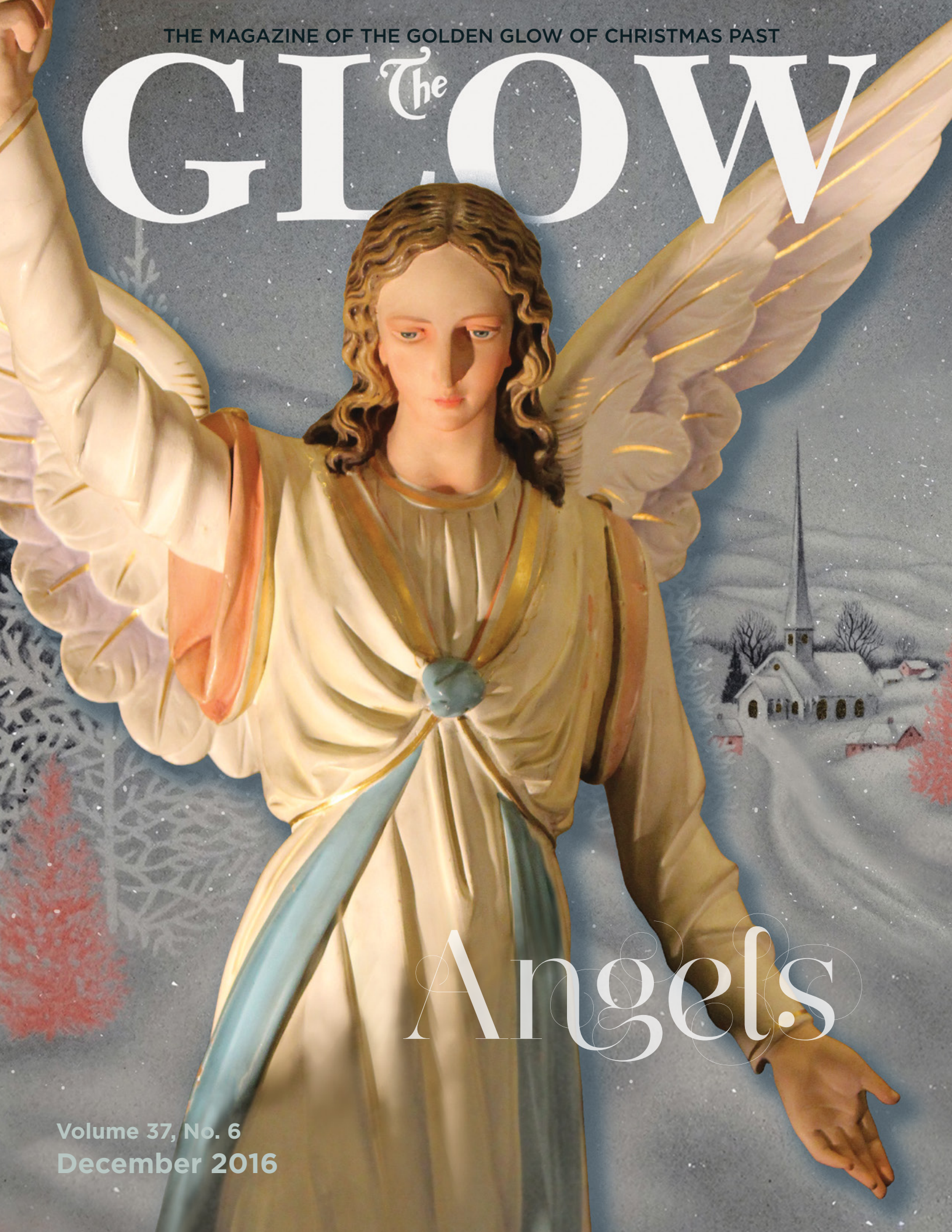


THE MAGAZINE OF THE GOLDEN GLOW OF CHRISTMAS PAST

The GLOW



Angels

Volume 37, No. 6
December 2016

EXCURSIONS

A DAY IN THE 'ENCHANTED' FOREST

(THE BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY AND MOUNT MITCHELL)

