
SMOKY MOUNTAIN FIRECRACKERS

Dedicated to the Art of Glass Beads

July 2011 Volume 1 Issue 1

Welcome! We are the Smoky Mountain Firecrackers, the Appalachian area chapter of the International Society of Glass Beadmakers. We formed in 2008 after discovering that we have a mutual interest in sharing the art and craft of glass beadmaking, in continuously improving our skills, and in spreading the appreciation of the art form throughout the region.

Our current members are from East and Middle Tennessee. We welcome anyone from the bordering states to join us. And we love visitors! If you are going to be in our area when we have a meeting scheduled, contact us for directions to the meeting site.

We meet officially 6 times a year, the second Sunday of January, March, May, July, September and November, although May usually gets moved to avoid a conflict with Mothers' Day.

So, what is it that we actually DO?? Mostly we have a huge amount of bead fun. We do have a brief business meeting at each official session, but once that is out of the way, we get down to the real stuff – making beads, trading beads, talking about beads, drooling over beads, and sharing our knowledge and enthusiasm with each other. And lunch. Don't forget lunch!

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July 26–31	<p><u>The Gathering XIX</u> ISGB 2011 Gathering, Louisville, KY at the Kentucky Convention Center See the Firecrackers at the Bead Bazaar on Saturday, July 30 at the Kentucky International Convention Center, Table 5.</p>
August 12	<p><u>Smoky Mountain Firecrackers Get Together</u> Post Gathering Show and Tell This will not be a formal meeting. We will share our Gathering experiences. Where: Carol Crye's studio, Knoxville, TN When: 10AM ET/9AM CT Lunch: Bring your own brown bag lunch</p>
September 11	<p><u>Smoky Mountain Firecrackers Meeting</u> Where: Angie Ramey's studio, Crossville, TN When: 10AM ET/9AM CT Lunch: Appetizers and Finger Foods Exchange Challenge: Encasing</p>
September 25-25	<p><u>Hot Time in the Mountains</u> Where: Touch of Glass, Asheville, NC This fall is filled. If you wish to be on the waiting list or the list for notification to sign up for Hot Time and Fire on the Mountain, send an email to m-langston00@gmail.com.</p>
October 22-23	<p><u>American Gem Expo</u> Where: Jubilee Banquet Center, Knoxville, TN Come see members of the Smoky Mountain Firecrackers, and buy our beads! More info, including directions to the facility, at americangemexpo.com</p>
November TBA	<p><u>Smoky Mountain Firecrackers Meeting</u> Where: Carol Crye's studio, Knoxville, TN When: 10AM ET/9AM CT</p>
November 12-13	<p><u>Brad Pearson</u> Where: Marjorie Langston's studio, Chattanooga, TN Email m-langston00@gmail.com to find out if space is still available for this class</p>
December 2-3	<p><u>American Gem Expo</u> Where: Tennessee State Fairgrounds, Nashville, TN Come see members of the Smoky Mountain Firecrackers, and buy our beads! More info, including directions to the facility, at americangemexpo.com</p>

Note: meeting times and places are subject to change.
 Members will receive email notification of any changes.

TESTING 1-2-3: REICHENBACH MULTICOLOR 104 [RL-6209-C]

