



# THE BEAD FORUM

Newsletter of the Society of Bead Researchers

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## SOCIETY NEWS

### Annual Business Meeting – 2004

The SBR business meeting was held on January 9, 2004, in the Texas Special room at the Hyatt Regency at Union Station in St. Louis, Missouri. This was during the course of the annual meeting of the Society for Historical Archaeology. Five members were present. The meeting was called to order by Secretary-Treasurer Jeffrey M. Mitchem at 9:34 AM.

Acting President's Report (Mitchem): I resigned as President on July 1, 2003, in order to run for the position of SBR Secretary-Treasurer. A Call for Nominations for the office of President was published in *The Bead Forum* No. 42, and we hope to elect a new President early in 2004. The election for Secretary-Treasurer is underway, and results will be announced in February. I would like to thank Smoke Pfeiffer for agreeing to handle the preparation and counting of ballots.

After several "interesting" years, things are settling down for SBR, and we are on a rebound. Our financial situation is robust, our publication program is picking up speed, and we are slowly gaining members. The SBR is still the leading organization of scholars interested in the serious study of beads, and our publications are considered the finest in the world. I would like to thank my fellow members for their continuing support.

Acting Secretary-Treasurer's Report (Mitchem): Since the resignation of David Jeane in February of 2003, I have been Acting Secretary-Treasurer. During this period, I put together a database of membership information, and we now have computerized information for printing address labels and other purposes. I have established a checking account at First State Bank in Parkin, Arkansas, and transferred all of the assets from the previous Louisiana account.

The election for the 3-year term of Secretary-Treasurer is underway. Once a President of SBR is elected later this year, I plan to send information on the Society and its publications to newsletters of bead societies, archaeological organizations, and other venues to attract new members. Sales of publications are doing extremely well, but memberships are down. Fortunately, our web site was recently updated by Lester Ross, and this should help us both gain members and sell publications more efficiently.

A full report will be in a future issue of *The Bead Forum*, but I can provide some information about finances and membership. As of January 6, we have \$20,418.37 in our checking account, \$16,252.48 in a money market account with Wells Fargo, and US\$1,059.56 in a Canadian checking account that is used by our Editor. Not bad for a small organization in slow economic times.

In terms of membership, here is the information as of the end of 2003:

Individuals, North America:	59
Individuals, Overseas:	9
Institutions:	13
Bead Societies, Free Distribution, etc.:	18
TOTAL:	99

I should note that there are a few people and institutions that just joined for 2004, and so they are not included on this list. A number of 2002 members did not renew, and I will be doing a special mailing to those individuals to try and get them to rejoin. My primary objective in 2004 is to increase membership, not only of individuals but also of institutions. A few months ago, I convinced the University of Arkansas Library to become a subscriber, and I encourage our members at universities to urge their libraries to subscribe.

Editor's Report (Karklins): During 2003, Volume 14 of *BEADS* was printed and mailed to 2002 members. Manuscripts for future issues are in short supply, and the Editor urges members to submit quality manuscripts on all aspects of bead research.

Newsletter (*The Bead Forum*) Editor's Report (Pfeiffer): Largely due to problems getting mailing labels from the previous Secretary-Treasurer, production of *The Bead Forum* fell behind. This should be remedied in 2004. Please send news items and short articles on bead research for inclusion in future issues.

New Business: The family of Peter Francis, Jr. has inquired about SBR taking over the Horace C. Beck Grants, which were previously managed by Peter through his Center for Bead Research. These grants, named after the famed bead pioneer, are small mini-grants meant especially for students in developing countries. After some discussion, the members present unanimously agreed that SBR should administer these grants. Acting President Mitchem proposed (and the members present agreed) that this will not become effective until a new President is elected.

A question was then raised about the possibility of accepting payment for memberships and publications in Euros. This might help SBR expand membership and readership in Europe. Mitchem said he will check with the bank in Arkansas about the extra costs involved. Discussion also covered whether PayPal could be used. Editor Karklins said he would investigate this.

There being no further new business nor any old business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:20 AM.

Respectfully submitted, Jeffrey M. Mitchem, Secretary-Treasurer.



### **SBR's *Whats New In Bead Research?* Session, Bead Expo 2004**

Society of Bead Researchers' What's New in Bead Research? The session was held during the course of Bead Expo on the evening of 20 March. Despite problems with the slide projector, the audience was treated to a number of interesting presentations:

Saraguro Beadwork, by Linda S. Belote

Chinese Millefiori Beads, by Jamey D. Allen

A Tribute to Albert Summerfield, by Jamey D. Allen

Some Comments on the Beads-L Discussion List, by Stefany Tomalin

Stefany also showed a video clip of Pete Francis during an interview a few years back on British television.

