Welcome to the first issue of the “new” Soda Lime Times. For several years, the Houston Society of Glass Beadmakers (aka, the Houston Hotties) had its own newsletter called the Soda Lime Times, and I was one of its past editors.

It was originally the brainchild of Janet Robinson, one of our most creative members, and I was delighted when Janet gave her blessing for me to continue using the name, Soda Lime Times. What started in 2006 as a short ISGB chapter newsletter, printed in black and white and delivered by mail to our local members, has become an online magazine (e-zine) in full color delivered electronically to lampworkers across the globe.

After years of having the SLT all to ourselves, I wanted to offer it to all beadmakers and not just the lucky few who happen to live in Houston. I hope you’ll agree that there is a very real need for a magazine (aimed at beginning to intermediate lampworkers) that offers information ranging from where to buy supplies and how to set up a studio to how to make beads of all types. There are, of course, a variety of online sources for much of this information, but you have to sift through a mountain of material to get to the nuggets that are useful.

I’ve spent nine years learning, researching, teaching and writing about lampwork. My goal is to break it all down so that you can spend your time making beads instead of being mired down under mountains of information. And while the SLT may be written with the beginning to intermediate lampworker in mind, even experienced beadmakers will find nuggets of inspiration here.

Each issue of the Soda Lime Times will contain some wonderful features: at least two tutorials; a spotlight on a glass artist or vendor; tips and tricks for making better beads; sourcing information; what’s new in the way of tools and glass and bead-related goodies, and lots of beautiful full-color photos for inspiration. Best of all it will be in PDF format so that there will be active links to all of our advertisers and contributors, and you can print a copy to keep in your files or take to your studio.

Over time I hope that the Soda Lime Times will become an indispensable tool that you’ll look forward to receiving each and every month. So welcome, sit back and enjoy the ride. – Diane Woodall

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Editor: Diane Woodall

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Donna’s journey with glass started with her love for stained glass windows. She took a beginner class and worked in the medium for a full 25 years as a solo artist (working full-time doing custom work in a glass studio), then “running the craft show circuit for a few years”.

In 2001 Donna’s life changed drastically with a move from Wisconsin to Alaska where she discovered lampwork at an outdoor market held every Saturday in downtown Anchorage. “I was walking along and found a booth that had the most incredible glass beads with flowers in them. I was hooked right there and inquired about a class.”

“A month later the class was over and everything I needed to get started was ordered. But it wasn’t for another six months before I got my studio set up and by then I’d forgotten everything; so I taught myself. I spent hours reading books, looking at other people’s work and experimenting over and over. My first teacher moved from Alaska, so there was no one else to teach that I knew about. It was a struggle many times, but so exciting when something I tried finally worked. Eventually I started selling on eBay and became a ‘power seller’. I continued to sell on eBay full-time for 7 years”.

During her time in Alaska, Donna also started to teach and had a basement studio set up with 3 work stations. Her classes were not just flamework, but also metalsmithing, wirework, beading and PMC. She described her time in Alaska: “My days were full and busy and I was loving it”.

August of 2008 brought her back to Wisconsin and a much smaller studio, but she rarely teaches these days. “I live in a conservative dairy farming community and making beads isn’t something that most people are interested in learning. So these days my time is spent in the studio working every day. I left eBay almost a year ago and haven’t gone back, instead focusing my time to fill my Etsy store and my website”.

Some people just seem to radiate color, and Donna Millard is one of those people. She has always been drawn to color… “from a small child playing in my Mother’s jewelry box, taking summer classes at the school playground where they had art programs as I grew older, to currently where I am able to support myself with this lovely art form.” We in the beadmaking world are blessed to be able to share her passion.
Many of Donna's beads are embellished with her own handmade murrinis. "I enjoy the process of murrini making very much. It's relaxing and I go into a zen-like state. The outcome is usually pretty cool with great reacting murrini chips I sell all over the globe. I've written a cheat sheet with 4 of my murrini recipes that I sell and I have considered a tutorial on how I make some of my beads as well. I'm not sure yet if I am going to write one or not."

Murrinis can make even the simplest bead come to life, and Donna has graciously shared her method for applying them to a bead. "After I have my bead all made and ready to add murrini (this is my last step) I let it cool a bit. I pick up a murrini chip with a tweezers and spot heat the place where I am going to place the chip. Then I pre-heat the end of the murrini chip by just heating the end in the flame for a second or two. Go back and spot heat once again and attach the warm chip to the spot heated place on the bead."

I use a brass Stump shaper for this next step but any tool that is smaller and has a flat surface will work. Heat the chip a little bit then count to 3 and GENTLY push the chip in, just a little way. Do this repeatedly, like two, three or even four times until the chip is flush with the surface of the bead. Heat, count, tap, heat, count, tap, etc. Remember to keep the rest of your bead warm, in and out of the flame, while you are doing all this. And that's it!"

Here is Donna's recipe for a quick murrini:

Pull some black stringer 1-2mm thick. Set aside.

Make a gather of pea green on the end of a thick mandrel-about 3/4 of an inch thick x 1 inch long. Marver into a nice cylinder shape making everything as smooth as possible.

Encase in transparent emerald green, marvering smooth.

Encase in light ivory-marvering everything smooth.

