the campus cops, who had their house area right across the street from our hot shop—the only time they ever warmed up to us at all was when we made that farm, and they absolutely loved that farm. Well, so we knew we had a winner. We set it up there outside the glass shop and photographed it before shipping it off to the—I was incorrect when I said Indiana, it was Louisville, Kentucky, the museum at Louisville.

MS. FRANTZ: To Speed?

MR. DREISBACH: You know, I don't know? It must be in my resume somewhere.

MS. FRANTZ: Everything else is.

MR. DREISBACH: So we can find it. On the next break, I'll do that.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, how did it end up in Corning?

MR. DREISBACH: Well, so we showed it in 1976, I believe it was, at this museum show. We were six or nine months making this piece, it was forever because every time we drove out in the country we'd see a new something—oh, we don't have one of those in our farm—and we'd race back to the hot shop and fire up the white glass and make some more parts for it. So this was a major undertaking, a major piece and it took a lot of

people's energies for a long period of time. And then it was exhibited as it was commissioned—not commissioned but as it was, we were invited. And then it came back to us, and you know, a whole bunch of boxes, like 20 boxes.

What do you do with it? And it sits on a four-by-eight sheet of plywood, or some format of—you need a big, wide expanse to show this thing. It's not like a goblet that sits on a shelf with 10 other goblets. So a couple of opportunities to exhibit it came up, one was at the Corning Museum of Glass, I think it also went to some other museums, a couple of other museums in the late '70s, early '80s. And then the—Rob and I wanted to sell it, we wanted it on permanent display somewhere. I mean, it's nice to get the money, but the money wasn't so much the issue, as what we really wanted was to have it in a significant collection where it would be seen. And I don't right now remember who approached whom, but somehow we started conversations with Corning Museum and that would have been early '80s, I guess, or middle '80s.

Were you there at that time?

MS. FRANTZ: No. Bill Warmus was there.

MR. DREISBACH: No, Warmus.

MS. FRANTZ: Or else David Donaldson.

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, Donaldson. I think it might have been Warmus. It doesn't matter. At any rate, a conversation started and Beuchner was involved in it, Tom Beuchner. And they asked us if we would sell it, what price did we want, and we quoted a price and they accepted it, and I always wondered if I was too low—

MS. FRANTZ: Of course.

MR. DREISBACH: And then I said, "But there's a caveat to this, there's a catch. What I don't want you to do is to bury that piece in a bunch of cardboard boxes in the basement and take three parts of it, like the truck, the tractor and the horse and the chicken and put them on display, as if that's the farm. I don't want it shown that way." So they signed a statement, said they wouldn't show a part of it. So they don't show it at all.

MS. FRANTZ: No.

MR. DREISBACH: So it's been in the basement forever—

MS. FRANTZ: That's not true.

MR. DREISBACH: It's never been on view except in a show that was appropriate to that time period, but it's never been a part of the permanent collection, it's just in the basement, in cardboard basements.

MS. FRANTZ: I put it in a show called "Thirty Years of New Glass."

MR. DREISBACH: It was in shows—a couple of shows like that —

MS. FRANTZ: It's not on display now?

MR. DREISBACH: No, it never has been.

MS. FRANTZ: Because I thought it—we were planning to.

MR. DREISBACH: They said they would when they got a sculpture area. They got a sculpture area; it's not on display.

MS. FRANTZ: The plan was to have it on display in the new gallery.

MR. DREISBACH: And actually right now, as we speak, I believe it's on the road somewhere. I think they've loaned it somewhere.

MS. FRANTZ: It takes up a lot of space.

MR. DREISBACH: [Laughs.] Talk to me.

So there was one of my ideas that worked against me, as it turns out. You don't know.

MS. FRANTZ: It's only size. Well, concurrently with these sort of funky, pop pieces, you've always sort of played tribute to historical glass. How did that get started?

MR. DREISBACH: Well, from day one when I was in Iowa city and my painting professor couldn't tell me what this course glass blowing was going to be like, I went to the library and looked up glass, and I saw all kinds of things, including the stained glass windows, that I thought I would probably end up working on, which I never—actually I only made one. Another collaboration, when we get to collaborations again. This one was with Gary Noffke also.

[Audio break, tape change.]

MR. DREISBACH: Now is a good time?

MS. FRANTZ: Sure.

MR. DREISBACH: It doesn't relate to the funky stuff, but you'll get me back there, right?

MS. FRANTZ: The historic period, all the different —

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah. So, about—let's see, what's the date on that, that window? I think that's middle '70s also. My good friend Gary Noffke and I met in 1971 at Penland School. We were both teaching—he was teaching metals and I was teaching glass. And people had told both of us that we would be really good friends if we ever met each other because we have similarities in our sensibilities and our aesthetics and our lifestyle et cetera, et cetera. So because so many people had made a big presentation like that, we were both very cautious of actually meeting each other.

But we finally did, and in fact proved that everyone in their estimates was correct. And by the end of the first day we had exchanged major pieces, traded with each other for major pieces. By the end of the week we took off in a car for the West Coast and drove to California together. And we've been as close as we could be when you don't live in the same house with somebody or the same city with somebody, as you could possibly imagine, for all these many years. And we've made a lot of serious, major work. We've done a lot of work together utilizing his skills in metals and mine in glass. We've had a great deal of fun making these pieces over the years.

But it turns out our experience, our backgrounds were very similar. He went to the University of Iowa to study painting; I went to the University of Iowa to study painting. He left Iowa and went into metals and went to Southern Illinois University [Carbondale] to work with Brent Kington, who was the king of all the blacksmith, metalsmith guys; I left Iowa City, quit painting and went to Madison, Wisconsin and worked in glass, which was the kingpin school of glass. Then we both got jobs in small schools and then we both ended up teaching at that summer class at the same time. So we had a lot, a lot, a lot of similarities.

And it turns out that when he was a student in Iowa City he saw some pictures of stained glass windows and decided he would love to make a stained glass window, but for one thing he didn't know how to do the glass. He knew metals. By the time he got to Illinois he knew how to do the metal part of the window but he didn't know how to do the glass part. I wanted to do a stained glass window also and knew how to do the glass parts, but I didn't know how to do the metal part. Now, we could have both figured it out or read about it or something, but in fact, we just waited. And finally, after 20 years of both of us wanting to make a window, we did it. We made this window for his house. It's about eight-and-a-half feet tall.

And my students and I in Ohio University made all of the glass except for one piece, which was the bottom of a whiskey bottle. After we finished the window we toasted it and then soldered in the window the final bottom piece of that bottle, just as a symbol of the end of the piece, of the end of the window. The finale.

MS. FRANTZ: Does the window depict something?

MR. DREISBACH: The window—the inspiration for the window is Florida subject matter of flora, fauna and flora—flora and fauna of Florida. And it includes bathing beauties, flamingos, fish, palm trees, orchids, all kinds of things. And it was fun. We made all the glass, we blew cylinders and opened them up, we made rondels, we rolled glass on the marver and pressed it out in stamps, with stamps, cast glass parts, we made murrines. We made all kinds of stuff for that window. It's really a neat window. And then because it was Gary's house and his house is in the north Georgia woods it gets mighty hot there in the summertime, so Gary designed the window so it actually opens up and has a screen behind part of it. In other words, it would have been a dead spot in the house with no ventilation so we had to design the window so that it was mobile.

We had to do quite a bit of learning, even though we kind of knew how to do this and we kind of knew how to do that, there were still things we had to solve, problems that we had to solve along the way. And it was a long project, but that was a true collaboration. It was not my window and Gary's metal. Nor was it his window and my glass. We both were involved in making everything, all parts of it, and we were both involved in the overall design of the window, so it was a true collaboration.

MS. FRANTZ: Was it related in any way to your interest in historic glass?

MR. DREISBACH: We might have looked at a picture or two of a stained glass window but I don't remember doing that. I don't think so; I don't think it was related to historical—except that I was aware of the things like the mobile glazings that Tiffany became famous for, and we did, in fact, utilize that technique when it was appropriate. We stole lots of good ideas from Paul Marioni and other people that were doing stained glass in those early '80s, but the window has our flavor. It does—when you look at it you do not even ever have any sense of Tiffany or any other artist. When you look at the window, you don't have that feeling. That was important—that it be our window, not somebody else's.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, let me read you some of these names of your historical reference pieces: the "Pseudo-Venetians," inspired by 17th and 18th century blown Venetian goblets; your Bavarian inspired "Fritzensteins" and "Loewenbecker mit Himbeeren (Lion Cup with Raspberries)." What are those all about?

MR. DREISBACH: Well, the Italian work of the seventeenth and eighteenth century has always fascinated me, has always inspired me, because these guys were so bloody good and they were so expressive of the molten, fluid quality of hot glass. And they did all of that and ended up with something that you could literally drink wine out of at the table. Now, it's one thing to make a goblet that you can drink out of; it's another thing to make a piece of sculpture or inspirational object of art, but to do both in one unit was—that doesn't happen very often and it did occasionally happen in those Italian pieces, and I wanted to be able to do that myself. In fact, if I could design the rest of my life, I would do that every day. After breakfast, I would start—and that's what I would want to do.

MS. FRANTZ: Make sculptural vessels?

MR. DREISBACH: Sculptural things that have a sculptural presence to them but they would also have function that you can actually enjoy them with the flowers in or with the flowers out—or with the orange juice or without the orange juice. Yeah, I would love that.

MS. FRANTZ: What's a Fritzenstein?

MR. DREISBACH: Okay. So that's—oh, so then I made more and more Italian-like looking pieces, to the point that I—this is in the middle '70s now, and you know what we're creeping up to, is we're creeping up to that 1978 when I was so unhappy with my work because it was so rigid, mold-blown looking that I rejected it. And that's the stuff I called the pseudo-Italian. And there were a whole group of those vases and—they were mostly vases, vase format. Some of them had a blown foot, most of all of them had filigree cane pickups, some had handles, some did not. But they were my interpretations of what the Italians might have done.

And what I realized in 1979 was that I had to stop following someone else and find a direction that worked for me. And that I could use the filigree cane, I just don't have to make it look Italian, I don't have to make it look like I ate spaghetti that day. I can have my own thing and that's what happened when the Mongos were born—not the very first one, didn't have all these things. But eventually the Mongos ended up with lots and lots of color that came from my painting experiences, had lots and lots of filigree cane. It had murrines, they had big lip wraps, you know, all this stuff that I loved about glass, I just started piling into those pieces and they were big enough that they could handle it. If you tried to jam all that stuff into a paperweight it wouldn't work, but these pieces had enough presence in enough places to put things that it seemed to work for me.

But any rate, get back to the pseudo-Italian. That's a term that I have used, again it's an in-house term, it's not a title, but it means those pieces that were too strongly influenced by somebody else and that I needed to stop making them and I did, in fact, stop making them. Now, the Fritzensteins happened way, way earlier than that. They happened back in the '60s. I was making beer mugs because I enjoyed drinking beer, which I did to a sufficient volume that now I don't need to drink any more beer, and don't now, I'm happy to say. So the word stein is a German word for a large drinking vessel and could refer to either stoneware, clay or glass. And then the play on words, or the kind of pun thing was to throw my name, which is also a very German name, Fritz, in front of the "stein," so you've got Fritzenstein. So I made this series of steins and I called them all *Fritzensteins*. And I make a variation on those pieces today that have more historical referencing than the original ones did, because I wasn't good enough to blow pieces like the original Bavarian glass.

MS. FRANTZ: Humpen?

MR. DREISBACH: And now I make the Humpen and I make the Passglas and some of the other—well, actually I made Passglas a long time ago too. They were fun. You put a ring every so many inches along the piece and then the idea is that you have to drink only from one ring to the next ring and then you pass the glass to the next person. This was when people probably couldn't afford a single piece of glass for each person, but they would have a single piece of glass for the whole table and then they would pass it around. I love the history, I love reading about the history of glass and how people made the glass, and I love how they used the glasses and what parts were the important things and why glass was important and special, what was so special about glass.

MS. FRANTZ: You especially love trick glasses, don't you?

MR. DREISBACH: And then I ran into these trick glasses. And that, the first—see my first teaching job was at the Toledo Museum School and I spent a huge amount of time in the museum collection looking at pieces and then running out to the hot shop and blowing them. It was a great fun thing to do. And in fact, in two months, three months from right now, I'm going to teach a one-week class at the studio in Corning, and we're going to do exactly that same thing again. There are only a few places in the world that have a collection, a major collection of glass, and a hot shop. And that's one of the places, and I asked Amy if I could please teach a class that was oriented that way and would she help me set it up with the museum folks that I could do that.

MS. FRANTZ: Mm-hmm.

MR. DREISBACH: As well as—any other place I go, I can only work from books, from pictures, but that's going to be really special.

Well, so anyway I saw in the Toledo Museum a goblet, made out of clear glass, crystal glass, clear glass, that had four projections coming out of the hollow stem. Now this goblet was designed that when you poured the liquid in the top, the liquid went all the way down through the hollow stem, clear down to the foot, if you can visualize that. And each of those projections would have allowed the liquid to go into the projection because they were hollow and open to the interior, like little tiny spouts except they had a cap on the end, three of them had a cap on the end. The fourth one—after looking at that piece I don't know how many times, I noticed, hey, there's a hole in that. That means, when you pour the liquid into the goblet it runs down into the stem and it runs out those four projections, it stops on three of them, but on the fourth one it'll pee all over the table.

Well, and I did a little reading and other people talked about this idea of these trick glasses or joke glasses that were made in the seventeenth and eighteenth century in Europe primarily, and one of them is called a "pinkelglas."

MS. FRANTZ: Pinkel?

MR. DREISBACH: Auf Deutsch, pinkel—P-I-N-K-E-L, which is the German word for peeing.

MS. FRANTZ: Oh, like tinkle.

MR. DREISBACH: It's like tinkle, only it's pinkel auf Deutsch. Pinkelglas, one S. So you know I went right to the studio that day. The first thing I tried was to make four of those things come out with one of them open. And then that became one of the most popular things on a two-day Road Show. First day you blow a pinkelglas but you don't tell anybody what it is. And they don't see—I make the moves so identical with all four of those things, except I have opened one of them, but nobody notices it, if I'm good. If I'm clever they don't notice that I've opened one of them, and we box it, put it in the annealing oven. The next day you take it out of the annealing oven and I look it over, you know, and then I go over to the sink, and pretend like I'm going to wash it off and so on, "let's drink out of this."

And so I hold it with my finger over the hole so that no liquid can come out and fill it. And when I hand it to someone to take a drink to toast the workshop, my finger comes off the hole and out comes the liquid. And then everybody laughs and so on, and we have a great time. And so that's a kind of a fun thing. I made it—the most fun I remember was pinkel-ing the burgermeister of Frauenau, Alfons Hannes, up on stage and I gave him a pinkelglas, filled up with—and my finger's over the hole—but he knew enough about glass to know he was getting pinkel-ed and he turned it back on me.

MS. FRANTZ: That sounds like him. He's such a great guy.

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, yeah, that was fun, that was a great one.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, there's also another running theme in your work which is drinking goblets. And you had the—specially notable are these reversible Champagne and Cognac goblets, one of them was the *Art-vs.-Craft Reversible*, and then there were Lariat Goblets and the flamingos.

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, yeah. Well, the goblets—when I looked at those first photographs in 1964, I saw pictures of the most incredible ornate goblets, so expressive of fluid molten glass. But I had no earthly idea how to make them, absolutely not a clue how anybody could ever make something like that. It was possible because there was a picture, but it wasn't computer generated, we didn't have PCs in every bedroom in 1966, '67, '65. So I knew it—they did it, but I didn't know how to do it.

So I made very simple goblets, which basically you make a tumbler and put a blob of glass on the bottom and that's a foot. And then if you put something between the drinking part, tumbler part or cup, and the foot, like

even something as simple as a round ball, you then have a goblet on a stem with a foot. And really, goblets in my mind separate themselves into three parts always, the part that you drink out of, the part that it sits on, and the part in the middle which is the stem or the—that was the place that I could have the most fun. But whenever I made them, I wanted those goblets to be functional; I didn't want them to be so that they couldn't be used.

So I wanted them to stand on the foot, correctly, and not fall over when you bumped the table—that was a test I used on critiques with my students. They'd put their pieces out on the table and I'm come in and bang the edge of the table and anything that fell down was an F. But I wanted them to stand and I wanted them to drink, and then in the middle, you could have as much fun as you wanted, as long as those other two requirements were met.

So they got more ornate in the middle, less emphasis on the cup and less emphasis on the foot. And at some point in the late '60s—no the late '70s, somewhere along in there, middle '70s, Dan Dailey had a long and serious discussion with me about my goblets. And he said, he loved them, but he didn't like the feet, because I was making a clapper foot or a squeezed out patty foot. He said that the foot—the design of the foot didn't go with the rest of the goblet, didn't have the elegance of the rest of the goblet. And he said, you really need to learn how to blow the feet the way they do in Italy and other places. And I resisted that because I used to make those goblets—a lot of the times I would make them by myself and I knew how to do the clapper foot, but I didn't know how to do a blown foot at that time all by myself.

So I said, well that's going to require working with somebody else, and so I trained some people to help me in various studies. I figured out how to make a second bubble with a second blowpipe and put it on the bottom and open it up into a foot. But it was a lot of work, a lot of extra work. And I thought, well, you know if I just make that foot a little bit bigger and a little bit deeper than a normal Italian-esque foot, we could drink out of both ends—either end, I mean. And then I started making them with different liquids in mind for the two ends. And so one end was more conical, and that was the champagne end, and the other end was more spherical and that was the cognac or brandy end, brandy snifter. And then that became a whole series starting about 1980, onwards, and I still make them today.

And still love making them. But the idea of turning these things upside and having them work both ways, see, they stand on the champagne end just as easily as they stand on the cognac end, they're as stable and they're ground and polished so they sit flat, dead flat on the table and when you bang the table they do not fall over.

MS. FRANTZ: Why do you want your work to function?

MR. DREISBACH: It adds a dimension beyond the purely visual. It's more—and I've always liked more of whatever I was doing. I'm greedy I guess you'd say. I love more. More is better. I mean, you can have too much of something, but normally I push it for more and that's why. It's not that it makes less. Some people might think that a functional object is less than a sculptural object. What I'm trying to do is more. I want both. I want the function and I want to be sculpturally interesting and challenging and attractive—appealing.

MS. FRANTZ: Now, the Lariat Goblets, they're reversible as well?

MR. DREISBACH: They're reversible. The Lariat's have multiple names. The Lariat—the name Lariat is like a nickname again. Lots in my series have nicknames. I don't know why—stable names. When you're talking to your horse, or your racing horse, you don't want to use their whole long official title; you use the nickname. I was born with a nickname so I guess that's one of the reasons why I do it. But at any rate, so Lariat—let's see, to describe the Lariats: They're basically a cup that has what looks like a stem coming down that becomes wild and wavy and rope-like looking, and somehow it's arranged so that it'll sit on that rope—

MS. FRANTZ: And the rope is a loop?

MR. DREISBACH: And the rope is the loop and it sits on that rope and the cup stands vertically up in the air and you could pour iced tea in that cup and pick it up and drink out of it and set it back down and it looks like a goblet that has no formal foot. It's like it sits on this loopy stem. If you turn it upside down, the rim of that lip of the cup is flat, so it sits on that like a foot, like a goblet foot. And then what sticks up in the air is this wild, waving lariat-looking loop of twisted spiral glass, which I always associated with like an arc sculpture.

MS. FRANTZ: And is it—

MR. DREISBACH: And so I thought these pieces would be reversible art and craft. When the cup is up and you can drink out of it, pour liquid in and drink out of it, it's [a] craft object. And when you turn it upside down and it sits on the cup and this wild lariat-looking stem is up in the air then it looks like art. So that's why the title, *Art-vs.-Craft Reversibles: Lariat Cups, a Tribute to Will Rogers, a Roping Fool*. And museums hate my titles because they always run beyond the label size. And it tickles me every time they complain. I just make them longer the next time.

MS. FRANTZ: What about the *Flamingo* goblets? Weren't they made with Dante Marioni?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah. So, back to '64 again, I saw those Italian pieces, I wanted to make them, I didn't know how, and 20 years later the folks I call the young Italians, Americans, learned how to do all of the joinery, all the combination techniques, combining parts that were stored in the garage or the storage oven and then brought back to the right temperature and attached at the right moment. All those techniques, once they knew how to do that, I knew I could make—I could finally realize my original dream. And so very close to my 50th birthday I asked Dante if he would help me make a series of goblets. And my idea was that they have the elegance and presence of those Italian pieces but they have my imagery, not the Italian imagery. I did not want to see any dragon stems; I did not want to see any of their kinds of stuff. I wanted my own stuff in the middle.

