

Reflections on the 2014 ISGB Gathering XXII



by Heather Behrendt

After a long plane ride and a bumpy shuttle adventure, I was so happy to enter the beautiful Hyatt Regency in Houston, Texas, ready to experience the ISGB Gathering. I was in awe of how fancy everything felt. The elevators gave a beautiful view of the interior of the hotel. I even spotted a few groups of ladies who I was sure were fellow lampworkers laughing in the bar. When I stepped into Einstein's Bagels in the hotel lobby to get a much needed snack, I stumbled on a 3/32" mandrel lying on the floor. It was a nice indicator that I was with my "beady" people.

Growing Together

At the Gathering, I decided to take a silversmithing class with Nicole Valentine-Rimmer. Unlike many lampworkers, I did not start with jewelry making before progressing to lampworking. It was exciting to learn what I could create by combining metal with lampworked beads. I ended up with a beautiful bead ring and a bezel-set cabochon pendant that I am thrilled with—even if it is a beginner piece. By the end of the class, my brain was percolating with ideas and a shopping list of tools that I needed.

Thursday was the first official "no classes" day at the Gathering. My day started at 8 a.m., with a stint volunteering in the fundraising room. There was an ebb and flow of attendees picking up their registration materials. I saw quite a few people that I recognized from Facebook, and I couldn't help but feel a little starstruck at some of the big names in attendance.

Once my first shift of volunteering was done, I went to the Instructor's Seminar down the hall. Teaching lampworking sounds like the next step in my glass journey, but as someone who takes very few torch classes, I wouldn't even know where to begin. It was so helpful to get advice from several teachers on how to get started.

When I finally had a little bit of free time, I realized I was hungry and went for a longer-than-anticipated walk searching for food in the cool Houston underground tunnels.



2014 Gathering attendees (left to right) Judy Iearn, Stephanie Sersich, Jennifer Field, Janice Peacock, and Barb Cohan-Saavedra.



Bead Photos by Heather Behrendt

Group Photo by Doug Baldwin

The Meeting Begins

Later that evening, it was time for the ISGB membership meeting, a time to hear about the successes and challenges that ISGB is facing. We were reminded why it's important for members to renew their membership every year, donate to the silent auction, and volunteer in any way possible. The location for the 2015 Gathering was announced as well. I'm not sure if I'll be able to make it to Albuquerque, New Mexico, from Rochester, New York, but I'm definitely going to try.

Next up was the Lampwork Etc. get-together, followed by the opening reception. Mingling doesn't come easily to me since I tend to be a little shy, but everyone was so welcoming that it was a little easier for me this time. I even started early on some bead trading before heading off to bed.

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*Denny Berkery, glass artist,
businessman, teacher and author.*



Friday started very early for me with volunteering to help set up for the silent auction to be held at the end of the day. I had so much fun that it didn't feel like work at all. I also enjoyed getting a sneak peek at what would be available. I was very impressed by how generous the donations were from both individual artists and big name suppliers.

The presentations started a little later in the morning with topics that provided something for everyone. I was able to get useful information from each one and left feeling inspired.

Gallery Tour and the Bead Bazaar

Once the presentations were finished, the Gallery Tour started. The ISGB and the hotel did an amazing job of putting together a display in one of the fancy suites in the Hyatt Regency. It looked so lovely that I can't imagine it looking any better. My evening ended late with watching people work at Open Torch. I was trying to absorb as much talent as I could.

Saturday was the Bead Bazaar. It's the sole bead show that has only handmade lampworked beads. There was an overwhelming amount of talent in that one room. I was excited and a little overwhelmed to be showing off my own beads and was happy to have volunteers available to watch my table while I did some quick browsing around at all the eye candy.

Final Events

Sunday was filled with more presentations. It's always amazing to see how people make their incredible glass creations. I ended my day with some early bead trades and actually ran out of beads to trade before the bead swap officially began.

I'm a little sad that the Gathering has ended, but I don't know if my brain could take any more ideas and inspiration. It's a wonderful feeling to be with all of these artistic, creative people and share our love of glass. **GA**

Visit www.isgb.org for more information regarding registration, presentations, and classes for the upcoming ISGB Gathering to be held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, July 15–19, 2015.

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