Using a razor tool (you do not need a graphite mold to make murrini) slice into the ivory to make grooves all around the marvered gather. Add as many grooves as you'd like, keeping them about 1/4 of an inch or less apart and working from side to side to keep your gather warm while you work.

Take your pre-pulled black stringer and fill in your grooves, again, working from side to side until you have all the grooves filled. I work from the outside end to the mandrel when I do this.

Melt in slowly, then pull your gather into a cane of the desired chip size you are comfortable working with. Let cool and cut into chips.
Asked to describe her life as a full-time beadmaker, Donna said, "I am fortunate and thankful that I am able to continue supporting myself during these hard economic times. I've made some fabulous friendships both here and abroad from selling my work on-line. I would not trade this for anything and I am thankful for my customers from the bottom of my heart".
...and here are some photos of Donna's studio. What a warm and comfortable place to work.

To purchase Donna’s beads, please visit her Etsy store at [www.donnamillard.etsy.com](http://www.donnamillard.etsy.com)

You can visit her blog at [http://fyrebeadz.blogspot.com/](http://fyrebeadz.blogspot.com/)

Middle of the Mandrel

The pros and cons of making beads in the middle of the mandrel

By Diane Woodall

Most beadmakers today make their beads on the end of the mandrel, however some of us prefer to work in the middle. There are advantages and disadvantages to both techniques, but I believe that working in the middle, especially from the beginning, helps you to achieve balanced, well formed beads earlier on, and in the long-run will enable you to form beads more quickly and with less strain on your back and shoulders.

The most common argument I hear against working in the middle is that it is too difficult and time consuming to dip the mandrels. There is actually a simple way to dip in the middle and here is how it's done: Using a small container (pizza dipping sauce or Crystal Light containers work great), mound the bead release slightly. The surface tension of the bead release will keep it mounded, but put a paper towel under the container to catch drips. Simply lay the mandrel in the bead release, remove it slowly, rotating it as you lift it out of the bead release, and then tap the mandrel gently on the table before placing it in a sand-filled container to dry. When you are finished dipping mandrels, pour the remaining bead release back into the container, wipe out the little cup with the paper towel and you are done. It takes just a little extra effort to dip in the middle, but it's easy once you try it.

There are some kilns that are not designed for beads made in the middle, so if you have one of these kilns, you will have to work on the end or find a way to stack your beads in horizontally. I have a fire brick kiln that has a front flap and a perforated metal rack in the back where I can place my beads as they are made. As they cool I simply move them over and keep stacking. Even with an interior size of only six inches by six inches, a mandrel with a bead in the middle fits nicely into a kiln like this. Chili Pepper kilns, on the other hand, make it more of a challenge if beads are in the middle.

When you work in the middle of the mandrel you are able to hold the mandrel with both hands. When you marver a bead on a torch marver, you can press with one hand and guide with the other. I use a torch marver or a Val Cox tabletop marver for all of my shaping and am able to roll and press using both hands. I can shape beads much more quickly than if I had the use of just one hand. Most beadmakers who make their beads on the end of the mandrel use a hand-held marver in one hand while holding the bead in the other. I agree that having the marver at eye level is beneficial and makes it easy to see your work. You can still do this if you work in the middle. Again, you have to decide what works best for you.

Another advantage to working in the middle is that when you are applying a design to a bead you can flip the mandrel so that you are always working from the "easy" side. For right-handed people it's the right. When applying dots I apply the dots to the middle (equator) and right side, flip the bead so that my completed dots are now on the left side of the bead, and apply the rest of the dots on the right. It is much less awkward and also produces more uniform results, especially when you are first learning and are trying to master consistency. And encasing is a breeze when you can flip the mandrel as you work.

One of the biggest benefits is that, by using both hands to hold the mandrel, you eliminate some of the stress on your shoulders and back. You can rotate the bead and easily keep it level because you are using both hands to hold the mandrel. I use a Creation Station and rest my elbows on the pads as I rotate the bead. Better yet, you can actually spin the mandrel with very little effort.

The one big disadvantage is that there simply isn't enough room on the ends of the mandrel for you to grip with your entire fist. You must hold the mandrel with your fingers rather than with your entire hand. This is difficult for some people who have been making beads a long time, but fairly easy for beginners because they have not yet attained the "muscle memory" from years of experience.

Of course, you can always use a tool to hold the end of your mandrel if you still want to work on the end, but that is just one more tool to pick up and put down when your hands are right there on the ends of your arms. For those of you who work on the end of the mandrel, changing now may be awkward for you at first, but I suggest that you all give it a try and see which method you prefer. You may find that a simple change like this is exactly what you needed to get past your hurdles. Torch on!
Did You Know?

...you can make a lot of spacers on one mandrel...and it's easy!

Making spacers using this technique makes them almost fun to make...almost. Dip your mandrels with a wide band of bead release (several inches at least). Since I dip in the middle, I use the lid of a Mason jar when I'm dipping mandrels for spacers.

Begin at one end and make a spacer and shape it, completing that spacer before moving on. Move down the mandrel a half-inch or so and make a second spacer, again heating it until it has the desired shape. DO NOT go back and reheat the first spacer. Resist temptation.