Tuesday, August 1, 2017, 8:30am-4:00pm

Board an air-conditioned motor coach at 2,218 feet (Asheville). The first stop will be the Blue Ridge Parkway Visitor Center for an introduction to the Parkway and the Blue Ridge Area. As you ride up the Parkway, a resident of North Carolina, who lived on Mount Mitchell as a child, will share experiences of that time. After riding about 30 miles up the Parkway, you will step off the motor coach near the summit of the highest point east of the Mississippi River: Mount Mitchell, standing at 6,684 feet. Enjoy 360 degree views (visibility varies with the weather), a museum, and cooler temperatures. A ten-minute walk via a paved, inclined walkway (no steps) is required to reach the summit. On the drive back to Asheville, you will stop at Craggy Gardens for a box lunch. The final stop will be The Folk Art Center, which houses the century-old Allanstand Craft Shop, one of the nation's top craft retailers, which carries the work of Guild artisans. **Limited to the first 46 persons registering.** Please indicate the number of people and the amount on page I of your Convention Registration Form.



BILTMORE ESTATE

Monday, July 31 & Tuesday, August 1, 2017,

8:30am-5:00pm (return time approximate)

Includes motor coach to the Biltmore Estate, plus admission to the house. Biltmore House is America's largest private home and is located on an 8,000-acre estate. It has 250 rooms and 43 bathrooms. You will have an opportunity to see the house, the gardens, the conservatory, and Antler Hill Village where the winery is located. Free wine tastings are included. There are restaurants on the estate for your lunch. **Lunch is not included.** Motor coach holds 55 people. If we get 110 reservation requests, we will have two coaches. If not, we will limit this trip to the first 55 reservations. Please indicate the number of people and the amount on page I of your Convention Registration Form.



ASHEVILLE DOWNTOWN: CACAO TO CHOCOLATE 101, AND HYSTERICAL HOMEGROWN HISTORY

Monday, July 31 & Tuesday, August 1, 2017,

9:30am-3:15pm (return time approximate)

This excursion includes a one-hour private tasting at the French Broad Chocolate Lounge, an iconic Asheville business that within a decade has evolved from a farmers' market stand to a three story chocolate temple and factory devoted, with passion, to producing high-quality bean-to-bar chocolate and desserts. Learn about cacao and its transformation into handcrafted products you will sample. Then board Asheville's infamous purple LaZoom Bus for a 90-minute city tour that you won't forget, filled with local sights and history, delivered with vaudeville style comedy that will keep you laughing nonstop. Disembark in downtown Asheville for a two-hour, non-rushed, Southern-paced exploration on your own of the many diverse and delicious foodie lunch options, craft beers, art galleries and antique shops. Meet your charter bus at a designated location at 3:00pm for return to the

Crowne Plaza Hotel. **This excursion is limited to the first 30 requests received for each trip.** Please indicate the number of people and the amount on page I of your Convention Registration Form.



WORKSHOPS

CRAFTING SCRAP ORNAMENTS WORKSHOP

Wednesday morning, August 2, 2017, 8:30am-10:00am

Mary Kathryn McIntosh will show you how to make ornaments using scraps, cardboard, and crepe paper. Workshop will include materials to complete five ornaments in class and additional materials to make some at home. Please bring pointed scissors to the workshop.

Attendance is limited to the first 20 requests.

Please indicate the number of people and the amount on page I of your Convention Registration Form.

COTTON-WRAPPED TREE WORKSHOP

Wednesday morning, August 2, 2017, 10:30am-12:30pm

Karen Shields will teach this session on cotton-wrapped trees. All materials will be provided. Participants will be guided through the process and will make an 18-inch cotton-wrapped tree in 1½ to 2 hours.

Attendance is limited to the first 20 requests.

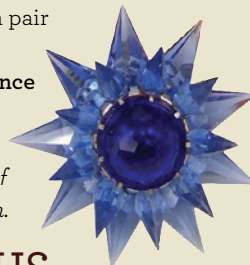
Please indicate the number of people and the amount on page I of your Convention Registration Form.

