

# THE GADROON

Newsletter of the South Carolina Silver Society, Inc.

Early Spring 2017

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## **ANNUAL DINNER MEETING HELD FEBRUARY 10th**

The South Carolina Silver Society's Annual Dinner and Business Meeting was held Friday evening, February 10, 2017, in Columbia at the Palmetto Club. Guest speaker for the evening was Dr. Catherine Walworth, curator at the Columbia Museum of Art, who presented a most interesting program based on her research on Peter Muller-Munk and the exhibition, *Silver to Steel: the Modern Designs of Peter Muller-Munk*, that was mounted at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburg.

During the business meeting the following were elected as officers for 2017-18: Judy Anderson, president and Henry Brown, vice-president. Ms. Anderson will continue for the time being as secretary/treasurer until a new secretary/treasurer can be named. Any volunteers for either job?

For the first time the dinner featured a silent auction to raise funds to sponsor a student at the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts (MESDA) Summer Institute. The student would study some aspect of South Carolina silver and would later present a paper at an annual meeting or some other appropriate setting.

## **LeHEUP SILVER COLLECTION TO BE FEATURED AT SCSS EVENT**

The Program Committee of the SCSS is pleased to announce a very special showing of the silver collected by SCSS member John LeHeup. The event has been scheduled for 2:00 PM, Saturday, April 8, 2017, at Charlton Hall Galleries.

Dr. LeHeup, a charter member and past president of the SCSS, was described in an article in *Traditional Home Magazine* as "the former defensive tackle [for the USC Gamecocks and member of the Gamecocks Hall of Fame] who attacks silver with the same passion displayed on

the football field." He was quoted as saying, "Discovering new information through research is almost as good as owning a piece."

The showing will feature from his extensive collection of one-of-a kind pieces from numerous South Carolina silversmiths. While many have been featured in museum exhibitions, others will be shown publicly for the first time. This is one event you most certainly won't want to miss!

## **RUTLEDGE MASONIC SEAL SOLD IN RECENT AUCTION**

A silver Masonic seal with ties to South Carolina's Rutledge and Middleton families sold in Asheville at Brunk's Auction on January 28, 2017. Described in the catalog as a "Charleston Silver Masonic Emblem probably England, circa 1770s, pierced silver backed with red velvet with wooden backing, the large oval medallion with urn, scroll and flower decoration centering The Eye of Providence, the backboard inscribed 'Masonic Seal of John Rutledge, First Governor of SC, Date 1770,' 8 1/2 in."

Notes accompanying the lot continued, "Before the Declaration of Independence was signed, South Carolina adopted a state constitution drafted by the provincial congress, becoming the first independent government in the colonies. John Rutledge (1739-1800) of Charleston, after chairing the committee that formed the South Carolina Constitution, was elected first president by the state's general assembly. John and his brother, Edward, both had been delegates to the Continental Congress, and John also was a Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. John Rutledge was a Mason, and likely a member of Lodge 190 in Charleston. While the circumstances surrounding the commissioning or purchasing of this emblem are unknown, Rutledge may have acquired it through the silversmith Thomas Harper...a silversmith and jeweler working in Charleston from 1773-1782. A Loyalist, he left for England during

the war. A Thomas Harper, likely the same, who worked in Charleston, went on to become known for crafting silver and gold Masonic 'Jewels' in England...While the connection between Rutledge and Harper remains elusive, this remarkable object ranks among the most elaborate and important works of Masonic silver surviving from 18<sup>th</sup> century America.

When the bidding was done, the hammer fell at \$42,000 for a total of \$53,928 including buyer's premium and sales tax, against an auction estimate of \$3,000 - \$5,000.

### **SCSS MEMBERS TO CONTINUE SILVER INVENTORY AT WHITE HOMESTEAD**

On Monday, November 7, 2016, seven members of the SCSS attended a service project at the White Homestead in Fort Mill, South Carolina. With the objective of assisting in inventorying the silver, the group identified makers, weighed the silver, took digital photographs, and correlated the pieces to an existing inventory.

SCSS members are invited to continue the project by meeting again at the White Homestead on Monday, April 3, 2017. Additional information will be forthcoming.

SCSS President Judy Anderson noted, "One of the best jobs, in my opinion, was to look through the rooms on the first floor to find the silver and silver plated items. It was a great adventure to poke in every nook and cranny to see what was there!!! And there was a lot there! As we were leaving, we found even more. One team member would photograph the item while several others looked up the marks and another member would weigh the item. The scribe would record all the information garnered. We frequently stopped to share information and to admire an item that one team was handling.

"I thoroughly enjoyed the day – it was exciting to handle the silver, but it was more exciting to work together and learn from each other. We are planning another workday. We haven't even peeked in the 'silver vault.' I hope that more members will be able to join us. There is a job for everyone, and an opportunity for everyone to learn through sharing information."

### **SCSS EXTENDS SYMPATHY TO BREMER FAMILY**

The SCSS extends sympathy to the family of well-known silver dealer Beverly Hart Bremer, who died in Atlanta on January 22, 2017, after a brief illness.

