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Society of Bead Researchers

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THE BEAD FORUM

Newsletter of the Society of Bead Researchers

MICHAEL A. PFEIFFER, Editor

845 Cagle Rock Road, Russellville, Arkansas 72802, USA

Number 50

April 2007

SOCIETY NEWS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The annual General Business Meeting of the Society of Bead Researchers was held in conjunction with the Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA) 40th Conference on Historical and Underwater Archaeology, in Williamsburg, Virginia, 11-13 January 2007. The meeting was held under the able direction of Karlis Karklins as your President was confined to an easy chair flat on his back and unable to attend. My apologies to the membership and especially Karlis who operated the book room sales desk essentially by himself.

On behalf of The Society of Bead Researchers I would like to thank Dr. Jeffrey M. Mitchem for his service to the Society as Secretary/Treasurer. When the former Secretary/Treasurer was unable to continue in the position, Jeff resigning as President to serve as interim Secretary/Treasurer. In doing so, he did the Society a major favor and jumped from the frying pan into the fire in terms of his SBR work load. Jeff has now found that he cannot continue in the position and resigned as of the end of his current term. We all wish Jeff well as he returns to his normal duties and thank Jeff for his extended emergency help to the Society.

It is with pleasure that we can now officially state that Alice Scherer is the newly elected Secretary/Treasurer of The Society of Bead Researchers. It is especially significant that Alice was willing to step forward to fill the most important elected position in the Society at a time when the Society is in need of strong leadership. We are also fortunate because Alice has both experience and a host of new ideas for improvement and reactivation of the Society. We look forward to the active participation of Alice Scherer in Society affairs.

Roderick Sprague
President

SBR 2007 BUSINESS MEETING

The SBR's Annual Business Meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm on 11 January 2007 by Editor Karklins in the Colony Room of the Williamsburg Lodge, Williamsburg, Virginia. This was during the course of the Society for Historical Archaeology conference held at the same site.

Old Business

President's Report: There was no report from the President as Roderick Sprague was incapacitated by a medical problem.

Secretary-Treasurer's Report:

Membership:

In 2006, the Society of Bead Researchers had a total of 99 members and subscribers. They are broken down as follows:

North American individual members & subscribers	59
Overseas individual members & subscribers	10
Benefactor members	3
Patron members	3
Sustaining members	9
Gratis, Mandatory, & Bead Societies	<u>15</u>
TOTAL	99

This is a drop from the total of 118 in 2005.

Financial Information:

In 2006, the bank where SBR has its checking account changed its name from First State Bank to Evolve Bank & Trust.

Total revenue for 2006 was \$4,364.47, while total expenditures were \$2,969.76. As of December 31, 2006, the balances in SBR's accounts were:

Evolve Bank & Trust Checking Account	US\$16,580.78
Wells Fargo Money Market Fund	US\$28,008.49
PayPal Account	US \$347.90
TD Central Trust Checking Account	<u>US\$ 3,610.78</u>
TOTAL	US\$48,547.95

Editor's Report: Vol. 15 of the journal *Beads* will shortly be printed and distributed by the end of January. Work is already proceeding on Vol. 16 and it is hoped that it will be ready by the early summer. If papers are forthcoming, it may be possible to get another journal out by year's end.

It is hoped that the publication of at least two journals this year will reignite interest in the SBR and increase the membership as well as the submission of good articles of interest to an international audience.

Newsletter Editor's Report: This was not presented as Editor Pfeiffer was not able to attend nor submit a report due to a death in the family.

New Business

The Future of the SBR: As membership in the Society has dropped and both editors are having difficulty soliciting material for their respective publications, it has raised the question as to whether the SBR is serving a useful role in promoting bead research and disseminating the resultant knowledge. While the current trend is to access information electronically, the consensus was that there is still a definite need for published material and that the journal should be continued until at least the next two issues have been printed and the bead research community has had time to evaluate them and the fate of the Society. It was stressed that we need people to submit good articles to the journal, as well as books for review. A major problem is that there are now many more venues for articles and reports on beads than there were when the journal was first proposed in 1988. This has dramatically reduced the number of articles that are submitted for consideration for publication in *Beads*. Several internet web sites have also taken over the task of *The Bead Forum*, making information available much more quickly than our biannual newsletter can.