LIGHTING REPAIR WORKSHOP

Wednesday afternoon, August 2, 2017, 1:00pm-3:00pm

You will be taught how to repair Paramount "ring type" bubble lights, Matchless Stars and light cords. You will also be able to repair your own items during the workshop. Each participant will be limited to three "ring type" bubble lights, two Matchless Stars and two light cords, C6, C7, or C9. Please bring a pair of needle nose pliers. All other supplies will be included. **Attendance is limited to the first 20 requests.**

Please indicate the number of people and the amount on page I of your Convention Registration Form.



MISCELLANEOUS

Attire

Attire is casual and comfortable. Traditionally, Saturday night is dress-up night. Badges must be worn for ALL convention events.

Artwork

Logo and ads designed by Asheville artist and GLOW designer Sue Wille.

Facebook

Look us up: [Facebook.com/groups/GoldenGlowChristmas](https://www.facebook.com/groups/GoldenGlowChristmas)

Questions

Contact Marylyn Seyler, Registration Chair:

BY EMAIL we2canoe@gmail.com

BY PHONE 828-779-1202

BY MAIL Marylyn Seyler
100 Wesley Drive, Apt. 113
Asheville, NC 28803

Volunteers

There will be sign-up sheets at the convention registration table to volunteer. **PLEASE PLAN TO HELP!**



Angels of Light from the Ore Mountains

Craig McManus



TOP OF PAGE
Schwebeengel (Floating angel)
Photo by Steven David.

ABOVE
Engel mit Lichterjoch (Yoke angel) and
Bergmann mit Lichterjoch (Yoke miner)
Erzgebirgisches
Spielzeugmuseum
Seiffen, Germany

MOST SEASONED CHRISTMAS COLLECTORS are familiar with lighted angels *Lichterengel* and miner figures *Bergmann* (literally Mountain man, or miner) from Germany's Erzgebirge region, but may not know the interesting history of these beautifully handcrafted wooden decorations. The tradition of placing miner and angel figures in windows of homes in eastern Germany goes back to around 1830, when mining local ores like zinc, tin and lead was the livelihood of many families in the Erzgebirge (Ore Mountains) a natural border between Saxony and Bohemia.

Beginning in the early 12th century, with the discovery first of silver ore near the present town of Freiberg and followed by the discovery of tin ore on the southern edge of the mountains in Bohemia, the Erzgebirge region became known for its mining potential. By the late 1500s, tin ore and silver were being mined throughout the Erzgebirge region. Over the next 100 years, rich new ore deposits were discovered, and the area's population and mines continued to expand. The ore mines started to run dry in the 17th century, and the Thirty Years' War severely impacted the local mining industry.

FACING A LOSS OF INCOME, families searched for new means of putting food on their tables and clothes on their backs. Textile manufacturing was tried with limited success, but the key to the region's waning economy lay in the forests that covered the hillsides. Wood was used mainly for keeping the smelting furnaces going, but there was enough to encourage creative and motivated people in the area to try their hands at wood-working. The earliest reference to wood crafting in the area is made in 1650. One hundred years later, in the middle of the 18th century, mills sprung up using water power to drive equipment, allowing woodworkers to turn out quantities of wooden toys to be sold for export. This new venture in the Erzgebirge proved highly successful and continued to expand.

Mining was not completely dead in the Erzgebirge at this time. There was a brief uptick in interest in the early 19th century when cobalt ore was discovered in the area, but soon after, mining once again went into decline. The Erzgebirge mountain mining office closed its doors for good in 1849. When the German Empire switched to a gold standard in 1871, silver lost its luster and people found little reason to dig in hazardous mines for something that was no longer of great value. Mining faded as an enterprise in the Ore Mountains, but woodworking, and especially toy making, flourished.

According to Dr. Konrad Auerbach, the Director of the *Erzgebirgisches Spielzeugmuseum Seiffen* (Toy Museum of Seiffen) in the heart of the Erzgebirge, it was in the 18th century that *Holzdrechselei* (the workshops of the woodturners) in the Seiffen region of Erzgebirge first began to dabble in the creation of wooden figural pieces for the Advent season.



