

The Newsletter of the Loose Bead Society of Greater Milwaukee
The Loose Bead Society of Greater Milwaukee began in 1999 as a fellowship of kindred spirits with the purpose of sharing and promoting the creation of beautiful beadwork.

Out and About in Tucson ... a first-hand report from Helen Dahms

For two weeks each winter, the world meets in Tucson, Arizona, for the Tucson Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show. This is much more than a single event; there are more than 40 sites around the city that host the show: in giant white tents, at hotels, resorts and exhibit halls.

The Tucson experience is not for the faint of heart. No, indeed! One must be strong in body, spirit, and pocketbook to survive day after grueling day of bead shopping. Bending over table after table of



Helen Dahms (l) and VP-Programming Maggie Roschyk enjoy a Tucson breakfast with LBS 'star' Christi Friesen.

gems, pearls, findings, and every other imaginable jewelry accoutrement can test even the strongest aficionado. Walking through row after row, tent after tent, show after show, parking lot after parking lot, wears the feet. Lugging bags of the aforementioned accoutrements back to the hotel causes neck and shoulder pulls requiring massive amounts of Ibuprofen, and changing climates from single digits to lower seventies puts the sinuses into a frenzy.

Why would any sane person endure this test? Because going to Tucson is the absolute nirvana of the gem and jewelry lovers' world. All pain is forgotten when one finds complete delight in opening those bags and rediscovering the latest bountiful riches from Tucson!

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LBS **Bringing Together**

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Tucson Treats

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The first stop for VP-Programming **Maggie Roschyk** and me was York Beads. We just had to get some of their delicious new colors of spikes, gumdrops, daggers, and, well, too much to mention. The collection at York is so fantastic we had to introduce our friend Christi Freisen to the York Bead collection. Can't you just imagine Christi's critters with spikes and daggers coming out of them?

We moved on to visit our friends at Rings & Things, where we are always greeted warmly. R&T is definitely a strong supporter of bead societies, and we're hoping to partner with them even more in the future. They were presenting the new EnCapture Artisan Concrete kit. This product can be molded, used with a variety of findings, and be painted, stained, carved, or stamped! What possibilities!

Another noticeable complete product line was the extraordinary amount of leather. We've already seen the leather trend in Milwaukee, with our local stores



Maggie Roschyk (r) conjures up new excitement for LBS members with Dee Mueller and Kim Crosby.

showing a variety of leather bracelets. The findings and tools used to rivet and embellish the leather were everywhere. Leather was available in all colors and types: tilapia leather, crocodile, alligator, and plain old cow! Looks like we'll be seeing lots more wraps, flat bracelets, and cuffs! There's also a new synthetic product (with no rubber smell!) suitable for an embellished flat bracelet.

Our LBSers would have loved hearing Elizabeth Ward talk about her new Bead Storage Solutions! Following our January Bead Stash Storage program, it was as if this product was meant to appear as another answer to our personal storage wars!



Now that's a pair at the Now That's A Jig! booth at the Best Bead Show ... our VP-Special Events, Kat Feldman, and our corporate member Brenda Schweder.

Ms. Ward has developed a system of stackable bins with see-through lids and containers, allowing us to see our inventory at a glance. Inside the bin there are mix-n-match containers in a variety of sizes. Plus each container has curved fronts for easy bead removal. Available in the system are a tool and spool bin, a work in progress tray, a tiny container bead storage tray for seed beads and crystals, an assorted bead tray with small, medium, and large containers, and a large supply bin for big tools!

One of the big tools you might want to add to your storage bin is Now That's a Jig, developed by our own **Brenda Schweder**! Brenda was in Tucson teaching for Jewelry Tools at the JOGS Gem and Jewelry Show. We caught up with her at The Best Bead Show where she was demonstrating (and selling) Now That's a Jig, the jig tool "that sits tight and stays put!" A new bracelet accessory was being introduced that allows wire wranglers to make a perfectly-fitting bracelet every time! **Kat Feldman** was there, too, adding her expertise to the classes and booth! It was great to see them and to know the latest in tools is available to us without having to go to Tucson - Now That's a Deal!

If you do want to go to Tucson, however, why not start planning a trip right now? I was just kidding about it not being for the faint of heart. When you get there, you will find yourself so exhilarated and energized by the beauty of Tucson and the excitement of the shows that you will get absolutely giddy! I know we did! With so much to share with friends old and new, and with so much to see in the world of gems, components, and tools, Tucson is an experience of complete delight!

-- by Helen Dahms

What Are *You* Working On?

At the beginning of each year, I spend a little time each week going through things that have accumulated. When I started sorting through my bead stash, I came across several items that I had purchased years ago with the intention of doing some project with them.

