



ON THE SPOT... Robert Weisenburger Lipetz

Robert Weisenburger Lipetz is Executive Director of GMIC, Secretary of UGSC and Conference Director of GPC.

GW: What have been the primary goals of the Glass Manufacturing Industry Council (GMIC) since your appointment in 2011?

The focus is on GMIC leadership in co-ordinating technical initiatives on behalf of all segments of glass manufacturing, like the Usable Glass Strength Coalition and federal government research and development opportunities. We put a priority on increasing the services and programmes that support these common interests. For example, we have vastly increased our technical education offerings, short courses, symposia and conferences, published the GMIC Glass Manufacturing Industry Report and introduced programmes to engage students in glass manufacturing careers.

GW: What will be GMIC's priorities going forward?

We will be focused on exploiting opportunities to accelerate the pace of innovation in manufacturing technologies, through leveraging public and private resources for research and development. We have plans to expand our technical education offerings. In 2017, the 78th GPC will triple in size, co-organising with the American Ceramic Society and the 11th Advances in Fusion and Processing of Glass.

GW: How has Brian Naveken impacted GMIC since his appointment as President last year?

With decades of experience at Toledo Engineering Co, Brian Naveken brings to GMIC his extensive knowledge of the technical issues relevant to glass

manufacturers today. President Naveken has been the driving force behind the organisation of the excellent GMIC symposium this November on 'Modelling Innovations & Applications in Glass Production'.

GW: What importance does GMIC put on industry education?

We believe that technical education is one of the most important services a trade association can provide for its members and the overwhelming acclaim for GMIC's programmes validates our commitment to strong technical education. Our members seek something better than the common commercially sponsored trade shows. GMIC is deeply committed to providing useful technical education, based on current science and citing real world data that our members can immediately apply to their operations.

GW: How would you describe the main benefits of GMIC membership?

Bridging all segments of glass manufacturing, GMIC co-ordinates technical initiatives, provides hard to find technical education, publishes industry intelligence,

acts as an advocate with regulating bodies, provides a forum for networking and supports workforce development. These are all activities that support the competitiveness and profitability of our members and that individual companies would find difficult to provide on their own.

GW: Is it fair to say that GMIC's image seems to have further developed into a modern, proactive and relevant body in recent years?

When GMIC was established by the glass manufacturing industry in 1998, we were largely funded by and focused on several US Department of Energy initiatives, like the development of the submerged combustion melter. With the completion of those projects, GMIC turned its attention to providing services of value to our members, such as the services cited above. This has been very well received, not only by our members but other participants throughout the industry, who also benefit from our activities.

GW: How well-integrated is GMIC into the international community of glass associations such as, for example, the International Commission on Glass?

Meaningful collaboration with other associations with overlapping missions is one of our basic objectives. We are close with the major glass trade associations here in the USA, as well as abroad. GMIC is an associate and active member of the International Commission on Glass and we extensively collaborate with the American Ceramic Society.>



Robert Weisenburger Lipetz with S K Sundaram of Alfred University at the opening of the 76th Conference on Glass Problems.



Robert Weisenburger Lipetz (third from left, second row) at the 2012 ICG annual meeting in Maastricht. GMIC is an associate and active member of the ICG.

GW: What position does the Conference on Glass Problems (GPC) now hold on the annual glass trade events calendar?

The GPC is the largest conference devoted to glass manufacturing in North America. It is widely considered the best opportunity for manufacturers to exchange problem solutions and for innovators to interact with their manufacturing clients and potential clients.

GW: How has GMIC been able to further establish GPC since taking over the management with Alfred University in 2012?

Together with Alfred University and our industry advisory board, GMIC refocused the GPC on adding value for attendees. In addition to the excellent technical papers, we have added technical short courses and full day one-topic symposia. We've increased student participation and expanded the opportunities for peer networking.

GW: What can attendees expect at the 77th Conference on Glass Problems this November?

They can expect a content-rich opportunity for technical education through expert lectures on topics, including glass melting, refractories, process control, emissions and raw materials. Three technical short courses offer difficult to find education on furnace operations, energy savings and glass defects. Valuable face-to-face time between innovators and manufacturers will be available

with day long exhibition and evening hospitality suites. In addition, GMIC has organised an excellent day-long symposium on 'Modelling Innovations & Applications in Glass Production'.

GW: Since the launch of the Usable Glass Strength Coalition (UGSC) in 2013, what progress has been made in improving the usable strength of glass?

Glass strength is a grand challenge for both industry and academia. It will take time and multiple approaches to fully realise its potential. UGSC-sponsored academic research continues to add to the body of knowledge of the factors that control the strength of glass, generating presentations and articles for major conferences and scientific journals.

GW: How has the coalition divided its priorities between the different glass sectors (container, flat, specialty, fibre etc)?

Current glass samples utilised are sodium lime silicates from container manufacturers and e-glass from fibre manufacturers. We are actively recruiting float glass manufacturers for our next round of research. The research is precompetitive and fundamental and can be enlightening for all manufacturing segments.

GW: How integral are UGSC's activities to help position glass in all its guises as a first choice material of the future?

A fundamentally stronger, usable glass would revolutionise the efficiencies of glass production, significantly reducing energy use, production and



Robert Weisenburger Lipetz.

transportation costs, material usage and environmental emissions. A stronger glass would also revolutionise the uses of glass applications, rendering enormous new efficiencies in all related industries. The coalition provides an opportunity to participate in this crucial fundamental research in glass strength, without the financial burdens and risks of independent research.

GW: What more could the industry do to support the efforts of the UGSC?

They could join the UGSC! One hundred percent of research is underwritten by our industry members. The more companies that participate in the coalition, the larger the research budget and the faster the pace of discovery.

GW: As preferred journal of GMIC and official journal of GPC and UGSC, how does *Glass Worldwide* contribute to these bodies' goals?

Glass Worldwide is a vital forum for the exchange of ideas, not only among glass manufacturers but also between the manufacturers and these support organisations. Disseminating best practice information from the organisations and updating companies on the bodies' activities is as valuable as the role *Glass Worldwide* plays in keeping the organisations well-versed in industry issues and events. ■

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FURTHER INFORMATION:

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