Reifendrehen

ANGELS AND MINERS took time to produce. Families relied on income from their work, so they focused on more "mass produced" products to sell to wholesale buyers visiting the area. They found their answer with *Reifendrehen*, a process to create multiples of tiny, wooden animal

figures from a single slice of a tree. In this circa 1920 photograph, wood rings are turned on a lathe, cut into sections, and sanded and painted into little animals by family artisans. This craft was a specialty in and around Seiffen from about 1800 and continues today.



Author's collection.

The first figures created were made from wood parts turned on a lathe and glued together to form one central body and base. Arms, a head, and wings (if it was an angel) were glued onto this bottle-shaped base. Most of the parts were turned on small lathes. This simple turned design was used in many of the toy figures that were mass-produced in Seiffen in the

...it was the development of a new process to make inexpensive candles that lead to the popularity of wooden angel and miner figures in the mid-19th century.

mid-to late-19th century and continuing into the 20th century. The most famous figureheads of the Ore Mountains in the 20th century, Dr. Auerbach told me, were the lighted angel and lighted miner figures. Some of the earliest angels had blond hair and gold leaf applied over the paint to reflect the candlelight.

Carved angel and cherub figures were popular in churches for hundreds of years in Germany. Local artisans saw an opportunity in the middle of the 19th century to expand that market farther into people's homes. Longtime Glow member and Erzgebirge collector Tony Annese gave me some insight into how angel figures had first migrated from the church into people's homes centuries earlier.

"The making of angels is a very old, long-standing tradition. It did not start in the Erzgebirge. Two developments fostered bringing angels into homes. The first was the Enlightenment Movement during the 17th and 18th century. A lot of clergy removed angels from the churches, but the people liked angels, and they brought them into their homes."



Two miner figures from Craig's collection. The very large piece on the left was made in 1951 by Schnädelbach in Zwickau, Germany. The smaller miner was made in the late 1930s by Albin Göbel in the Erzgebirge town of Löbnitz, Germany.

Photo by Steven David.

While carved angel figures had been used in homes in the Erzgebirge since at least the 17th century, it was the development of a new process to make inexpensive candles that led to the popularity of wooden angel and miner figures in the mid-19th century. With cheaper candles available to the homeowner in the mid-1800s, candles became decorative, and not just a source of light. Miner and angel figures incorporated these new candles as part of their designs.

ANGELS WERE ALWAYS KNOWN AS "BRINGERS OF LIGHT" IN GERMANY. Now they were literally bringing light into people's homes. In the hand or hands of these figures a candle and candleholder was added. Once in a person's home, the candles were lighted and placed in windows during Advent and Christmas. Of particular significance was the light given off by each candle.

In the days before electric light, with the exception of a fire burning in the fireplace, candles and oil lamps were the only means of lighting a home or building. In the deep and treacherous ore mines of the Erzgebirge, family members, young and old, worked long hours to bring home enough money for their families to survive. Light was essential for survival in the dark mines. The miners depended upon their lanterns and candles. I have been told that the miners would pray in the mines for angels to bring them light and to get them safely home each day. On Christmas Eve, the miners would hold services in the mines, using their lanterns to line the mine entrance. This is where the idea for the *Schwibbogen*, or lighted arch, came from. The decorative arches represent the mine opening on Christmas Eve. Light was very dear to a miner's heart. The theme was carried out in the *Lichterengel* and the *Lichterbergmann*.

I was told several years ago, and reminded of the story while visiting the Erzgebirge last year, that each family typically had a father and children working in the mines. The carved angels and miners would be kept lighted in the windows each evening during the Christmas season, calling for a safe passage home for family members away at the mines or working in other dangerous jobs.

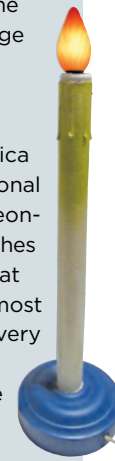
Traveling through the Erzgebirge in eastern Germany last December, I was amazed at how many homes had miners and angels in the windows. Glow member Uwe Heintze, who specializes in antique toys and Christmas from Germany and lives in Germany near the Erzgebirge, told me that families today buy one miner for each son and one angel for each daughter. The pieces go with the children when they marry, to be passed down to a new generation.

A 1930s pyramid stands in front of several modern *Schwibbogen* (lighted arches) in Craig's living room. Photo by Steven David.