### **Society of Bead Researchers General Meeting**

Immediately following the "What's New" session on 20 March, Karlis Karklins called to order the SBR's General Meeting at 8:30 pm. This meeting reiterated what was discussed at the Annual Business Meeting held in St. Louis in January (the minutes of this meeting are presented elsewhere). A number of suggestions were made as to how the SBR might facilitate the payment of annual dues by persons living in Europe. There being no additional old or new business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

## **OTHER BEAD RELATED NEWS**

### **BEAD EXPO 2004 - ORGANIC BEAD SYMPOSIUM**

Entering its second decade, the popular Bead Expo organized by Recursos de Santa Fe took place in Santa Fe, New Mexico, March 17-21, 2004. The five-day event centered on the spectacular bead bazaar, 65 workshops on beads and beadworking, and the biannual symposium whose theme this year was "Organic Beads: Harvesting Nature's Bounty." Moderated by Karlis Karklins who took over for the late Peter Francis, Jr., the symposium included the following presentations:

#### **Bamboo, Beetle, and Bone: An Introduction to Beadwork of Organic Materials, by Valerie Hector**

Glass seed beads are the material of choice for many of today's beadworkers. But glass beads are a relatively recent addition to the repertoire. Before they were available, beadworkers in many parts of the world used beads of organic materials such as bamboo, beetle carapace, and bone, and threads culled from trees and plants. Although these may not sound like very promising materials, in fact, beadworkers of various times and cultures have done amazing things with them. This overview is global in scope, tracing the use of animal and vegetal materials in beadwork from the earliest times to the present.

Valerie Hector is a jewelry designer whose primary materials are glass beads and sterling silver. Her designs have been widely published, in *American Craft*, *Fibre Arts*, *Ornament*, *Smithsonian*, and *The New Beadwork*. She also collects and researches beadwork from Asia

and elsewhere. Her article, "Prosperity, Reverence, and Protection: An Introduction to Asian Beadwork" was published in *Beads* 7, while a new book, *The Art of Beadwork*, will be published in 2004 by Watson-Guptill.

### **Early Ornaments and Early Modern Humans**, by Steven L. Kuhn and Mary C. Stiner

The first recognizable traditions of personal ornamentation appeared more than 40,000 years ago, and seem to have developed independently in several regions of the world. Early ornaments, mainly beads and pendants made from stone, shell, ivory, and carnivore teeth, were the work of anatomically modern humans (*Homo sapiens*). While the forms of early beads varied regionally, the same basic shapes often persisted locally for tens of thousands of years. These beads, which qualify as the earliest preserved records of human aesthetic expression, raise important questions about how people first used ornaments and why *Homo sapiens*, but not earlier humans, might have chosen to use them.

Steven Kuhn and Mary Stiner have been researching and publishing on Paleolithic archaeology in the Mediterranean Basin for more than 15 years. Their fieldwork has taken them to France, Italy, Israel, Portugal, and Turkey. One of their current projects involves excavation and study of a cave site in southern Turkey, a site that dates to the beginning of the Upper Paleolithic and the period when modern humans first appeared in Eurasia. The cave has yielded thousands of beads made of marine shell, evidence for early systems of personal ornamentation. These findings have led Drs. Kuhn and Stiner to the broader question of how ornaments function in human culture, and what the appearance of beads and similar artifacts in the archaeological record might mean for human evolution.

### **Birds, Beasts, and Botanicals: Organic Beads and Pendants from the Amazon Basin**, by Deborah G. Harding

The Amazon Basin of northern South America is a rich environment that provides its peoples with a wide range of organic materials for the majority of their daily needs. The Section of Anthropology, Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Pittsburgh, PA, has been collecting objects of everyday life from the region since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, but most heavily in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These items provide the material for an overview of beads and pendants made from teeth, bones, claws, shells, feathers, seeds, and other plant materials, as well as insect parts.

Deborah G. Harding has been the collection manager of the ethnographic collection in the Section of Anthropology, Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Pittsburgh, PA, since 1985. Before that she held a similar position at the then-Florida State Museum (now Florida Museum of Natural History) in Gainesville, FL. An introduction to the wonderful world of anthropological material began during a museum volunteer job while an undergraduate at Beloit College in the late 1960s, and she has worked at little else since. Besides beads and beadwork, her interests include textile and basketry technology, and all sorts of needlework. These interests have been curtailed in the last year by the addition of a small African parrot to the household. It's amazing how a small bird can break most beads with a single munch and then throw the pieces an incredible distance.