I know you want to, and everything you've learned tells you to do it...but don't heat the first spacer again. Move another half-inch down the mandrel and make a third spacer, and then a fourth and so on until you have as many spacers as you have bead release. About 5-6 is a good number, but some beadmakers can get 10-12 (or more) per mandrel. What a great way to make sure all of your spacers are the same size. When the last one is finished, just pop the mandrel in the kiln and you're done.

The reason this method works is that spacers are small and not as prone to thermal shocking. The key is to never put a spacer back in the flame once it is finished, but to move quickly to the next. The radiant heat will allow the one you just finished to cool gradually without thermal shocking. Good luck and have fun with your new technique.

This amazing bucket-o-spacers was made by Tracy Bell on large hole mandrels. Her personal record is 18! To see more of Tracy's work, visit her Etsy store http://www.etsy.com/shop/tracybell

If you make jewelry...or are interested in learning more about how jewelry is made...you should check out Rio Grande's video library. There are currently about 100 videos in the library, but they'll be adding more weekly, and like everything Rio Grande does, the videos are professional and enjoyable.

Just click here: http://www.youtube.com/user/RioGrande1944

"Creativity is allowing yourself to make mistakes. Art is knowing which ones to keep." Scott Adams
Each month in the Soda Lime Times I’ll present a Grubby Mitts Report (again many thanks to Janet Robinson who began this feature in the “old” SLT for the Houston Hotties). In The Grubby Mitts Report I’ll share with you the nifty tools, glass or other goodies I love to use and hope that you will too. If you have any recommendations for the Grubby Mitts Report, please let me know. I’m always on the look-out for something new to make lampwork even more fun.

This month’s first Grubby Mitts winner is CIM Marshmallow. I like to call this “Magic” Marshmallow because it has the most extraordinary translucency that allows the beadmaker to use it in very creative ways. I made the shell on the left with a base of CIM Phoenix and cased it in CIM Marshmallow, creating a beautiful deep peach with the same translucent qualities as Marshmallow.

You can layer Marshmallow over cobalt, teal, red, green, even dichroic…just use your imagination. The fact that it is translucent makes Marshmallow react almost like a transparent, only with more muted results. The thinner your casing layer the more translucent it becomes and the more the base layer will show through. Marshmallow allows the freedom to expand your palette simply by layering it over other colors. Give it a go and you’ll agree it is magic too.

My other Grubby Mitts winner is just purple glass. Nothing special there, except that the purple I’m referring to is the most delicious deep purple transparent you’ve ever seen. Layered over white, it produces a true, royal purple, and best of all it’s just regular ol’ Effetre available from our friends at Frantz Art Glass (among others). And it gets better: it isn’t terribly expensive. This beautiful glass comes in two shades, Violet Dark Premium and Violet Light Premium. If you’ve been looking for the perfect purple, look no more. Here is a heart I made for Beads of Courage with a base of Effetre white, cased in Violet Light Premium, with silvered ivory stringer and flowers made with Effetre Ink Blue over Effetre white.


Coming next month…tools to drool over.
Are You Long on Shorts?

How to use all of those little short pieces of glass that are taking over your studio

by Diane Woodall

If you are like me, shorts (or those little pieces of glass left at the end of the rod) are threatening to take over your studio. At the end of every session of beadmaking I seem to have even more of the little pieces to add to my shorts barrel. The good news is that every millimeter of that glass is usable if you know how to do it safely.

When I refer to "shorts", this can be anything from a tiny little nub of glass to a piece several inches long. One of my favorite ways to use shorts is to take two pieces that are two inches or longer, holding one in each hand, and melt them together to form a gather about the size of a chick pea, and then pull a thick stringer (2mm-3mm) between them about 4-6 inches long. (photos below). Flame cut the stringer in half and you'll have great little handles to use to hold each piece of glass. Now you can use the rod right up to the last inch or so of the little handle you've made. Every month or so I like to take some time to make up a bunch of these little shorts in the colors I use most. Not a bad way to spend an hour in your studio if you don't want to heat your kiln. See the photo above showing my little jar of ivory shorts, ready to use again. (it's my stash of Vetrofond Light Ivory, which is now as rare as hen's teeth. Glad I kept those shorts!).

Another method for melding two or more rods together is called a "maria" (photos below). To make a maria you simply take two rods of glass, heat the tips of each one and then push them together until they meld. You don't want to build up a big gather; just make them molten where they stick together. When the two rods are properly melded there will be a bulge where they meet. Apply heat to this spot and pull gently to thin out the join. If you leave the bulge, the glass may shatter (and almost always does) when the flame touches this spot. By thinning out the join there is less danger of the rod breaking or shattering.
Even if you have tiny little nubs of glass, you can still use them. Heat the end of an old mandrel until it glows (I like to use one that is 3/32” or bigger). Pick up the little piece of glass using tweezers and heat one end until it is hot enough to stick to the mandrel, and then stick it on and melt it to form a gather on the end of the mandrel. Keep adding little pieces the same way, making the gather larger and larger until you have a gather big enough to pull fat stringers or even a new full sized rod. You can also marver the gather and use it as the base for murrini or twisties.