Another thing that boggled my mind was the number of lighted arches in the windows of homes in the Erzgebirge. In the U.S., if I see a *Schwibbogen* other than the ones in my own windows or in a fellow Glow member's home, I am surprised. In eastern Germany, there were thousands! They were different from the elaborately painted arches seen for sale here; not a one had a drop of paint on it. The arches were all plain, unpainted die-cut wood with even *more* white bulbs! Some houses had one arch, some had arches in every window. Fighting for space in those windows were the angels and *Bergmann*. Occasionally, I would spy a larger angel hanging inside a living room. It was a real treat because these *Schwebeengel* (floating angel) are near and dear to my heart, and are rarely seen anywhere outside museums.



Winding through the narrow streets of small towns in the Erzgebirge (watching anxiously from a back seat as our tour bus precariously inched by clusters of old homes, cutting some very tight turns) I had a bird's-eye view into people's living rooms. Houses were close to the street and our bus was so wide, I almost wound up as an unexpected dinner guest several times during the trip as my window and their windows came close to meeting. The point-blank range *did* give me a great view of their Christmas decorations, however. One thing that really stood out was the absence of color light bulbs. In America we have gone LED crazy, with traditional colors being overwhelmed by wild neon-like colors lining houses, buildings, bushes and every other conceivable surface at Christmas. In eastern Germany, and most of the other areas that I have seen, every Christmas bulb is white, white, white! I was homesick for my orange candle bulbs and color C6s, C7s and C9s halfway through the trip.





...they were not mass-produced. Each is unique and represents the artistic inspiration of a single woodcarver.

MY LOVE AFFAIR WITH these “floating angels” began a few years ago, at one of the Glow conventions, when I walked into Uwe Heintze’s room to behold a magnificent sight. Hanging high above the little lighted angels and miners for sale there hung, in all its glory, a magnificent, *Schwebeengel* (above).

Carved completely of wood, the infant-sized angel was hovering in the air, arms outstretched and holding two counter-weighted candleholders. I was in awe. The thing that struck me most about this particular angel was the face reminded me of my mom, who had just passed a year before. My mom loved Christmas and I thought this was her way of sending me a sign that she was OK and watching from Heaven.

After doing some research on these floating angels (there was not much to be found) I discovered they were carved by the woodworkers for use in their own homes during Advent and Christmas. Some were even made for churches and schools as decoration. Most of these *Schwebeengel* carry candleholders or small oil lamps. Some have carved baskets of flowers. They typically hold a sign or a banner exclaiming *Friede auf Erden* (Peace on Earth) or *Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe* (Glory to God in the Highest).

Well, as the story goes, Glowers can’t just own one of anything. I now own three *Schwebeengel*. Two are carved of wood and one is made of a bisque-like material and used to hang in a church

in eastern Germany. All are pictured. *Schwebeengel* are much rarer than *Lichterengel* and *Bergmann*. Unlike the later, they were not mass-produced. Each is unique and represents the artistic inspiration of a single woodcarver.

Another early but lesser seen carved angel from the Erzgebirge is the “yoke angel.” These pieces were made from the mid-1800s and are still manufactured today. The *Engel mit Lichterjoch* takes its name from the wooden beam (yoke) normally used between a pair of oxen or other animals to enable them to pull together on a load when working in pairs. The wooden arc suspended above these angels is made to hold multiple candles and resembles an oxen yoke. This yoke, when lighted, creates a beautiful halo effect that the normal *Lichterengel* would not have. Yoke angels are quite rare and highly sought-after by

collectors of old Erzgebirge. Modern versions also are being produced, but lack the finesse of detail and patina of the antique pieces.

As Dr. Auerbach pointed out to me, carved, lighted angels from Seiffen and the Erzgebirge were rarely seen prior to 1850. They came into vogue around that time and stayed in fashion for many years. Each woodworker had his own design for angels produced in his shop. While the basic shape remains the same for most lighted angels, the painting, head, wings, and hands all follow a certain “house style.” In the U.S., collectors typically are not concerned about the maker of each piece, but in Germany many die-hard Erzgebirge collectors want to discover each and every manufacturer. You will often see a piece for sale in Germany that may say something like “Füchtner” or “Familie Timmel.” This indicates the manufacturer.