And we made flamingos in the stem, standing on one foot, which Dante was, "Oh, I don't know, Fritz, I don't think you can do that on—I can't do that on just one—we're going to have to put both feet down," because my drawings all had the one foot up and one foot down, which is the classic flamingo pose. I mean, if you're going to do a flamingo, and you put both legs down, it's like, hey, you're copping out here. So I twisted his arm and twisted his arm, I said, "Come on, Dante; please just try it. If you can't, if we have trouble and it doesn't work out, then I'll consider putting two legs down, but let's try it with one down and one up, the classic pose." He said, "Well, all right, but I don't think it will work." And he got, just for the record, 20 out of 21, and the one that we lost was my fault. In other words, he didn't lose a single one of them—and that boy is good!

MS. FRANTZ: Wasn't he one of your students?

MR. DREISBACH: Briefly. He took one of those eight-week classes. And he, I think, absorbed things from that class, but I didn't always see, at the time, that he was picking up that information. But we've had a few fun exchanges about his memories of that experience. What I remember about Dante was his absolute conviction, commitment. No one has ever shown more commitment to being one of the best glass blowers in the world than that man, Dante Marioni. He is absolutely committed. And he is, in fact, one of the best glass blowers in the world. And he gets better every day—every single day.

MS. FRANTZ: How many of those goblets did you make with Dante that survived?

MR. DREISBACH: Close to 100. So the whole idea of this reversible thing, I wanted to push the reversible thing and I wanted to make a big splash and a big presentation, because I'd made a few goblets here and a few goblets there and I'd shown a few goblets here and a few goblets there. But I wanted to make a big splash. And I had never done anything like this before. But I set it up with two galleries, one on the East Coast and one on the West Coast to open a one-man show of my work in each gallery.

MS. FRANTZ: At Maurine Littleton?

MR. DREISBACH: Maurine Littleton on the East Coast and L.A.—

MS. FRANTZ: Ruth Summers?

MR. DREISBACH: Summers, Ruth Summers Gallery in L.A. And we made a poster for the exhibitions, and the poster was even reversible. It had my name upside and right side up, so you could look at the poster either way, didn't matter. East Coast, West Coast, you know, the whole thing, everything was reversible.

And one of the neat things is, when I show the slides, people are always curious: well, what part did Dante play in these? Well, number one, I couldn't make these pieces, I couldn't put them together, I didn't know how to do that. Now, I could have possibly taken a bunch of time and learned how to do it or taught myself how to do it or something, invented a way of doing it, or shudder, shudder, I could have used cold glue, but I absolutely abhor glue in my work and I didn't want to use glue. I wanted to put them together hot, I wanted them to have that flavor of the Italian work and I needed somebody that had the skills to do that.

So now as you look at a picture of these pieces you'll see parts that are very wiggly and organic and you'll see parts that are extremely tight and symmetric. And I didn't do those symmetric parts and Dante didn't do the parts that wiggle. So the stems are all mine. They're grapes and seashells and cornucopias and flamingos and lots and lots of wiggly handles with little raspberries on them and so on. And many of the cups are very, very tightly controlled, symmetric, and lots of them are mezzo stampo. There's one that we designed where the mezzo part is a very tiny little sphere and then coming up out of that is a very long tapered flute, ideal for champagne—pushes the Italians use of that mezzo stampo to a great extension, or a great exaggeration, and they ended up looking like air horns and so we named them the *Mezzo Air Horns*.

MS. FRANTZ: What does mezzo stampo mean?

MR. DREISBACH: I think it means something like half-ribbed, and it's—ancient Roman pieces, bowls from the 1st

century A.D., B.C. time period. You'll see bowls that have these ribs that don't go all the way up, they're part way up. And that's what the glass pieces—the glass blowers learned how to do that, imitate that work of their ancestors.

MS. FRANTZ: And the originals were slumped, I believe?

MR. DREISBACH: We're not going to go there right now because that is yet another interview. And I actually should bring that into this interview at some point, is the work that I've done with Dudley Giberson and the work that he's done that's so spectacular.

MS. FRANTZ: Talk about it.

MR. DREISBACH: And Gib was a student of Norm Schulman, graduated from Rhode Island School of Design, B.C.

MS. FRANTZ: And what's that?

MR. DREISBACH: What does B.C. stand for? Before Chihuly. Yep, he had graduated in the summer and Dale came in the fall of '67, I guess.

MS. FRANTZ: What are you doing with—

MR. DREISBACH: And Gib is researching some very complicated ancient glass-making techniques, including core vessels and murrines and so on, and is right now making—is right now trying to reproduce those ribbed bowls.

MS. FRANTZ: Uh-huh. And what are you doing with that?

MR. DREISBACH: And they—and his will utilize the slumping format at one point, but it's not the major forming technique. And he's not ready to go public with it yet. He's still working on them so we can't talk about those, but the other two series we can talk about. He's done the closest, most impressive body of core vessels of any human being since the pharaoh's, since the 18th dynasty, and I think he's figured out to make them the way that it's most likely—the way they were made originally. And it's utilizing frit instead of molten glass because there are people that are fairly certain that what we know to be molten glass today was not available, wasn't that hot and wasn't that loose. It was a much more viscous, much more like oatmeal material in ancient times.

MS. FRANTZ: And you're working with him on this project?

MR. DREISBACH: I have been invited to observe and make comments and so on, but it's his research and it's his ideas and I'm just a sounding board and that's been a great, great pleasure to be a part of that project, I really love it.

[Audio break.]

MS. FRANTZ: This is Suzanne Frantz interviewing Fritz Dreisbach at his home in Tucson on April 22, 2004. This is session two, disc number five.

Fritz, I'd like to talk a little bit more about this work that you did with Dante Marioni. I don't think that people quite understand how, for example, two glass blowers, two skilled glass blowers working on a single object, how the process actually works, or as you say, how the piece is built. Could you describe that?

MR. DREISBACH: Sure. The first thing that I'm going to describe makes it clear that these are my pieces, not collaborative. This is not a collaborative effort. These goblets are not on Dante's resume; they're on mine. And the reason is, I did the drawings, I did the thought process, I picked the colors, I made the decisions of how they should be—how they should look. Dante made the decisions about how to make them, how to join the parts together. That was the part that I didn't know how to do and I needed his help for that. I am not disparaging his contribution to these pieces. I have always given him the credit for being the gaffer to put them together. But the ideas were mine so the pieces are mine, and I signed the pieces.

Now, so I showed up at the studio with the drawings and Kugler bars all cut up in little pieces, because I knew I wanted these extremely pale tints, not pastel, transparent colors, tinted in the two bowls: the cognac bowl and the champagne bowl. Then in the morning we would make cups—Dante calls a goblet a cup—so we'd make the cups. We made champagne cups and we made cognac cups and we made them to go together. In other words, I would think what kind of color and shape I wanted to go with which other color and shape I wanted, but we did not deal with the stems at all in the morning. So now we have an annealer with, let's say, five or six champagnes and five or six cognacs.

MS. FRANTZ: Just the bowls?

MR. DREISBACH: The bowls, with a little nub on the bottom, called an "avolio." It's an Italian word that means—that translates to be something like a spool, like a spool of thread. Avolio, we'll have to look up the spelling.

MS. FRANTZ: Avolio.

MR. DREISBACH: And they're required for the joining process as well as the fact that they're a visual transitional element. Very important. So they're sitting in there all on their rims with their avolios up in the air. And then, right after lunch, it was a nice lunch, we'd start making stems. And we'd put a pair of the cups, a champagne and a cognac, we'd take them out of the annealing oven on a fork, a preheated fork, and put them over in what's called the garage, which is a storage and preheating oven, that I didn't know about, that was part of the secret that the Italians had worked out. It has little front doors so that you can move the pieces around in there, and one side of the oven is hotter than the other side of the garage. And the cool side is right around the annealing point and the hot side is above the annealing point, to the point that if you left a piece over there near the hot side, in the hot side of that garage for very long, for more than let's say 15 minutes or 10 minutes, it would slump probably.

So when the stem was finished, and I did most of the stemwork because that was sort of my forte—

[Audio break, tape change.]

— when the stem was ready we would put a cognac on one end of the stem and then put a punty inside that cognac bowl and then put the champagne on the other end of the stem. And they were adhered to the stem by a hot bit that was very precisely gathered and brought at the exact moment that Dante needed it by the fellow that was working with us. There were three of us. Janusz Pozniak, he was Dante's right hand man that helped on these goblets.

And so Janusz would bring over the hot bit—Dante calls it glue: "Bring me the glue." And the absolute timing was so critical because if the hot bit is too early or too late you won't get a good joint. And of course these were all perfectly done, absolutely wonderful. And if you look at the photographs you can see that Dante was very proud of the ribs in the mezza stampa bowls, and he was also very proud of the jointery. Not too much, but enough.

And they held up, and they got shipped from Seattle to Los Angeles and shipped from Seattle to Washington DC, and then shipped from—the ones in LA finally went from LA back to Washington, so they've been moved around the country and not a single joint has come apart.

MS. FRANTZ: And you made the decorative elements on the stems? You made the flamingos?

MR. DREISBACH: I made the decorative elements and the handles and do-da and the stem—in the stem.

MS. FRANTZ: And all furnace work? There's no—

MR. DREISBACH: That's all furnace work, yeah. We didn't—well, there's a bench torch if you need it, but rarely did we ever need a bench torch for these pieces. And that's the classic way of building, that the Italians would build their goblets that you see in the books and in the museums. I didn't know that. I didn't know how they were made. So I come up with another process for building goblets with a blown foot where I didn't have a garage, so I had to actually be manipulating two blowpipes at once.

And of course, that was always done with an assistant, had one blowpipe and I had the other one. And I would trade back and forth until I had the shapes the way I wanted them and then I would just jam them together when they were just the right temperature, they would stick. And I used transitional elements, they're not true avolios, but they're similar to an avolio, but their hot bits, when I needed it.

But when I put the bowl that ended up being the punty end onto the stem, generally that went on just with a hot bubble rather than a hot bit. And again, they have stuck just fine; they don't separate there. I haven't had a problem with that. And I've made hundreds of those around the country, using various people to bring me—but see, the thing was I had to work with people that—I couldn't work with the same person all the time, because as I traveled around I would always use the assistants.

I would try to use the people wherever I was teaching or demonstrating as my assistant, rather than bringing the crew with me, where I could be dead certain of every move that they made. I had to sort of keep one eye over on the student that was helping me at that moment. And then even after I would get to one place and stay there for a few days, I didn't even stay with the same person. I would use as many different people as possible so that they all got experience of handling the hot glass under the pressure of working with me.

And that was pretty good, a pretty good way of teaching I thought. I still teach that way. In fact, I just returned a week and a half ago from a workshop tour to Georgia and Florida. And I worked, again, did exactly the same

thing, worked with the students and tried to get all of the students helping me at some point or other in the pieces that I made and demonstrated.

So it's a different way of adding a foot but it works. And there are lots of techniques that people have come up with where you can choose the different styles. I often do workshops demonstrating the process of making filigree cane and then picking that cane up on bubbles. And there are two systems that I demonstrate. I try to give equal presentation to each style.

One style utilizes a grooved metal plate that sits on a hotplate, so it's preheated metal with grooves in it, and the canes are laid in the grooves and they don't roll around because they're trapped in the groove, if you can imagine that. And then a hot gather is rolled over that series of warm canes, the canes are warm enough that they don't explode when they hit the hot glass, but they're not hot enough to stick to each other. Nor are they hot enough to stick to the metal plate, the grooved plate. But they do stick to the molten glass. And that was a system that Gary Beecham developed when he was a student at Madison, Wisconsin in the '70s. And he showed me that system and I've used it consistently ever since then, and I call it the Beecham cane pickup technique.

And I contrast with that the more classic Italian system using a metal plate that's covered with a kiln wash or clay wash and the rods—the cane actually are put in—and the metal plate are put into the glory hole and heated until the canes stick to each other. And you end up with a blanket, if you will, that is one fused solid mass. And then you pick that up on a blowpipe, either on a collar on the blowpipe that's opened on the end or on a bubble or on solid glass, a cylinder that is warm but not hot—not a fresh gather, as opposed to the Beecham style.

And there are different times when you want to use the Italian style or the ferro-pastorale style and there are times when it's better to use the Beecham style. And Gary developed that thing so that he could blow glass in the middle of the night because he was a night guy and he liked to blow at night and he couldn't get any helpers to come in. And he wanted to do cane work but he couldn't find people to help him do the pick-ups. And so he figured this whole system out with the grooved plate—

MS. FRANTZ: I thought that was an Italian technique.

MR. DREISBACH: Well, I'm sure the Italians also know how to do that. But that—Gary was the one that showed it to me so that's why I give Gary that credit for it. Many of the things that we think we figured out on our own we find out later that other people also had figured out exactly the same thing, independently.

MS. FRANTZ: Like the Romans.

[They laugh.]

MR. DREISBACH: There you go.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, we were talking before—before I so rudely interrupted you—about your commissioned work. And we don't want to linger too long on that because that hasn't been a prime interest of yours. But at that time we were talking about probably one of your most important commissions, which was the *Corning Pokal*. And you had just started talking about how that commission came about and how we had been talking about the Toledo Chalice, can you—well, first of all, why did you make that chalice that ended up in the collection of the Toledo Museum of Art?

MR. DREISBACH: That was called the *10th Anniversary Chalice*. And it was made in 1972 for an exhibition that was put together by the American Craft Council and the Toledo Museum of Art to celebrate the 10 years of contemporary American activities, in glass, '62 to '72. So—and it was—I believe it was an invitational show; I'm not dead certain about that. It might have been a competitive but I think it was invitational. It doesn't matter. At any rate it went to those two museums and then I think it went to a couple of other museums.

So I decided that it would be fun to make a ceremonial piece to celebrate those 10 years and I had already done a couple of little ones. I did one for a workshop in 1970 that we had in Toledo. The workshop was called, "Get it All Together Again," and that was bringing Harvey Littleton, Nick Labino and Harvey Leafgreen together in the hot shop with a group of students. These guys were all teachers, they weren't students but they got called students for this event. They were participants and we did a real old fashioned Toledo style glass workshop.

And we used the brand new studio. It was one year old by then. The most expensive glass studio in the world is what I used to call it. I had this beautiful little studio over in the garage where we took over the space that the gardener used to keep his lawnmowers. And I loved that little studio and it was so nice to teach in that place because I could keep my eye on the two bench—the two students that were working on the two benches and re-heating in the two furnaces. Everything was easy to keep your eye on it. Nobody got in any trouble without me being able to instantly help out.

And when they built the new glass facility in '69 they had two four port glory holes, so there were eight benches, eight pairs of jacks, 16 blowpipes, 32 plug discs. I mean, it was insane. There was no place that the teacher could stand and see the students. There were always a minimum of two and sometimes four students out of view, hidden. It was totally insane. As a teaching environment it was totally insane. As a showpiece it would have been fine but it should have been a production facility not an educational environment. At any rate, I didn't like the new studio that much but it did set the bar up a few notches on how to build a glass studio.

In fact in '69 was my first invitation to go to California and do workshops out at the University of California, Berkeley and also at California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland. And Marvin Lipofsky set it up. We were there during—or prior to and during an NCECA conference, the ceramics people. And we did a panel for NCECA in 1970 that dealt with how to build glass studios and we had one of the funkiest glass studios and then we also contrasted with that this brand new quarter of a million dollar hot shot that Toledo built.

And I wrote a book with the help of some of my friends in Toledo, Jack Schmidt primarily, and others, that became a little tiny text. It was like our first publication that talked about how to build glass studios and where to buy the various pieces of equipment that you needed and where to buy the supplies that you needed for a glass shop and what the safest way to set up the burners would be and all kinds of stuff. And it was an NCECA publication. It was then upgraded, and that was in '69, 1969, and passed out at that California conference. I think I've lost track of why I'm in California right now.

MS. FRANTZ: So, we're talking about why you made the chalice for the 10-year anniversary?

MR. DREISBACH: That's right.

MS. FRANTZ: Leading in to the *Corning Pokal*.

MR. DREISBACH: Boy, oh boy, oh boy. Well, backing up, yeah, that California—that California experience was really, truly one of those deals that if you could remember what happened you probably weren't there. And I don't know—there's not enough tape to go into any of the big details of that. But it was an eye opener for this young boy from the Midwest, let me tell you that.

MS. FRANTZ: This corn shucker.

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah. So, we had this 1970 workshop with all of those guys and I helped Nick blow, which was very rare. Almost no one ever helped Nick, he always blew—pretty much almost everything he made was a solo operation. He liked it that way. But he allowed me to help him make a three-bubble goblet. One bubble was turned into the bowl of the goblet, another bubble became the stem, a hollow bubble stem, and the third bubble was obviously the foot. And he allowed me to keep parts warm while he blew the other parts and then we joined them and so on and so on.

When the piece came out of the annealing oven the next day it was this beautiful red glass, dark, dark red. And I got the idea that I'd like to commemorate that workshop by engraving on the surface of that piece with the diamond stylus. Because I had been doing a little bit of scratching here and there on pieces but never really produced a completed object, engraved object. And that little goblet was really the first commemorative piece that I made and it was for the "Get it All Together Again" workshop. Schmidt and I had done a big poster for that workshop. And the imagery from that poster was spread around on that goblet with the diamond stylus.

I didn't use the rotary grinder or the flex shaft at that point. I just did the whole thing with the diamond. And that came right from looking at the 16th Century, 15th Century German pieces and other countries. The Italians did diamond stylus engraved pieces. Diamond engraved they're called, by the art historians. And I liked that because it was a way that I could use my drawing skills and I'd also studied engraving and etching on copper plates and printing on paper with ink. So, I knew that process and I imagined what it would be like to engrave on glass and so I did that piece and gave it to Nick Labino.

And then, let's see, that was '70, then in '72 when it was the tenth anniversary then I decided to do a bigger piece, a much bigger piece. I think that Toledo Chalice is around maybe—the *10th Anniversary Chalice* is maybe 10 inches or 12 inches high, probably about 12, and blown up at Haystack with Jack Schmidt as my helper. And I made three of them because I wasn't sure that—I might break the piece during the engraving processes that I wasn't very familiar with. And on that one I did use the flex shaft a lot and the diamond stylus.

And I put it in the—I put in the exhibition. That was my entry for that exhibition, the *10th Anniversary Chalice*. And the Toledo Museum decided—because they had started this whole business with the '62 workshops they decided they wanted to have it. So, they bought that piece out of the show. I didn't make it for Toledo. I just made it for the show. I made it to celebrate and then they bought it. It was for sale and they bought it. And then there were two backups I engraved with a totally different imagery and they both sold also. They were commissions, I think. One of them anyway was a commission and the other one I might have just done free,

freebie—at any rate.

MS. FRANTZ: You haven't done very many commissions, why is that?

MR. DREISBACH: I don't like them.

MS. FRANTZ: Why not?

MR. DREISBACH: Somebody telling you what to do. I'm not real good with that. I don't take well to somebody telling me what to do. I'm just ornery enough and obstinate enough that it doesn't work. Some people would even say I'm German enough that it doesn't work. But not my father, he of course would never say that. [They laugh.]

You know, it's like, how many artists does it take to screw in a light bulb? I don't like a lot of other people telling me what I can and cannot do. The commission of choice is when the patron gives you an almost blank check for doing what you want to do. And you do it and cash the check. But those commissions don't happen to me very often. I can only name one or two. And one of them I blew; I couldn't do it. I got stuck in the middle of the commission. I ended up giving the money back because I got stuck. I couldn't go to the next level. I couldn't finish the project. And so the patron never got the piece.

And I don't know what to do about that. I think there was just a little bit too much pressure and I don't work that well that way. I need some pressure but if I have too much then that's too much. So, I guess I should tell you about the best commission of all, which is the most recent. A couple of years ago my mother's church in Naples, Florida, the First Presbyterian Church of Naples, Florida, was on a fundraiser. They were building a new building and they wanted to get money from their patrons and members. And so they had a big fundraising drive and when they asked my mom for money she said, "Well, I'd like to give you something that's better than money." And they said, "Well, what do you have in mind?" And she said, "Well, you know, you don't have a very interesting communion set." And they didn't. It was like they were just using pieces that they got at the drug store or the grocery store for the wine and bread. And she said, "I'd like to give you a communion set; a real set that was designed for you, for your church—for this church, for our church. And I'll pay for it. It won't cost you a dime; you'll just have to accept it." They thought that was great. So then she called me up and said, "Can you make a communion set?" [They laugh.]

