

**PENLAND DAY**—the day the Glass Art Society came to town—was a study in contrasts. The heat and light of the glass studios contrasted with the cool, cloudy, and then very wet weather. Delicate work made over the lamp with onlookers crowded around contrasted with athletic glassblowing demonstrations. The homey, funky atmosphere of the old glass shop—where a couple dozen spectators stood shoulder-to-shoulder—set off the high-ceilinged, spaciousness of the newly dedicated Bill Brown Glass Studio.

Perhaps the greatest contrast, however, was between the first and last demonstrations of the day. Italian master **Lino Tagliapietra** took the first gathers from the furnace in the new hot shop, and then worked for two hours with rapt concentration. He seemed almost oblivious to the crowd, which filled every corner of the studio but watched in near silence. Five hours later, sculptor **Gene Koss** brought the day to a close with a flat-out, rock & roll glass-casting demonstration which was pure performance art. Working with seven leather-clad assistants wielding large-caliber blow torches, Gene poured pounds and pounds of taffy-like hot glass into a succession of medieval-looking steel devices. After each piece was excised from its mold, blasted with flames, hot-worked, and then carried trophy-like to the annealers, Koss's crew would throw off their leather jackets and shake hands around while the crowd cheered.

The day began with activity all over campus. Caterers prepared supper for the masses, beverage stations were set up, studios were cleaned, and the Penland office was a buzz of last minute preparations for the six or seven hundred Glass Art Society conferees who were expected to make the trip from Asheville—the main site of this year's conference—to Penland, where the Society was born twenty-five years ago.

In the new glass studio, kids swept the floor and gas lines were tested. A number of well-known artists were adjusting burners and doing some last-minute welding in preparation for the afternoon's festivities. At 2:00 PM, while **Ken Botnick** was dedicating the building to the memory of Penland's second director, **Bill Brown**, a grinder was still whining inside.

But when **Jane Brown**, with children and grandchildren at her side, cut the ribbon and opened the doors and the crowd poured in, the glory hole, the garage, and the lamp were lit and Brown's memorial was a living one. Both the new studio and the old were in use throughout the afternoon as one amazing demonstration followed another. The work produced by **Gary Beecham, Ricky Charles Dodson, Richard Jolley, Ruth King, Gene Koss, Robert Mickleson, Don Niblack, Roger Parramore, Emilio Santini, Lino Tagliapietra,** and **Lewis Wilson** gave testimony to the richness and diversity that characterizes glass art today.

**MANY THANKS**

Before the doors were opened, however, many thanks were in order, and a succession of speakers attempted to recognize everyone who had made the new studio a reality. Special mention went to the members of the glass community who put time and creativity into both building and equipment, especially **Richard Ritter** who contributed leadership and countless hours of his time. Board member **Rob Levin** praised Ken Botnick, whom he credited with pushing the project from talk to action. Thanks went to the Board of Trustees and to



Studio coordinator Robert Gardner after a lot of overtime.

**CUT THE RIBBON! LET THE GAMES BEGIN!**



Penland director Ken Botnick addressing the crowd during the studio dedication.



Many hands equipped the studio.

