



## Heart of Illinois Bead Society

P. O. Box 13 Congerville IL 61729-0013  
[hoibs@beadartistry.com](mailto:hoibs@beadartistry.com) <http://beadartistry.com/hoibs>

*Our Purpose is to encourage and promote interest and enjoyment in beads and beadwork*

### October Program

**It's our first Birthday!** We're going to have a laid-back, potluck, stitching meeting this month. Everyone bring a dessert or appetizer to share, and bring an unfinished project to work on. If you have something you're having trouble with, bring it and see if anyone else might be able to help out.

### What's New

- ❖ The Society now has a website (<http://beadartistry.com/hoibs>) and an email address ([hoibs@beadartistry.com](mailto:hoibs@beadartistry.com))! We're going to add pictures soon, starting with the pictures from the Heartland College displays. If you have digital pictures of beadwork you want to share, send them to our new email and Mary will add them to the site.
- ❖ The Heartland College Library display (in Normal, IL) turned out lovely, with a large variety of member work. When you have a chance, stop by to see our displays! It will be at the Library for the entire month of October.
- ❖ Diane has announced new hours for The Bead Parlor. She will be open on Monday evenings from 6pm – 8pm, and will expand her Wednesday hours, which will now be from 3pm – 8pm. Of course you can still call ahead for an appointment if you have a bead emergency!

### Officer's Reports and Business Notes

We had a business meeting this month, with the following topics discussed and resolved:

- ❖ **Annual Member Show:** Laura Kroutil reported that the paper at the bottom of the display cases at Heartland College was somewhat ratty and torn up. Lois suggested that we purchase fabric for the cases and donate it to the Library. It was motioned and seconded, and passed unanimously. (Follow-up: It turns out that once the paper was removed, the cases had very nice white countertop-style or wood bottoms, so we need to discuss if we should just keep the material to use in future shows.)
- ❖ Tammi Andrae brought forth a motion that the Society should receive 10% of the fee charged for workshops held through the Society, since the teacher would not have benefited from the workshop if not for the Society's sponsorship. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. Teachers will be advised of this, and of the member discount and hall fee, so they can take them into consideration when scheduling a class.
- ❖ Mary Winters-Meyer brought forth the idea that we should send out a postcard to people from the original mailing list of the Society to remind them that we're still here. A motion was brought and seconded to use Society funds for a one-time postcard mailing. The motion passed unanimously and Mary will prepare and send out the postcards sometime in the next month.
- ❖ Discussion was held about whether we should allow potential members to join the society using an online shopping cart through the website. (This could also be used to pay annual renewals.) The group consensus was that while this was a good idea, it should wait until the society has grown larger. It was thought that in another year this might be a viable option. No motions were brought forth on this item.
- ❖ There was a brief discussion about the member dues and when they are due. It was originally decided to have them due in October for a January thru December membership, and general consensus was to continue that. There was also a discussion about prorating dues, and we will continue to charge based on a tri-level fee structure. Fess are \$15 for a full year, \$10 for May – December, and \$5 for September – December.
- ❖ **Treasurer** - Tammi Andrae – Balance in our treasury is \$272.50 as of 8/31/02.



- ❖ **Community Service**, Lois Hartwig – We need to think about whether we’re going to keep the Bottles of Hope as our community service project for next year.
- ❖ **President**, Lois Hartwig – Lois reminded everyone that she won’t be available for office next year. There are other positions that will also need to be filled. (Positions already filled include Mary Winters-Meyer for Newsletter/Website, and Cindy Gotham and Mary Winters-Meyer for Monthly Programs.) *If you are interested in serving as an officer or committee leader, please let Lois know as soon as possible.*

**2002 HOI Bead Society Programs**

October 19	Our 1 <sup>st</sup> Birthday Party
November 16	Cabochoon Ornament - Mary Winters-Meyer
December 21	Holiday Theme Beadwork
January 18	Wire Beaded Beads

**August Show & Tell**

- ❖ Tammi Andrae brought some of her hardanger pieces embellished with beads.
- ❖ Lois Draper brought two Christmas stockings embellished with beads. She still has 3 more to make!
- ❖ Cindy Gotham showed us several necklaces made using seed beads and polymer clay beads that she made herself. She also showed us some of the new magnetic clasps.
- ❖ Kathy Anderson-Mason brought several ornaments made with cross stitch techniques and beads on perforated paper.

**Membership**

No new members to report for September.

**Reminders**

- ❖ Annual Member Dues of \$15 are due in October. Please bring your dues to the next meeting or send them to the Society address. (P.O. Box 13, Congerville, IL 61729-0013.)
- ❖ I still haven’t heard from everyone who gets the newsletter in email concerning what format you want to receive. If I haven’t heard from you yet,

I’m assuming you want Word 2000 format. If you want something different, (WordPerfect attachment, PDF attachment, or just a note when the newsletter is uploaded to the website,) please let me know so I can add you to the appropriate list.  
(banshee@beadingbanshee.com)

- ❖ Interweave Press is offering Special Reduced Pricing for members on the following magazine subscriptions:

Beadwork \$21.95  
Handwoven, \$24.00  
Interweave Knits, \$21.00  
PieceWork, \$21.00, and  
Spin-Off, \$21.00.