And that was the extent of her input on that. There was never a mention of design, of shape, or anything. It was like, here's a project, do it the best way you can, and here's the check. So I went to the church and I talked—interviewed a number of people and found out what their needs were and how they used these things and where they would be placed in the church and so on. Lighting and the color became a big, big issue. And I ended up having to design—develop a color specifically for that church project, which I now call, it's in my catalogue of colors, and I call it Naples Blue, appropriately, I guess—not to be confused with Naples Blue in the oil paint department but it's not unlike that Naples Blue that I grew up with as a art student.

But this is a combination of copper and cobalt that has—a wonderful accident happened when I started making pieces with this color that had big changes in wall thickness, from thick to thin. When the glass was thinner it shows as being a turquoisey blue-green and when it's real thick it shows as a pure cobalt blue with no green tint to it.

MS. FRANTZ: Is it dichroic?

MR. DREISBACH: So, it shifts—it shifts based—it is dichroic based on wall thickness, not on color of the light.

MS. FRANTZ: Or chemistry?

MR. DREISBACH: Well, the chemistry causes it.

MS. FRANTZ: So, it really is dichroic glass?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, I would call it dichroic. Dichroic just means two color. It's a glass that has two colors depending on something changing. So, some glasses change—dichroism change from one color to another depending on if the light comes through it or if the light bounces off the surface.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, I thought rare earths had something to do with that.

MR. DREISBACH: Rare earths, some of them. Neodymium changes color from incandescent light to florescent light. But the color is the same whether it goes through it or bounces off the surface. It doesn't change. Silver glasses and gold glasses often do that dichroism. And the *Lycurgus Cup* [fourth century AD] is the most famous ancient glass, dichroic glass. It's very strong. The art historians call it pea green, which I think is a ridiculous—at any rate it goes from pea green in reflected light to a reddish—

MS. FRANTZ: Amber.

MR. DREISBACH: —almost amber maroon reddish color in transmitted light. That's also a dichroism but it's a totally different dichroism than Naples Blue and it's a totally different dichroism than neodymium. And all of these dichroic glasses that I'm mentioning, all three of those and others in that family, are different than from the, quote, "dichroic," end quote, glass that stained glass people get, which actually is a misnomer. It should be titled polychromy rather than dichroic because they don't have two color changes.

They have multiple color changes, for the most part. And they're achieved by a thin muddled deposit that allows the light to in some cases bounce off the surface and in other cases to pass through. And you get the oil slick on water phenomena similar to the iridescent glass of Tiffany and ancient Rome.

MS. FRANTZ: Is that the same as the little thin sheets of glass that glass people glue onto work and they call it—

MR. DREISBACH: Dichroic.

MS. FRANTZ: —they call it dichroic.

MR. DREISBACH: They call it dichroic. But as I say, my choice of terminology for that type of glass would be polychromic rather than di because they generally are not just two colors.

MS. FRANTZ: Anyway—

MR. DREISBACH: We're picking hairs here.

MS. FRANTZ: Anyway, so, what constitutes—

MR. DREISBACH: But I loved—so, I made this—I made this commission with the requests from the church for size and shape, basic shape. But not—they were not rigid about it.

MS. FRANTZ: So, they wanted a chalice?

MR. DREISBACH: They wanted a cup, a goblet—excuse me. They wanted a goblet, a pitcher to pour the wine into the goblet and a plate to put the loaf of bread on. Three items. And they wanted—and I wanted to use my newfound engraving skills and I wanted to work with the engraving to do these pieces. And so blowing them was —well, the first step was finding that blue. I had to find the blue that matched the other materials in the church, the curtains and the choir robes and so on. They had a certain blue that they liked and I wanted to match that so I matched that blue.

To the—and they liked the chalice and—I mean, they liked the goblet and pitcher and the plate. They liked that color so much that when they built the new church they had everything color-coded to my work, to my glass, which I was honored. But then I had, of course, some glass left over after I blew—I think I made five or six of each, five or six of the goblets and the plate and the pitcher, because again, whenever I'm engraving I still feel like I need those backups. So I started messing around with some of the leftovers and that's when I discovered this slight shift in color, in hue, from the blue/green in thin sections to the purple/blue in thick sections.

Now, I have made a whole series. I later rented the facility at Rob Adamson's studio, Island Glass up on Whidbey Island, and ran a number of crucible for—crucibles of Naples Blue and made a whole bunch, I think about 20 pieces, of vases and bottles and bowls and goblets. And I'm going to engrave on all—I'm going to carve on all of those.

MS. FRANTZ: Would you say that that cold working and engraving that you did on that commission differs in any way from the work you did on the *Corning Pokal*, which is quite extensively engraved and carved?

MR. DREISBACH: The plate was completely covered in carved surface.
The—I'm speaking of the Naples Church commission—the plate was completely carved, even more than the pokal, more carving, less written words. I didn't have whole chapters of stories the way I did on the pokal but I did have a little bit of text. The pitcher was 95 per cent carved and the goblet was about 60 per cent carved. So, there was a lot of cutting, a lot.

MS. FRANTZ: Have your skills improved?

MR. DREISBACH: Oh, yeah. Yeah. Although I went right through the goblet, put a hole right in the first one I tried.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, tell me about working on the Corning piece. It's in three parts—two parts?

MR. DREISBACH: Two parts. Two parts. I designed it to go together like a stopper for a perfume bottle with a

tapered slug on the bottom of the big goblet bowl that fits into the hollow stem of the second piece which is—it really looks more like a—it looks like a big bottle when you take the—

MS. FRANTZ: Or candle stick.

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, it looks like a candlestick. But the two tapers are ground to go together so that they fit and you can actually pick up the whole thing, although you shouldn't ever do this. But my father taught me that that's how you test a ground stopper is that if you can't pick up the whole thing by the top part. If it comes apart then you're going to have air leaking and when you're dealing with volatile chemicals you don't want that. So he taught me how to make those ground stoppers so that they lock. I can't get this one to do it.

MS. FRANTZ: What is the—

MR. DREISBACH: I never finished—this is the backup piece that you are looking at now, Susanne. And I—there were many things I started on this piece, I call it the practice piece, or the backup piece. I would start operations on that piece before I went to the real one. I was pretty nervous. To make that piece was pretty nerve wracking. First of all, it was my first time using the engraving machines, the lathe, engraving lathe. And I took classes with Jiri Harcuba at Pilchuck and I also got a lot of help from—boy, we're going to have to find this name, for sure.

MS. FRANTZ: Were you using carborundum?

MR. DREISBACH: Write down, who else helped me with Jiri Harcuba?

MS. FRANTZ: Another Czech?

MR. DREISBACH: Because it's important for—no. No, American. It's important that we have him. I want to make sure I have him, that I properly thank him. Acknowledge his help in learning how to engrave. And for me it was—it was a little bit like stepping back to the '60s and learning—when I learned how to blow glass, little rudimentary moves that were so basic you had to pay attention to it. It's like when you're learning how to drive a car you think about your foot moving off the clutch. You don't do that after you've been driving for 10 years. You just—your foot just goes in and out and your brain doesn't have to focus on your foot.

It's an automatic motion, but when you're first learning to drive your brain has to guide your foot and my brain had to guide all these moves on the pokal. Later, but with more and more experience, you feel the cutting rather than seeing it. Yeah. So that took a while, and Harcuba was so encouraging. I think he loved the fact that the Americans were so free of regulations and rules and traditions and so on. In Czecho and most of Europe the artists had—almost all of them had gone to some kind of training school, some technical school, some glasfachschule that taught them everything about how to do it, the correct this and the correct that. And we had the freedom of not having to follow the rules. We didn't have those rules.

So even when he, in his senior position in the world of glass engraving, would loosen up, he still wasn't as loose as we were. And he knew that and he saw it and he encouraged me so much. He was a major, major person, encouraging person, to keep me grinding. I could have easily quit doing the grinding and engraving at the end of the—once the pokal was done. I could have said, okay, now I've done it. I've done my copper wheel, I've done my diamond, I've done my stone engraving, I've done all of this stuff, I don't need to do it anymore, I'm finished. But no, parts of me kept saying, you must continue, you must go farther and when we had—when they organized an engraving seminar, symposium in Novy Bor—

MS. FRANTZ Kamenický Šenov?

MR. DREISBACH: No, in Kamenický Šenov, Czech Republic, he made sure that I was invited and that I could come. And when we were there, he—I remember, he was going around the room talking to the various people, because he's the granddaddy, you know? He's the man, he is the man, the top dog and he's a very kind and a very generous person and he always shares everything with everyone. He's not an ego maniac but he could be if he wanted to, he's that good and he's that important, but no. And so he went around the room and he was asking people questions and he asked me, I think he asked other people but I remember he asked me—specifically asked me, "What was the breakthrough, what was the most important thing that you learned about glass engraving?"

And without hesitation I said, "The most important thing that I learned that helped me in my work and still to this—is how to erase." And the whole place broke up, they didn't—they at first didn't get it, and then they got it. When you make a mark on a piece of paper with a pencil, you can erase it. When you make a mark with an ink pen, most often that mark stays. I, at first, was so afraid of making marks on the glass because I thought it was an ink pen type mark that could never be altered or removed in any way.

But as long as the glass is thick enough, you just grind it down and polish it back up and you're right back where

you started from, almost the same as fire-polished glass. You can actually come very close to imitating it, and in fact, I don't think anyone could ever find it, but on the pokal in the Corning Museum, the Rakow Commission, 30th Anniversary pokal, there are two Roman numeral 30s, three X's one on each side, and I wrote text in the bar above the two 30s. And the first time, when I got to the end, there wasn't room for the last letter, and I had to erase the entire bar and respace the writing.

MS. FRANTZ Oh my God.

MR. DREISBACH: I was so happy that I learned how to erase. It freed me up. It gave me the confidence that—it doesn't matter, you make a mistake, it doesn't matter, you just go on. When I watched real masters blowing glass, when they made mistakes they went right through them, they went right on anyway. And many of those mistakes never showed in the end.

MS. FRANTZ So they didn't just dump the piece?

MR. DREISBACH: They didn't just freak out and dump the piece, and that was major. For me, that was major—a major important breakthrough.

MS. FRANTZ You know Lino Tagliapietra doesn't dump the piece if he makes a mistake?

MR. DREISBACH: I don't think I've ever seen him dump one. Doesn't mean he doesn't but I didn't see it. I haven't been privy to it.

[Audio break.]

MS. FRANTZ: Fritz, your *Mongo* series has been one that has brought together a lot of very important elements of your work and I wonder if you could talk a little bit more about the Mongos?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, thanks Susanne. I didn't know it at the time. I saw the Mongos as a solution to an immediate problem which was that I was not happy with the very tightly symmetrical controlled pieces that I was making in the late '70s and I needed a break. But as I gained confidence from making the Mongos I started adding elements into them that came from my experience as a painter.

I started using a lot more color and a lot of wild and crazy and expressive and happy colors that I think relate directly to the abstract expressionist painting studies that I did when I was a painting student. I combined many of the decorative glass techniques like the filigree cane and the murrines and glass chips and thin shards, all—everything was—it seemed like everything was legal and everything was acceptable in this new format, this new loose and fluid and expressive glass material and it was new. I had it in the '60s, lost it in the '70s and got it back in the '80s and I'm really happy that it stayed with me, '80s, '90s and now it's into the '00s and I'm still enjoying making them. I still enjoy making Mongos, yeah, absolutely.

I made a beauty down in Jacksonville, Florida, a week and a half ago. We made all the cane—I essentially did a cane workshop for the university, Jacksonville University students, and showed them all the various ways that I knew to make cane and then that was part of the workshop, two thirds of the workshop. And then the rest of the workshop we spent using those cane to make objects, to blow objects, vases and goblets and bottles.

And my demo for that was a Mongo, and it was really fun to be making. I do enjoy it. There's a—as crazy as they look when they're finished, as free and spontaneous as they might appear as a cold glass object finished out of the annealing oven, most of the time while I'm blowing them I have to try to keep them very symmetric. So I needed the skills that I had learned in the '70s. I needed those skills in order to be able to make the Mongos, but then I had to go another step beyond symmetry and make them wiggle.

[Audio break, tape change.]

And that was what was missing in the '70s and that's what came from being able to make them in the '80s and still today, is loosen it up. At the end, right at the very end, there's almost a flowering, an opening up and flowering of this piece. And it's somewhat predictable, I mean, I kind of know if I put a big blob of molten glass on one side of the bubble and then spin it, get it hot, spin it, that wad, that bit will function like a weight and it will spin out. Centrifugal force will throw it out farther than the other side of the bubble and therefore it immediately goes out of round, and that's cool. That's exciting and it's logical.

When people look at it they don't say, well, this guy's a dingbat. He doesn't know how to blow glass worth beans. Look how asymmetric this piece is. It doesn't have the appearance of inexperience. It has the appearance of the physics of the real world, gravity, centrifugal force, all those things that we count on every day, demonstrated in the molten glass when it's hot. And then, after it cools down, if people still see that potential movement, then I'm the happiest boy on the block and that's how I feel about the Mongos and that's why I feel

that they're important, that they say for me what it is about glass. But there's also the aspect of the thin and delicate, and that's the goblet aspect and that still shows up as an important part of my whole body of work. The thin delicate goblets, the heavy, massive Mongos, they both have the fluid look. And they need—if they don't have that fluid look, then I'm not happy.

MS. FRANTZ: You talk about fun. That word comes up a lot.

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, yeah.

MS. FRANTZ: And the word "play" comes up a lot as an over-arching theme of your work.

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, yeah, the fun and the play. I do try to show folks that side of me and that side of my work, but it—I would say the Mongos probably don't have a big—they don't seem to take the play and show it off so well. They show off a lot of things but they don't show off the play, so I have to do other kinds of pieces to get across that idea of having fun and playing. And that really was what it was all about in the '60s. None of us sold anything in the '60s. The stuff was made for the act of making it for the most part. We showed it because people needed to see in order to know that you could do it, but what was the most fun was the performance itself, the act of making it.

We didn't—I didn't ever say this out loud or didn't ever analyze it this way, but in a way we were doing happenings. When we were in front of the furnace it was a happening. And happenings were happening. The '60s was a time for the happenings. And all the guys—well, the famous ones, you know, were doing this kind of thing as pieces, as art pieces.

And the—I mean, the joining together of theater and the gallery art and putting all of that together, that was really a part of the '60s and that was a—I think that was also one of the reasons why glass was so greatly accepted and why it grew so rapidly. Lord, it was so big. Glass got to be so big so fast, makes my head spin now to think about it. I don't know anything else that grew that fast.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, when you—one of the ways you can see a difference is through the exhibitions.

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah.

MS. FRANTZ: The museum exhibitions and the growth of galleries that handle glass and glass exhibitions. How have things changed?

MR. DREISBACH: Magazines and criticism and history, people writing history now.

MS. FRANTZ: How have things changed? Good, bad?

MR. DREISBACH: Well, the biggest difference between the '60s and the '00s or the '60s and the '90s is money. Money is the big change that happened. We couldn't sell the stuff. We didn't even try to sell the stuff much, very few people did but the emphasis wasn't on sales in the '60s. The emphasis was on the performance and the act and the fun and the carrying on and the camaraderie and the let me help you, let me show you how to do this and that and—

MS. FRANTZ: Learning?

MR. DREISBACH: And the learning curve was so steep, so fantastically wonderfully exciting. By the '90s, it's big business; glass is big business. This is not exclusive to glass, nor is it even exclusive to the craft world, or art world. It's pretty universal. Students go to school now to get money, to get a job where they'll earn money. When we went to school in the '60s we went to school to get an education. We didn't know where the money was going to come from. We didn't think about the money.

MS. FRANTZ: And look where we ended up.

MR. DREISBACH: [Laughs.] With no money.

MS. FRANTZ: [Laughs.] With no money.

MR. DREISBACH: So I guess we were successful. [Laughs.]

We didn't have galleries showing much glass. We didn't have museums showing very much glass. They were afraid of glass because they thought it would break, or at least that was the story I heard. We didn't have people writing about it. We didn't—but we didn't really make anything worth writing about and we didn't make anything worth showing, really. Those earliest exhibitions were just a bunch of lumps of glass with real pretty lighting. And the display was award winning, but the stuff they were displaying was pretty mediocre. It was mighty

mediocre; not pretty, it was mighty mediocre.

I have some of those pieces that I made those first couple of years that I still own because I gave them to my mom and my Aunt Eleanor. That's the only reason I still own them. I look at them, and unless you have a historical context they're dumpy lumps of you know what. But in context, they're pretty cool.

And I don't know, I don't know. Every once in a while I look at old pieces of mine and I think, you know, there was an idea there. I think I could work on that and expand on that today, knowing what I know today. Knowing what the market is like today I think this might work. And I've actually tried it a few times and I was right. But guessing about the market is something I have no track record on at all. I am just pathetic when it comes to understanding how to market and being and doing it. I don't understand it and I don't do it. I don't know how to do it and I don't do it. That's wrong, but hey, I just—there's some things I do.

MS. FRANTZ: And you—but you learned from the master.

MR. DREISBACH: I was around two big masters, Harvey Littleton and Dale Chihuly. I mean, put them together and you've got post graduate work, and I didn't get it. I—my radio was tuned to a different frequency. It just did not sink in.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, can you describe your relationship with glass dealers or whoever handles your work?

MR. DREISBACH: Well—

MS. FRANTZ: How do you sell your work?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah. Through all—all through galleries, and I have a few, I don't have very many, galleries that sell my work, and I try to supply them with enough pieces and change them around enough often enough and so on. When I have a solo show is when the sales usually go up. When I don't have a solo show then the sales generally go down. That's understandable, it's advertising, it's called advertising.

And when I don't have a solo show I'm just one of many people in that gallery with work there and they might have one or two of my pieces out and have one or two of 20 other people's work on view at the same time, so I don't get much promotion. But when I have a solo show then I'll have maybe 20 pieces or 15 pieces and I get—the newspaper article is written about my work and the magazine advertisement is about my work, etcetera, etcetera. So you know, I know what needs to be done; I'm just poor.

MS. FRANTZ: Poor.

MR. DREISBACH: Just not doing it.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, has your work been collected anywhere or by anyone in any sort of depth?

MR. DREISBACH: I'm pretty sure I can honestly say no. I—there are so few people other than my peers—there are very few people that feel strongly about my work. I think I'm in many collections because of the baseball card phenomena, as we call it in the biz, got to have one of everybody that's anybody, and that's a lot of people. I mean, if all the major collections had one of my pieces in it, I would be struggling to make enough pieces as opposed to the situation where you're not selling very many pieces and so you have lots of them around. So I'd say no, I don't know any place where there's a bunch of my—my mother had a bunch of them, but that's the only real—

MS. FRANTZ: Everybody's mother has a bunch of them.

MR. DREISBACH: And but that one doesn't count.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, if you were writing the history of American studio glass, where would you say your niche is? Your contribution?

MR. DREISBACH: One—this—I'm going to say something else I've never said before in public. I suspect that I'll be remembered or mentioned more as an educator than as an artist, and that hurts to say that. Not—it doesn't hurt to say that I was a good educator, that I'm proud of, but to say that people won't remember my work as much as they might remember my teaching hurts me. As an artist, I'm saddened to think that that is the case. And it's not something I dwell on, because it would be a little bit discouraging, I guess, to dwell on, but I would guess that's probably what will happen.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, I would think your contribution as an educator, it's not—one doesn't diminish the other. You have been a great educator and that doesn't diminish the value of your work. So if you're remembered as an educator, it's because you were a great one, or have been a great one.

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I hear what you're saying. The—I guess I would like my work to be recognized before or at least to the same extent as the education periods. But, you know, you get what you get. I live my life the best way I can and I love my lifestyle and I'm happy, and I don't make changes based on what's going to sell. I never have. I don't want to do that. I don't want to get up in the morning and say, okay, what did we sell yesterday that I can make more of so I can make more money? I don't want somebody telling me what to do. It goes right back to that again.

MS. FRANTZ: Well—

MR. DREISBACH: It's amazing that I got—well, actually, you know, now that I think about it, I never stayed in any one school long enough for them to tell me what to do.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, speaking of—

MR. DREISBACH: The Toledo thing was probably the longest teaching in one spot and that was only three and a half years. From then on it went down hill. Got much shorter.

MS. FRANTZ: Now, wait a minute, you cited some pretty amazing statistics for me earlier today on the numbers of institutions where you've worked.

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, but I've never stayed at any one of them.

MS. FRANTZ: What were those numbers that you totaled up today?

MR. DREISBACH: [Laughs.] We were just adding up and it's about 300 lectures, workshops and demos in over 130 various institutions around the world. So, some places I've only been once or twice; other places I might have been there a dozen times.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, let's talk about the rest of the world, institutions in other countries. How would you compare the way glass making is taught now in Europe, with the way it is in the United States—for example, at the Gerrit Reitveld Academie [Amsterdam]?