Engel mit Lichterjoch (Yoke angel), 21 inches high, with arch supporting candles, attributed to possibly Schmalfuss of Schneeberg or Ulrich of Seiffen
Inset: detail, back of wings
Collection of Tony Annese.

All photos on this page by Steven David.



TOP OF PREVIOUS PAGE AND ABOVE
Schwebeengel (Floating angels) from Craig’s collection
Photo by Steven David.



ABOVE
Ringo Müller, longtime Glow member and fourth generation Erzgebirge woodworker, *Willkommes* Glow Chair Craig McManus to his workshop, Seiffen, Germany

BELOW LEFT
Carved wood Erzgebirge piece from Craig’s collection, dated 1905 on the base, without a maker’s mark. It is a variation on the lighted angels that most likely were used as part of a Nativity.
Photo by Steven David.

BELOW RIGHT
Woodworkers Workshop
Erzgebirgisches Spielzeugmuseum
Seiffen, Germany



FÜCHTNER IS AN OLD ERZGEBIRGE FAMILY famous for its nutcrackers and credited with creating the tight, straight, legless form of the lighted angel around 1890, according to Dr. Auerbach. The Timmel family began making toys and Christmas decorations around 1850 in the small village of Kühnhaide, in Marienberg, near the Czech boarder today. Carl Gottlieb Timmel was well-known for his quality lathe-turned and dough-formed pieces. The family continued to manufacture for generations. Familie Timmel pieces are quite collectible today.

If you visit Germany you will find many of the original woodworking families are still in business today. Longtime Glow member Ringo Müller is the fourth generation of his family to create toys and Christmas decorations in the village of Seiffen. Ringo’s great-grandfather, Edmund Oswald Müller, started the company in 1899, and offered a wide range of products. Toys available from his

workshop included doll house furniture as well as the famous Seiffen matchbox miniatures, tiny scenes built into small matchboxes. Today, Ringo continues the family tradition by creating beautiful angels and miners, but is best known for his magnificent lighted arches or *Schwibbogen*. While metal lighted arches were produced in the early 20th century, wooden arches are a more modern invention and today seem to be surpassing angels and miners as headliners in house windows—at least from what I was able to see.

When buying an antique angel from the Erzgebirge, you will encounter quite a variation in paint schemes and decorations added to the turned or carved base. As I mentioned, each artisan had a house style, but those styles typically reflected the popular dress of the time. Dr. Auerbach pointed out that the original Biedermeier-inspired paint schemes stayed around much longer than the actual Biedermeier period.

COLLECTOR TONY ANNESE concurred adding, "These Erzgebirge figures are ladies. They are wearing a style of clothing popular in the Biedermeier period (1815-1848). That is, after Napoleon, but before the revolutions of the mid-1800s. It was a time of the flourishing of style and fashion which developed in Central Europe. It coincided with the growing middle class. The clothing worn by the angels is very interesting. The dresses on the ladies are long, and the figures have a very narrow waist, rounded hips, and a V-shaped bodice, which accentuates the chest and shoulders. The dresses were often adorned with flowers. This style of dress on the ladies lasted long after the Biedermeier period."

By having beautifully painted pieces in their homes, families felt as if they were more in touch with the wealthier class. Elaborate turned wood chandeliers and magnificent chandeliers made of glass beads also were created by the local artisans to be hung in their homes to reflect the more expensive crystal chandeliers seen in wealthy homes and castles. The local people of the Erzgebirge created their own class in the form of beautiful woodworking and ornamental designs. These chandeliers would be displayed all year and used to light homes, whereas miners and angels would only emerge during Advent and Christmas.

I had the opportunity for the first time to visit the *Spielzeugmuseum* in Seiffen last December. After enjoying the annual miners' parade, with battalion after battalion of men and boys dressed in traditional mining dress uniforms of their areas, I made my way down the hilly and winding streets in Seiffen, stopping for an occasional *Glühwein* or pastry (it was a rough trip) and finally arriving at the Toy Museum. It was one of the most magnificent collections of Erzgebirge toys and Christmas decorations I have ever seen.

