

Garden : 32" high x 24" wide x 9" deep

"The greatest challenge was cleaning those 1208 little pieces with Q-tips and toothbrushes. The zinc trellis arches were bent with a came bender, then assembled flat and finally soldered together over a wastebasket to hold the curved shape. The flowers and leaves were pre-assembled and installed in the planters. The humming birds were made separately with wire overlay on the glass wings and tail. I couldn't resist adding a miniature spider on a brass web.



## Boats, Spaceships, Choppers and Wagons

*The Brady Bunch travel  
in their own style!*

by *Stu Goldman*

When I first met Dennis Brady a couple of years ago at the Las Vegas Glass Craft Expo, I was impressed with how clever his work was. Dennis had turned what appeared to be a hobby into a sophisticated collection of small boat models that had charm and continuity. His abundance of, and attention to detail, combined with a unique 3-D use of materials added a flair that caught the attention of everyone passing by his booth. Truly, some in the industry, after having paused and smiled at the work they were picking up and studying, dismissed it as 'tourist stuff', but when questioned later recalled it as good work and again used the word, 'clever.' Dennis Brady had produced one book with patterns and instructions for making his boats and he gave me one to take home. As I looked at it later I was again impressed and realized that what I had initially considered as commercial work was really a personal style that had mass appeal and commercial value. Dennis had found a niche and filled it through skill, effort... and a talent for turning his version of our craft into a successful cottage industry.

Fortunately, I procrastinated about writing an article on Dennis. Last summer I was introduced to Jason Brady, his 24 year-old son, who wowed the Warner-Crivallero Battlefield Glass Contest with his finalist pieces, Gypsy Caravan, Alien



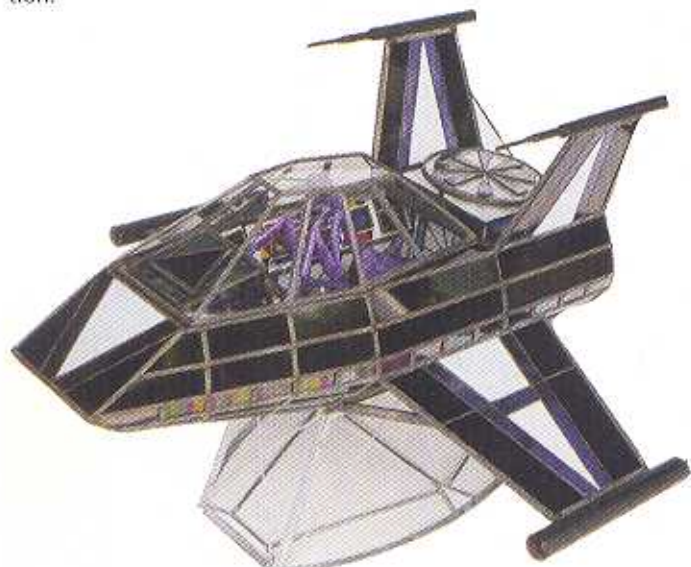
Jason Brady



# Stages of Competition

**Space Ship 42" long x 28" wide x 18" tall:**

To create the impression of alien architecture, a series of interconnecting angles were used. The interior lighting created some other challenges. I wanted to project lighting through the side stripes and through the exhausts and back-light the cockpit for interior illumination.



**Pork Chopper 12" diameter x 8" tall:**

Nothing is too good for such a sophisticated swine in his silk scarf. In size, this was the smallest of all my projects, but it was the most challenging, the only thing specific was that it be silly and whimsical.

Scoutship, Pork Chopper, and more (visit [www.battlefield-glass.com](http://www.battlefield-glass.com) for other finalists' images and this year's contest results). I was further taken aback when I discovered their father-son relationship, and thought to myself, "...hmmm, boats, spaceships and caravans; now here's a family that knows how to travel with 'glass'!"

This year in Las Vegas I was introduced to yet another son, Dane, who now spends his after-high school time working in the family's studio along with three younger stepsiblings. At this show Dennis also premiered his newest book, "The Lazy Man's Guide to Stained Glass."

