



May 25, 2008

## Advocate for Asheville arts: American Craft Council director doesn't forget where he came from

*By Arnold Wengrow*

*CITIZEN-TIMES CORRESPONDENT*

NEW YORK - When Andrew Glasgow left Asheville last October to become deputy director of the American Craft Council in New York, Western North Carolina's craft community was at a loss.

Glasgow had been the director of The Furniture Society, a national craft organization based in Asheville since 2001.

Before that, he held positions with the Southern Highland Craft Guild and for a time was the assistant director of Blue Spiral 1 gallery, both Asheville institutions in the Southern arts.

### **Gain, not loss**

But New York's gain may turn out to be this area's gain as well - Glasgow has recently moved up to become the craft council's executive director, putting him in one of the most visible positions in the entire crafts field.

"Western North Carolina has proportionally the highest concentration of working craftspeople in the country," Glasgow said.

Now, with one of the area's own as director of the country's largest craft organization, "there's someone at the national level shining the spotlight on what's happening in Western North Carolina," he said.

(Glasgow is the third WNC resident to lead the council. The others were Hunter Kariher, former director of Penland School of Crafts, and Dan Keith Ray, founder of HandMade in America.)

The American Craft Council was formed in 1943 by New York philanthropist Aileen Osborn Webb, a member by marriage of the Vanderbilt family, who wanted to bring rural handicrafts to an urban audience.

Now a 29,000-member national organization, the council sponsors six national juried shows each year, including the largest craft fair in the country, the American Craft Show in Baltimore each February. Other shows are in Charlotte; Atlanta; San Francisco; Sarasota, Fla.; and St. Paul, Minn.

Many of the craft artists in this area are involved, said Dian Magie, the director of the Center for Craft, Creativity and Design in Hendersonville, a regional center of the University of North Carolina.

Deb Karash, a jewelry artist who recently moved to Marshall from Illinois, usually does three shows a year, sometimes accounting for 50 percent of her annual sales.

The shows "play a huge part in my ability to make a living as an artist," she said.

## Keeping connected

Glasgow, an Alabama native whose degree in the history of decorative arts came from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, has kept his home in North Asheville. He returns as often as he can. He's visiting Asheville this weekend.

"I consider myself an Ashevilleian," he said in a telephone interview while visiting his parents in Heflin, Ala.

He's lived in Asheville since 1988, longer than he's lived anywhere else. For his New York residence, he chose an apartment in Long Island City, which he calls "the Asheville of New York City," a quiet point of land with galleries, furniture makers and an influx of new people across from the United Nations.

To reinforce his Asheville connection, he took along some of his favorite wood-fired pottery by Josh Copus, of Marshall, and his dining table and chairs, coffee table and bed made by Asheville furniture artist Randy Shull.

Magie pointed out that council members represent varying interests - collectors, museums, galleries and crafts-makers from all mediums.

Glasgow, she said, is "exceptional in being able to bring people together and come up with a consensus. That's been difficult for the council many times in the past."

Karash said Glasgow is an articulate advocate for Asheville and for crafts. When she was thinking about moving away from Illinois, he told her she needed to move to Asheville.

"There's no reason to go anywhere else," she said he told her. Glasgow is "really wonderful about making connections between people," she said.

Andrew Glasgow, at the offices of the American Craft Council in New York, is the third Western North Carolina resident to serve as the council's executive director.

Andrew Glasgow discusses craft issues with Judith Duff of Brevard, who does Japanese-inspired wood-fired pottery, March 14 at the American Craft Show in Atlanta. The show is one of six sponsored by the American Craft Council.

For more information on the American Craft Council, visit [www.craftcouncil.org](http://www.craftcouncil.org).