These are all one-year prices. If interested, send subscription choice & check to Lois, and she’ll send all in under the Society name. Offer is good through December 15, 2002.

**Our Sponsor**

**The Bead Parlor** at 1007 S. Fell, Normal IL 61761 (309-452-2421) is open:

Mondays from 6:00 – 8:00 pm,  
Wednesdays from 3:00 - 8:00 p.m.  
and also by appointment.

***Bead Society members receive a 10% discount on purchases.***

**Errata**

In last month’s newsletter, the thank you card for our memorial donation should have read “Woodford County” not “Woodfield County.”

**Deadly Beads**

This month, I wanted to share a story about some interesting beads. One of my student employees went to Peru over the summer, and because she knew I was interested in beads, she brought some back for me, including a necklace and bracelet set.

The jewelry was made with small seeds alternated with regular glass seed beads, strung on what looks like fishing wire. The seeds look like little ladybugs, bright red with a little black dot on one end. My student thought the seeds were naturally



black and then painted red on one end. Looking closely, however, it didn't seem painted. When running a finger over the surface, I couldn't feel any ridge where the red ended and the black began.

My curiosity was aroused, and I did a search on the Internet for "Peruvian seed beads." It turns out these seeds are from the *Fabaceae* family of plants, scientific name *Abrus precatorius*, common names Rosary Pea, Coral Seed and Crab's Eyes. The seeds come from a pea-shaped pod, are hard-coated and glossy, a brilliant scarlet-red for two-thirds of the length, and black over the narrow remaining third.

What's most interesting about these seeds, however, is that they are highly poisonous! A single seed is enough to kill an adult human if ingested. It is rumored that farmers in India would make the seeds into blow darts to shoot at their neighbor's cattle, and occasionally at the neighbors themselves. Early in this century, 5 or 6 murders were registered annually with this bead listed as the cause of death. (I did entertain brief suspicions about why my student had given me jewelry made from these beads. <smile>) Even today, a number of children end up in the hospital each year because they are attracted to the bright red seeds.

Other common uses for the seed are much less dangerous. In Europe, they were commonly used in rosaries, due to their consistent size and shape. (Hence the common name "Rosary Pea" and the "*precatorius*" part of its Latin name, which means "prayerful" or "praying.") In addition, the juice from the seed has been used as a temporary "jeweler's glue" to hold two pieces of metal together until they can be fused.

The seeds were even used as a weight measure, because of their reliable size and weight. Called a *rati*, each seed is equivalent to 1.75 grains. To get to this measure was an interesting progression before manufacturing processes gave cultures the ability to create reliable scales – three small poppy seeds equal one black mustard seed; three black mustard seeds equal one white mustard seed; six white mustard seeds equal one medium barleycorn, and three barleycorns equals one *rati*. Even today, dealers in precious metal and gems use the term "double rati" to indicate 3.5 grains.

So there you have it. A necklace and bracelet set from Peru, which took me on an interesting journey into "seed bead" history.

### Book Review

*Contemporary Beadwork III, Zulu Beaded Chain Techniques*, Diane Fitzgerald, softcover, 43 pages

This is a book on how to do 8 different chain techniques. Diane reverse engineered the patterns from existing beadwork that she had in her collection, created by the Zulu tribe from southern Africa.

Two of these techniques are familiar, as they are covered in other popular books – the African Helix (which Diane calls the Ladder chain) and Chevron Chain (which Diane calls the Zig-Zag chain.)

I would consider this a book for Intermediate or above. While the techniques are fairly simple, and the diagrams are nice and large, with clear thread paths shown, Diane does make some assumptions that would make it difficult for beginners to work the techniques. (I think in a class situation, though, these chains would be good beginner projects.)

This is not a project book. There are almost no directions shown for finishing a chain into a necklace or bracelet, except for a simple button and loop closure, and although she mentions some possibilities for uses of the chains, there are no specific projects mentioned. Out of the 43 pages, the first 17 are introduction and beading basics, and the last 5 are appendices, leaving only 21 pages for the actual description of the techniques.

I found the placement of the photographs in the book a bit confusing. There is only one picture of all the chains, and they aren't in the same order as the techniques in the book, so you have to do a lot of back and forth at the start to figure out which chain is which. She also has some pictures of Zulu beadwork using techniques not covered in the book, which I found a bit disappointing, as they were interesting pieces that I would have like to know more about.

In general, a good technique book with some very unusual chains. I think a follow-up book with actual projects using the chains would be interesting.

