

# LAGUNA WOODS

## GLOBE



Jan Elbaum, 90, has taught art classes in stained glass at Saddleback College Emeritus Institute for nearly 16 years. Elbaum, who will be honored by the Historical Society of Laguna Woods, makes her own glass pieces like this Geisha pictured. > MIGUEL VASCONCELLOS/OCREGISTER.COM

# ARTIST HONORED

**JAN ELBAUM, 90, WHO TEACHES STAINED GLASS ART CLASSES, WILL BE RECOGNIZED BY THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY. PAGE 3**

# Jan Elbaum named Honoree for April

BY CLAIRE WEBB  
LAGUNA WOODS GLOBE

The Band-Aid on Jan Elbaum's right thumb is evidence she spends the majority of her time playing with broken glass.

"The more you know about glass the more likely you are to get cut because you get careless," Elbaum, 90, said.

Elbaum has taught stained glass art classes at Saddleback College Emeritus Institute, which provides programs for older adults, for nearly 16 years. She leads beginner and advanced classes for more than 75 students. The Historical Society has named her honoree of the month for April and she will be honored in a ceremony at 10 a.m. Wednesday, April 7 at Clubhouse 6.

Elbaum said she began making things out of glass nearly 35 years ago by accident. She was working as a high school principal in Los Angeles and she stumbled over an ad for making Tiffany-style glass lampshades at a nearby shop.

"The minute I started, the first time I cut into a piece of glass I knew I was going to do it," Elbaum said. "It just talked to me."

She began teaching classes in bible literature and comparative religions at Saddleback, since she has a background in religious education and an honorary degree from the University of Judaism. However, the program soon found a need for an art teacher and looked to Elbaum.

Elbaum teaches classes in cold glass



Jan Elbaum, 90, has taught art classes in stained glass at Saddleback College Emeritus Institute for nearly 16 years. Elbaum, who will be honored by the Historical Society of Laguna Woods, makes her own glass pieces at her home workshop. > MIGUEL VASCONCELLOS

and glass fusing, a technique used to melt pieces of glass together and mold it into different shapes using a kiln.

She said she gets a thrill out of her students finding new ways to use glass—like one pupil who is working to weave glass into a piece of driftwood.

"I get such a kick out of it," she said.

When she isn't teaching she spends

her time toiling in a workspace that husband Murray built for her on the front porch of her home on Avenida Sevilla. She draws, cuts, arranges and finishes her glass creations on a small work table outside the kitchen window.

Elbaum was in the middle of making a flowered glass panel for a wooden room screen for her home.

She ran a small, hand-held cutter across a piece of opaque glass to score it and then broke the piece using two hands. When asked what kind of champagne flowers she is cutting, she quickly whipped her head over her left shoulder. "Mine," she said playfully.

She said she then files down the rough edges using a grinder saw before she arranges the pieces. Once the design is in place, Elbaum wraps each piece in thin copper foil before laying the solder, a piping made of lead and tin. She will then take a small curling-iron-like device and heat the solder to fuse the pieces together.

This piece will take her a couple weeks to complete.

Elbaum estimated she has made more than 30 glass pieces for her house alone and more for her five children. Her collection includes a lamp shade made entirely of eyeglass lenses, a figure of a Geisha that hangs just opposite the front door and two rectangular rain-bow glass pieces in her front window.

"I don't have enough walls anymore," Elbaum said.

Although the process to complete a glass piece may seem arduous, Elbaum's hobby comes down to a simple love of the way colored glass looks when it's put together.

"I guess it is the texture of the glass that excites me," Elbaum said. "I love the colors. I love the way the light hits it."