MR. DREISBACH: You know, I don't know. I'm not—I have not been around the Reitveld or Royal College [of Art, London] or the Swedish—

MS. FRANTZ: Orrefors?

MR. DREISBACH: Orrefors School or the Italian—there's now a new one on Murano. I don't know any of those places. I don't know how they're doing things, so I'm not able to answer that question at all. I think it's really cool that they all exist and I think it is a definite compliment to what education in America—glass education in America has set, I think, a positive influence on those places.

MS. FRANTZ: How so?

MR. DREISBACH: I don't know, in—there's one up in northern England—

MS. FRANTZ: Sunderland?

MR. DREISBACH: Sunderland, that I'm going to be visiting. Pam is giving a lecture there and I'm doing a teaching demo, teaching a demo for their glass festival this August. How so? Well, because before '62 they didn't have those kinds of schools. They had glasfachschules. They had the factory school where you were taught how to hold the punty. You weren't taught to think. You weren't taught—well, that's not totally true, because in Czecho we did see art school and technical school side by side. They existed side by side. But in art school, UMPRUM [Prague, Vysoká škola umelecko-prunyslové v Praze]—is that the correct—

MS. FRANTZ: That's the abbreviation of the name of the school.

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah. At the UMPRUM they didn't have a furnace. They had kilns for slumping and casting but they didn't do—so, I don't know. What we tried to do in the '60s and onwards in America was to let the students or let the people who were working with the glass experiment in any way, using any technique, using any approach they wanted to, as long as they didn't hurt themselves, burn the building down, and I didn't see that kind of open freedom any place that I visited in Europe or Asia.

However, that's probably an unfair thing because I didn't go very many places, only a few countries and only a few schools. So again, not that—I got involved in the international glass scene way late in my career compared to people like Marvin Lipofsky, Dale Chihuly, Joel Myers. Those guys were over there doing stuff and they saw more about what was happening than I did and that would be a great question for them to work on.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, conversely, the Italians certainly have changed the way glass is made in the United States. How about their teaching styles?

MR. DREISBACH: Their teaching styles here?

MS. FRANTZ: Mm-hmm.

MR. DREISBACH: Well, they adapted pretty fast. They—as you might expect, they had to figure out what we wanted and how we were going to use what they knew, so the first year that Checco came to Pilchuck, '78 I—

MS. FRANTZ: Checco Ongaro?

MR. DREISBACH: Checco Ongaro. He did demos and didn't talk very much and then Lino came the next year and then the year after that and the year after that. And with time Lino, I think, understood what the Americans could do and would do with the information that he had. And he kept giving us more and more and more as he kept coming back and coming back and coming back. And what he learned from the Americans were things that he couldn't get on Murano.

MS. FRANTZ: Such as?

MR. DREISBACH: Hard to define exactly what I'm speaking about, but it was a way of stretching beyond that tradition thing that we talked about a little while ago, that was an anchor for many of the Europeans. When they came to America, they saw no anchors. Everybody was just floating around in the middle of the stream and having fun and paddling around.

And it looked like chaos, but in fact people were going in different directions and they were getting a lot done, and a lot of investigation and reinvention of many of the glass techniques was happening. And the various people that came over, Vallien with his casting in sand, Bertil Vallien, Ulrica painting with the fired on glass and on and on and on. I mean, it's a huge number of people coming and sharing. The Libenský's [Stanislav Libenský] with their casting of massive amounts of glass, which was totally beyond belief to us. We were making pieces of glass that were 10 inches tall and they were making giant murals that were 10 inches thick and 10 feet tall, 50 feet long. I mean, we're talking wow. That was such an eye opener.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, tell me what you think of this. When I think of influences, the people and the factors that really changed things. In the '60s and '70s I think Littleton, Labino, '80s I think Chihuly, '90s I think Lino Tagliapietra.

MR. DREISBACH: Okay.

MS. FRANTZ: Does that make sense?

MR. DREISBACH: Who's next? [Laughs.]

MS. FRANTZ: Because not many Americans really have taken up the Czech casting techniques yet.

MR. DREISBACH: No, oh no.

MS. FRANTZ: But the Italians and particularly Lino—

MR. DREISBACH: The Italian thing caught on like wildfire, absolute wildfire. It was like feeding candy to starving—or me—no, starving people. Dante tells the story the best, I think. He was one of the first to see it and to jump on it and carry it to a very, very high level.

And what he saw being made in the United States before the Italians showed up was pretty much, for the most part, irregularly shaped uncontrolled glass objects. And what he saw with the Italian influence was control and the appearance that you could do anything you wanted. And boy, he just jumped on that and he's never let go, and I don't expect him to. It fits him like a glove, like the glove was sewn on his body.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, talking about Dante makes me think of Seattle which makes me think of Pilchuck. What's been your relationship with Pilchuck? Where did—when did you ever—when did hear the word Pilchuck for the first time?

MR. DREISBACH: [Laughs.] Well, I stayed in touch with Dale. We both left Madison in the fall of '67, or the summer of '67. He went to RISD to work on his MFA at the Rhode Island School of Design under the tutelage of Norm Schulman and then went off to Europe on the Fulbright and then came back and started teaching at RISD. And he would occasionally call me up or I would be cruising through the northeast and I would drop in and he would always give me a workshop and a place to stay and a party and blow glass and drink beer, whatever. And

have fun and occasionally he'd call me up and say, you know, how was it that you got that red glass again? I'd walk him through the steps again. It was fun.

So I knew that he had—the rumor mill—glass is a small family, so the national scene, even we knew that he was up to something. And they put out a poster. They know—Dale Chihuly knew how to advertise. And so we knew about the school. See, at first, I'm not even sure when it got the name Pilchuck. At first it was just the school. It didn't have that name and, in fact, some people were promoting that it be called the Peanut Farm, which Dale I don't think liked that reference at all. But the name Pilchuck came from the tree farm that it was posted on, John Hauberg's personal tree farm, Pilchuck Tree Farm.

I remember the tree farm was named for the creek that flowed through it or by it—beside it—and Pilchuck Creek came of Pilchuck Mountain, so all those names are—and they're all Native American names. It's a controversy as to what it means. Everybody should read Tina Oldknow's "25th Anniversary of Pilchuck" book [*Pilchuck: A Glass School*; University of Washington Press: 1996]. A lot of us at the school worked very hard to make sure details and facts are as correct as humanly possible.

[Audio break.]

MS. FRANTZ: This is Susanne Frantz interviewing Fritz Dreisbach on April 22, 2004. Fritz, we were talking about Pilchuck. What if there hadn't been a Pilchuck?

MR. DREISBACH: [Laughs.] Wow, no one ever asked that question before. That's pretty neat to think about—I mean, to cogitate. I don't know. I may need a minute here to think about the answer to that.

MS. FRANTZ: Just like George Bush.

MR. DREISBACH: There was a—yeah. There's a set of questions that I often ask my students that I try to set them off guard like that, and it has to do with—I ask them to describe what it would be like to blow glass in outer space at zero G, because it forces them to think about the movements that are required here on Earth to counter gravity or to use gravity. And if you take gravity away, then what do you have as a shaping tool? Well, here on Earth if we spin the glass around, the centrifugal force acts on that glass and will, on occasion, if everything is right, it will shape it, form it, and it can be good or bad.

If you take a big gather that has come out of the furnace and spin real fast, the glass, the brand new glass, flows out around the equator of the bubble like a Saturn, a ring on Saturn. And then you can't get it in the block and it's a real big problem, and it occurs when beginners, for the most part, people that are inexperienced, turn—they get so excited, they turn too fast, and that's why they use too—they have too much centrifugal force. But up on the space station if you were blowing glass, centrifugal force would be probably the major force that you could use on the glass to shape it, because you don't have that directional—omni-directional gravity pulling in one mode. It's sort of fun to think about. It hasn't been done yet. Somebody will do it someday.

So if there was no Pilchuck, well, I wouldn't have had any place to go up in Washington. I wouldn't have moved to Washington. That's one thing that wouldn't have happened. There'd still be glass people there, because there were glass people blowing in Seattle before Pilchuck. Not much, but there were a few people. Marquis would have still gone to the University of Washington and taught glass blowing and ceramics in 1970, '71. That was independent of Pilchuck. But, boy, not much since 1971 has happened in glass in Seattle or the greater Northwest without some input from Pilchuck.

Russell Day had made his glass, fused glass panels that were exhibited at the World's Fair.

MS. FRANTZ: Who was Russell Day?

MR. DREISBACH: Russell Day taught arts—I don't know what aspect of art—at Everett Junior College, Community Junior College in Everett, Washington, about 20 miles north of Seattle. And he was—he is credited with influencing and suggesting that some of the early students come study with us at Madison. The first one that he sent was Bill Boysen in 1963 or '62, specifically because of the glass program there.

MS. FRANTZ: And he was fusing glass?

MR. DREISBACH: And he saw something in Boysen's work. Boysen was a native out of the greater Seattle area. And he saw something in Boysen's attitude or his work or something that made him think that he'd do well with this glass—this new thing in glass. Remember now, this is one or two years after the Toledo workshops. Pretty darn amazing. No, wait a minute, am I compressing? I may be compressing time here. Boysen would have arrived at Madison somewhere closer to '64. But still, I mean, that's mighty, mighty early.

MS. FRANTZ: And Day made fused panels for the Seattle World's Fair?

MR. DREISBACH: In 1960, yes. In 1960.

MS. FRANTZ: Did you see them?

MR. DREISBACH: No. I've only seen photographs.

MS. FRANTZ: What did they look like?

MR. DREISBACH: Well, lumps of glass. [They laugh.] With real pretty lighting.

MS. FRANTZ: But it was a panel?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, it was panels. Fairly large, you know, with a number of small units making up the large panel, metal framework. Then the second one that he sent was Michael Whitley, and that one is about the same time, '64/'65. So both of those guys were at Madison when I got there in '65. They were already there, both of them, Whitley and Boysen. And, in fact, Boysen graduated in '66 and went to Carbondale, Illinois and taught in the [SIU] Ceramics Department for many years, and then finally started up the glass thing when the school could afford to fund a glass department.

MS. FRANTZ: He's still there, isn't he?

MR. DREISBACH: He is retired from teaching. He lives right outside of Carbondale in Cobden, I think. And many of those of us that were at school in the '60s have now retired from teaching, and so there's a whole raft of new young folks with lots of energy and vinegar in their veins, and they're doing great things. And it's really neat to watch that growth. I just love that.

To me, the biggest compliment a teacher ever receives is to see their students outperform anything they've ever come close to doing. And that was the case with my father. I could tell when he was proud of his students. It was because they had gone beyond his wildest dreams.

MS. FRANTZ: Are there any students—

MR. DREISBACH: And that's true for me too.

MS. FRANTZ: Are there any students that really stand out in your memory?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah. There are some neat students that—you know, if I start a list and I leave somebody off, it's going to feel like the mother who has to pick out their favorite son. So I'm not going to give you a bunch of names, but the important thing is that I get this great pleasure of visiting with them on a periodic basis, occasionally showing up at the GAS conferences or other glass events around the world. And knowing that they worked with me for part of their earlier education is just a huge pat on the back. It's a wonderful feeling. It's a great feeling.

MS. FRANTZ: Was Preston Singletary one of your students?

MR. DREISBACH: Briefly. Not really. A lot of people were around. You know, there's—again, referring to the Pilchuck book, Tina's book, I think she quotes—Toots Zynsky said, "There really were no students and no teachers, as everybody was learning and everybody was teaching. Everybody was showing something." And that's a wonderful summary of what was happening in the '60s, definitely what was happening. Because the teachers only had a few hours of experience beyond their students. So it's hard to say.

But at any rate, these people that were around at the same time, they might not have been—maybe they didn't pay tuition to study with me, but they were around and they picked up stuff. And they picked it up from other people who were in my class if they didn't get it from me sometimes. And other times there are people that did not work with me that I'm very proud of their work also. Not in the same way because they're not part of my immediate family, but they're still part of the big glass family, and that's something to brag about. So I'm ducking that question—

MS. FRANTZ: You're weaseling.

MR. DREISBACH: —as you noticed.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, now, you've taught just about anywhere there is to teach. But the three big schools, I suppose, the summer schools would be Pilchuck—in the United States—Pilchuck, Penland, and Haystack.

MR. DREISBACH: Used to be. But there are so many more now that are in direct competition with those old big three. There are lots more opportunities now for students, way, way more opportunities. And way more

teachers, and the teachers themselves know more variety of techniques and have more experiences than the teachers had in the '60s and '70s. So everything is growing. It's not just a singular motion. It's not just glass blowing that's getting bigger.

MS. FRANTZ: It's very different from the way you had to learn.

MR. DREISBACH: Way different, way, way different. But I wouldn't ever trade it off. It would be—I mean, I have never tried to imagine what I would be like today if I had started today and then jump into the future 30, 40 years from now. What would I be like? It's incomprehensible, too difficult to see. So at any rate, we were talking about the schools. I think the big difference now is the variety of teachers and the variety of techniques that are being taught on a very regular basis in these summer programs.

And then the other biggie that shows up, big important part of the contemporary glass scene, are the studios that rent time for people to work so that everybody doesn't have to go to their garage and build a furnace. They can pay a fee, monthly or weekly fee, and have access to a studio that they could never afford on their own, completely to build on their own. And that has allowed more people to blow glass than ever before, just that one phenomenon.

I'm thinking one of the earliest ones along those lines is Pratt, Pratt Center of Fine Arts in Seattle, Washington, which started as a part of the city parks system back in the '70s, middle '70s I believe, and grew and grew and grew. And now it's an independent nonprofit organization. And they have rental time; they have classes. They do lectures and workshop series. It's a great role model for many, many other institutions. This type of school exists in California, Ohio. They're popping up all over the place. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania has one. Corning, New York has two, two facilities with classes and rental time.

MS. FRANTZ: Seems like with your generation, mentors were a much—or they were a big part of it, probably still are a big part of it for students now. Would you consider Dominick Labino to be your mentor?

MR. DREISBACH: He was definitely one of my mentors. Definitely. I hope that he would not be embarrassed by me saying that. I think he wouldn't. When I first went to visit Nick to talk about the glass formula, the 475 formula, so that I could try to understand how to color it, the fact that I'd done some homework, the fact that I could ask intelligent questions and answer a few of his leading entry questions meant that he was willing to go the next step.

If, on the other hand, somebody just came up to him and put their hand out and said, "gimme, gimme, gimme," he'd give them the boot in the butt and send them down the road. So he didn't have the reputation of being, you know, Mr. I'll tell you anything you want to know kind of guy.

[Audio break, tape change.]

He wasn't that way at all, and I couldn't ever expect him to be. I couldn't ever expect him to be, I don't know why anyone else should. He grew up in industry. He grew up in a secretive industry where you didn't tell anyone anything.

And, in fact one of the most valuable assets that you could have, as a real good glass industry person, was that you could keep secrets from other industry competitors, but you could steal all of their secrets. That was the highest position you could attain. So how does that correlate with being a teacher? It don't. He wasn't. It wasn't his nature to be that way. I was brought up that way. That was my nature. I think I said already that I told all of my friends, never tell me anything you want secret because I'm a blabbermouth. I don't know to keep my mouth shut. So it's best to just not tell me and it won't go out and about.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, in your opinion—

MR. DREISBACH: And Nick knew that about me also. And there were areas of his studio I wasn't allowed to go in. I wasn't allowed to see what was in there. Why? He had projects that he was working on that if somebody got a hold of that information which they could find out from me just by talking to me at Tony Packo's over a bowl of chili and a glass of beer. I wouldn't know what I was talking about. "But how high was it?" "I don't know, maybe 5 feet, 6 feet." "Uh-huh, yeah. See, that's the secret I needed to know." Nick was smart enough to know not to let anybody like me with loose lips in that part of his building, and so there were places that were cordoned off.

MS. FRANTZ: In your opinion, what were Labino's contributions to American studio glass?

MR. DREISBACH: Well, the first and most important was that top fire and small glass tank lined with bricks that was easy to use as both a reheating chamber and as a melting chamber, relatively inexpensive to build, incredibly durable. It didn't make the best of anything, but it made molten glass, and it wasn't all that darn tricky to operate. That was number one. Number two would probably be the—knowing that we needed a good

durable, safe, easy to melt material, glass material, he set it up with Johns Manville that they would sell small quantities of these marbles to the artists.

MS. FRANTZ: But he had—

MR. DREISBACH: —which was a total pain in the butt to JM. I mean, they wanted something like that like a hole in the head.

MS. FRANTZ: And hadn't Labino invented those models?

MR. DREISBACH: He'd developed it, yeah. It was his formula. It had his name on it. It's written in the textbooks. I've found it in some of my books. I found the formula for 475. That's why he said to me, "It's okay for you to use the marbles, it's okay for you to know what the formula is, just don't try to—you can make all the art glass you want with this formula, but don't try to make fiberglass with it." But it was a published formula.

MS. FRANTZ: Patented.

MR. DREISBACH: Patented and published. But patents don't work in the glass world, because all you've got to do is just change one little, minute ingredient and you can beat the patent. So for the most part, glass people didn't patent things so much as they kept them secret. But this one was so famous and such a known commodity that by the time I was inquiring about it, it was public information, totally public information.

Okay, so first the furnace; second, the marbles. Third would be hard to decide what was the next most important thing. For me personally, very high on the importance list would be having the attitude of experimenting and knowing and remembering and writing down the results and learning from the experiments, not just working on accidents but actually kind of a research. And I remember one response when I asked him something like, "How's it going, Nick, or, what's happening out the shop these days?" And his answer was, "The cullet pile is a little bit bigger than I wish it was, but at least it shows I'm trying." You know, those are not his words. I paraphrased it.

In other words, if he had no cullet pile, if he had no cullet, that meant he was just playing it safe and taking the easy road. But, sure, I made a mistake. I tried something; I made a mistake. Okay. You get over it. You'd throw it out in the cullet pile and you do it again until you get it right. And you stay on. And you need to be careful. If you're going to work with these chemicals and materials, and gas and air and oxygen and on and on and on, you need to be careful. You have dust problems; you have explosion problems.

Originally, glass furnaces—glass factories all had to have explosive licenses, because they handled nitrates and carbonates and other sources of carbon that could combine with those nitrates and you get gunpowder. Sulfur, you've got sulfur, and you've got carbon, and pretty soon you've got gunpowder and pretty soon you have an explosion.

MS. FRANTZ: Toward the end of his life he was quite concerned about the way that studio glass was going to hold up, wasn't he?

MR. DREISBACH: Actually, it started—

MS. FRANTZ: Physically.

MR. DREISBACH: It started the day he started making studio glass. He made damn certain that his formulas were extremely durable. They were so bloody durable you could barely blow them, quite frankly. I always had trouble blowing his glass. It was short, it had all the right ingredients in it to last forever, but it didn't have the sweetness that a high soda glass that I was more used to working with would demonstrate. Glassblowers talk about a sweet glass, meaning that it has a long working range, that you can accomplish many different little moves before you have to go reheat again. And after you do reheat, you've got a long time before you have to go back and reheat a second and a fourth time and a 20th time and so on.

A short glass is defined as one where you only have—you can only accomplish one or two moves, and then you have to go back to the reheat. Nick's work, if you look at it, has a certain style that I think was somewhat dictated by that material. And clunky is not the word I want to use, but it was not eleganté. So somewhere between not elegant and that other word that I don't want to say again is where his—they were massive and they were—you know what they were like? I don't think I've ever thought of this before right now.

They were like the northern European glass of the fifteenth, sixteenth century, seventeenth century, compared to the glass that I was used to blowing, which had a longer, sweeter working range, which was more like the Italian glass. And do you know what the difference in those two is? Sodium in the Italian glass made it very sweet. Potash was the primary—they had a much higher potash content, potassium carbonate content, in the

northern furnaces because they were using the ash from burning the wood, from the woods. The people in the South used more plants and seaweed and things like that to create their ash, and that ash has more sodium in it than it does potash, by a large proportion. So soda glass is sweeter. Potash glass is stiffer a little bit more to move it.

So even when you've got an ace glassblower from Italy sneaking off the island and traipsing up into the woods of Bavaria, try as hard as he would, with all of his skill level in the world, that material still wouldn't move like the stuff did down South. That was sort of a revelation for me when I—and where it all of a sudden hit home that potash and magnesium substituting for sodium and calcium would make the glass stiff was as a result of my working at Spectrum Glass, where we had to make glass—we made—they made a glass—this had nothing to do with me. I didn't—they were already making this glass long before I started working for them.