To increase awareness of the SBR, we need members to actively promote the SBR at archaeological meetings, bead shows, and bead society meetings. To this end the SBR had a table in the book room at the SHA conference in Williamsburg, Virginia, which offered our publications as well as books on bead research. This elicited quite a bit of interest from many of the attendees, especially graduate students who were working on projects that involved beads. Most of these individuals were not aware of the SBR's existence prior to this. Subsequently, sales of our publications were good and it is hoped that some of those who came by will become SBR members. If you are willing to take membership/order forms to meetings and shows, contact the editor (karlis44@aol.com) and he will send you the appropriate form by email or the forms themselves.

Some time was also devoted to discussing the SBR web site. While it is static, it does garner most of the publication orders and memberships we receive. It could be expanded in several ways to make it more interesting to the public, but this will require input from someone who is willing to devote some time and thought to it. Are you that person?

Other New Business: There being no other new business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Karlis Karklins, Editor

SBR TREASURER'S SUMMARY REPORT FOR 2006

Opening balance as of January 1, 2006			\$47,153.25
INCOME			+\$ 4,364.46
Annual Dues			
Individual N.A.	\$1,080.00		
Individual Overseas	271.20		
Sustaining	360.00		
Patron	150.00		
Benefactor	<u>150.00</u>	\$2,011.20	
Publication Sales			
<i>Beads</i>	979.17		
<i>The Bead Forum</i>	<u>136.00</u>	1,115.17	
Contributions and Grants		62.00	
Investment Income			
Interest Wells Fargo Money			
Market Account	1,175.69		
Interest TD-Canada Trust Checking			
Account (in US dollars)	<u>.40</u>	1,176.09	
EXPENSES			-\$2,969.76
Publications			
<i>Beads</i>	479.94		
<i>The Bead Forum</i>	<u>87.67</u>	567.61	
Publication Storage		1,336.60	
Postage			
Publications	522.64		
Office	<u>32.10</u>	554.74	
Office Expenses (stationery, supplies)		150.81	
Miscellaneous			
Conference Book Room Table Fee	300.00		
State Fee	<u>60.00</u>	360.00	
Closing balance as of December 31, 2006			\$48,547.95

- Respectfully submitted, Karlis Karklins, Editor (March 26, 2007)

PROPOSED SBR BUDGET FOR 2007

Opening Balance as of 1 January 2007			\$48,547.95
INCOME			+4,400.00
Annual Dues			
Individual	\$1,400.00		
Sustaining	250.00		
Patron	150.00		
Benefactor	<u>150.00</u>	1,950.00	
Publication Sales			
<i>Beads</i>	1,250.00		
<i>The Bead Forum</i>	<u>150.00</u>	1,400.00	
Contributions and Grants		50.00	
Investment Income		1,000.00	
EXPENSES			-(\$24,550.00)
Publications			
<i>Beads</i> (3 issues)	(20,000.00)		
<i>Bead Forum</i> (2 issues)	<u>(100.00)</u>	(20,100.00)	
Publication Storage		(1,650.00)	
Postage			
Journal	(1,800.00)		
Newsletter	(200.00)		
Miscellaneous	<u>(400.00)</u>	(2,400.00)	
Office Expenses		(300.00)	
Miscellaneous		(100.00)	
Anticipated Balance as of 31 December 2007			\$28,397.95

Respectfully submitted, Karlis Karklins, Editor (March 26, 2007)

RESULTS OF THE SBR ELECTION

An election was recently held to fill the position of Secretary-Treasurer for the term 2007-2009. Jeffrey M. Mitchem's term expired on December 31, 2006. A Call for Nominations was published in the October 2006 (Number 46) issue of *The Bead Forum*. One nomination was received: Alice Scherer. A total of 68 ballots were distributed to 2007 members during the month of January. Of these, 25 were received by the deadline of February 12. The results were 24 "approve" and 1 "do not approve." Thanks to all of those who voted.

For those of you who don't know her: Alice Scherer started the Center for the Study of Beadwork in the mid-1980s to gather and disseminate information on beadwork. A large, early focus of the CSB was promoting the work of contemporary bead workers, culminating in publication of the book *The New Beadwork*. This book kicked off the "beadwork as an art form" movement and fulfilled her dream of having beadwork be respected as an art form.