Sometimes you just want to use the shorts you have on your table immediately. Fortunately there are some excellent tools that will allow you to do just that. The first is Graceful Studio’s “Hold-Me-Tight” rod holder and this was the first grabbing tool I ever purchased (photo above). This ingenious little tool allows you to pick up a short piece of glass and use it right up to the last inch or so without burning your fingers. Best of all, you can hold your mandrel in one hand and pick up the glass with the tool using your other hand. There is no need to put anything down to use this tool. It will hold rods from about 1.5mm to 12mm in diameter, and it keeps a nice, firm grip on your glass. It does take some hand strength to use this tool, but the pay-off is that it is strong. You can purchase one of these nifty tools for $24.00 from GracefulCustoms on Etsy at http://www.gracefulcustoms.etsy.com. I can definitely give this tool a high personal recommendation.

Another handmade tool offered on Etsy is made by Glenn Mincey and is an easy-to-use clamp that grabs the glass and holds it, allowing you to use the rod right up the last half inch (photo left). Best of all, Glenn has added a handle to the grabber that is rounded and thus allows you to easily turn the tool as you wind on the glass. Glass rods are easy to pick up and the tool is lightweight and well balanced - well worth the price of $14.99. One of my favorite features of this tool is that it can be used with strips of stained glass (which I use a lot when making seashell beads). I really can’t say enough good things about this tool. Every beadmaker should have one. You can buy one from Glenn in his Etsy store http://www.agates8.etsy.com.

If you like lightweight tools, or you don’t have much hand strength and need a tool that is easy to open, you might want to try the Greedy Grabber from Arrow Springs. This tool comes in two sizes and also allows you to pick up shorts with one hand while holding your mandrel in the other. It will accommodate rods from 1mm to 7mm in diameter. The holding strength is surprisingly good for such a lightweight tool, but the little prong that holds the glass isn’t as stable as the two tools pictured above. Greedy Grabbers are very affordable even for those of us on a budget ($14.95 and $16.95 depending on the size you buy). I was only able to find these tools on the home page of Arrow Springs at http://www.arrowsprings.com, so just follow the link if you’d like to learn more about the greedy Grabbers.
Soda Lime Times

The most expensive holding tool I reviewed is the Italian Style rod holder, also available at Arrow Springs (http://www.arrowsprings.com), Rio Grande (http://www.riogrande.com), ABR Imagery (http://www.abrimagery.com) and Olympic Color Rods (http://www.glasscolor.com). It is a popular tool with the advantage of a round handle, allowing you to rotate the glass as you melt it. Some beadmakers enjoy this feature and are willing to pay the extra money for the round handle design, though there are less expensive tools with the same feature.

The Italian Style rod holder is a variation on the Uncle Al Rod Grabber (designed by Al Jannelle). It’s a pair of hemostats with the rod holder attached. The advantage of this tool is that the handle locks in place, keeping the rod of glass very secure while you melt it. At $30 it is the second most expensive holding tool I reviewed, but the only one with locking handles. The Uncle Al rod holder is available from Arrow Springs, ABR Imagery and Olympic Color Rods.

Lastly, Devardi Glass sells a rod holding tool that is completely different than the others I’ve reviewed. This tool is designed with a round handle, allowing for more range of motion, but the glass is held in place with a screw instead of a clamp. For this reason, you must place the rod into the holder before beginning your bead (as you can’t insert the glass and tighten the tool with one hand). This is a disadvantage if you don’t plan ahead; however the advantage is that it will hold a rod up to 12mm thick, and hold it securely. This tool is well designed and will do everything you need it to do and more, and at $18.99 it is an excellent value.

You can purchase this tool at http://devardiglass.com.

Whatever tool you buy for holding your shorts, it will pay for itself in no time with the savings you’ll receive from using your glass rods right up to the very end. I’m sure, like me, you can think of something fun to do with the money you save.

Let’s Clear things up

Transparent beads can be beautiful, and to make your beads truly transparent through and through, try putting a drop or two of clear fingernail polish into the hole of the bead (after you clean it), and then spread it evenly in the hole with a mandrel. When the polish dries, the hole will be completely clear and your transparent bead won’t have a cloudy looking hole anymore. Just make sure you have removed every speck of bead release before you put the polish inside your bead.
Making lampwork beads is fun and rewarding. It is so rewarding, in fact, that many beadmakers are making a respectable profit making beads. Lampwork has the unique distinction of being a “hobby” with the potential to pay for itself….and much more. There is strong demand for attractive, well-made lampwork beads and we all want to help meet that demand. The question is: when is the right time to begin selling your beads?

Like anything that is market driven, the simple answer would be: when people are willing to buy them. But we all know it’s much more complicated than that. Lampwork is not widgets. When you sell your beads you are selling your own creative energy, and your work is forever linked to you. With that in mind, the true answer would be that you can sell your beads when they are worthy to represent you as an artist. I’m not talking about perfection…but definitely more than just proficiency.

In 2004 Corina Tettinger published a booklet called The Spotlight on Marketing Lampwork Beads on the Internet and I have read it so many times my copy is dog-eared. I consider this publication to be the best resource out there for anyone interested in selling lampwork beads online. If you can get your hands on a copy of this publication, read it! In the Spotlight, Corina addresses technical proficiency: “This is the bottom line. If your beads aren’t nice, all the smart marketing in the world won’t bring you any success. What are nice beads? Well, I guess a lot of that is a matter of taste, but at least the holes should be nice and smooth (and cleaned!), the shapes should be even (unless they are purposefully uneven), the colors should be crisp (unless it’s an “organic” style), and they should be properly annealed.”