By Verna Hedgecoth

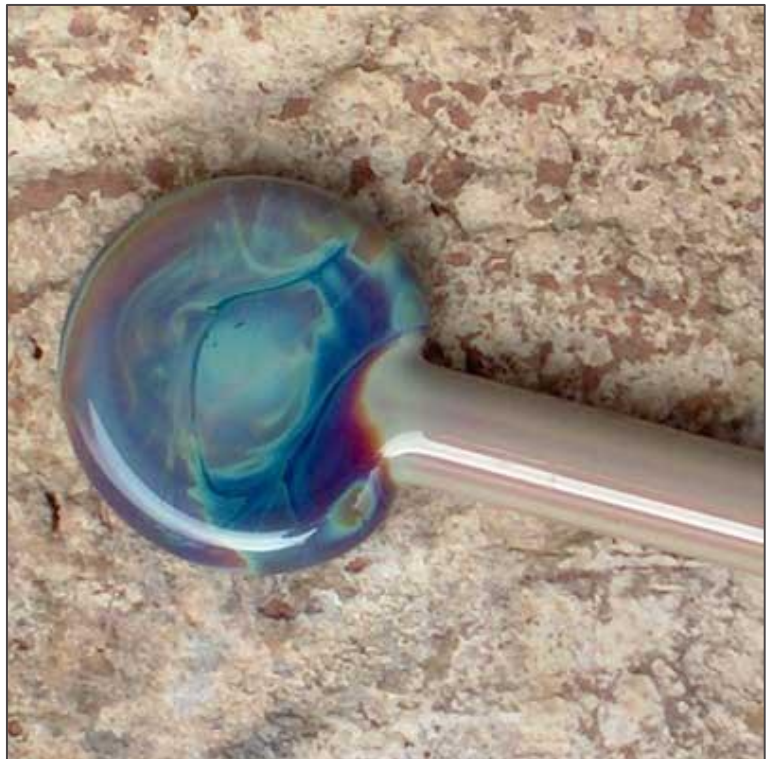
Wherein Verna ~~plays with~~ scientifically tests new glass colors and tells us about the fun she had.

Note: Apologies to Verna! She completed this color test shortly after Multicolor became available. Sadly, it has taken the Editor this long to get the Newsletter completed.

For the best images, you should view the newsletter online at Smokymountainfirecrackers.org via the Newsletter link, or from your email.

This month I've chosen Reichenbach's new COE 104 color "Multicolor," RL-6209-C. As I have played with it, I have determined that it reacts a lot like Raku (Reichenbach Iris Orange) in that it seems to need to be heated, cooled and reheated to bring it to its full range of colors.

Here you can see the initial rod with a paddle that has been heated, mashed, and reheated to flame polish. This color doesn't look very exciting in rod form, but it will definitely surprise you as it changes from this plain neutral color and blooms into all new hues





The first beads I made have raised decorative elements that have been formed and swirled in a normal fashion without being super cooled by pressing, etc. This was my first attempt at using the glass and I was sort of disappointed with the range of colors that I got, so I decided to etch them. Kind of neat, if soft muted colors are what you're after,

For my second attempt, I decided to go back to basics, and made a simple round tube out of Effetre's standard black, using the Multicolor as a raised stringer. Very little color appeared and again I was a bit disillusioned. I decided to see what would happen if I reduced it, so I cranked up the propane, and got – mud. But when I put it back into a neutral flame, the most beautiful dark plum and aqua colors bloomed out. I think this technique warrants further testing.



In this last bead, I wanted to see what the glass would do if it were melted instead of left raised. I used Effetre's transparent pale aqua, 591038, with Multicolor stringer that has been raked and swirled, melted flat, the bead pressed, and then flame polished before going into the kiln. This was my favorite of the three techniques I tried, and you can see the range of colors it produced.



I feel like I've only touched the surface of this glass and its potential. If you get a chance to buy a rod or try a rod, play with it, have fun, and let us know what kind of cool tricks you come up with. All of my testing was done on a GTT Cricket with one 5lpm medical concentrator.

TEN STEPS TO SUCCESS ON ETSY.....BY ANGIE RAMEY

President of the Smoky Mountain Firecrackers, Angie Ramey runs the very successful Etsy store BeadAddicts with her mother, Verna Hedgecoth. Here are Angie's top ten recommendations to make your online presence a success. Even if you sell through your own website or on Ebay instead of through Etsy, Angie's advice adds invaluable insight to selling on the web.

1. CONSISTENCY.

When you get ready to open your Etsy shop, try to have enough items prepared and photographed so that you can list a minimum of two to three items each day for the first month. Space these listings out through the day, and try to list at different times of the day and night if possible. Keeping one of your listings on the first couple of pages in your main category is the best way to draw people into your shop. Once your store is stocked, use the re-list feature if necessary to keep a couple of items readily viewable.

2. SHOP SET-UP.

Since your banner is the first thing your customers will see when they enter your shop, be sure that yours is attractive, preferably with your logo or photographs of your beads or jewelry. Keep your "shop announcement" (the text that appears below your banner) brief. If it's too wordy and long, the first items you have in inventory won't be visible when people first click on your page. There are plenty of separate sections to use for your shop policies, shipping methods, etc. Put that information where it belongs, and just use a brief suggestion in your shop announcement to direct people there to read further details.

