

passing through

Marlene Blessing

Confessions of a Magpie



This past week at the Tucson bead shows was a full-bead immersion for me—both as a developing beader and as the new editor of *Beadwork* magazine. Tent-loads of beads, baubles, findings, fabrics, tools, and more drew me from one beautiful display to another. It took just a few hours of happy wandering to empty my wallet of my cash allowance! I also

had the joy and privilege of revealing conversations with this magazine's founding editor, Jean Campbell. She offered generous introductions to her beading colleagues and shared stories of her eight years at the helm of the good ship *Beadwork*.

As I join this outstanding magazine for its future journeys, I want to offer some words of introduction. I am no stranger to jewelry, beaded and not, having been an avid collector for many years. Indeed, my collection spilloth over. I am also no stranger to crafting. My own work has included sewing, quilting, embroidering, clay sculpting, and, most recently, stringing beads. Last, I have worked as an editor and writer for books, magazines, and newsmagazines. These are the "beads" and "findings" in my tray.

One recent Halloween, I wondered what I could create as an instant costume. Without much hesitation, I converted a Hefty bag into a shift and covered my neck, arms, waist, and earlobes with as much jewelry as I could possibly wear. My sister joined me with her own drapings of necklaces, bracelets, and earrings. Never have garbage bags looked so rich!

My elaborate "bag lady" costume was a solution to an evening's fun; but it was also deeply revealing. I am attracted like a magpie to the beauty of beads. I am also in the habit of saying "I can do that" and then having to make good on the claim. How lucky I feel to be in the company of beaders, who understand how irresistible and soul-satisfying it is to express a vision by creating a unique wearable object. Over the coming months and years, my hands will discover the language that links me to you, dear readers, one bead and one word at a time.

Happy beading,

P.S. Spring is a time for playfulness, so we've chosen some very young models to get us in the spirit! Many thanks to their mothers for lending them to us for the day. We hope you share the sense of fun we got from pairing them with our projects.

What's Cookin' in the *Beadwork* Office?

- Join us for the *Beadwork* Retreat in Sonoma Wine Country August 17–19 for hands-on workshops, then stay for the Sonoma Glass Art & Bead Festival. See pages 24 and 49 for more information.
- *Beadwork*'s fourth juried traveling exhibition *Beadwork IV: The Beaded Figure* will debut at the Museum of Arts & Design in New York April 1–May 15. *Beadwork*'s founding editor Jean Campbell will give a special lecture at the museum at 4:00 p.m. on Friday, April 29. Check the traveling exhibit schedule at www.beadworkmagazine.com for more information and additional tour dates.
- *Beadwork* is delighted to announce its second charity auction event. Thirty items from the *Beadwork* magazine presents: *Stringing Spring 2005* issue will go up for auction April 4–13. Proceeds will be donated to Oxfam America, an organization that's doing valuable relief work for tsunami victims and helping to keep indigenous handicrafts alive. Check www.beadworkmagazine.com to preview auction items, then bid high and often!

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