Let me caution you, however, that simply offering beads which are technically “acceptable” may not benefit you in the long term. If your goal is to make a name for yourself as a respected beadmaker, offering your beads for sale too soon could backfire on you. Corina goes on to say, “I don’t know exactly what it is about beads, but I don’t think there’s any other art, craft, or hobby (whatever you want to call beadmaking), where people are trying to SELL their products almost right after having figured out the basic techniques, or sometimes even sooner.”

Corina said it all. The downside of selling too soon is that your beads will fetch a lower price than you may want and the more beads you sell at the lower price, the harder it is to move beyond those initial prices. It can take several years to build a clientele once buyers discover you, so you must think about the type of buyers you want to attract. You may, in fact, get a reputation as someone with bargain beads. It may be best to wait until you have achieved some skill, or developed your own personal style, so that you are known for quality from the beginning. Imagine how nice it would feel to hear from a customer who tells you, “I just found you and your beads are amazing! Where have you been hiding? I’ll be back for more.”

Be warned, Internet buyers are especially savvy when it comes to buying beads because they have, at the click of a mouse, access to the world’s best beadmakers. Your beads will be out there in cyberspace, in a big ol’ pot of bead soup, and they’ll be seen side-by-side with some awesome lampwork. You can do more harm than good by jumping into online bead sales too soon. There are, however, other options when you are just starting out, and they are a lot closer to home than you may realize.

Our local ISGB chapter participates in trunk shows at our favorite local bead store, Spring Beads (http://www.springbeads.com). The owners invite us several times a year to set up tables at their store and they invite all of their customers to the show. Being the smart businesswomen that they are, participating in the show is free for our members because we draw business into the store and they benefit from the additional sales.
Some bead store owners expect a percentage of the sales from an in-store trunk show, so you will have to adjust your prices to accommodate their commission. You can negotiate the terms of the show, but never open negotiations assuming you will have to pay for the privilege of having a trunk show in their shop. If you present the proposal well, they will see the benefit of having you there (especially if you can bring multiple beadmakers with you to increase attendance. This is a win-win opportunity for the artists and shop owner.

Your target audience is people who love beads and probably have seen some lampwork beads either online or in person. They can pick them up and look at them, even carry them around the shop looking for coordinating beads. This just isn't possible when they buy online, so bead store customers LOVE trunk shows. Our members even display bead strands here and there on their tables, next to lampwork beads that coordinate with them. We've made a lot of sales for the shop by doing this.

So, if you are new to beadmaking and want to get your feet wet at a local bead store trunk show, what should you make? As I spoke with other beadmakers about this, the unanimous answer was, “Keep it simple and within your skill level”. Spacers priced at fifty cents to a dollar sell like crazy, and if you add some dots, frit or a twistie to them, they sell even better. If it’s nothing more than skillfully made frit beads, every bead on your table should be well made and free of flaws (no sharp edges or cracks). My personal experience is that focals sell better than sets, but they don’t have to be overly large or complex. Many people prefer smaller focals (especially those pressed into a lentil or tab so that they are lightweight and easy to wear).

By all means bring a big bowl of orphan beads. At the end of one show I was amazed when I added up my total for the day only to discover that over fifty percent of my sales had been in decorated spacers and orphans. Perhaps it’s the hunter and gatherer in all of us that gives people so much pleasure digging through that bowl of orphans looking for a prize.

No matter what you make for the show, remember that quality is better than quantity. One of my longtime customers (Janet) told me this about buying lampwork: “I hate to say this, but I can usually spot a newbie bead a mile away. That’s not a bad thing. I have bought more than my share of newbie beads. They have simpler designs/shapes and less use of color and added materials, like foil, frit, enamel, etc. If they are pressed, you can see seam lines and chill marks, which I avoid (I feel that chill marks mean that the bead may have not been properly heated before put in the kiln, and it’s unsightly).”

“I would recommend the newbie keep it simple. Practice one technique...and get it down. Then sell that in lots of colors and add frit and silver. An impressive pair of earring spacers is better than a tray full of wonkies! If your holes have sharp edges, consider NOT selling that bead. It will tear the stringing material in jewelry designs and will be uncomfortable to hold in the hand. Your work reflects back on you. If I go to a table and search through your beads and find that one bead with sharp edges...it may leave a bad cast on the rest of your beads.”

Lack of experience is not always a turn off to buyers. When I asked Janet if she would rather purchase beads by experienced beadmakers versus “newbies”, she said, “Not really...some folks just have talent! I do look at their prices and I feel that some of that price covers their experience as well. A Newbie bead and a Kim Neely bead, even if similar, won’t command the same price from me. I like to find new artists and follow them and collect their works over time. It’s interesting to see how they change and finally find a niche.”

Another customer (Suzy) who has purchased hundreds of lampwork beads, both online and at live shows, explained her buying philosophy to me: “I love color, so that is a big factor in what I buy. Must be very wearable and in the colors of the moment. Also, I look for wonderful combinations of neutrals. I don’t like beads with blobs of glass all over them. I look for form and proportion. Accidents that look like accidents give beadmakers a poor reputation. I want everyone to know and appreciate the tiny works of art that all of you create!”