3. CATEGORIES.

You're allowed 10 different item categories in your shop. Use them! Make it easy for your buyers to find exactly what they are looking for without having to wade through multiple pages to find it.

4. TAGS AND DESCRIPTIONS.

Etsy allows you to use up to 14 tags per item. Shoppers search for the items they are looking for by entering keywords, and if your beads aren't tagged with those words, they won't show up in the search. Be sure that your tags are accurate to avoid getting flagged, but be creative! You'd be surprised how many people search for beads by color, shape, size, style, etc., so don't forget to include these descriptive terms in your tags. If you find yourself getting stuck when tagging, look for similar items listed in other seller's shops and see what tag words they use to get started. When writing your descriptions, remember that most people don't have time to read a book! Write a couple of lines about your inspiration, how the item was made, etc., then move on to the important information like measurements, hole size, components used in jewelry items, etc. Clients want very specific details before they spend their hard earned cash.

5. QUALITY.

Only list your best items! You don't have to love every single thing you put in your shop. After all, beauty is in the eye of the beholder! But.....you should be certain that there are no cracks, rough ends, under or overfilled pressed beads, off balance beads, etc. This is especially important if you're just beginning to sell and trying to build name recognition. Your feedback rating can make or break you when you are new to a sales venue, so don't give your buyer any reason to leave less than stellar feedback remarks.

6. RETURN POLICY.

Offer an unconditional refund or exchange policy. Nothing is more off-putting to a new buyer than the idea that they might be stuck with beads they don't love. After you have built a following and have some name recognition, you can alter your policy if you'd like, but keeping that buyer confidence is the best way to make repeat sales.

7. PERSONAL CONTACT.

Don't let the sales notice from Etsy be your buyer's only contact after the sale. ALWAYS send a personal note of thanks after a purchase. It makes your customer feel like you truly appreciate that they chose to do business with you. And always leave feedback for the transaction, as it encourages your buyer to do the same.

8. MARKETING.

Use the Etsy forums and get your shop seen! Many of the buyers on Etsy are also sellers on Etsy, and they like to spend their money with other people who know the value of handmade items. Posting regularly in some of the forum threads gets a link to your shop in front of people who might not normally be shopping within your main category.

9. GO GLOBAL.

There are thousands of international buyers on Etsy. Keep your international shipping fees at a fair rate, and they will flock to your store! So many sellers overcharge for their global shipping rates, that when an international buyer finds a seller who ships for a reasonable amount, they become a very loyal customer. In general, a set of 10 moderately sized beads, or a couple of focals can be shipped in a bubble mailer via first class international to anywhere in Europe, Canada, Australia, etc. for \$2-\$3.

10. CONSISTENCY.

Yes, this one is important enough to talk about twice! Keep the items in your shop fresh. Shoppers don't want to see the same 18 items on your first page every time they come for a visit. If there is nothing new to see, eventually they'll stop looking! I can't emphasize enough how important it is to list new items regularly in order to keep customers coming back.

Of course it doesn't happen overnight. But with patience, consistency, and a quality product, you can make Etsy become one of your most valuable and successful sales venues.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ANGIE RAMEY

Angie has been selected as the interim Regional Director for the ISGB East Central Region, replacing Nancy Puffer. While we will miss Nancy and wish her the best as she transitions to other obligations, we are very proud of Angie. Way to go! We know you will be superb in your new role.

WHERE TO FIND THE SMOKY MOUNTAIN FIRECRACKERS

On the Web

www.smokymountainfirecrackers.org

On Facebook – like us!

Smoky Mountain Firecrackers

Email

contact@smokymountainfirecrackers.org

smokymountainfirecrackers@gmail.com

If you would like directions to our meeting locations, want to submit an article for publication in our newsletter, get added to the mailing list, ask a question, or just want to send a shout out to us, email either address, above. The gmail account will get the fastest response if one is required.

Members, would you like to add your blog, your website, your Etsy, Facebook or Ebay shop to this page? Email us with the information. It's like magic – the Big Bead will make it happen.



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 Verna Hedgecoth