Her interest in beadwork began in the early 1970s and she has always been interested in all forms of beadwork, with an especial interest in that of cultures outside of the Caucasian world. Moving forward, she plans to learn more about Northwest Indian work, work made from naturally-occurring materials (discoidal shell beads worked into beadwork, for instance), and the beadwork of Central and South America. In fact, she is hoping that SBR members with special foci in those areas will initiate contact with her at alice@europa.com to open a dialogue.

Academically, she is a "passionate amateur" who is currently taking anthropology and Spanish classes to prepare her for field research and deepen her knowledge. She agreed to become Secretary/Treasurer as she realized she couldn't keep foisting off responsibility for running the SBR onto others much longer and looks forward to doubling or tripling the membership and hence the coffers.

She would also like to talk with any members who have experience in "umbrella organizations" to see about establishing some sort of grants program within the SBR as the SBR would be a perfect means to allow grants to funnel through to private researchers currently unaffiliated with an academic organization.

We welcome Alice to her new position.

---Respectfully submitted, Jeffrey M. Mitchem

LOOKING FOR A NEW PRESIDENT AND NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Dr. Roderick Sprague's term as SBR President ends on December 31, 2007. Due to health and other concerns, Smoke Pfeiffer, our current newsletter editor, will be resigning from his post on that date as well. If you are interested in running for either position or would like to nominate a candidate, please contact Karlis Karklins (karlis44@aol.com). The nominee must be a member of the Society in good standing. The term for both positions is four years. Ballots for the

presidential election will be mailed with the fall *Bead Forum*. The newsletter editor's position is an appointed one and does not require a ballot.

OTHER BEAD RELATED NEWS

EXHIBITIONS

The Bead Museum DC currently has three exhibits, its permanent Time Line and two current exhibits-The Sacred Bead and Other Symbols of Faith: Religion in Personal Adornment and a two-part Shakespeare exhibit titled To Bead Or Not To Bead and Beads and The Bard. Sacred Bead runs through August of this year and the Shakespeare exhibits end mid-June.

The Time Line, the Museum's permanent exhibit, shows how people have used beads from the end of the Paleolithic era, about 14,000 years ago, to the present. The portion of the Time Line dating from 1200 CE is currently being updated with the intention of adding more beads to illustrate more completely the Americas, Asia, and Africa.

The two-part Shakespeare exhibit coincides with the Shakespeare in Washington festival inaugurated by the Kennedy Center and occurring throughout the Washington cultural scene. Plays, operas, symphonies, a trial of Hamlet, and many other events make up the festival. It runs from January through June of this year.

As a part of that festival, The Bead Museum DC has put up a two-part exhibit. To Bead Or Not To Bead shows how beaded costuming has been used in Shakespearean productions over the centuries. It features artifacts from recent and contemporary productions and photographs of pieces and actors/actresses wearing beaded pieces from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Beads and the Bard is a collection of 15 pieces made by 12 Washington-area designers. Each creation illustrates the designer's interpretation of a particular character and scene from one of Shakespeare's plays. For example, there is Desdemona's handkerchief from Othello or a scary necklace made of frogs and spiders, etc. for one of the Three Sisters in MacBeth.

The Sacred Bead exhibit shows how humans have used beads as religious symbols over time. Included are seven religions: Ancient Egyptian, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Animism/Shamanism. The exhibit illustrates how much in common major religions have with each other. Exhibit pieces were borrowed largely from members of the Society, but there are significant contributions from friends of the Museum, too. Cases include prayer necklaces (rosaries, tasbihs, or malas), earrings, and other forms of personal adornment (headpieces or pendants or rings, for instance). A booklet accompanying this exhibit awaits publication. The Museum has an agreement with Diana Friedberg, producer of the DVD series World on a String, to put up an exhibit each time she produces a new segment of the series.

As these exhibits come down this summer, they will be replaced with new shows designed to highlight other areas of human culture and history at the Museum. The Museum is located at 7th and D Streets, NW, Washington, DC 20004. Phone number is 202-624-4500, e-mail at www.beadmuseumdc.org.