The highlight for me was all of the fabulous *Leuchterspinne* chandeliers, most dating back to the late 1800s and early 1900s. Did I mention angels? I have never seen so many *Lichterengel* and *Lichterbergmann* in one place! My only

regret was not having a photographer with me to photograph *everything*. As it was, I spent almost two hours with my face and camera pressed against the glass display cases. I would highly recommend a visit here to anyone interested in folk art and the Christmas traditions of the Erzgebirge.

One other type of angel was produced beginning about 1900. It is a standing angel with a base that holds several candles. Above the angel is a propeller that turns and causes a small metal rod to strike a bell on each full turn. According to Dr. Auerbach, these are called *Pyramiden flügelrad*. The first examples had tiny pyramids decorated with lithographs. Later pieces were sold with tiny figures adorning each level of the pyramid. The people of Erzgebirge love their pyramids! Many of us are familiar with these wonderful multi-level creations with large propellers on top that are slowly turned by the rising heat from the candles positioned on each level, which cause a turntable to rotate a scene on each level. But that's another article!



ABOVE
Lichterengel (Lighted angel)
Erzgebirgisches
Spielzeugmuseum
Seiffen, Germany

LEFT
Glockenengel, *Pyramiden flügelrad*
(Bell angel, with pyramid impeller)
15 inches high, with propeller, attributed to the family Raum of Seiffen. Heat from the candles turns the propeller, which trips a hammer, ringing a bell
Collection of Tony Annese.
Photo by Steven David.



Photo by Steven David.

YOU WILL NOTICE in some of the pictures with this article that the candles are actually lighted on the angels. The mere mention of this fact to some fellow Glow collectors and dealers brings about exclamations of horror and disbelief, some feeling the old, dry wood is perfect kindling waiting to ignite. While I will not light pieces in which the candles get too close to the figures (as many *Lichterengel* are designed), I will light the pyramids and chandeliers for special guests at just before midnight on Christmas Eve. The effect is mesmerizing. I always stay in the room where the candles are lit, never leaving them unattended, and I also have a fire extinguisher ready. Hearing my recording of church bells playing in the background, and sitting with a glass of good port, basking in the glow of the candlelit angels above, I would have to say the risk is worth it!

My grandfather and his family were all from Saxony. He was born in Halle an der Saale, near Leipzig. While he was not from the Erzgebirge, he loved Christmas. He died two years before I was born. I often regret not having had the opportunity to get to know him and ask him what it was like growing up in Germany in that region at Christmastime. In some ways, I think I am my grandfather reincarnated. I seem to be drawn to eastern Germany and the wonderful rural folk art holiday traditions. Christmas collectibles from the Erzgebirge may not be well known to collectors outside Germany, but they are well worth the effort to explore further. Once you start with one angel and one miner figure...you won't be able to stop! I now have enough angels to last me a lifetime. Even though they are only wood, when I sit in my chair each December evening and gaze upon them, I feel like I'm in Heaven.

LEFT
An angelic view of Craig McManus and Willy Kare's living room featuring *Schwebeengel* floating between two trees filled with kugels from the 1800s and early 1900s

When buying A VINTAGE OR ANTIQUE PIECE FROM THE ERZGEBIRGE

You may want to check to see if the piece has been repaired or repainted. Quite a few of the larger pieces have been restored, some better than others. These pieces were, after all, used and loved for generations. They took some wear and tear. Most of the floating angels I see for sale have been repainted. The old paint usually chips and flakes away over the years, just like the paint on a house. The arms or legs, glued together 100-plus years ago, can break off and need to be reglued.

Lichterengel and *Bergmann* typically are found in their original state. They seem to have held up better than the pyramids, floating angels and chandeliers. Luckily, there are many experts in Germany doing amazing work to restore these old treasures. There also are angel reproductions being sold as old. I see the same *Lichterengel* with attached tin wings being sold as an antique on the Internet. This is a modern piece created to reflect the pieces of the past, but unknowing buyers may buy one as old. I try to buy pieces from dealers I know or have had a history of buying with over the years. It helps if he or she is a Glow member!



The evident age and wear on a *Schwebeengel*—an integral part of its beauty
Detail of a photo by Steven David.