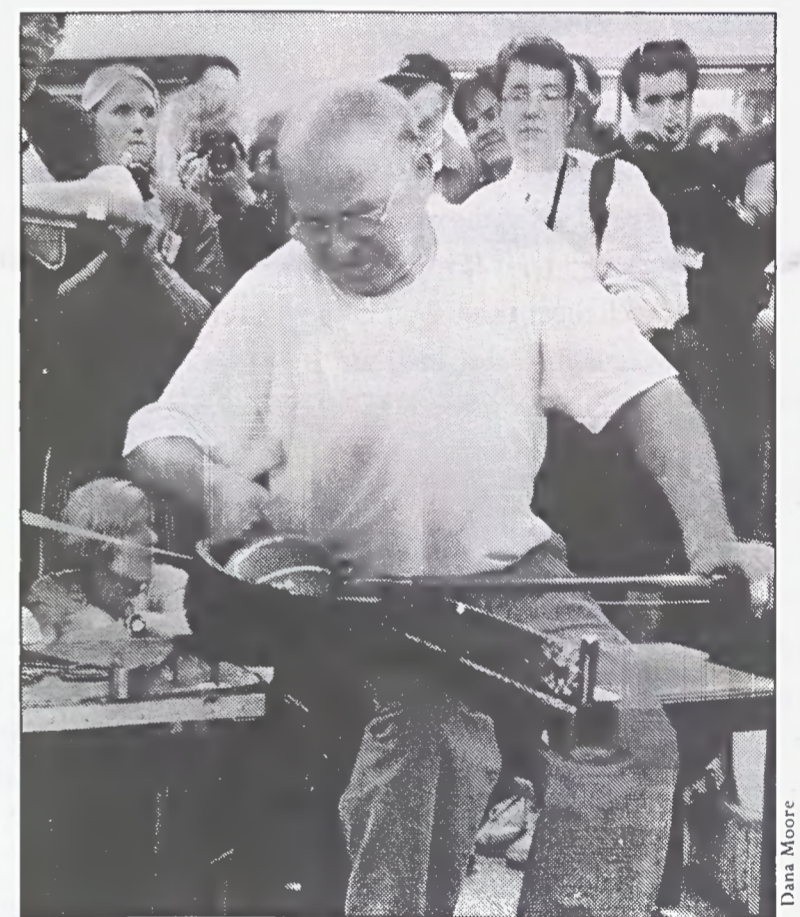
**Mignon Dunn** and **Donna Jean Dreyer** who spearheaded the fundraising effort—with considerable help from the many glass artists who gave work to the last two Penland auctions. Thanks were also due to studio coordinator Robert Gardner, who worked day and night, tended to hundreds of details, and coordinated the volunteers who came forward to help in the weeks leading up to the dedication. Robert also taught the spring glass class, and his students made regular trips up the hill to join the effort as well.

Final thanks, however, were reserved for Bill Brown, who not only initiated the glass program but began the Penland Resident program which has done so much to build the North Carolina glass community. "For that kind of vision," said Rob Levin, "there's no way to say thanks."

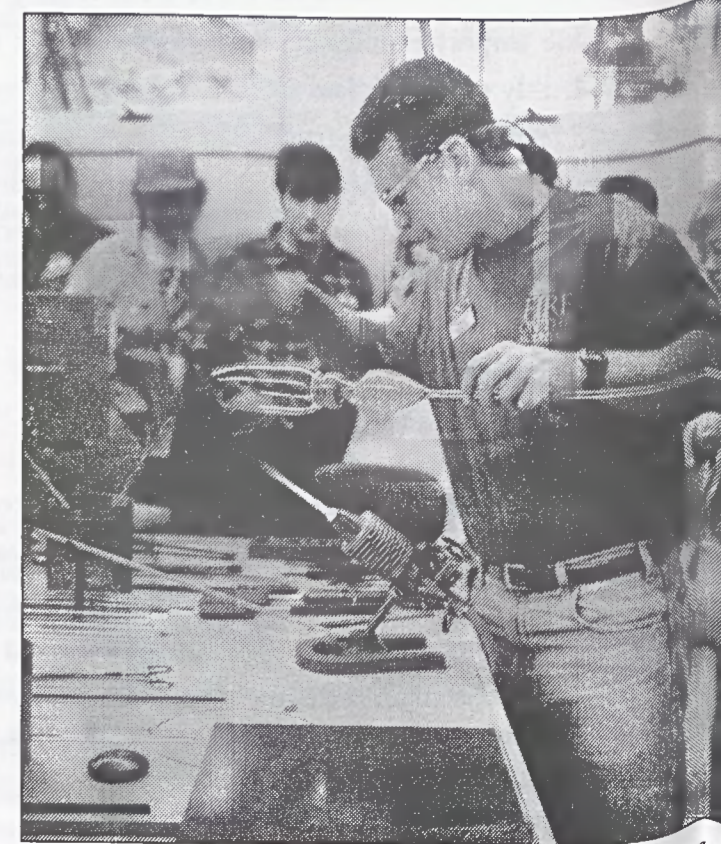
When the final demonstration was finished, the food was cleared, and the last tour bus pulled off into the dark, there was, along with a general sigh of relief, a feeling that something amazing had happened. A beautiful new workspace had been completed on time and on budget, and Penland had successfully hosted a large and vibrant craft organization. And it had rained, thundered, and hailed, but as near as anyone could remember, everyone just kept smiling.



Gene Koss and the Red Hot Chili Peppers of glass.



Grandmaster Lino Tagliapietra and a very quiet crowd.



Robert Mickleson turning glass in the new lampworking shop.