

Jerry Marcel



Those who live in the hilltown and West County areas may take for granted the sort of drive I it took to get to the glass studio and home of Jerry and Barbara Marcel, who live on Norman Road in Buckland. Dirt roads, humps and hills and twists and turns and Voila! the little house with its gardens and out buildings. Jerry was puttering around their man-made pond in the middle of an old stone foundation near their studio, and Barbara was making their first batch of home grown pesto in the kitchen.

The retired couple moved here from Cambridge, Vermont, about 9 years ago, to be closer to the people who comprised their social circle. Jerry retired from social work, though his first career was in set design in the New York city theater world. He left that career due to a desire to connect with people beyond the world of the theater. He and Barbara, a retired US Census Bureau worker, married 18 years ago.

It has also been 18 years since Jerry first discovered the joy of working with glass. To work with glass is to work with light and color, explains Jerry. The workshop he took in Boston where he once lived and worked was in leaded glass. A large window in the house displays his first piece, which looks to be about three feet by six feet tall—a very ambitious first project. He was not wild about the

technique of leading glass pieces together, though. When he discovered fused glass he fell in love



with this method.

Jerry held up a rainbow of fused glass squares held together with a metal frame that he called Chakra Glass. This piece was on display at West County Physicians for many years. It is meant as a healing art piece. The Marcells believe “the powerful energy of experiencing color and light through the pieces we create...can involve us all in the powerful energy of healing and balancing.”

They call their glass business “Ninth Wave Glass.” Ninth wave, according to their artist statement, is a “wave of movement described in the Mayan calendar as the beginning of the birth of a new world... and hope for all humankind”. Because “color is an electromagnetic energy vibrating at different frequencies, the physics of light transmitted into color can balance and transform our physical and mental states.” Colored glass has long been employed in the world’s cathedrals and other houses of worship for this reason. And haven’t we all been attracted to the “eye candy” produced by our local glass workers, as bees to a flower?

The workshop is located next to the pond and is outfitted with a propane heater and solar panels. The tidy studio is filled with reference materials and many many bottles of brilliantly colored frit (bits of glass), glass sheets, and works in progress by Barbara and Jerry.

There is no division of labor between them; they are each ready to step in anywhere in the process from design to kiln firing to finish work. As we talked they often emphasized the expense of the glass-making materials, and how they felt this limited their ability to sell to more people because they have to price their work higher than they would like. Money is not a big motive but they must at least cover their costs. Sharing the wonder of light and color as healing energy is really their biggest motivation. They sometimes give away their work to friends and family, just to move it out into the world.



Jerry has Alzheimer's, and they are both very frank about his condition and want to talk about it with others. He does get confused and forgetful and therefore isn't able to work at the cooperative doing sales. However, his disease does not affect "living in the moment" activities in his garden or studio, where he can immerse himself in the sheer delights of color and form. They like to sell their wares at the Ashfield Fall Festival as well as the Co-op. Nothing delights them more than when someone else wants to adopt one of their pieces into their life. To be sure this is a couple with abundant good wishes towards the world, and each piece comes with their generous blessings.