

Stained Glass News

Information & Ideas for the Glass Hobbyist
stained glass, kilnwork, mosaics and beads

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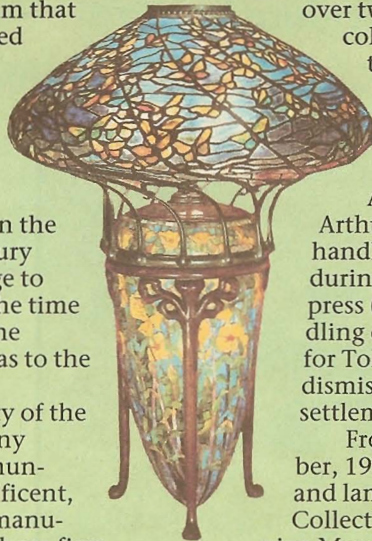
12 Information, Answers & Ideas *Q&A, tips and tutorials*

a news item you might find interesting!

Insurance Company Agrees to Pay \$7 Million to Tiffany Glass Collector

New York, NY – The Tokio Marine and Fire Insurance Company settled for \$7 million with collector David Bellis over a 1991 claim that ten of his world famous Tiffany stained glass windows and lampshades were damaged in connection with an exhibition in Japan. The case involved 13 years of legal proceedings over barely visible, hairline cracks in the windows and shades. It ended in a hotly contested jury trial in the federal court in Manhattan, when a jury verdict established that all the damage to the collection was sustained during the time insurance was effective. Thereafter, the parties settled to avoid a second trial as to the amount of damage sustained.

“This case is unique for the beauty of the subject matter in question—the Tiffany windows and lampshades consist of hundreds to thousands of panes of magnificent, handmade glass, which no longer is manufactured,” said Raymond A. Bragar, whose firm



Bragar, Wexler & Egel, P.C. represented Bellis. “There were six parties involved in a 15 year dispute over two continents: David Bellis (the collector of the Tiffany glass collection), Tokio Marine (the insurance company), CBC (the Japanese broadcasting company and the sponsor of the Japanese exhibition), J. Alastair Duncan (the American curator of the exhibition), Arthur Femenella (who supervised the handling of the windows and shades during the exhibition) and Nippon Express (which did most of the actual handling of the objects). All the parties, except for Tokio Marine and CBC, had been dismissed from the case at the time of the settlement.”

From September 1989 through September, 1990, a number of Tiffany windows and lampshades from the Bellis Tiffany Collection were displayed in the Smithsonian Museum and the Metropolitan Museum

of Art as part of the Masterworks of Louis Comfort Tiffany Glass Exhibition. CBC learned of the possibility that this Tiffany Glass Exhibition could travel to Japan. CBC approached J. Alastair Duncan, an art appraiser and the author of several books on Louis Comfort Tiffany, to arrange for a Japanese Tiffany Exhibition. CBC selected Tokio Marine to insure the Tiffany glass objects to and from Japan and while on exhibition there. Femenella and Nippon Express were selected to handle the transport of the objects to and from the Japanese Exhibition. Tokio Marine claimed that the damage occurred, at least in substantial part, either prior to the Japanese Exhibition or in five years thereafter. Bellis prevailed in proving that all the damage occurred solely during the Japanese Exhibition.

“The resolution of this case puts to rest a 15 year battle by David Bellis to vindicate who is responsible for the damage to his Tiffany glass collection and to finally obtain insurance payment for those damages. Sometimes persistence pays off,” Bragar added.