They made a glass they called baroque, and what it was was cordy glass. They made, on purpose, cordy glass to look like old window glass. And they would use two different melts, and they'd use a soda glass as the base melt and then they made a heavy potash-magnesium glass that was real stiff and short, and it would just raise up on the surface and make all these little lines when they stirred these two glasses together. It would come to the surface and stay up there. And so if you put it in the window, it just made everything all rippley when you looked through it, and they called it baroque. And it is, to this day, an extremely popular—boy, I hope I didn't give away a secret. [They laugh.] See, there goes my mouth again. Maybe I've got to make a phone call before we print this.

MS. FRANTZ: Seems like I heard that Labino was very concerned about unstable glass and—

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah. I got off the track, yeah.

MS. FRANTZ: —and silicone being used to put pieces of glass together. But that wasn't going to hold up in the long run.

MR. DREISBACH: Okay. We don't know about silicones and how long—what kind of longevity—if you talk to museum curators and so on, you won't find very many of them using silicone as a long-range adhesive. And so I've always been very suspicious of that. But on the other hand, for the short run, for the five-10-year kind of run, it ain't bad. It works pretty nice for a lot of that kind of stuff.

But Nick, from the get-go, was very concerned about durability, glass durability. Glass durability means the resistance of the glass to the attack from weathering or from the atmosphere, from the water and the acid that's in the water that's in our air. And that will attack some glasses, and it shows up as either a slime on the surface or eventually becomes like crizzling on the surface and actually eventually will flake off and the glass will fall apart, literally fall apart.

I saw a piece in a drawer in the Toledo Museum archives—it's not on public view ever—that is growing hair, what appears to be hair follicles. Unbelievable. And it's crystallization. It's a form of devit, I guess you'd say.

MS. FRANTZ: Devitrification.

MR. DREISBACH: I guess. I'm not enough of a scientist to know if it's true devit or not, but it's like that. The glass is breaking down. The surface is giving up its soluble salts from the surface and you're left behind with a salacious scum, which has always been one of my favorite little terms to throw out. Every once in a while I love saying it: salacious scum.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, if Labino had lived longer, do you think he would be reassured by the way glass artists are using the technology now?

MR. DREISBACH: For the most part, he would be, yeah. I think he would be. And actually, I think he even saw it before he died, that people were paying attention to that. And there were a few people whose ear he had that made certain that the artists were getting good materials. And that helped a lot and that must have given him some amount of pleasure to know that.

MS. FRANTZ: You mean manufacturers?

MR. DREISBACH: Yes, yes, but manufacturing materials for the artist, because most of the artists don't make their own glass formulas. There are a few examples, but most of them buy their material.

MS. FRANTZ: As batch?

MR. DREISBACH: Either batch or cullet, yeah. So he had worked with some of those folks to make sure that their glasses were durable, not as durable as his glass. [Laughs.] His is going to last the longest of any glass, I think, except the #475. I don't think his formula was quite as—well, maybe it was as durable. At any rate.

MS. FRANTZ: Since your generation of American glass artists had to do a great deal of self-teaching, can you tell me what publications you relied on for your own education?

MR. DREISBACH: Well, technical material. We already talked about Sam Scholes' *Modern Glass Practice* book, 1958.

MS. FRANTZ: But I think it was on the lost tapes.

MR. DREISBACH: Oh, okay. The bible for me was—and I still recommend it to all students that are getting interested in understanding the physics and chemistry of glass—a book written by Sam Scholes, S-C-H-O-L-E-S, Samuel Scholes. The title of the book is *Modern Glass Practice*. And I recommend that you try to find—it's difficult, but try to find the 1958 version.

In the '60s somewhere, Dr. Charles Greene at Alfred University did a second edition updating a lot of the information in the original Sam Scholes book. And it's good, but I like the presentation of Sam's original text. It was a college text. It was for a glass technology class at Alfred University, a very famous glass tech school. One of the four or five very important glass technology schools in the United States, along with Ohio State University in Columbus and the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana. That's where a lot of the big guys hang their hats.

So that was the first book. The second book was called *Coloured Glass* [1951] by Woldemar Weyl, W-E-Y-L; Woldemar, W-A-L-D-M-E-R, I think. We'll have to look it up. And that was—that text was very specialized and deals primarily with glass colors and steps through the various elements and talks about each one: a chapter on cobalt, a chapter on copper, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. And I used that extensively when I was writing my thesis for the University of Iowa, which the subject of the thesis was glass colors.

And I worked some experiments making glaze samples, because we didn't have a pot furnace or have any way of making glass at Iowa. We didn't have an experimental furnace to make. We had the one blowing furnace and that was it, and that was not the right thing to use for doing color experiments.

So I used a technique that the potters used. It's called a triaxial. You make a triangular shaped piece of clay and make dents in that and put the little samples in there, and you blend the various—you put the three ingredients that you want to vary at the three apexes of the triangle, and then you blend according to their location on the triangle. You blend them together. So right in the very center of the triangle is one-third of each of those three ingredients, and then along any of the lines of the triangle would be—one variable would be held at zero and the other two variables would change from 100 percent to zero percent along that line.

At any rate, you then see what a little of this and a little of that does to a color, and that was good. That was very helpful. It was a good beginning for me. But when I got to the research at the Glass Eye, where I could devote whole crucibles to a color and vary one or two ingredients between the four crucibles. That's when I really felt like I was learning a lot about what colors glass and what affects those colors.

And at Spectrum, when I got to Spectrum, then everything got even more—everything got even better, and I was able to do more experiments and they have what I call the bigger sandbox. And so they had deeper pockets and I was able to do much more research. And that really helped a lot.

So over the years I've slowly gathered a sense of what glass colors are like and how to make them and so on. And this fall I'm going to be teaching a glass in Portland, Oregon—not Portland—in Eugene, Oregon, at the Eugene Glass School—there's another one of these types of schools that have classes and rentals and so on and so on. They've asked me to come and do a color workshop.

So I'll teach the rudimentary chemistry of glass to the students. We will make up formulas. We'll mix them up, put them in the furnace, melt them, come back the next day, blow them, make new ones for tomorrow and so on each day of the five-day workshop—four days. We haven't decided four or five days. So we should get quite a few nice colors out of that for them.

And that whole approach to glass is exciting for me. It's not exciting for a lot of my friends. They don't care. They just go to the 64 crayon box and they pull out this Kugler bar and that Kugler bar, and away they go, and that's it. But for me it was not enough. I want to know how did they make it. I don't want their formulas. I mean, that's proprietary information. I'm not interested in that. But I am interested in knowing how these materials function in the glass. When they go into solution, what happens inside in there, in that puddle of molten glass. I'm curious about that.

I'm curious to know how the molten magnum in the center of the Earth when it comes to the surface sometimes cools down slowly enough that it crystallizes and becomes granite or basalt. And other times it cools more rapidly and becomes glass or obsidian. Why is that? How is that? How can that be? If you're talking about glass as a non-crystalline material, basalt, granite, those are all crystals. I'm just absolutely fascinated —

MS. FRANTZ: Well, you mentioned —

MR. DREISBACH: —by that kind of stuff, those kinds of questions.

MS. FRANTZ: You mentioned Samuel R. Scholes, and I know that in 1994 you were honored by being invited to give the Samuel R. Scholes lecture at the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University. What did you —

MR. DREISBACH: There's a mouthful.

MS. FRANTZ: What did you talk about? Did you give a technical lecture?

MR. DREISBACH: Art and glass. No, no. I talked about my work. I talked about the American glass—what we started doing in the '60s and how we—and I showed pictures of very crude furnaces that people made, and I showed Brian Lonsway's trailer and demonstrated walking across the stage, what it was like to be reheating behind the moving furnace. I talked about my heroes, like the combination of art and science, people like Leonardo Da Vinci and Dominick Labino and people that—my father—that had this strong science thing, and then how with someone like Da Vinci, he applied a lot of that to his art, sometimes to the detriment of his art, but nonetheless it was a strong part of it.

And the program at Alfred is interesting because they have a strong glass science department and at the same time, in the same building, they have artists working with glass. So upstairs are these scientists working with these fancy, incredible machines and optical instruments to measure this and that and to observe and so on, and down in the basement there are these guys blowing glass and casting in big molds. Not very many places where those two activities are working that close together. And Dr. Pye, David Pye, was the chairman of the Glass Technology Department, had a very strong interest and gave a great deal of support to the glass art. And he wanted to have a center for having both of these things available to the students.

And so I did demos in the hot shop for the glass scientists. They came down and I gave a special demo to them and we talked about viscosity. And I showed them, what is this thing called, viscosity? What is it? They knew what it was in words. I knew what it was on a stick, on a punty. And so then I'd hand them the punty and they'd diddle with it, you know, and we made Prince Rupert Drops.

You know, the stuff that caught them, it was so neat to bring art and science together and watch that happen. I would have just given anything if my dad had been able to see me performing in that kind of capacity, where I was playing back and forth between them. It would have really been cool. And it was a fun thing to do and I still thank Pye for making me one of those scholars. Nick Labino I think may be the only other glass artist I know of that was a Scholes lecturer.

And at the lecture, and then at the dinner—the luncheon after the lecture—two gentlemen, very nicely dressed in suits and ties, came up and introduced themselves to me, and they were Sam Scholes Junior and his brother, Robert.

MS. FRANTZ: Oh, how great.

MR. DREISBACH: And I had my book. I had my Sam Scholes book with duct tape on the spine, you know, trying to hold this thing, because I've carried it everywhere I've ever gone. And it has full of it, notes written inside, you know, things, ideas or problems or questions that I had. And I opened it up and I said, "Would you guys please sign my book?" And they really loved that.

MS. FRANTZ: Is it still—

MR. DREISBACH: They loved it that I had the book. They actually really loved the fact that I brought the book and handed it to them and asked them to sign it.

MS. FRANTZ: Is it still your bible?

MR. DREISBACH: It's the beginning, yeah. If I'm going to start off on some aspect of glass technology that I haven't really spent enough time on, that I'm not sure about, I go there first, absolutely. But now I have books that are, let's say, at the graduate level, so I don't always go back to the undergraduate book. I don't know if I'm making myself clear.

MS. FRANTZ: Books on glass technology?

MR. DREISBACH: On glass—I'm talking about glass technology. I think you were also thinking about the arts aspect of glass and what kind of journals and books I might be reading about that, and that is another whole category.

MS. FRANTZ: Not even just about glass or art. What do you read, period?

MR. DREISBACH: [Laughs.] I'm not a big reader. I study textbooks a lot when I have a problem, but I don't read for pleasure that much. I'm not a reader type person. When I travel, if I find a book that talks about the history of glass in a certain country, let's say in the Czech Republic or something, I scarf them up and buy as many as I can and bring them home, and then slowly I might get around to reading them, or maybe I'll just thumb through them rather than really studying them.

And then someday a question will come up and I might hopefully remember that I bought a book 15 years ago that might have a chapter that deals with that. And this has happened with those trick glasses or joke glasses that fascinated me so much, from that first one I saw in Toledo in the '60s. I graduated now to some extremely elaborate pieces that I found in the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague. One of the neat things was getting to know the people there well enough that they would take me upstairs in the stacks, I guess you'd call it. And I got to see like 10 of some of these. So I saw little variations that the glassworkers made.

But these were showing off. These were the kinds of things that I could relate to in my road show type. And so that's part of my interest in them, because they were never on the general marketplace probably. It's a miracle that they would have 10 of these things in that museum.

MS. FRANTZ: That they survived.

MR. DREISBACH: That they survived. That somebody maintained one of them would be understandable, but a bunch of them is really amazing, that a bunch of people would each save one, as it were, and that they would eventually wind their way to the same case on the third floor, and they'd all be right there in a row or a pile. Sometimes they're more of a cullet pile than they were a—

MS. FRANTZ: —a museum. Was *Craft Horizons* magazine important to you?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah. It was a way of keeping touch with what people were doing. I didn't read the articles so much for information about what I should be making or doing myself as like where's George and what's Ralph doing now. And that was fun. They were fun magazines for me, I guess, rather than factual information being exchanged. That didn't happen very often.

MS. FRANTZ: Would you consider *Glass Magazine* now to be the same, just to keep up with what people are doing, or how do you view the current state of—do you look at any of the publications?

MR. DREISBACH: Not that much. I'm not a big publications guy.

MS. FRANTZ: How do you know what's going on? How do you stay in touch?

MR. DREISBACH: Through the Glass Art Society conferences and the workshops. When I go to GAS, I usually come home with four or five invitations. That's one of the reasons I go to GAS every year. I go mainly to visit my friends. I go to the lectures because that's where my friends are, and I can connect with them and then we can go and have lunch and have fun and talk for 10 minutes in the hallway, and I can find out, you know, what their children are up to and they can find out where my last workshops were and so on and so on.

MS. FRANTZ: Do you—

MR. DREISBACH: And it's been for 35 years now real fun for me to do that.

MS. FRANTZ: Have you ever missed a GAS conference?

MR. DREISBACH: Not yet.

MS. FRANTZ: Now, you were president of GAS twice, right?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah. Well, some people don't get it the first time.

[They laugh.]

MS. FRANTZ: Some people are masochists.

MR. DREISBACH: Some people are a lot smarter than I am.

MS. FRANTZ: I just want to say why? Why were you president twice?

MR. DREISBACH: Well, I helped get the thing rolling, so it wasn't important to be president, because I was there

actually before there was a president, if you will. And that was neat. These were all my buddies. Almost all of them were personal friends, and the ones that weren't before GAS I were after that for sure. We were all good friends.

And it was fun and we didn't need a president, we didn't have a president. That didn't exist yet. But then when we realized that in order to get grants and so on you have to have all— you have to satisfy all the federal requirements, so you've got to dot the I's and cross the T's, and that meant getting a board of trustees or a board of directors and officers, and of course, that means you have to have a president.

So the first president, we pushed Henry Halem to making—be the first president, because Henry—well, I always say it was because Henry was such a great spokesman. You know, he's got the biggest mouth that you've ever seen, and he really did an awful lot of good, hard work for the organization. So anyway, so he was the first president. And then I think—and I was put on the board. I was one of the directors. And I think there was kind of a popularity contest going on. You know, who's going to be elected to this and that had to do with your status in the glass world or something. I don't know.

And what I felt the organization needed was worker bees. So after a couple of years, three or four years of not seeing things going exactly as I had hoped for the organization, I pushed myself into being president. I picked a slate of officers and went in with a nomination not for one person, not for me, but for the whole group of us. And I assigned and got each person to agree to take on a duty. One guy was going to be in charge of finances, one guy was going to be in charge of education. One guy was going to do this and one guy was going to do that.

Before the election—that was all figured out and they were running as a slate. And I thought that that would give the organization a better image than the kind of hippie style beer drinking truck driver image that GAS was falling into in the early '70s that I didn't like and that was also so distasteful to some of my very good friends that wouldn't get involved with GAS, that they stayed away from GAS. And I thought, well, we've got to—we need those guys in there and we've got to figure out some way to get them in. So we'll try to become a little more professional.

That was my approach. I ran; we got elected. Nobody went against it really. It was a total railroad job. And I told everybody in the audience, you know. I said, "I know this is a railroad job, but we want to do it and we think we're the right thing." And so boom—so we did it, and then I worked behind the scenes. So then I went off the board. By then I'd spent enough years that it was I think legally I had to go off.

But at any rate, I was tired and it was also time for me to go off. So I went off the board, but behind the scenes I knew everybody that was on the newer board, the next board after me, and I saw—and so I kept trying to, you know, encourage things to go this way and that way, and they wouldn't listen to me. They just flat wouldn't listen to me. No power. So I ran again.

I was going to fix it. I was going to fix the damn thing. It wasn't going my way, so I'll just get in there and make it happen. Right or wrong, I don't know. It's water under the bridge, so it's not important to spend much time analyzing, but there were problems and we got around those problems. And then there was the period where I really stepped back. See, I didn't really step back between those two presidencies. I still tried to keep my noise in there, and probably shouldn't have. But at any rate, I didn't know how to not do that.

And then after the second time that I was president, then I really did back off then, and Marvin—oh, so then I did another railroad job. I started picking the presidents a year before they were president. They didn't know it. I picked them. Well, they were logical, and they needed to do the service to the organization and to the glass world, and it was good for them for the most part. Most of them got something out of it.

MS. FRANTZ: What were you going to say about Marvin?

MR. DREISBACH: What did you say your—the response—when you went off to the GAS conference, they said, "Whatever you do, don't come back as president," and you came back as president. [Laughs.] I love that.

MS. FRANTZ: Worst two years of my life.

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah. So anyway, I pushed and shoved Marvin into being on the—being the president.

MS. FRANTZ: Marvin Lipofsky?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah. And he was the journal—well, it was called the newsletter—editor at that time. So he had a gigantic load there for a while. He was doing triple duties: board member, president and newsletter editor. It was a huge job. But he rose to the occasion, as he almost always does every time I've been around him.

MS. FRANTZ: Now, I believe you—are you a member of the American Craft Council?

MR. DREISBACH: No.

MS. FRANTZ: Were you?

MR. DREISBACH: No. I don't think I've ever been—

MS. FRANTZ: But you're one of the fellows.

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, I am a fellow. I don't think I've ever served on their board. I have done little jobs here and there, and I've had exhibitions. I've been invited to exhibitions, but I've never been on their board.

Now, NCECA I was a board member for two years, one term of two years, and that I did just before the Glass Art Society started. Before we had GAS I, most of us all would go to NCECA conferences, because it was a chance to get together with other glass people, because many of them were potters before or during the time that they were doing glass. They would go to NCECA because of their pottery contacts.

And I went to some of the NCECA conferences and realized that these people were actually supporting the glass artists and helping us. And so—and they wanted to have one of the board people to be a glass guy. And so I was picked. I don't know why. I can't remember how it happened.

But in a way I probably was ideal in the sense that I was not a clay guy. I had no ax to grind in the clay world, and I had no rivalry between clay and glass at all. I was strictly a glass guy, only glass. And I did a little painting on the side.

MS. FRANTZ: And you didn't have a glass department that you were trying to get money from the Ceramics Department budget to run in a university.

MR. DREISBACH: Oh yeah I did. That was at Toledo. Oh, yeah, that little issue crops up everywhere, absolutely everywhere. It seemed like whenever glass got something, it was almost always—got money or space, it was almost always at the expense of the ceramics. And there were strong pottery people who wouldn't allow glass at their school, because they saw it happening, you know, at school A and B, and they said, it ain't happening in my backyard. I'm not giving up the kiln space and the propane and so on, et cetera, et cetera.

MS. FRANTZ: That's interesting.

MR. DREISBACH: Yep, yep. I know that's why I didn't get a job at some of those universities that I applied. I know it was the potter that stopped it.

MS. FRANTZ: Because they didn't want a department there, glass department?

MR. DREISBACH: Wouldn't allow that to happen to them, yeah. They smelled it. They could see it ahead of time. Yep.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, Fritz, you're —

MR. DREISBACH: That's interesting.

MS. FRANTZ: —also known as a glass historian, and you're very interested in the history of American studio glass in particular. You made several videotapes for the Glass Art Society about the early years of GAS, and you've also given lectures on that subject. And what I'd like to know is what is your impression about the way that American studio glass history has been documented so far?

MR. DREISBACH: Well, they—

MS. FRANTZ: You must have felt—

MR. DREISBACH: —documentation is scant and it's not accurate. A lot of it has very, very inaccurate statements in it. I can't stop them. I can't stop people from printing erroneous material. I can complain after they do it, but it doesn't do any good because somebody else comes along and picks up that thing that got printed. It's wrong, but they don't know it's wrong so they print it again.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, what are the big mistakes that you see repeated over and over again?

MR. DREISBACH: I don't know if I can drudge this—dredge this up.

MS. FRANTZ: This is for history.

MR. DREISBACH: Well, one of my biggest axes to grind has been that people put in print over and over and over

again that Harvey Littleton started the glass movement. It wasn't one person starting anything like that.

[Audio break, tape change.]

It was a group of people that all had their job to do. Harvey had his job to do and he did it. But so did Norm Schulman, so did Otto Wittmann, and so did Dominick Labino. So did Clayton Bailey. So did Tom McGlauchlin. I mean, the list is—Harvey Leafgreen never gets any credit. I mean, that's wrong. He's the great, great, great, great-granddaddy of almost all of us blowing glass in America today, the artists blowing glass in America.

I'm not talking about factory—whenever I talk about glassblowers, by the way, in this whole text, remember that I'm speaking about the glass artists, not a worker at Steuben or Blenko. Okay, those guys are glassblowers. They're not the ones I'm talking about. I'm talking about the artists. People trained as artists making art glass independent of the industry, factories.

Okay, so a lot of people made contributions. Leafgreen was—just accidentally showed up at that first workshop in '62, the March workshop, and on the last day, all dressed in a suit and tie and went around and looked at these little lumps. I mean, can you even fathom what somebody with 60 years of blowing glass experience picked up these lumpy, junky nothings and what could go through his head.