Next month we’ll discuss selling your beads online. Until then, I hope you’ll contact bead stores in your area and plan a trunk show. It’s the best way ever to get your feet wet before jumping into the deep end...selling online.
A Little Lampwork Trivia

ACROSS
4  Gelly Sty ________
7  A big bead
8  Made by fusing a thin layer of metal to glass
10 Zooziis or Cattwalk
14 Element that gives amber glass its color
15 Rubino ___
19 A tool used to move glass
20 ___________ Society of Glass Beadmakers
22 Placing beads in acid to produce a matte finish
23 This year’s Gathering is in what city?
24 Has a COE of 104
25 Paper thin pieces of glass, a decoration
29 Creation is ____________
30 Iris Gold ____________ frit
31 Tells your kiln what to do
32 Element that gives pink glass its color
33 Has a COE of 90

DOWN
1 Glass is a super-cooled ____________
2 This glass is made in Germany
3 Element that gives green glass its color
5 A graphite shaping tool
6 Scary sea creature and the name of a torch
9 A reducing flame has too much of this
11 Another name for Borosilicate glass
12 Evil ___________ Purple
13 Has a COE of 96
16 Element that gives purple glass its color
17 Every studio needs good ____________
18 Pulling ____________
21 Reichenbach and Boro are not ____________
22 This glass is made in Italy
26 Double Helix & TAG glass are high in ____________
27 Element that gives blue glass its color
28 Opal ____________
29 Pixie dust is made from this substance

You can print just this page to work the puzzle.
Answers are at the end of the magazine.
Beads of Courage
The ABCs of BOC

When is a bead more than a bead? When it is given to a child undergoing treatment for cancer as a reward for bravery and courage. The Soda Lime Times is an ardent supporter of the Beads of Courage program and we hope that our readers will learn more about this extraordinary organization.

Beads of Courage is a resilience-based intervention designed to support and strengthen the protective resources in children coping with serious illness. Through the program children tell their story using colorful beads as meaningful symbols of courage that commemorate milestones they have achieved along their unique treatment path.

Upon enrollment each child is given the Beads of Courage bead color guide with a detachable membership card. Their Beads of Courage journey begins when each child is first given a length of string and beads that spell out their first name. Then, colorful beads, each representing a different treatment milestone are given to the child by their professional health care provider to add to their Beads of Courage collection throughout their treatment.

Donated handmade beads are given to children as they pass treatment milestones that are distinguished by a one-of-a-kind bead. We, as glass beadmakers, have the opportunity to create beads for the courageous children in the Beads of Courage program. And they are in need of beads on a continuous basis as the supply of handmade beads seems to shrink at an alarming rate.

So, what kind of beads does Beads of Courage look for? The easier question would be, what don't they want? They don't want beads that are not cleaned or have any bead release remaining in the bead. They don't want beads that have sharp ends that could injure the child or damage the cord onto which the beads are strung. They don't want beads made with reduction glass, frits, powders or enamels that leave a metallic surface on the beads (so make sure if you use silver that it is encased). Lastly, they don't want beads that are cracked or damaged. With these simple "don'ts" in mind, the sky's the limit on what they do want.

Donated beads can be any size or shape and should made on mandrels 1/16” or larger (3/32” is the preferred size). Because children will be handling the beads, beads should not have protruding details that can break off and cause injury. All surface designs should be well adhered, and all beads should be kiln annealed.

Handmade glass beads are used as Act of Courage beads. Children choose from this selection to acknowledge special milestones, a particularly rough time or for instances not on the regular bead guide. Purple hearts are given to a child at the end of treatment, and these are the most special and significant bead they receive. Butterfly beads are presented to the family when a child loses their battle with cancer and is a very meaningful bead. Fortunately, the need for purple hearts is always greater than for butterflies, and you can contact Robert Simmons (director of bead donations) at rsimmons@beadsofcourage.org to learn more about donating beads to Beads of Courage. You can also visit the Beads of Courage web site at http://www.beadsofcourage.org for more information about where to send your donated beads.

In future issues we’ll be printing some wonderful tutorials for beads that are perfect for Beads of Courage. In the meantime I encourage everyone to dig through your bead box and send in those beads.
How to Make Murrini

A tutorial by Glenn Mincey & Avaline Pierson
Introduction

For anyone lucky enough to own one of Glenn and Avaline’s optic molds, you will have received these tutorials free with your purchase. They were kind enough to allow the Soda Lime Times to print them so that other beadmakers could see how fun and easy murrinis are to make. Thanks Glenn and Avaline.

A little about Glenn:
Hi, I just wanted to tell you a little bit about myself. I have lived in Washington State my whole life. I have been making lampwork beads full time for the last six years. I remember the first time I tried it. My awesome girlfriend showed me how to make a basic round bead, and I said that looks easy, so I tried it. It wasn’t so easy, and it dripped right on the table. I was determined, and tried again. I finally got a bead made, and then I was hooked forever. I have studied just about everything I could get my hands on, so I could be very well versed in soft glass lampworking. I would like to add my parents and my grandfather played an important role in my decision to be a lamp worker. They were avid gem and rock hunters. I remember enjoying time with them as a child hunting petrified wood, agate, obsidian, jasper and many other beautiful stones. Those memories I now incorporate into my work.