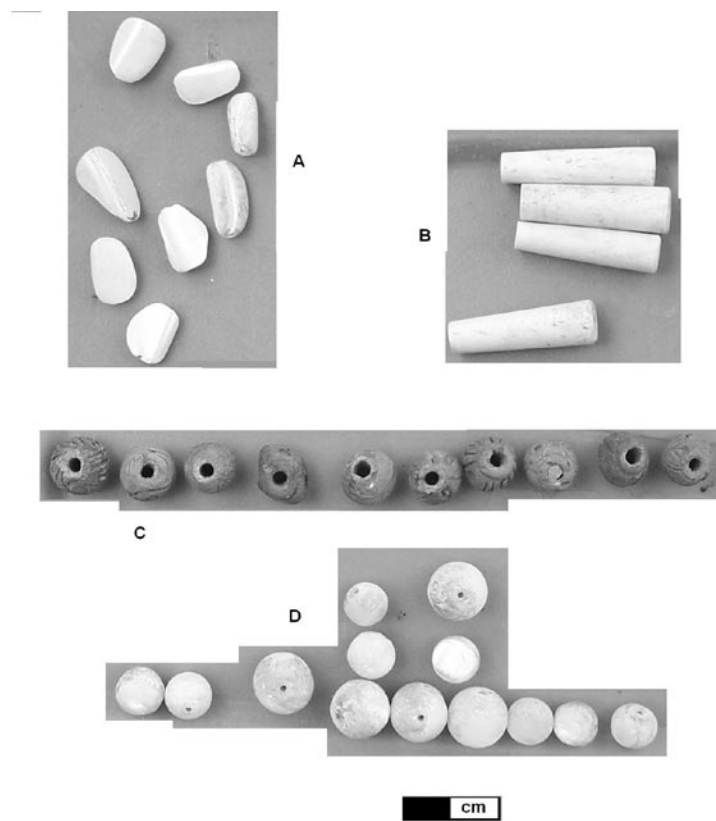
REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Recently, a local farmer asked me to look at a "cache" of beads found on his farm several years ago. According to the information provided, a tenant on his farm noticed some of the beads eroding out of

a large creek bank in Sumner County, Tennessee. Further digging in the bank yielded the total of thirty-five beads. The recovered beads include: A) eight irregularly shaped beads made from segments of freshwater mussel shells or marine shells; b) four tubular bone (?) beads; c) ten incised pottery beads; and d) thirteen perforated freshwater pearls (some probably artificially rounded). The ceramic beads are the most intriguing of the items – several exhibit geometric patterns while others appear to represent “faces” (including possibly turtle, fish, and snake). While this assemblage is unique in my experience, I have no reason to question the veracity of the informant or the information provided.

The find spot is isolated and shows little other evidence of either prehistoric or historic artifacts in the immediate vicinity. Although a large prehistoric Mississippian town site (ca. A.D. 1200-1350) is located within a mile or so of the find spot, clay beads of this type are unattested from prehistoric Mississippian sites (or earlier sites). The cache location is, however, within a two-mile radius of a large number of Tennessee frontier period forts, farms, and plantations (mid-1700s through early 1800s) with significant representations of settlers of British, Irish, Scottish, and African descent (primarily slaves).

I am interested in any information on necklaces or caches similar in material composition and form – and particularly any information on pottery beads similar to those illustrated. Please contact: Kevin E. Smith, Professor of Anthropology, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro TN 37132-0001. Email: kesmith@mtsu.edu. Telephone: (615)-898-5958.



Bead "cache": a) shell beads; b) tubular bone beads; c) pottery beads; d) pearl beads.



Six pottery beads



Four pottery beads illustrating possible "faces" (left two beads) and geometric motifs (right two beads)

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Birk, Douglas, A., and Jeffrey J. Richner

2004 *From Things Left Behind: A Study of Selected Fur Trade Sites and Artifacts, Voyageurs National Park and Environs 2001-2002*. Issued jointly as: *Midwest Archeological Center Technical Report Number 84* and *Institute for Minnesota Archaeology Reports of Investigations Number 606*.

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/mwac/publications/pdf/tech84.pdf>

Cayron, Jun G.

2006 *Stringing the Past. An archaeological understanding of early Southeast Asian glass bead trade Quezon City, Diliman [Metro Manila]*. University of the Philippines Press. xv, 91pp. Illust. Wrappers. \$ 10.00 + shipping/packing

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 published a biannual newsletter, *The Bead Forum*, and an annual journal, *Beads*. The society website is:
<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 2007. 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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