

# KeizerCommunity

KEIZERTIMES.COM

## Museum exhibit is (slightly) radioactive

By ERIC A. HOWALD  
Of the Keizertimes

Tammy Wild picked up her interest in colored glass from her in-laws who had colorful displays in their homes. But, a chance encounter with information on uranium glass on the internet helped her discover some of her collections' unique qualities.

"We do not remember how we learned about the uranium glass. We saw something online and I started to think, 'Is that what I have?'" Wild said.

Uranium glass might sound scary, but the amount of uranium – a radioactive isotope – used in its production is typically small. What makes it special is what happens when someone shines a blacklight over it in a darkened room. It glows under those conditions.

Fortunately, Wild and her husband had a blacklight on hand. She pulled out a few of the pieces in her collection that looked like prime suspects and discovered that's precisely what she had.

Some of her uranium glass and milk glass collection are on display at the Keizer Heritage Museum in the Keizer Cultural Center through the end of the month.

Now, Wild seeks out additional pieces at thrift stores and garage sales.

"My best find was a set of six sherbert bowls at a Goodwill in Seattle. They were only 25 cents each," she said.

The use of uranium glass dates back to at least 79 AD and, while those earliest makers probably didn't know their creations could glow, the additive found naturally in soil brings out yellow and green hues in glass. Its production largely ceased after the World War II when the U.S. government began holding all uranium supplies in reserve as an asset during the Cold War. It's still produced, but in much smaller quantities than before.

Wild's radioactive collection now includes bowls, a juicer, and some small- to medium-sized pitchers.

The other portion of the display is a collec-



KEIZERTIMES/Eric A. Howald  
Tammy Wild's collection of uranium glass emits a ghostly green glow under black light.

tion of milk glass, aka ceramic glass, aka the poor man's porcelain.

Milk glass originated in 16th century Venice and came in a variety of colors, but the plain white version found in the museum are mostly from the 1950s and 1960s. Wild's collection, mostly inherited from her mother-in-law features a variety of sizes and shapes, but a large, and striking, bowl is the centerpiece of the display.

Milk glass tableware was never produced, but the vases, bowls, dishes and even baskets were largely decorative or used as serving pieces.

"My favorites tend to be the smaller pieces because they are so ornate," Wild said.



A: Students perform a song from Mamma Mia!  
B: A ragtag group or "orphans" from Oliver.  
C: More from Oliver.

D: A group of Mamma Mia! singers.  
E: Aiden Heplet-Paro performs a solo from Oliver.  
F: Emmie Taylor sings a solo from Mamma Mia!

Submitted photos



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