Etsy  http://www.agate58.etsy.com/

A little about Avaline:
Hi, I have been making lampwork beads since 2002. I can’t believe I have been making beads that long. I had made polymer clay beads for about 8 years before getting interested in making glass beads. I have always been interested in arts and crafts. When I first met my boyfriend I never thought he would be interested in making beads. It was funny to watch him make his first bead. I’m glad I got him hooked on bead making because sometimes it does make it more fun.

Etsy  http://www.imakebeads.etsy.com

To contact Glenn or Avaline with questions about their tools or techniques, or just to tell them how much you enjoyed their tutorials, you can e-mail them at: trsrhnt@frontier.com & imkbds@yahoo.com

Tools & supplies you will need

3/32 mandrel 12 point optic mold (optional)  http://www.agate58.etsy.com/
Glass nippers
Marver
Glass rods and stringers
Punty
3/16 mandrel (optional)
Bead Sizer (optional)  http://www.agate58.etsy.com/
Tweezers for applying your murrini
6 point optic mold (optional)  http://www.agate58.etsy.com/

Effetre glass colors used in the murrini:
Dark Yellow #412
Violet #272
Nile green #214
Black #064
Let's get started…

**Step 1**
Heat the end of your 3/32 mandrel to a red glow, so it is hot enough for the glass to stick. Do not use bead release on your mandrel. Heat your dark yellow glass rod to create a gather to wrap around the end of the mandrel. I usually use 3 or 4 small gathers. Use your marver to make a barrel. Make the barrel about an inch long, and the diameter about ½ an inch. After marvering, I warm up the glass in the flame but I keep the shape.

**Step 2**
Now we are going to add the violet over the dark yellow. Lay down thick stripes of violet. When laying down the stripes next to each other apply a slight pressure to the glass to help prevent trapped air bubbles. After you are finished applying the glass, marver it back into a barrel shape. Warm up the glass, but don't lose the shape.

**Step 3**
Finally, apply the nile green as you did the violet in step 2. The final diameter size of the barrel should be about ¾ inch, and about 1 inch long for best results when using the 12 point optic mold. An 18 or 20 mm bead sizer is great to use when checking your diameter.

If you are not using the optic mold go to Step 7.
Step 4
Now that we have built a large barrel we want to evenly heat the glass. Once it starts to glow continue heating the barrel in a vertical position until it starts to get soft and droop. Quickly move to the optic mold and plunge the glass gently into the mold. After you remove the glass, warm it up slightly in the flame. Do not melt the grooves down. The pictures below show the glass being shaped with the mold.

Push the mandrel to the base and it should be cool enough to remove. After you remove the glass, warm it up slightly in the flame.

**CAUTION:**
The metal surfaces of the optic mold do get hot!
Step 5
Use black stringers for your stripes. When applying the stripes turn your flame down, so you don’t melt the grooves. I applied the stripes left to right, but they can be applied either direction. Apply slight pressure when adding the stripes to the grooves to avoid trapping air bubbles. Once the grooves are filled, turn up your flame and warm up your gather.

Step 6
Warm up your punty and attach it to your gather, so you can pull your glass into a cane. I used a large rod of clear glass, but you can also use a 3/16 mandrel.

Go to step 8. The photos below show how to make the murrini without an optic mold.

Step 7
You should have a nice shaped barrel from Step 3. It should be about 1 inch long and about ¾ inch diameter. I used black 2-3 mm stringers in this step. I turn down my flame when I apply my stringer, so it is easier to control the glass. I applied the black stripes to one side and then rotated to the other side. I continued doing this around the barrel until I felt I had enough stripes. I usually do 8 stripes, but it can be more or less. Be sure to lightly push down your stripes when applying them.
I used nile green stringers to fill in the space between the black stripes. When you finish applying your stripes turn your flame up and warm the glass. Now warm up your punty and attach it to the glass. I used a 3/16 mandrel as a punty.

Note: You could also just use all black stripes. I just think it looks better when I alternate the colors for the stripes.

### Step 8
Heat the glass gently to a nice bright even glow, being careful to not twist the glass. Melt your stripes in completely. Once it is evenly heated and glowing, remove from the flame. Now this can be the tricky part. You need to get a feel for the glass. Rotate the glass but try not to twist. You need to let the glass cool some, but not too much. When you feel it is no longer too soft, start pulling slowly. As the glass cools you may need to pull faster to get a uniform size cane. Keep pulling until you can no longer pull. I like to pull mine to about 3-5 mm diameter. Lay your cane down and cut the ends off with your glass nippers. The best way to remove the glass from your mandrel is to put the hot glass into water.

These are the finished murrini using the optic mold (left) and without (right).

Now, would you like to know how to attach them to a bead? Read on....
How to Apply Murrini to Your Bead

A tutorial by Glenn Mincey & Avaline Pierson

Spot heat the area of the bead where you would like to apply your murrini. You should already have a piece of murrini in your tweezers. You do need to be quick with this step. Remove your bead from the flame and set your murrini into the hot glass. If you do this quickly enough the glass should still be hot enough for the murrini to stick. This may take some practice before you get the hang of it.