With our January program on Bead Stash Storage fresh in my mind, and a desire to not hoard things until I completely forget about them, I decided on a bit of a change. I moved the items out of the storage boxes, and into clear plastic bags. Then, I put the bags on a shelf right in my line of view in my work area. I'm hoping that seeing these items on a regular basis will give me the push I need to actually use them!

I also went through some of my old Loose Bead Society newsletters. I was pleasantly surprised at all the techniques that we've explored as part of LBS. We've had enough presentations about creating beads (polymer, fused glass, paper, lampwork, metal clay) and creating beaded jewelry (loom work, off-loom weaving, wire weaving, wire pounding, chain maille) to keep us all very busy for a long time. These presentations have inspired me to explore some new techniques.

I didn't get to it in time for our January program, but I already have tackled one new technique – new to me, that is. I worked on a leather wrapped bracelet. I'm pleased



What has Loose Bead Society President Elect Judy Menting so engrossed? You'll have to turn to page 4 to find out!

with my first attempt, well, technically my second attempt. The first time, I successfully completed the weaving with the beads, but did not do a good job measuring my wrist. I could get the bracelet on, but not easily. And, I dislike fighting with my jewelry. So, I took it apart and re-made it slightly longer.

I was thinking about making another wrapped bracelet using seed beads and wondered what might be a good thread to use since the C-Lon cord I used on the first version would be too thick for size 11/0 seeds. Since then, I have been looking for information in cyberspace about wrapped bracelets. I was a little surprised to find so many different ways of doing the wrapping, and how many of the instructions use needles. Using a needle certainly gives one more bead and thread choices. I can see that I am going to have to experiment further with this technique!

Speaking of experimenting further, I sure hope some of you are enjoying playing around with the kumihimo technique that we learned in February. I find kumihimo weaving to be relaxing and I love the end result. At this point, I know only one weave, the round eight strand version. I have promised myself that I will try to learn a different version by the end of this year.

So, I have new (old) materials and new techniques to play around with. Such fun! What about you? What are you working on? Post a picture or comment on our Facebook page about your new beading adventures.

– Kathy Willmering, President

LBS Adds More New Members

The Loose Bead Society has added 22 new members in the last several months.

In December **Sheila Campbell** joined the Society.

January saw **Tris Withington, Pam Jadro, Rebecca Prusak, Judy Cornell, Carol Surges, and Diana Nowak** as new members.

In February, we welcomed **Julie Metevia, Denise Kowalski, Pamela McCreary, Vicki Mehling, Bonnie Boblin, Susan Aasen, Barbara May, Heidi Steigerwald, Suzanne Busalacchi, Sally Johnson, Carol Pampel, Karen Fullington, and Karen Jacobs.**

Also new to The Loose Bead Society are **Barbara Hanson** and **Cheryl Hoolihan.**

A very warm welcome to all of you! We hope you will benefit from all that your fellow members have to offer — from bead weaving, lampwork and precious metal clay to bead tatting, polymer, wirework and more.

A Very Kumihimo Evening

During February's meeting, Loose Bead Society members learned to make a kumihimo bracelet. After an explanation by Maureen Bartz (below) — who designed the project — and President Kathy Willmering, members set to work. Each person received a packet containing beads, findings, cord, foam kumihimo disk, and bobbins. Although kumihimo was new to many, by evening's end members were turning out beautiful beaded bracelets in a variety of lovely colors.



Below, Secretary Judy Markworth (I) is set up to take the night's minutes.





Above are LBS' two newest Board members; Kathy VanDemark (l) is Membership Coordinator while Sue Stachelski is Community Service Coordinator. Kathy checks her computer while Sue makes jewelry for the Cinderella Project.

Another Great Bead In

It was a Saturday of jewelry goodness when Loose Bead Society members gathered at the New Berlin Public Library on February 9 for the Spring Bead In. Some members beaded away while others linked lots of chain maille.

Supplies were available for making prom jewelry for the Cinderella Project, and several members took advantage of the opportunity to contribute to this worthy project. Others attended the beginners' class on bead stitchery offered by **Susan Beal**. And others worked, worked, worked away on their own projects.



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Dairyland Seed Event a Hit

When the Dairyland Seed Company held its convention in downtown Milwaukee in February, the Loose Bead Society was there to present a class in beading. The women attending learned to make a simple but gorgeous crystal bracelet designed by Kathy Willmering. The participants — and their LBS teachers — had a great deal of fun. The report from Dairyland: “Very pleased with the way their spouse activity went with the Loose Bead Society.”



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