According to her daughter, Mimi Bremer Woodruff, in the *Faces of Atlanta*, "My mother started her shop in 1975 after she divorced. She had three children, no child support, and no alimony. She had exhausted all resources and was prepared to sell her wedding silver, Francis I and Burgundy by Reed & Barton. She took it to a pawnshop, and the broker offered her \$4 per ounce or about \$250 for her eight place settings of silver. She remarked that she felt it was worth much more than scrap silver, as it was arguably one of the most popular patterns amongst her and her friends. He quickly reiterated that it was just 62 ounces of silver and she should go find some of those friends to buy it from her. Refusing to take scrap for her wedding silver, she set up shop at the Atlanta Flea Market. Mom rented a booth on the front row, took her silver, and in the first weekend she sold every last piece. There were people missing a teaspoon and those who needed extra salad forks, and those who wanted to add a place setting or two. She sold them whatever piece they were missing, and her trademark 'Missing a Piece of Your Pattern?' was born. She went back to that pawnshop and asked what other silver he had for sale. She knew that there would be a market for popular patterns, so she struck up a great relationship with the pawnbrokers and estate dealers throughout Atlanta. When she left the flea market in 1980, she loaded her stock into a Brink's truck and moved it to Peachtree Road." A year into her new location adversity struck again when the shop burned to the ground. She ran the business out of the basement of her home while she rebuilt the shop. For the next thirty-five years she grew to be one of the premiere dealers of new and used sterling silver in the United States with millions of dollars of inventory. Beverly Bremer is survived by two daughters and a son.

### **HAVE YOU READ?**

*Silverware of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: The Top 250 Patterns* by Harry L. Rinker.

Described as a lavish first-ever pictorial tour of the top 250 silverware patterns of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS TO FEATURE RARE SILVER

Lovers of fine flatware look no further! From elegant Tiffany to the affordable International Silver, this sumptuous volume highlights a vast selection of sterling, silver-plated, and stainless designs. Beautifully illustrated throughout with digitally reproduced photographs, *Silverware of the 20th Century* is arranged alphabetically--first by silverware manufacturer and then by pattern name. Combined with short histories of each manufacturer, listings of every known piece with current suggested retail market price, date information on when the piece was introduced and/or discontinued, and an appendix that ranks the top 250 patterns, this cherished volume will earn a place at any setting!

Highlights include feature stories on manufacturers and decorating, expert advice on displaying and caring for collections, behind-the-style looks at particular patterns, and much more! Originally priced at \$35.00, the book is available from Amazon for as little as \$4.00

*Magnificent Tiffany Silver* by John Loring.

With 345 illustrations in its 272 pages, this volume is the first comprehensive look at the superbly crafted silver created by Tiffany & Co. over the course of its 150-year history: the prize-winning 1,250-piece Mackay table service that remains the single greatest silver service ever produced, the Bryant Vase that became the first object of American silver in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's permanent collection, and myriad presentation pieces, vases, tea and coffee services, commemorative cups, and fabulous sporting trophies ranging from the Belmont Cup to the Super Bowl trophy are among the masterpieces featured.

Tiffany & Co. design director John Loring highlights the careers of Tiffany's key silver designers, from Edward C. Moore to Elsa Peretti, in a wonderfully anecdotal text brimming with historical detail of society, business, and sports in America. Color photographs bring into focus the beauty, originality, and fine workmanship of American silver at its very best. Sold originally for \$60.00, *Magnificent Tiffany Silver* is now is available from Amazon for as little as \$23.00.

Any SCSS member with plans to be at Colonial Williamsburg would surely enjoy the exhibition *Silver from Mine to Masterpiece*. This exhibition features about 150 objects primarily drawn from Colonial Williamsburg's superb collection of British and American silver. Various aspects of silver will be explored, including silver as a material, fabrication and decorative techniques, and the social role of silver objects in America and Britain. Other areas of interest will be a section on silver made and used in Williamsburg, stunning examples by premiere silversmiths of the period including Paul de Lamerie and Paul Revere, and a display of what is new to the collection.

Opening this summer at the Museum of New York City, *New York Silver, Then and Now* will link the history of silversmithing in New York City to present-day artistic practice. The exhibition will open a dialogue between past and present, paring historic pieces with remarkable new work by internationally recognized contemporary artists. The Museum of New York City holds one of the foremost collections of American silver in the nation. Its more than 1,400 works include designs produced in New York from the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. The museum is located at Fifth Avenue at 103<sup>rd</sup> Street and is open daily from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

## SCSS MEMBERS ASKED TO SUBMIT SUGGESTIONS

Members are asked to submit any ideas for articles or other information that could be included in future issues of *The Gadroon*.

## SOUTH CAROLINA SILVER SOCIETY, INC.

Judy Anderson, President  
Bart Mullin, Immediate past president  
Henry Brown, Vice-president  
Judy Anderson, Acting Secretary/Treasurer  
Frank White, Newsletter  
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