The next step is to slightly spot heat the murrini and gently push it into the bead with your marver. You may need to do this several times. It does take practice and patience when applying murrini.

Finished beads using the above murrini.

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I discovered this bead design quite by accident, but I surely can’t be the first person to make beads like this. There aren’t too many truly original designs out there, so I don’t claim the credit. Most of us simply discover something as we are working along or we stumble onto a good idea while trying to fix a bad bead. That is how I discovered this fun technique for raked dot beads.

There is a popular bead style made by applying offsetting dots to opposite sides of a base bead and when melted in, the dots become triangles. You’ve probably all seen beads like that. But getting the triangles to have nice, crisp points is not easy. This technique started out as my attempt to “coax” the little triangles into shape, and then it morphed into something completely different as I began to experiment with different ways of stacking the dots. The best part of this technique is that the dots don’t have to be perfect. It’s very forgiving, and for that reason it’s a great bead to make when you are learning dot placement and heat control.

To make this bead you will need a tungsten raking tool, and rods of glass in black, ivory and dark amber. It is easier to make the dots if you use commercial stringer or your own handmade stringer 2mm-3mm thick.

1-Wind on a base bead that is slightly donut shaped and not too large. You’ll be adding several layers of dots, so the base should not be too big or too wide.

This technique works best when you layer an opaque and then a transparent, and so on, and if you alternate light and dark, light and dark. For this bead, the base is Effetre black. A dark transparent color is a good choice for the base bead because of the contrast it produces in the final bead.

2-Apply four evenly spaced opaque light ivory (or white) dots along one shoulder and four dots on the other shoulder between the first four dots.

Don’t make the dots so large that they will spread and completely cover the black base. Some of the base color should be visible when all layers of dots have been melted in.
3- Melt in the ivory dots, applying heat to the sides near the mandrel instead of in the center.

The goal is to pull the glass toward the edges instead of to the middle, and since the glass will flow in the direction of the heat, apply the heat to the edges. When the ivory is almost melted in, apply heat to the middle just to smooth out the shape.

Slow, gentle heating is important when making this bead.

4- Apply dark amber dots over each ivory dot, but place the dot not in the center of the ivory dot, but closer to the mandrel so that some of the ivory is still visible near the center. You don’t want to completely cover the ivory dot.

Always work amber higher in the flame to keep it from bubbling.

For this step it is fine if the amber overlaps the ivory dot near the mandrel.

5- Melt in the amber, again applying the heat near the mandrel and not on the center of the bead.

Again, slow, gentle heating is best. Try to control the heat so that the dots do not distort. Take your time.

6- Repeat the process above with light another layer of light ivory (it’s OK to overlap the amber near the mandrel). Melt in.
7- Add another layer of dark amber dots.

In this photo you can really see how the outline of each preceding row is visible because each new layer is added near the mandrel and not in the middle of the dot.

8- Melt in the final layer of dark amber.

Notice how the footprint of the bead is wider than when you first started. By adding glass to the edges and not to the middle, and then applying heat to the edges to draw the glass toward the mandrel, the bead shape has spread out slightly. This is the reason for starting with a donut shaped base bead.

9- Now for the fun part: apply heat to the center (equator) of the bead, aiming for the tip of one triangle. With a raking tool, gently grab the tip of the triangle and pull it toward the mandrel, extending the pull just slightly beyond the edge of the bead.

To do this effectively, you don’t need to apply heat for more than a couple of seconds, and the pulling action is very gentle.

10- Rotate the bead 180 degrees and do the same to the triangle on the opposite side.

Repeat this step with the two remaining triangles on one side.
11. If you are working in the middle of the mandrel, this is where you can flip the mandrel and pull the remaining four triangles in the same direction as the first. If you are working on the end of the mandrel, angle the mandrel and pull the final four triangles. Then gently heat the entire bead before placing it in the kiln.

And on the right is a photo of some finished beads, after annealing. This is such a fun and easy design I hope you’ll use this tutorial as a jumping off point for many other color combinations.

Torch Tip
From Janet Robinson

To extend the life your oxygen concentrator, turn it off as SELDOM as possible. Leave it on for your entire lampworking session. This was advice given to me by a gentleman that services medical devices, including oxygen concentrators (oxycons). I quickly turn off the oxygen at the torch, then turn off the propane at the torch to extinguish the flame, then slowly turn the oxy back on at the torch to keep the oxycon running, so my flame is off and the torch is only blowing oxygen. I do this for bathroom breaks and lunchtime. When I return, I turn off the oxy at the torch and relight the propane, then slowly turn up the oxy...VOILA! I never had to turn off my oxycon.

Learn to Make Seashell and Animal Print Beads
Three tutorial set by Diane Woodall & Becky Mason
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Crossword Puzzle answers

A Little Lampwork Trivia

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Until next time....

...stay cool.
Don’t miss the next issue – All About Frit

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The Soda Lime Times is actively seeking contributions of articles, photographs and tutorials from beadmakers who want to share their knowledge with others. The goal of this magazine is to entertain and educate anyone interested in learning more about lampwork. If you have something to contribute, suggestions for making the newsletter better or ideas for future issues, please contact me at diane@sodalimetimes.com