**"Bio-bead-ology" - Old and New Bead Materials Recycled from Nature, by Stefany Tomalin**

The scope of organic beads is enormous, especially at the non-precious end of the range. Ms Tomalin investigates organics used in a bead jewelry, from the most plentiful to the rarest, the most valuable, and the most bizarre! She will show and identify items she has acquired, mostly at flea markets, over the past 30 years, and explain their intricacies. Some object, such as various seeds, shells, and small bones and teeth were used as found; others were altered by dying, carving, laminating/inlaying, embellishing, stabilizing, or mounting in settings.

Stefany Tomalin is known to many because of her former bead shop in Portobello Road, London, UK. In addition, she is well known for several books including *Beads!*, *Bead Jewellery Workstation* (packaged with a kit), and *The Bead Jewellery Book*. Another book is in the formative stage. She continues to teach basic threading skills and has recently developed a class on more specialized techniques for advanced students. Stefany also helps moderate the prestigious email discussion group, Beads-L, and has recently become a Trustee of the Bead Study Trust. She also works in a consulting capacity, both concerning designing with beads and offering information on people's most puzzling bead curios and heirlooms.

**Amber: What it is and what it isn't, by Jamey D. Allen**

Amber is one of the most popular and ubiquitous bead materials. In this general survey, Mr. Allen shows some of its many worldwide uses, and demonstrates how to distinguish between authentic amber beads and those made from substitutes and imitations. Simple but accurate methods of testing amber will be described, and demonstrated during the subsequent focus session.

Lifelong artist and beadworker Jamey Allen has been researching beads since the early 1970s. Amber was among his earliest interests and he was instrumental in exposing the fact that, during the 70s, copious quantities of plastic beads from Africa were being misrepresented as "amber" or "copal." He has authored numerous articles and four books devoted to beads and beadmaking, and has also lectured extensively on these subjects. Mr. Allen has a close relationship with The Bead Museum in Arizona and is a Consulting Curator there. He also currently moderates an online group called Amber Forever that continues his involvement in this arena. His primary specialties are organic materials, art-glass beads, the technology of stone-beadmaking, and synthetic materials. Mr. Allen is a much-called-upon consultant who evaluates bead collections for authenticity, rarity, and value. In sum, there are few other individuals who command a similar degree of expertise and experience in the field of beads and personal adornment.

**Precious Red Coral: Markets and Meanings, by Susan J. Torntore**

Precious red coral has been made into beads and used by diverse cultures around the world for many millennia. Historically, red coral as an organic material has carried different meanings based on its physical properties and on differing commercial markets, ranging from coral's ancient use as an amulet against the evil eye or early Christian religious symbolism to its high

economic value as a luxury product on the silk and spice routes. Coral beads and jewelry in our contemporary era have been influenced by these historical meanings and traditions, and three primary, yet very different, commercial markets for coral beads today (the fashion, ethnic, and tourist markets) reflect the historic trade and use of red coral beads in several West African, European, or American cultural settings. Each market category is based on the production of different beads that result from different physical properties of red coral, on the diverse needs of each market, and on interpretations of the historical meanings of red coral. Dr. Torntore provides an historic overview of the trade and production of red coral beads within a contemporary perspective of coral as a precious and highly valued organic material.

Dr. Susan J. Torntore is assistant professor of textiles and clothing at Iowa State University in Ames, IA. She specializes in the history of dress and textiles. While conducting research for both her master's thesis and dissertation, she conducted several months of fieldwork in the Italian coral bead industry centered in Torre del Greco, Italy, interviewing coral bead producers and observing the production process. She has also completed extensive archival and historical research in Italy and the United States on coral and the Mediterranean trade of coral.

### **On the Trail of the Elusive Ojime, by Frederick Chavez**

The intricately carved ojime and netsuke that helped to secure articles carried on the waistcord of the Japanese kimono were generally made of ivory and wood, but also shell, bone, horn, and other organic substances. Once the Japanese began to wear Western-style clothing with pockets, these items became obsolete, and are now much sought after by collectors.