MS. FRANTZ: He was a glassblower at Libbey.

MR. DREISBACH: He was a glassblower at Libbey when he'd retired. He started working in glass factory at age 6. In Sweden he hauled water buckets to the glassblowers. And he stayed with glass industry and worked his way across the Atlantic Ocean as a young teenager, I think, or young man—I think he was a teenager—and then started working in various factories and slowly worked his way from New England, and from New Jersey to New England and New England across to Ohio and Western Ohio, and finally stopped moving around when he got to Toledo.

And Leafgreen told me later, when I met him in the late '60s, told me that in the year 1900, there were 6,000 glassblowers in Toledo, Ohio. In that year, 1967, there were six. I mean, that's a lot of zeros, 6,000.

MS. FRANTZ: Did he do demos for the —

MR. DREISBACH: He would come to the studio—he was so thrilled that—see, he saw glassblowing as a hand operation die. He saw it replaced. Michael Owens must have been the guy that Harvey Leafgreen threw darts at every night before he went to sleep, because he developed all those incredible machines that replaced almost all of his buddies, and eventually replaced him. Although he was so good that even after he retired, Owens-Illinois would occasionally bring him in to the tech center to blow experimental bottles or shapes or something. And so they kind of wanted him to be around. They needed him a little bit.

But basically they saw—Leafgreen saw glassblowing dying off. And here come along these funny-looking bearded kids that are excited about dipping their blowpipe into a hot, gooey bubble. Wow. I think he thought that maybe we were going to bring it back. Of course, it never will ever be 6,000 people. But, you know, he blew light bulbs. This man blew light bulbs. Can you imagine having a hand-blown light bulb in your bedroom?

MS. FRANTZ: Did he teach—

MR. DREISBACH: He blew TV tubes. He made some of the first TV tubes. He's not the only one, you know. Different factories were experimenting with these same things. But it's phenomenal what that guy knew. So I wanted him to demonstrate for my students —

MS. FRANTZ: At the Toledo Museum of Art School.

MR. DREISBACH: —at the Toledo Museum. Once I got the furnace going and so on, he would come and visit, and he always came with his buddy, Stan Westlung, who was a glass worker also. And they would sit and watch my students work. And I'd ask him, "Harvey, don't you want to blow a piece of glass?" "Oh, no, I didn't come to blow glass. I came to watch." Okay. So I didn't push him, you know. The next week he'd show up again.

And I noticed every time he came, he had this like brown paper bag under his arm that was like—I thought was his lunch. Because he and Stan were off for the day, probably having fun, and they had a baggie lunch. And I didn't ever say anything about it. And every time he came, I asked him if he wanted to blow. "No." Same answer every time. "No, no. Didn't come to blow, just came to watch."

So finally I figured out, this guy isn't going to do it. I'm going to have to trick him. So I said, "Harvey, I've got this problem. Can you help me?" "Ya, sure." And I said, "My students want something"—and I named something I don't know—"and I don't know how to do it." I lied to him. See, I told him like I didn't know how to do a handle or something. I forget what it was. It's irrelevant what it was. And he said, "Ya, sure, I can show them." And he

whipped out that brown paper bag, and inside that bag were jacks, tweezers and shears. Now, he brought that damn bag every single week, but he never would take it out from under his arm until there was something—you know, he didn't want to show off. He didn't want to be too pushy.

MS. FRANTZ: He's Swedish.

MR. DREISBACH: He's very Swedish. Very Swedish. And then of course the ice was broken, and from then on the kids just—they fussed over him. And I told them. I said, "Whatever you do, you'll never experience anything like this anywhere else probably in the world. Nail this guy every time he shows up. Give up the bench and let him do something. Ask him to do something for you."

And he made fish and he did turtles. You know, all the fun stuff that those guys loved to do. But what I saw was this motion, poetry. He was so efficient. He captured the glass. He made the glass do—when it was the right temperature, he made it do the things that needed to be done at that temperature, and then as it cooled down, he would do the next set of operations. So something that might take me five reheats he would catch all in one cool down. And that's the way you learned in the factory. You didn't have time for reheats.

MS. FRANTZ: Was he paid by the piece in the factory like they are in Europe?

MR. DREISBACH: I don't know. I don't know how things were done. You know, they probably only earned about a dollar a day. I don't know what it was.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, you get very efficient when you're being paid by the piece.

MR. DREISBACH: And I think if you didn't produce a certain amount, you'd probably get fired or bumped down. He said that one of the ways you would progress through the hierarchy of the glassblowers, you know, from the lower end, towards—you're always moving—well, not everybody, but a lot of people were trying to get the higher paying position and also the bigger honored position, aiming towards being the gaffer, which was the top dog, the head man. And he said, "What I would do is I would go to—I'd move from one town to another, go to a new factory, and I'd walk in and tell them I was the next level up. And so if they needed one of those guys, they'd put me right to work. And if I could do it, fine, there was no problem. If I couldn't do it, they'd bump me down to the level where I belonged anyway, or where I was, where I came from. And I'd practice, and then I'd move to another city and do the same thing." And he got—that's how he progressed. If you stayed in one factory, you could never make the move from the lower level to the higher level until that guy died. [Laughs.]

MS. FRANTZ: Do you remember any tricks that you learned from him?

MR. DREISBACH: Oh, yeah. I still make the Harvey Littleton turtle—I mean the Harvey—

MS. FRANTZ: Leafgreen.

MR. DREISBACH: —Leafgreen turtle. And I still make a fish. I've used almost all of his tricks making my fish. There are certain things. But what I did see that was so neat was the way the glass would dance on the end of the blowpipe. It was—everything was always in motion. And when he would thumb off the process of blowing a little bit of glass into the blowpipe and then capping it with your thumb, when he would do that, the blowpipe in his hand would pass in front of his mouth. You didn't even see that it made contact. And it was all one motion, that fast. I can't do it because I have a moustache and it will pull my hair out if I try. But anyone that's clean shaven could probably eventually figure it out.

And I also thought that part of the reason that we couldn't—those of us blowing glass in the '60s couldn't make very good glass was because of the marbles. I blamed it on the raw material, you know. I had just assumed that it's such a short glass, it's an industry glass, and so therefore it's obviously not sweet. It's obviously short glass. Until I saw what this guy did with it. He made it look like it was lead crystal.

MS. FRANTZ: Really?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah. Yeah. He was that good. So he showed up and he showed those first people at the '62 workshop a little bit in March, but then he was there for the whole time in June. And they learned all the major moves of how to make glass out of a furnace with a blowpipe and punty from Harvey Leafgreen. No one else that I know of was there that knew all of that except Leafgreen.

So that makes anybody that descended out of that—and I'm one of them—any of my—so anyone that works with me is then yet another removed great-grandfather, is Harvey Leafgreen. Now, there is a branch on the tree, the glass tree that Tom McGlauchlin tried to—well, he did, he didn't try he made a glass tree. But it got so confusing because a lot of us moved around and we studied with different people.

And so the branches—was hard to know where to put some people, they worked with different folks so you

couldn't really make a real tree the way you can with a genealogy tree. But it was fun to see it. But one of the guys that was not—did not go through that Toledo system is Joel Myers. And Joel, who I'm sure will be interviewed at some point, and his story will be very valuable to add to this history of the glass thing, Joel started in ceramics at Alfred University and then did some designing work for a firm in Denmark and had a little bit of exposure to glass. But mainly his exposure to glass came after he was hired to be the designer for Blenko Glass Company.

And, so, you know, it's like you would expect anybody designing something they better had ought to try it out. If you're going to be the designer you should know what this stuff does, how it acts, what it's like. And that's what he did. And he struggled. Those workmen made so much trouble for him, it was just a riot. I remember my first visit there, there was this one gaffer that liked Joel and that was very helpful to Joel, unlike a lot of the other workman. His name was Jar Fly.

MS. FRANTZ: Jar Fly?

MR. DREISBACH: Jar Fly. Hinton Richmond was his real name but Jar Fly is the name he used and that was his factory name, that's what everybody knew him as. He was like a supervisor. But he was like a hot dog, top drawer, blower when I first visited in the middle 60s. Jar said to me, "Do you want to try it? Do you want to block in one of these pieces and blow it out and get it ready to go in the mold?" And I said, "Sure, I'd love to try that." And he said, "Well, just stand there"—and I started making—I started to walk towards him at the bench.

In other words, I was going to sit down at the bench when the gatherer brought the thing over. He said, "Don't let them know that you're going to blow this out because they'll do something like heat the pipe up to the point that you can't handle it. They'll do something to you, they'll trick you." He said, "If they're bringing it to me they won't dare. If they think they're bringing it to me they won't dare to." So, he said, "You wait till it gets like a foot away from me and then I'll jump out of the bench and you jump in. And there won't be time for them to do anything weird." [They laugh.]

But they would float kerosene on the water in the bucket behind the base where the blocks were. So, when Joel would be—you know, he'd be all excited and the glass is starting to get away from him and he'd grab the first block he could and slap it up in there and this—whoosh—flame would shoot out of it. [They laugh.] And then another time they put water on the bench and so because he's watching the glass so intently he doesn't see where he's sitting, he just comes in and sits down and then his pants are all wet.

MS. FRANTZ: I think Dick Marquis experienced some of that at Venini.

MR. DREISBACH: At Venini, you betcha. It's universal, universal. It's like hazing, not something that you would not expect to see.

MS. FRANTZ: This tape has to be running out. We're at 77 minutes.

MR. DREISBACH: Okay. Well, it's an 80 so that's—that means we have very little time left on this tape.

MS. FRANTZ: I don't see how we have any time left on this tape. Please be recording.

MR. DREISBACH: Are we recording?

MS. FRANTZ: We're recording, yeah.

MR. DREISBACH: Okay.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, maybe I should just turn it off and let's take a look at our notes and—

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah.

[Audio break.]

MS. FRANTZ: This is Susanne Frantz interviewing Fritz Dreisbach, it is still April 22, 2004. This is the second session and this is disc number seven.

Fritz, there are a couple of people that—we touched on one of them a while back and I'd like to bring Bill Brown up again. And there's another person I'd like to reminisce about and that is Frank Fenton. So, if you could talk a little bit about Bill Brown's contributions to glass, American Studio Glass, and who was Bill Brown?

MR. DREISBACH: Who was Bill Brown? Well, Bill Brown was a graduate of the Cranbrook Academy of Art, studied sculpture, got his degree. And became good friends there in the Detroit area with Francis Merritt who became in the '50s somewhere along in the there, in the 1950s, became the director of Haystack School up in Maine,

summer school in Maine. And he took—Francis took Bill Brown along as his right hand person. Bill and Fran had been working together on designing installations for museums in the greater Detroit area.

So he followed him up there to Maine and worked as the assistant to the director for about 10 years and then when Miss Lucy Morgan decided to retire from being the director of Penland School after 30 some years Bill was one of the people that she interviewed and she liked Bill and selected him for the director at Penland School. And that was in the early 60s. And when he - when Bill got there he had this fantastic experience and knew of all those various craftsmen that were teaching at Haystack.

He brought them down to Penland to teach there in the summers also and sort of upgraded the Penland School experience from being that of a handicrafts summer camp activity to being an art school, an adjunct to MFA programs in glass—I mean, in art schools around the country with really good teachers that were full professors and recognized leaders in their field of woodworking and ceramics and weaving. And when he heard that Fran got a glass furnace from the World Crafts Council meeting in New York City at Columbia University in the summer of '64, he was interested in having glass start at Penland School also and so asked Harvey to come down and set up a glass furnace and so on.

And, of course, Harvey doesn't do things like that. So, he sent one of his students, Bill Boysen. And Boysen did a fantastic job of setting up the studio. Bill Brown said to Bill Boysen, "I'll give you a spout, build a little shed to keep the rain off with Homasote walls and a tin roof, dirt floor, and I'll give you $200 and a license to steal. And you bring what you can't get anywhere else, like the burners for the furnace and so on, and we'll put together a glass thing and then you can teach the class."

And Boysen said, "Okay, I'll accept that challenge and I will have hot glass by the"—I don't know what it is, by Wednesday morning or Wednesday noon or something like that. And sure enough, he did it, and went on—at lunchtime on Wednesday they rang the bell and they announced that the glass furnace was ready for people to come and watch people—watch a glass blowing demonstration. And Boysen tells this story in one of the Glass Arts Society journals that's really a fun story to read of starting that thing up.

And I've heard over the years Bill tell the story about how much fun it was to get that glass thing going. And I've thought, always thought that Bill Brown had a special spot in his heart for glass though as the director of the school with many craft areas represented he had to be careful not to show favoritism in one area to another. So, he would often bend over backwards to hide that fascination that he had for glass. But it would occasionally creep up to the surface. Those of us that were around a while would know that he did love glass and enjoyed that material and all of the activities that go with it.

There was a time before he went to Penland as the director that he was invited with a couple of other people to come to Steuben Glass and design, do design work for a summer. And at the end of that summer he did a number of designs and he had a wonderful experience. And at the end of that time period the people at Steuben, or at Corning Inc., talked to him about, well, "Maybe we'd like you to be the director, would you consider being the director of the Steuben operation?" And Bill said, "I'd love to do that if you'll allow me to live and work in Corning, New York."

And they said, "The corporate image is that the design director must be in New York City where the center of the art world was." And Bill said, "Nah, thanks. I don't care to live in New York City. I think the design director really should be on location where the action is and working with the workmen and so on. So, I'd rather not do it under those circumstances." And so he didn't. But he did enjoy that experience and he did have some great stories to tell. And those are also chronicled in one of the journals, *Glass Art Society Journal*, an interview with Bill— an interview of Bill Brown with Marvin Lipofsky.

And it's fun reading that story. It's a fun read, a good read. So, when we wanted to start the Glass Art Society Mark Peiser and I were living there and we went to Bill and said, "You know, we'd like to get the guys together and have a conference that would be similar to the ceramic organization of NCECA but of course much smaller." He didn't think that was such a great idea, putting all the glass people in one spot. He said, "You guys are better off when you're spread around. It's a little like horse manure." I said, "What do you mean?" And he said, "Well, in a big pile they stink but when you spread them all around the country then they can do some good."

So, I said to Bill, "Well, let us get together and stink for a couple of days and then we'll spread that gospel throughout the United States." And in fact he did allow us to do that. And we did. The American Craft Council gave us a grant, $500, to start this organization, a new craft organization. And we took half the money and put it in the bank for next year so that we could have not only the Glass Art Society, GAS I, but we could also have GAS II. And I was real sure that we needed to do that, that kind of continuity would be very, very helpful.

And it was a good time and it was a big party and we blew a lot of glass and we had a lot of furnaces and a lot of fun. A lot of lies were told and a lot of laughs were laughed. But what happened as a result of that was getting together enough of us that we could exchange ideas. And that's what Mark Peiser saw as an important step to

bringing together the glass people after his visit to California in 1969. And when he got out to California he realized that we on the East Coast thought that the real action in glass was happening on the West Coast. And then when we got to the West Coast they told us that the real action—they thought the real action was happening out on the East Coast.

So, it was the grass is greener on the other side of the fence syndrome, pretty much. But it did point to the fact that we needed to get together and we needed to exchange ideas and we should not—no longer be feeling separated but rather have a way of exchanging these ideas and this information. And that's what we did. And then in '62—in 1972 we had another meeting, a second, GAS II, at Penland School. And Bill Brown let us get together and stink again for three days. And then one of the decisions that we made at that second conference was that we should incorporate the organization and have articles of incorporation.

We should have the proper documents drawn up so that we could start applications for a 501(c)(3) tax exempt rating so that we could get grants and so on. And we elected officers, et cetera, et cetera. And that—that all happened because of the vision that Bill Brown had to, (a) bring glass to the school in the first place, and, (b) to allow us to start this whole Glass Art Society organization which now numbers 3- 4000 people. And in 1971 there were 18 people at that first meeting. We had to restrict it somewhat—actually we had to restrict it significantly—because the school didn't have facilities to just open it up and allow everybody to come.

So, we made a commitment that we would only have either teachers or studio operators, owner-operators. And we asked the students to not come. Well, by '73 that was an uncomfortable feeling for many of us and so in '73 we decided we could no longer go back to the Penland School any more. It was too small. There were so many people that wanted to come to GAS that in '73 we gave Henry Halem, the newly elected president, the job of finding a place that could host a lot of us—and in fact as many as we could come up with.

We didn't even know how many it might be, I think it ended up somewhere around 60 or 80, maybe even 100 people at GAS III. And so Henry somehow talked Frank Fenton into allowing us to come to the Fenton Glass Factory and use the Marietta College campus dorms and classrooms for our meetings across the river, over in Marietta Ohio, across the river from the Fenton Glass Factory, which was in West Virginia.

MS. FRANTZ: Was it in Huntington?

MR. DREISBACH: No, it's in Williamstown, West Virginia, right on the Ohio River. I mean, literally right on it. And Marietta is right over the river on the river also. So, the two towns are like five minutes but a bridge away, you have to go over the bridge. So we had GAS III and we had GAS IV at Fenton, and one of the big treats for those two conferences was Fenton—Frank Fenton allowing us, figuring out a way that we could blow glass in the factory.

And most of us had at that point never even seen a glass factory, let alone been able to blow in one. I was lucky enough to have connected with Joel a few years earlier at Blenko so I had a sense of what it was going to be like. And I'd also visited the Fenton factory as a tourist with my family, with my Aunt Eleanor who had a huge collection of Fenton glass. She was from West Virginia, of course.

So when we got there and they provided us with a map, I said, "Oh boy, this is going to be wild." You've got 40 or 50 glass blowers—or 60 glass blowers, some of whom have never been in a factory before, and they've all blown glass in little tiny furnaces, in little tiny studios and now they're going to be in this huge space with multiple pot furnaces that had 200 pounds or more of molten glass of many different colors. And some of the colors fit. If you put the one color over the other color it would be okay but if you did it the opposite way it would crack.

And they had all these rules and regulations, you know, about what would fit with what and what you had to use under, what you had to use over, and they gave us this list of paper and I'll never ever forget seeing—and so there were 40 benches—not 40, I suppose there were 25 benches, 25 glory holes, so 25 of us were working at the same time, and I looked over and sitting on one of the benches was Mark Peiser, and he had that map on his lap, and he was rolling the blowpipe back and forth. He had his first gather on there and it was cooling down and he was trying to figure out where to go next. [They laugh.]

I think that bubble got so cold it fell on the floor before he ever got the whole map memorized well enough to figure it out. And then another thing that happened was Bill Boysen was making this very crazy, wild and crazy thing—as he loved to do. And he was so excited and he came up to me and he's talking real fast, he's so excited, he said, "Where do I put it? How do I get it in the annealing oven? Where's the door? How do you open the annealer?" And I said, "It's right over there. Just step on that lever, put your piece in and then when you step off the door will shut." Okay, okay, he runs over and cranks it off and I turn just in time to see him step off the lever before the piece was actually inside. The door smacked that piece of glass; it sent it clear across the factory. [They laugh.]

Oh, boy, we had fun that day. We really did.

MS. FRANTZ: I don't think that ever happened again, did it?

MR. DREISBACH: That was—the last time that everybody could blow glass was 1974.

MS. FRANTZ: And in a factory for sure.

MR. DREISBACH: And it was the era. That was appropriate, it was necessary, but then where do we go next? I believe we went to Toledo to the museum. Well, we had a nice studio there that people could do demos, and I think that was the first time a lot of—almost anybody saw Bertil Vallien doing his sand casting. I think that was '75 or so. In '76 we went to Corning and just about got thrown in jail. Oh, my heavens, that was—and Corning became one of our favorite spots to go. We couldn't blow there, very many of us, but there were so many other things to see and do that made Corning such a wonderful, wonderful place.

There was a funny thing that happened in the early '70s. Toledo, who had helped get this whole glass activity going back in '62 sort of dropped their support of the contemporary glass scene, but Corning museum more than picked up the slack and kept this thing alive and pushed for it.

And I want to always try to thank Tom Buechner for his part in supporting the glass activities and the fact that he would go so far—not only did he come to our conferences and make presentations many times over and help us, but he also had special gatherings and meetings at Corning and brought the artists in and basically asked the question, "Well what can Corning do for you artists? What would you like? What do you want? What do you need?"

That was so cool to have somebody responding to what we were doing and he had the vision. He saw that we were doing some good stuff. That was so neat. Bill Brown saw it. Frank Fenton saw it, a lot of people, but I think it's good for their names to be on the record book and the thank yous be official and formal.

Then we went to Madison, Wisconsin, and then we went to Asilomar. Oh, boy, what a fun place that was—California, right on the coast, right on the Monterey coast; no glass blowing but what an environment, what a fabulous conference center environment.