That in itself would be an interesting article, but the story of how they got where they are today is worth telling.

In his latest book, Dennis dedicated the effort to his son Brant, "...he introduced me to stained glass and



**Caravan 16" long x 12" tall x 9" wide:**

I thought the weird collection of items sent for this "Battle" looked flashy, tacky and trashy. Then inspiration struck! That was the perfect description of a Gypsy caravan!

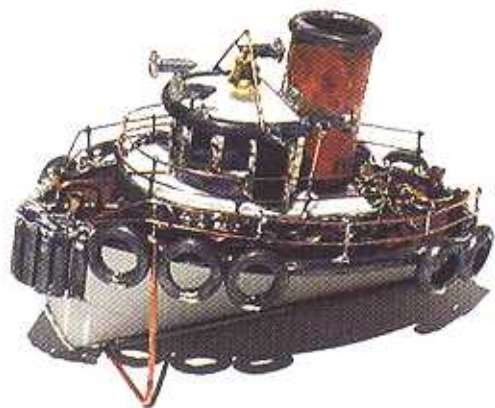


Caravan interior





Ketch, 18" long x 19" tall



Tugboat 8" long x 5" tall



This 36 in. long stained-glass model of the "Cutty Sark" was one of the first large glass and metal models the Brady's made.



Detail of "Cutty Sark"

helped me start DeBrady Glass Studios. It's unfortunate he couldn't stay long enough to see what it became." It was Brant who learned glass while in a high school art class and shared his passion with his father, then a contractor. Together they played with glass and began going to craft shows until parlaying their hobby into a business. Dennis took a year off from his regular job and together they produced enough work to do serious shows and fairs and begin a wholesaling business in and around Denman Island, British Columbia, Canada. At this time, Jason, who was 10 years old, worked sweeping the studio in exchange for his allowance. Dennis was a firm believer in the work ethic, and obviously still is considering that out of their 20 full and part-time employees, six are family members, four of whom are still in school.

With a firm grasp on a burgeoning business, tragedy struck when Brant was killed in an automobile accident. Although this left a great void in their lives, Jason took to the challenge of working with his father and today is the operations manager of the family business, DeBrady Glass Studios. They currently supply 80 stores through-

out the world with their work. What began with sun-catchers evolved exclusively into their maritime theme designs when they noticed it outpacing all their other sales. Dennis remembers, "It began as fun, became a business, and now it's fun again!" Today they also do other work, such as limited editions of large-scale models for private collectors. They have expanded their repertoire into other modes of transportation, such as planes and antique stagecoaches and gypsy vans, but once they begin mass production on a design, they immediately begin looking for a new image to work with. "We are always looking for ways to break out of our comfort zone!" Dennis remarked, adding that he tells his family staff, "Build big or go home... it's a huge shame failing to meet potential!"

Jason has taken this advice to heart, and in addition to his work at the family studio, he devotes his spare time to other pursuits such as instructing skiers, coaching fitness and guiding scuba divers. He also attends The University of Victoria part-time and claims to hold

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## PROFILE: THE BRADY FAMILY

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the world title for having made more glass spiders than anyone else in history; something he can now make his younger brothers do.

The studio website (*debrady.com*) contains images of their production items as well as some of their pieces that have been commissioned by

private collectors. It also contains technical tips. As Dennis states, so many people have helped him along the way, it was his way of sharing his knowledge with those outside the family as well.

There is a wonderful feeling of warmth to this family as well as a sense of equality and cohesion that binds them in both their business and creative efforts. Their obvious loss of a son and brother seems to

have been a catalyst that enables them all to work with a strong sense of purpose and, as Dennis put it, dedication. ❖

*Stu Goldman is a fan of glass that breaks the barrier between craft and fine art, and the people who create it. His latest book, *Glass-itecture: The Style Handbook*, published by Glass Press, is for those who still need a little help in creating the proper design to go with a specific architectural or interior motif.*