Sometimes known in his field as "The Beadologist", Mr. Chavez has been active as an antiques dealer and consultant in the San Francisco Bay Area for thirty years, and presented his first workshop on ojime at the Minneapolis Netsuke Convention in 1979. The Netsuke Journal published his article, "Ojime: An Historical Perspective" in 1984. Over the years his consultative expertise has guided the acquisitions of many important collections. With a 10X jeweler's loupe in hand, he has personally examined and studied essentially every ojime in the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of New York, the Newark Museum of New Jersey, and the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

### **RECENT PUBLICATIONS**

Crawford, Jessica F.

2003 Archaic Effigy Beads: A New Look at Some Old Beads. M.A. Thesis, Department of Anthropology, University of Mississippi, Oxford.

A study of zoomorphic stone effigy beads from the south-central United States. Formerly thought to date after 2000 B.C., Crawford's study revealed that they were probably manufactured in the Archaic period, 5000-2000 B.C.

Jolles, Frank

2004 Continuity and Change in Zulu Beadwork Conventions: The Interaction of Color and Pattern. In: *Symmetry Comes of Age: The Role of Pattern in Culture*, edited by Dorothy



K. Washburn and Donald W. Crowe, pp. 100-132. University of Washington Press, Seattle & London.

Henshilwood, Christopher, Francesco d'Errico, Marian Vanhaeren, Karen van Niekerk, and Zenobia Jacobs

2004 Middle Stone Age Shell Beads from South Africa. *Science* 304(5669):404.

Discusses and illustrates 41 tick shell beads from Blombos Cave in South Africa. Their stratigraphic context indicates that they are 75,000 years old.

Holden, Constance

2004 Oldest Beads Suggest Early Symbolic Behavior. *Science* 304(5669):369.

Discusses and illustrates the shell beads reported by Henshilwood et al., and also illustrates an ostrich shell bead (one of two) from Serengeti National Park in Tanzania. The Tanzania beads have not yet been firmly dated, but could be as much as 110,000 years old.

Kinahan, Jill

2000 Cattle for Beads: The Archaeology of Historical Contact and Trade on the Namib Coast. *Studies in African Archaeology* 17. Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, University of Uppsala, Sweden, and Namibia Archaeological Trust, Windhoek.

This doctoral dissertation includes a study of 19th century trade beads from sites in southwestern Africa. A detailed study of the beads is presented, along with results of chemical analyses of some varieties. Color photographs of the 72 different bead types and varieties are included as well.

Lubinski, Patrick M.

2003 Rabbit Hunting and Bone Bead Production at a Late Prehistoric Camp in the Wyoming Basin. *North American Archaeologist* 24(3):197-214

Illustrates and discusses evidence for cottontail rabbit bone bead production at the Raptor site in southwest Wyoming. The site dates to approximately A.D. 600-1000.

Pederson, Maggie Campbell

2004 *Gem and Ornamental Materials of Organic Origin*. Elsevier / Butterworth-Heinemann, Burlington, MA.

A highly useful reference book, this is a unique source of information on a neglected topic of gemology. The materials covered in the book include Amber and Copal; Jet; Ivory; Bone; Antler; Rhino horn; Horn; Tortoiseshell; Pearl; Shell; Coral, and other materials of plant and animal origin that have been used as gem or ornamental material. The book describes how to recognize them and how to distinguish them from the materials most commonly used to imitate them, for example plastic.

A comprehensive list of materials is included and each is presented with details of its origin, availability and conservation status, examples of, and a brief history of, their use. Organics fit together because of their origins, because they are constantly used together, have similar histories and were the earliest gem materials used.

Two hundred color images are included for ease of reference and identification, allowing you to identify this material by sight, avoiding the usual gemological tests, which ruin them. 280 pages, Hardcover, ISBN 0-7506-5852-5, Retail Price: \$54.95

The Society is a non-profit corporation, founded in 1981 to foster research on beads of all materials and periods, and to expedite the dissemination of the resultant knowledge. Membership is open to all persons involved in the study of beads, as well as those interested in keeping abreast of current trends in bead research. The society publishes a biannual newsletter, *The Bead Forum*, and an annual journal, *Beads*. Tables of Contents for BEADS and ordering information can be found at the SBR website:  
<http://sbrwebsite.home.comcast.net/index/index.htm>

Contents of the newsletter include current research news, requests for information, responses to queries, listings of recent publications, conference and symposia announcements, and brief articles on various aspects of bead research. Both historical and pre-historical materials are appropriate. The deadline for submissions to the next *Bead Forum* is 15 October 2004. Electronic submissions should be in Word for Windows 6.0 or later, or RTF (Rich Text Format) with no embedded sub-programs such as "End Notes". References cited should be in *American Antiquity* format.

Send electronic or paper submissions to the *Forum* editor:

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