And the organization grew and more and more artists got involved in the administration of the organization, and it just got better and better with age. I got to watch it grow and I'm still proud as hell of what they've done and where they've gone and what's happened. And I make it a big point to get to the meetings so that I can keep in touch and keep tabs with my friends and what they're doing, and I can tell them what I'm doing, and it still services me in the same way that it did in 1971, and this is now coming up on the 35th meeting in New Orleans, New Orleans, Louisiana, down in the bayou.

MS. FRANTZ: [Laughs.] I want to get back to the subject we were discussing before about the way that the history of American studio glass has been written and correcting some mistakes or maybe a few people that have been left out or fallen through the cracks inadvertently. And one of the things you pointed out was that people who were often pointed to as inventing American studio glass certainly were not alone, and as a matter of fact there was American studio glass before the '62 workshops but it wasn't glass blowing.

But artists were certainly working with glass in the United States using kilns, lamp working, even working with hot glass making things like paperweights, all kinds of things—and not to mention stained glass. And I wanted to ask you, when you were being brought up in the studio glass world, what was the attitude towards these people who now we really look back to as precursors or pioneers, and I'll just mention a few of their names: Edris Eckhardt, Maurice Heaton, Frances and Michael Higgins, Glen Lukens, John Burton, Charles Kaziun. Do any of those names ring a bell?

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, I had heard of a number of them. There are some that I don't know. We were trying to differentiate what we did, as I said earlier in the interview. What we were doing, we were trying to differentiate from what industry or factory glass workers were doing. And we were also guided away or steered away from anybody that was making things more as a hobby base than as an art base.

Now, how do you define the difference between art and non-art or art and craft or whatever? Before I invented those Art-vs.-Craft Reversible cups, I really didn't have a way of seeing the difference exactly, but there was a flavor that certain things had. And one of the reasons that we were not made - that work was not introduced to us as something to emulate or follow or understand or even acknowledge that it existed was that those pieces tended to be more craft-oriented or non-art oriented and didn't show up in art museum shows. And the makers tended to be not so much teachers—in many cases—a few of those people did teach but in many cases they kept a huge—they went to great lengths to keep secrets from each other and the rest of the world as to how things were made.

And that was antithetical to what we wanted to have happen which was to open everything up and let everybody know everything. So even those folks that did teach tended to not promote in the Harvey Littleton/Dale Chihuly sense of the word, using the word "promote" glass art. They also didn't build a following. And so in many cases when the person, the artist that you named stopped working, that was the end of it.

That's not my fault. I didn't cause it to end. They didn't have apprentices or supporters or students or whatever to carry it on. They didn't encourage somebody to follow them. So in a way I suspect that it stopped from good cause, that it just came to a natural end, that when people continued to show and demonstrate and help each other, that then a movement gets started and you won't have that movement start if you don't have that continuity, that next step.

So the fact that Harvey immediately set up the glass lab at the university and didn't keep it just on the farm, and immediately started placing his students in university art department programs all around the country—immediately started that—that helped it to grow faster than it ever would have had he quietly made glass in the corner. And he probably wouldn't do anything quietly but had he not pushed, it would have had a much slower start. Not to say it wouldn't happen but it would have been a different happening—

[Audio break, tape change.]

—I think because there were so many different people with different approaches. Nick was very different from Harvey, was very different from Norm Schulman, but because of those differences it gave energy to the glass activity and kept it from being narrow and kept it from being stagnant. Those are not very favorable adjectives to use, but that's what I see in a lot of that work that you've mentioned.

MS. FRANTZ: Two of Littleton's students—many students went out and opened glass programs, went to California—Marvin Lipofsky and Robert Fritz both started glass programs at different schools in the same year and I want to—

MR. DREISBACH: The same month, I think.

MS. FRANTZ: The same—yeah, I suppose, September.

MR. DREISBACH: It was. It was just amazing.

MS. FRANTZ: And Dr. Fritz was at San Jose State [University], and I'd like you to kind of recall for me the program that Lipofsky started at CCAC—California College of Arts and Crafts—and at the University of California at Berkeley, which was the first hot glass program there, but Edris Eckhardt had taught a class in glassmaking, either—we're not sure if it was kiln work—

MR. DREISBACH: Sculpture or something.

MS. FRANTZ: Something fusing before that, but if you could—

MR. DREISBACH: Well, I can't give you too much of that information because I—most of what I have is second or third-hand. But you have described it the way I heard it also, except Bob Fritz would probably never allow us to say that he was a student of Harvey's because he was there for a summer workshop that was taught by Erwin Eisch in 1964 and Marvin Lipofsky was there finishing up at that time and he remembers that. And then, of course, it was Marvin that took the furnace from Nick Labino over to New York City for the Columbia World Crafts Council Exhibition—Exposition—the first World Crafts Council [First World Congress of Craftsmen, New York, NY, and formation of the World Crafts Council]—all in '64. And then that fall Marvin started the program of hot glass, molten glass and the furnace and built the studio with the students helping him in the fall of '64.

And Bob Fritz went back after the class with Erwin Eisch—went back to San Jose State and started the furnace and started teaching glass at San Jose. And both programs existed for a while together, and then the one at Berkeley folded when the design department was collapsed. And Marvin then moved over to California College of Arts and Crafts where he had been doing guest shots, but then he became the professor of glass at CCAC full-time after the Berkeley thing failed—folded.

MS. FRANTZ: What was—

MR. DREISBACH: I don't know that I could add anything. This is, sort of, a matter of the record. But I don't know that I can really add anything except that I reiterate what I have said earlier that there were no shy glassblowers. And the reason there were so many people that pushed so hard to make this thing happen is exactly the contrast that I'm trying to make between people like Eckhardt and Higgins and so on and what we did. The difference was an intensity. It was an intense time for the hot glass. Also, don't ever forget what an incredible show blowing glass is by comparison to somebody sitting around waiting for a kiln to cool off. I mean,

that's like watching clothes dry on the line.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, what about Peter Voulkos? Now, he was at the University of California, Berkeley—

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah. Pete was smart and lucky enough to be involved in—not in just the design department, but he was in another department that did not close, so that when the design department folded, Pete could stay on at Berkeley, and he did and kept that—kept the sculpture alive that way. He taught bronze casting as well as the ceramics thing. And Pete and Harvey were good buddies from the old clay days back when Harvey would go to the street fairs in Chicago and sell bowls—ceramic bowls—for $8 or whatever they were, I don't know. I'm just making up that number— but a very, very low amount of money and you'd have to throw dozens and dozens of those bowls in order to be able to bring home any money after the craft fair

MS. FRANTZ: So, that's how Pete Voulkos—

MR. DREISBACH: And Pete said to—the story was—I was told this story, and later I actually confronted Pete. He came to a GAS conference. We had a GAS conference in Oakland, California, and Pete came over one afternoon—one evening—and he just sat outside. He didn't want to come inside. He didn't want to get any glass on him—so he just sat out, and a few people that knew who he was and so on would go up and talk to him. And it was sort of like he was holding court in a way. And I said to myself, you know, I should check this story out, because I had heard that Pete said to Harvey, "Harvey, you're just an average potter, but if you can get this glass thing going, you could be, you know, the top dog. You could be the big fish in a little pond. You can't do that in ceramics. Your ceramics—it ain't going to put you on the top of the—top rung of the ladder."

So I said to Pete—I introduced myself and I said to him, "You know, I heard this story," and I related it to him. And he said, "That's the absolute truth." He said, "That's exactly what I told him to do." Now, it's interesting, but I'm tying some other stuff together here with Pete and Marvin and Harvey. So, Berkeley had it on the schedule that—they had glass as part of this design thing and they wanted Harvey to come on. And they asked Harvey to come be the professor there, and he was tempted, but he had just worked his way up to practically the top at Madison, Wisconsin, at the university there. He would have had to then drop back down and start back up the ladder again if he'd moved out to Berkeley, and he wanted to stay with the ladder that he was already three-fourths of the way up the rungs.

So, he decided to stay in Madison, and the story goes, he handed the letter to Marvin Lipofsky and said, "Here's your job for you." And Marvin applied and got it and it was a great thing. It was good for Marvin. It was good for Berkeley. I mean, it's a shame they didn't keep that division going because it was a good group of people working there.

MS. FRANTZ: And Voulkos was experimenting with glass.

MR. DREISBACH: Didn't ever know about that. He might well have. He probably tried a lot of things. I know he tried a lot of things.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, another name that comes up when you talk about the early days of Pilchuck and also about the early days of the glass program at CCAC is Ruth Tamura.

MR. DREISBACH: Ruth Tamura was there when Marvin showed up. And there was only room for one top dog. Again, using the analogy of the ladder, you can't have two people on the top rung, so Ruth got bumped. And I don't know the story and I don't know the ins and outs. Whatever happened happened, and I don't know too much about it. But before Marvin took over the head of the department at CCAC, Ruth Tamura was, I guess, like a glorified assistant, T.A., and ran the hot shop and made sure that everything was going.

And I don't know what her title was there. I know she had a lot of responsibility and she came to the very first GAS conference in 1971, representing the school. Marvin was not there that year. He was in Europe in '71, so he didn't come, but Ruth came there. And then—and she had already connected up with Dale to help start this Pilchuck Glass School. Now, the reason for that was that RISD, where Dale was teaching in '70-71, was a member of the Union of Independent Colleges of Art, which there were about eight or 9 schools at that time, including the California College of Arts and Crafts. I can't name them all—Kansas City Art Institute, Philadelphia College of Art, it goes on and on and on. You can almost imagine who they might have been.

And one of the clever ways that those guys figured out to make sure that they had good students at Pilchuck was to ask each of those schools in the Independent College Association to send two students representing their school, the key being representing your school so they're only going to pick really good people. Now, there's no way Dale or anybody else could have screened and figured out who were the good potential art students. But each school knew who two good ones were from that school, and so they—that's how they made that thing happen.

And the very first grant—the very first financial support for Pilchuck School came from the union, and it was like $2,000, which I think Dale had spent by noon on the first day, because when they got there there was nothing but grass—absolutely nothing there on that hill, absolutely nothing. There was no electricity, there was no power, there was no propane—there was nothing there. They had to put everything in place. They had to build a shelter and they had to build furnaces and they had to—had to have gas-fired annealing ovens because there was no electricity.

Now, here's the cool one, though. Can you imagine Dale Chihuly where there's no telephone? This is before cell phones, right, so there were no phones. In order to make phone calls, which Dale was constantly on the phone making arrangements of various things, he would have to go down to the farm house, which was about a mile away down a dirt road and—

MS. FRANTZ: When did—

MR. DREISBACH: That was pretty exciting, you know. I started to tell you the story of going to Pilchuck for the first time and I didn't finish it, so now is a real good time because we're segueing in. So, anyway, Ruth was there representing CCAC. Dale was there representing RISD and Buster Simpson was there representing the other arts and the alternatives. He was like the guru, the Woodstock-type artist, Buster Simpson from Ann Arbor, Michigan. And he was heavy into video and into alternative arts and into alternative living situations. And one of the things that everybody had to do was provide their own living arrangements. You had to build your own shelter in those first years and you had to cook all your own food and so on. And people got together to share the workload, but basically you were responsible for everything. There were no dormitories. There was no kitchen; there was no central kitchen, not at first. Eventually those got build, but it took a while—it took a few years.

So I was teaching at CCAC. I'd taken that trip across the United States with Gary Noffke and he was doing a teaching gig at UCLA—a summer gig at UCLA, and I was doing a teaching gig at CCAC in Oakland, the summer of '71. And over the fourth of July weekend there was just enough days—I think I had like five days on the weekend because of the holiday—and I jumped in the car and drove up to Seattle. I'd never been to Seattle and I just knew that Dale had this thing going and I didn't even know how I would find it, but you know, things happen and you ask somebody and they know somebody else and, well, I got there.

And I drove up there. I'll never forget that drive up the long dirt road into the Pilchuck school. And I get to the pond and there are a couple of cars parked, so I figure, well, this is where you get out and start walking the rest of the way. And I knew that they had done this alternative living and glassblowing operation and that it was inspired by the Haystack experience that Dale had had and many of us had enjoyed, being at Haystack. But it wasn't going to be plush. It was going to be more like Woodstock living and Haystack furnaces.

But I wasn't quite prepared for what I saw, and when I did, it was love at first sight. I mean, I literally, actually thought this is the way it ought to be. This is, like, in the woods—the Volks glass in the woods, Walden II. Byron, it was the Byronish-volks [ph]. And here they were, like, these little elves, these little gnomes, making glass under the rainy—in the rain. It was raining. We're in Seattle, of course it was raining, and they—there was a gap. They had built the furnace under a little shelter over the furnace. And then they built a shelter over the bench and marver, but between the two shelters was about a foot of uncovered space. So, when you came out of the glory hole you went through the rain—[makes hissing sound]—and it would sizzle as the raindrops would hit your glass piece, and then you could marver and go to the bench and do whatever you were going to do. And then as you went back to the furnace, it would—[makes hissing sound]—it would sizzle again.

It was crazy. But I so fell in love with it that I said to Dale right on the spot before I left the next day, I said, "Please, if you do this next year, get me in on it. If you want help, I'm your man. I'd love to help you." That was the first summer of '71.

MS. FRANTZ: Was Kate Elliott—did you remember seeing Kate Elliott?

MR. DREISBACH: Kate was there in '72, I think.

MS. FRANTZ: Who was up there?

MR. DREISBACH: The '71 we got that whole list, you know, it's in the book—but Michael Nourot, a very famous glassblower from Bay Area now. Bill Carlson, a very famous glass artist and professor of art at Miami University now, used to be at Champaign, Urbana, but he's now in Miami, Florida.

MS. FRANTZ: Who else?

MR. DREISBACH: And who else was there? Well, of course, Jamie and Dale were there. Toots Zynsky was there.

MS. FRANTZ: James Carpenter?

MR. DREISBACH: James Carpenter and—

MS. FRANTZ: Ruth Tamura?

MR. DREISBACH: Ruth Tamura was there. You see, Marvin was in Europe. Ruth was up at Pilchuck. I was teaching the classes in CCAC. You get it? Pretty cool.

MS. FRANTZ: How long did you stay? Just the day?

MR. DREISBACH: Two days.

MS. FRANTZ: And then when did you go back for the second time?

MR. DREISBACH: '72, I was there for the whole summer from then on until one day we were sitting in Dale's cabin out on the deck and we were looking at the beautiful sunset and the incredible view of the Puget Sound. And Dale and I both came to the realization—I don't know who said it first—that, you know, we can't keep coming back every year. As much as we love Pilchuck and love this opportunity to come here, we've got to give it up. We've got to let the other guys have a shot at it. There are glass artists all over the world that need to come to Pilchuck and teach, and Pilchuck needs them to come. Well, they can't come if we don't give them a hole, if we don't leave.

And so he and I made a pact with each other that we would drop off every other year. And we did that for a little while. And then, of course, it got to the point where sometimes I'd wait three or four years before they asked me back, now. But I've been an active part of the school, even when I wasn't a teacher. I might be a visiting artist or I might be an artist in residence or—I've had almost every job there except the treasurer. They never let me run the money.

MS. FRANTZ: Were you ever on the board?

MR. DREISBACH: I am on the board.

MS. FRANTZ: You're still are on the board?

MR. DREISBACH: Yes. I've been 10 years now—more—

MS. FRANTZ: Is that a lifetime appointment or—

MR. DREISBACH: It's renewable on a—what is it? Either a three or four-year basis you have to be renewed, which means the person that's on that board has to show that there is a reason for them to stay and they have to want to stay. So, you can—it's important not to have dead wood in the place. And, in fact, I'm in critical—my wood is drying out. I'm in critical mass right now in terms of whether or not I should go off the board to allow somebody that can be more actively involve with the school to help out.

But anyhow, that's—you know, I don't know where to even start with the Pilchuck story. I—one of the things I got going there that was so much fun was making our own colors. When we started making opals and I was having some trouble getting the opal to strike, and I had the same formula that I used to use in North Carolina, but of course the raw materials were different out there. I was stumped. I didn't know which—what was causing the opal not—to perform incorrectly. I didn't know why it was, you know, not performing. But I knew something was affecting that opal colors. And so through Dale Chihuly's cousin, Roger Eck—

MS. FRANTZ: E-C-K?

MR. DREISBACH: E-C-K, who was involved with some of the glass facility at Larry Pemberthy's electric melting glass thing, and those guys that started Spectrum Glass, he—Roger knew those guys. When I asked Dale who I could talk to, Dale said, "Talk to my cousin, Rog, and Roger will tell you who knows the answer." And he did. He told me to go see somebody—I can't remember the name right now. Anyway, and he—and that man said, "Well, tell me what you're using for raw materials." And I told him. He said, "You're using that sand?" He said, "That won't work. You can't make opal with that sand." I said, "Really? I didn't know that." He said, "Well, you didn't use sand like that in North Carolina." I said, "No, no. We had real white sand." And he said, "That's your problem. It's got iron in the sand and it won't strike."

I couldn't believe it. He, like, opened this whole door for me. I went right to the sand store, bought 10 bags of the good, white stuff, took it up there to the school, and guess what we had the next day? White glass. Well, those guys knew that we had a glass furnace up there, and they said, "You know, we have this idea that we want to start up a flat glass, colored sheet glass company and we have an idea of how to do the colors and we need to test our idea." And I said, "Come on up and I'll let—I'll give you one of the furnaces and you can play in it all day. For a whole day you can have that furnace."

Well, that saved them a huge amount of time and money because they didn't have to build a test furnace because they could use our furnace that was already running anyway. And that began that whole connection that I had with Spectrum Glass and they never forgot me and I never forgot them. And that's really kind of a cool connection that came roundabout through the backdoor of Pilchuck, and it ended up that I worked for Spectrum then for 10 years about 20 years after. Pretty cool the connections that—the interactions and the intersections of the hoops.

MS. FRANTZ: It's pretty tight.

MR. DREISBACH: It is so amazing. Yeah, it's tight. And it's where—when I say that it's the people that I love about this whole thing, that they're really at the root of it, and when I talk about a community, I'm not talking about a town or even a state or even a country. I'm talking about the world of glass and all of the various facets, if you'll allow me the pun.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, while we're talking about that world, let's talk about a few of the non-American glass artists who probably have been important to you. And I'll just give you a few names and just off the top of your head come back with what meaning they might have had to your career and your life or memories that you have of them.

I guess first I would like to start with the artists who, when you first met them were, I believe, probably from Czechoslovakia, rather than the Czech Republic, and that is Stanislav Libenský and Jaroslava Brychtová. How did you meet them?

MR. DREISBACH: At Pilchuck. That's going to be the answer to a lot of questions, I think. I met them at Pilchuck. I did not go into the Czech Republic until after—I did not go into Czechoslovakia. I went after the Velvet Revolution finally. But I had met them before at Pilchuck so I knew—and I had heard Dale talk about them forever and how important they were in the glass arts world. He was—well, they would always call him "The Professor." They never—no one ever called him Libenský or Stanislav except the Americans. But at home he was The Professor. It was like there was no other professor but—which is not true, but he was The Professor. He was the top dog. He was a professor.

And he—he reminded me—when I first met the very first time, he reminded me of somebody you would want for a grandpa. There was no question that he had personality. He had stature. He—he knew he was good and you knew that he knew he was good but he never let you know. Wow. He always said hello to me. He always acknowledged me, and Jaroslava also always stopped, focused on me and it's not like I'm in a hurry, I don't have time for you ever. It was never that. And I didn't meet them that many times but I did get to spend a little bit of time with them, sometimes in their home and also in the studio, and a little bit at Pilchuck, although I never studied with them. It would have been fun to have been a little mouse in the corner of the room listening to their presentations.

But I also see how he influenced so many of his students and I see—the big measure of a good teacher is the student body. Who are their students—that person's students and are they any good, because if the students are good, you can bet the—if a bunch of the students are good, then the teacher's probably really good.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, another person that you seemed to be particularly close to is Finn Lynggaard from Denmark.

MR. DREISBACH: Right.

MS. FRANTZ: Now, you both were honored by the Glass Art Society two years ago in Amsterdam. How did you—what is your relationship with Finn?

MR. DREISBACH: Well, I met Finn through the symposia in Frauenau and Novy Bor and he invited me to come to his home a couple of times and we even blew a little glass together there in his studio. It was a wonderful place, Ebeltoft. And he had an amazing project, and I've always had a huge amount of respect for somebody that would put this kind of energy into—talk about somebody making a major contribution to the glass art world. This guy almost single handedly started one of the largest museums of contemporary glass in the world there in this tiny little town on the coast of Denmark, in Ebeltoft. And it's a funny place and it's still growing and it's still improving and still showing glass.

They have a huge collection—permanent collection that is—that they don't own the pieces. They're there on loan from the artist to the museum, but, I mean, the loan is so long that you might as well say they really are responsible for the pieces by now after they've been there for these many years. But he knew they didn't have the money to buy the pieces so he cleverly figured out this system where you could loan it to the museum, and somehow it was easier to loan a piece to somebody than it was to give it away. I don't know any other place in the world that's done something like that. I'm sure there are places, but I don't know about them.

MS. FRANTZ: What happens when the lender passes away?

MR. DREISBACH: I don't know. I don't know if—if legal documents take care of that or not. I do not know.

MS. FRANTZ: You must have a document with them some—

MR. DREISBACH: You know, I wouldn't be able to find it if you paid me, but sure, I do. Sure, I do. But he's a phone call away. I could call him anytime I need to if I wanted to know the answer to that question, but after I'm dead it won't matter anyway.

At any rate, I don't know the answer to—to that question.

MS. FRANTZ: When did you first go to Japan?

MR. DREISBACH: I've only been to Japan one time and that was for the GAS conference in—in Seto. And I did a pre-conference workshop in a small private studio, and that was before the conference, and that was wonderful. And it was set up by—

MS. FRANTZ: Michael Rogers?

MR. DREISBACH: No, Takako Sano.

MS. FRANTZ: Sano.

MR. DREISBACH: She made the arrangements for me to teach a class and I was very grateful because not only did it defray my expenses of—of going overseas, but it also got me—it allowed me to meet and visit with people on a different level than just the conference site. This was a nearby town; I don't know, 20, 30 minutes away. That was—that was nice. I really valued that opportunity to go to Japan.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, we mentioned Czechoslovakia and now the Czech Republic and Novy Bor Symposium. That's a very interesting phenomenon—

MR. DREISBACH: Series, yeah.

MS. FRANTZ: Novy Bor.

MR. DREISBACH: Yeah, yeah.

MS. FRANTZ: Tell me—where you participating, how many times?

MR. DREISBACH: I think twice. And I didn't understand really the first time I went. I didn't understand what it was and what it was supposed to be. I knew it was quite different than—than our GAS conferences that we have in the states. It was a working opportunity. You spent more time blowing glass or making glass objects than you did talking about it, which is the opposite of the Glass Arts Society.

There's very few demos and lots and lots of lectures, although they've increased the demos a lot because they're so popular, but the general participants don't get to blow glass generally at the GAS conferences. And at the symposium—symposia in Novy Bor, I think almost all of the artist participants got some time at the furnace, at the glory hole.

MS. FRANTZ: They were all invited so —

MR. DREISBACH: And the people that didn't blow would be arts administrators, museum-type people, writers, and so on. And then they had a show at the end of the three days of making things. It's hard to believe they would—that we could do it that fast, but—and some of the pieces were kind of clunky and kind of crude. But the point of it all was that we worked together and we talked and we had open dialogue and they learned about me and I got to learn a little about them and that was the real benefit of it all.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, what struck you about the factory situation there? I suppose—

MR. DREISBACH: Too much beer and too much sausage. [Laughs.] Well, I—before going to the Czech Republic, to the factory, I had a strong prejudice, shall we say, for the Italian style of working, soda glass. And here I'm—now I'm in potash, the land of potash and you can't do it. It won't work. It won't do it.

MS. FRANTZ: How so?

MR. DREISBACH: The style of the work was quite different. I didn't understand it yet. I was—still didn't understand that what—how much influence that potash versus soda ash—when you take soda out of the formula

and put potash in what that does to the material, the molten material. But it stiffens it up. It's like cornstarch. You know how to make gravy, you start with a liquid that's almost like water, you add the cornstarch and the heat and it thickens it into gravy. Well, potash is the cornstarch of glass chemicals.

MS. FRANTZ: But you weren't blowing the glass at Novy Bor were you?

MR. DREISBACH: Oh, yeah. No, I was. Sure! Sure!

MS. FRANTZ: Oh, they let you blow the glass?

MR. DREISBACH: Oh, yeah, sure. Everybody—all the artists made stuff.

MS. FRANTZ: Most of them worked with the professional glassblowers.

MR. DREISBACH: Well, yeah. Of course, but, you know, those pushy Americans, they won't let anybody work *for* them unless they can do it themselves also. No, I did. I used the guys. When I say I blew, of course I didn't do all of the blowing but I—I was actively involved in it.

MS. FRANTZ: You did—

MR. DREISBACH: And I did gather stuff and blow it and do this and that but they would do other things and so on. But the style that they were used to, the molds that they had there for us to utilize all came about because of this thicker, gooier type of glass, in my head. This is in my brain. It's what I see. I don't know if other folks know this or think this or have ever tumbled to this idea, but I really feel there's a big difference between vault [ph] glass and the glass from the ocean.

MS. FRANTZ: Not to mention lead glass.

MR. DREISBACH: And then—and then there's another big jump when you go to lead.

MS. FRANTZ: And borosilicate.

MR. DREISBACH: And then there's an even *bigger* jump when you go to borosilicate. But people tend to accept the borosilicate look and don't—they don't expect anything different, and they tend to expect the lead look and they don't expect it to be any different. But the difference between soda and potash you can't tell by looking at it. You have to know by either gathering it or by looking at the formula. Either one will tell you.

MS. FRANTZ: It seems like lead glass would have been the perfect medium for you because it's so soft and gooey and—

MR. DREISBACH: You know, people have said that over and over again and I am dying to blow lead glass somewhere. I just don't know how to get my foot in the door. I would do anything to get an opportunity to work—not just two or three pieces, but I need a couple weeks or at least a week to work with it and start to feel it. And I—I've made, you know, inquiries to Steuben and to—into—

MS. FRANTZ: Lenox?

MR. DREISBACH: Ireland—

MS. FRANTZ: Oh, Waterford?

MR. DREISBACH: —and Waterford. I didn't talk directly with any of the Waterford people. I didn't get that far up the chain. But, at any rate, I'm hoping that this will—that it'll happen some day.

Why haven't I made it myself? Well, because it's a whole another family of glasses that I don't know how to melt, and I'd need another one of those sugar daddies with the big sandbox to help me finance a lead—lead glass formula or project. Oh, and Leerdam, and then I also inquired at Leerdam because Durk Valkema was working for them and still does do consulting for them and is well-connected and I thought, you know, maybe but they just don't have artists working there.

MS. FRANTZ: It was interesting to watch Lino trying to blow the lead glass at—

MR. DREISBACH: Steuben.

MS. FRANTZ: —Steuben. He did it over a fairly extended period of time, a couple of weeks or so.

MR. DREISBACH: I would think he would—

MS. FRANTZ: It really affected his work.

MR. DREISBACH: Oh, I'm sure.

MS. FRANTZ: Yeah, it was—I think it was quite difficult for him to do.

MR. DREISBACH: Get on top of. Yeah.

MS. FRANTZ: But for your work, my goodness.

MR. DREISBACH: Yep, yep, yep, yep. I think it would be an—I think it would be a natural—I'd love to do that, but it's good to have something to look at for the future on this tape instead of just talking about the past. Susanne, thanks for thinking of that.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, tell me about the future other than everything's just going to get better and better—

MR. DREISBACH: Better and better. [Laughs.]

MS. FRANTZ: —and every day—every day in every way. Are you every going to retire?

MR. DREISBACH: Artists don't retire. They just get better. I had that discussion with my finance guy. You know, he wanted me to set up an IRA and I said, "Artists don't retire." I said, "You know, if I'm doing what I'm ought to be doing my—my salary will go up, not down. My—I'll be in the higher tax bracket when all that stuff comes due. I don't want any of those IRA things." He made me do it anyways.

I really—I already have plans for the wheelchair. That's how unretired I suspect I will be.

MS. FRANTZ: What are the plans for the wheelchair?

MR. DREISBACH: Well, they're personal right at the moment. They're not public information yet.

MS. FRANTZ: I'm sorry.

MR. DREISBACH: No, no, they're not embarrassingly personal but, I mean, I'm still working them out. But I have some writing that needs to be done that I want to get done. I have—I have a set of brushes and ink and paper that I brought back from China and from Taiwan and I'm going to do painting and calligraphy when I'm not out there—when I don't have the strength to go out and blow glass. I intend to spend more and more time with the engraving and carving of small pieces of glass that are not too heavy to hold up. And I'm stockpiling work to do that carving on right now because I know I won't be able to make glass forever, nobody does. Harvey Leafgreen lasted longer than anybody I know, but I don't know that I have his constitution. I don't think I worked hard enough in the early years.

MS. FRANTZ: If somebody put a recent piece of your glass next to a piece from 30 years ago of comparable size, what would be different?

MR. DREISBACH: The price. [Laughs.] That didn't take long to answer. The work today has more decorative motifs in all likelihood—at least that's available today. I have more—more techniques at—in my palette. My palette's bigger and brighter and more colorful than it was because I didn't have accessibility to that yet. I didn't know how to make filigree cane. I didn't—we just hadn't got there yet. Didn't do murrines yet. Didn't have Kugler yet. So complexity, color, surface decoration—not the surface decoration, internal decorations.

What would be similar, I think is interesting to talk about. I would hope that you would see the wet look in both of them. I hope that you would see the viscous flow of molten glass, the memory of the viscous flow of molten glass in that older stuff, as well as in the newer stuff. And I show—in my slides, I show side by side simultaneous images, two screens, two videos—I mean, two slides. A piece from 1966 or '67 and a—on the left screen and on the right screen a piece from '87 or so, 20 years difference or I can do '97, doesn't matter. And I—I try to point out those similarities. I don't point out the differences because I guess I think that people will see those because the image is there. I have to tell you because we're working without images. This is not an easy job for me to talk about stuff like this without my favorite images.

MS. FRANTZ: For nine and a half hours.

MR. DREISBACH: For nine and a half hours. Do you want to know what one of my most difficult lectures ever—that I ever gave was?

MS. FRANTZ: To blind people?

MR. DREISBACH: It was to deaf people—

MS. FRANTZ: I'm sure there will be handicapped—

MR. DREISBACH: —at Gallaudet College. And the first thing they made me do was wax my moustache away from my lips so that they could read my lips. The other thing they did was to put a signer on either side of me. But the big thing that was difficult was the lights were on. It was a reverse projection screen behind me and the lights were on in the room so they could see me and they could see the signers.

MS. FRANTZ: And they couldn't see the slides.

MR. DREISBACH: It was a reverse projection that was designed specifically for a lit room and it worked. But I constantly had to keep turning, you know, and then they couldn't read my lips and—and I—and it was—I have not yet gone to any foreign countries and delivered lectures so I wasn't used to the lag—the joke lag, the laugh lag.

MS. FRANTZ: Yeah.

MR. DREISBACH: So you tell a joke and then nobody laughs and you're getting a little bit POed and then finally they start laughing. [Laughs.] And you don't know if they're laughing at you or they're laughing with you for a while.

MS. FRANTZ: Do you think that the Italian glass influence is going to stay as strong? Do you see any abatement in the influence or—or anything else coming on the scene that's going to be just as strong? Or is the pendulum going to swing another way? What are you sensing?

MR. DREISBACH: I don't see it—I don't see another direction. Sure, something will substitute but I wouldn't—I don't have a clue what it might be. You know, taste is amazing. You can—there's no accounting for taste and people's—right now people's feeling about Italian design is quite high, not just in glass but in clothing and cars and so on. I assume that's going to continue.

MS. FRANTZ: Speaking of taste influences, what do you see the influences of the glass collectors—contemporary glass collectors on studio glass? Or have they been an influence?

MR. DREISBACH: [Laughs.] I would say so, yes. I definitely think that galleries have responded to collectors and then galleries have put pressure on artists and sometimes the collectors even do it directly with the artists. And they have a powerful lobby called the dollar and it speaks with a loud tongue and people respond to that conversation. So—but is that any different than any other arts? No, not really.

The thing that's different about today compared to the '60s was there—they didn't want our glass then and it wasn't probably that interesting to them, and it's actually only interesting in a historical context now anyway, for the most part. Certainly, I'm speaking of my own work. I'd say that about my stuff. It's only interesting in a historical context so I could never have a show of my early work. I would put—I could but it would be a total—I'm sure a total bust. Nobody would be interested in it, really, except an art historian perhaps here and there.

But if I salt those in with some of the recent work and I have some early work and some middle work and some late work in an exhibition, those shows have been quite popular lately and I've had a number of them. Surveys I call them. I don't want a retrospective yet. Those are—I'm saving—I'm saving those for the—

MS. FRANTZ: Wheelchair.

MR. DREISBACH: —wheelchair period.

MS. FRANTZ: Well, Fritz, this tape is just about to run out.

MR. DREISBACH: Okay.

MS. FRANTZ: We've got a couple—a few—a couple more minutes and I just want to, first of all, thank you very, very much. This has been very, very interesting and a very valuable opportunity for me to listen to you and I appreciate it, and I know that the Archives certainly thanks you.

And I just want to ask you if you have anything else you want to talk about. It doesn't have to be related to anything. What needs to be said—we had mentioned unsung heroes and one of your unsung heroes of American studio glass was Bill Brown.

MR. DREISBACH: Yes.

MS. FRANTZ: Any other unsung heroes you'd like to mention?

MR. DREISBACH: Well, we've mentioned some of them. I put them in—but we didn't give them the designation. Harvey Leafgreen is a super important person in a very narrow band—a very narrow way. He helped us get started and it was—and it's important to know that.

Norm Schulman, who was the ceramics instructor at the Toledo Museum when they had the first workshops in '62, did all the grunt work of making sure that the studio worked. Well, that—you know, without those grunters you don't have a workshop period. He doesn't get much credit and he deserves a lot more credit for what he did, not only in Toledo, but then after he left Toledo he went—while he was at Toledo he spent a lot of time with Nick Labino and learned a lot about making glass and when he went to Rhode Island—when he left Toledo Museum he went to the Rhode Island School of Design, he set up a glass shop at his house and had students coming out there. One of his first students we mentioned already, Dudley Giberson, and he's gone on to a fabulous career 30-plus years of making—

[Audio break.]

MS. FRANTZ: This is Susanne Frantz interviewing Fritz Dreisbach in Tucson, Arizona, on April 22, 2004. This is session two. We only had two sessions. Yesterday was session one, today is session two, and this is diskette number eight.

Fritz, we were talking about unsung heroes and you were speaking about Norm Schulman. Would you like to continue?

MR. DREISBACH: Yes. So, Norm, after leaving Toledo went to Rhode Island School of Design, set up a hot shop in his yard—backyard and had students coming out and one of them was Dudley. And he also helped set up the glass shop in Clinton, New Jersey for a small summer crafts program. I don't even know if it exists anymore. The Clinton Arts Center which was the hometown of Toshiko Takaezu, a very famous potter, ceramic artist. And it was modeled after the Haystack type of format but more of a Woodstock environment.

And it was just another one of the hot shops on the summer circuit that we often visited and taught. And Norm set that up and Norm helped other places get their glass operations going. He doesn't blow his own horn and I just want to thank Norm for all of his work and endeavors over the years to support the glass arts. He loves clay, he does clay. He doesn't do glass. He loves clay. But he was a big help with the glass.

There's—there are other folks in that same category that—Doug Johnson was one of Harvey Littleton's first students and he's—when he graduated from Madison before—and that—he left before I got up there. He set up the ceramics and glass studio in River Falls, Wisconsin and many people came through that program, John Clark, Auggie, and many others.

MS. FRANTZ: Auggie? Who's Auggie?

MR. DREISBACH: John Clark at Philadelphia College—I mean, at Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia. And many other people went through that program. And so, without those unsung heroes that you don't hear their name because they don't do glass today—it doesn't mean they didn't make a good—good contribution to the glass arts world of today.

And I said earlier that I feel a measure of a good teacher is the quality of their students, and certainly when you have students in the caliber of John Clarke you measure up very high on the scale. And Dougie made sure that he had good people around and that his students would be exposed to workshops, people that came through, like myself and others, that would do workshops there. So that even though he didn't work in the hot shop very often himself, he made sure that the hot shop was there and it was working. That's pretty neat.

Rob Adamson in the Seattle, Washington area started working with glass after his initial exposure to glass in—as part of the Peace Corps project. He was training in Colombia—he was training for the Peace Corps in Mexico and visited glass factories in Mexico and got excited about the idea of blowing glass. And when he came back to Seattle in 1967, I think it was or so—or '70, '67, '68, somewhere along in there—started a glass cooperative with some of the other guys in Seattle. This is all documented nicely in the *Glass Arts Society Journal* of 2003, the Seattle conference.

And when he started The Glass Eye—after a short period of working at Pilchuck for about four—three years, four years at Pilchuck, he started a studio called The Glass Eye with Sonja Blomdahl and Mark Graham, a famous songwriter and glass blower. There are only two famous musician/glassblower—musician hyphen glassblowers that I know personally—I'm sure there are others—Bob Naess in Vermont and Mark Graham in Seattle. Anyway, Mark helped with that, and Charlie Parriott was involved very early on in The Glass Eye.

But the point is that Rob saw a need for a place that artists who had graduated from school could transition into being a glass artist and having their own studio. And they needed—or he saw that they could benefit from having a transitional element and that's what The Glass Eye ended up being. It was a place for people to go work and blow glass and hone their skills, their technical skills and draw a salary. Not be—not—not they had to go out and hawk their stuff because Rob did the hawking, he did the selling. He would load up his VW van and drive up and down the west coast and sell the glass products that were made at The Glass Eye.

In the middle '70s that started and it continues as a multimillion-dollar organization today owned and headed up by Ruth and Dale Leman in Seattle—the Glass Eye. And they show their Christmas ornaments, or as they call them seaballs all over—and vases and paperweights—they show them all over the United States. They have literally hundreds of people showing their glass in small galleries and gift shops and so on all over the United States.

And it's interesting, not too many glass artists worked there even though that was the original concept and that was Rob had as a vision for The Glass Eye to get started. And many artists went through there: Dante Marioni got his start there, Ben Moore, Richie Royal, all those guys blew for The Glass Eye for many, many years—well, not many, many years but for a few years. And it helped them get the transition.

In fact, when Rob moved The Glass Eye factory studio operation from the church—what was called to the church on King Street over to the school property, he then sold the old studio to Ben Moore and Ben Moore's glass studio is the old Glass Eye studio. Although, it's not—it doesn't have any of the flavor whatsoever of The Glass Eye. It's all Benny's and it's a very, very nice place to work and lots of artists rent time to—rent the team and make their pieces there. I've done it and many, many other people—Dan Dailey makes work there on a very regular basis. He flies all the way from the Boston area to Seattle because that studio provides him with the kind of quality of work that he needs in his work. It certainly makes a lot of—my mongos could only be made at a place like the—like the Ben Moore studios. A lot of—a lot of great support there.

But Rob's concept—I always called Rob the Godfather of glass in Seattle because Rob took care of people. Rob noticed what you needed and he tried to help you get it and he does it even today. Although he no longer lives in Seattle—he's now up on Whidbey Island—he now has a smaller group but he's—he still functions as the guy that helps out. And when somebody needs help he's there to help and that might mean you need a place to blow some glass. Well, he'll find a place—he'll find a hole in the schedule that he can allow you to blow at his studio.

It might mean that you need a bag of soda ash and so he's got a bag of soda ash. He lets you have a bag and then you pay him back later. It might mean that you need a gallery connection and so he makes a few phone calls and pretty soon you've got a gallery to show your work. I mean, he's connected in the glass arts world all over the place and he helps people by using that knowledge and that skill that he has to do the networking. And it's in that networking that a lot of things get done, and that's not just a glass phenomenon, that's the real world. It just happens in the real world all the time and Rob makes it happen—he's the Godfather. I love—I love it.

And unless I think of something really fast before Susanne can hit that button, I think we're going to shut this down and I'll bet whoever's doing the typing right now is ready to hear this. Thank you. Thank you for inviting me to have this opportunity to tell some stories, spin some yarns, and I hope get a chuckle or two. Thank you to the Archives of American Art of the Smithsonian Institution. Thank you, Susanne, for spending this much time with me and putting up with all of this amazing amount of gobbledygook and helping me to try to organize. You organized it. I didn't even try to organize it, but you had an organization that made doing this possible and made it a pleasure to work with you.

MS. FRANTZ: It's my pleasure. Is that it, Fritz? Is it over now?

MR. DREISBACH: I'd say push the button.

MS. FRANTZ: Time to take a nap.

MR. DREISBACH: Take a nap.

MS. FRANTZ: Okay, I'm signing off. This is our last tape, at least unless you think of something else

MR. DREISBACH: Unless—no, hit that button! Hit that button!

MS. FRANTZ: Okay, bye-bye.

[END OF INTERVIEW.]