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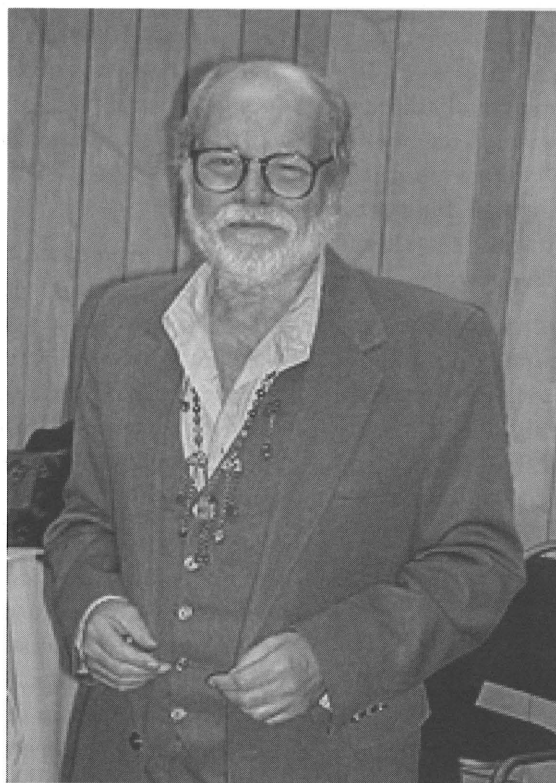
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**IN MEMORIAM
PETER FRANCIS, JR., 1945-2002**



Peter Francis, Jr., at Bead Expo 2002 (courtesy of Dee Mueller of Rings & Things).

The bead research community lost a principal member when Peter Francis, Jr., director of the Center for Bead Research in Lake Placid, New York, died December 7, 2002, while on a research trip to Ghana, West Africa. Pete was widely known and respected, and was responsible for significantly increasing people's awareness—on a worldwide scale—of beads and their place in human culture through his many publications, lectures, workshops, symposia, and internet website. He leaves a void that will be very hard, if not impossible, to fill.

Pete was born on August 6, 1945, in Kingman, Kansas, to Peter and Phyllis Francis. His father was an Episcopal priest who ran a boy's home. His mother taught English and journalism. After completing high school in Ellsworth, Kansas, Pete attended Park College (now Park University) near Kansas City where he obtained a good liberal arts education. Pete had long been interested in visiting England and his chance finally came during his junior year when he participated in a school-sponsored trip which took him and seven fellow classmates on a journey that led from

Glasgow to Damascus. He had a great time. The wanderlust bug bit him hard and he would never recuperate from its effects.

After college, Pete thought he might follow in his father's footsteps and entered the General Theological Seminary in New York City. It was soon apparent that this was not what he wanted to do but Pete continued on and graduated with an M.A. degree in theology. Coming from a small town in Kansas, life in the Big Apple was an adventure for Pete who actively partook of what it had to offer. He not only became a member of the Museum of Modern Art and went to concerts, gallery openings, and movies, but also taught an accredited course on the history of rock 'n' roll and became a member of a street gang for a while.

While life in New York was great fun, the wanderlust bug just wouldn't leave him alone and, in 1971, Pete decided that he would go to Iran where there were opportunities to teach English. After being certified legally blind by the Selective Service and illegible for the draft, Pete traveled around Europe for several months until he came upon Spain's beautiful Costa del Sol. He was so taken with one of the fishing villages he encountered that he took up residence there for a year while deciding whether he should become a painter or a writer. In the end, he decided that writing was what he did best.

Life on the Costa del Sol was good but it was time to move on. With backpack in tow he crossed the Strait of Gibraltar to Morocco where he taught English for the next three years. Here, as he put it, he experienced life in the Middle Ages. Finally it really was time to get to Iran and so he journeyed there by way of Italy, Greece, and Turkey.

For the next two and a half years, Pete taught in Isfahan and visited many of the ancient sites in the vicinity. It was here that his interest in beads crystalized. After purchasing some beads a colleague had collected locally, he began to research them, finding the archaeological reports in the library of the British Council the most informative. His research was productive and before he left Isfahan, he had lectured three different groups about beads.

Having become interested in archaeology, Pete cast about for a place where he might study this subject. The friend of a colleague provided the answer: Deccan College in Pune, India! Before heading there,

Pete visited Egypt for a few months. It was then back to Iran and eastward by bus. In Afghanistan, he observed beadmakers for the first time. That portion of the trip was a little tense as there was a war on at the time.

Arriving in India, Pete became enthralled with all its wonders and, as he put it himself, "fell in love with it." With some difficulty he enrolled in the archaeology course at Deccan College and was doing quite well working toward a doctorate degree when the Indian government informed him that it would not exchange his tourist visa for a student one. Much to his chagrin, he was forced to leave India (but he would return).

Pete then decided to return to the United States where his parents now lived in the scenic town of Lake Placid in New York's Adirondack Mountains. On his way, Pete traveled through Pakistan, Syria, Turkey, Greece, Italy (Venice), Czechoslovakia, Germany, and England, researching beads at just about every stop. He arrived home in July of 1979, after an absence of over eight years.

Shortly after his return, Pete established the Bead Research Bureau which a few years later became the Center for Bead Research and occupied the lower level of his parent's house. Simultaneously he began publishing the results of his research. These first few reports, published in the CBR's *The World of Beads Monograph Series*, were the vanguard of a long line of well-researched, well-written publications that have greatly increased our collective knowledge of beads and their users. That same year, noting his keen interest in beads, editor Robert Liu asked Pete to become Contributing Editor of his magazine, *Ornament*, a position he held for almost 20 years.

To facilitate communication among those interested in beads, Pete, with Jamey D. Allen and Elizabeth Harris, founded the Society of Bead Researchers in 1981. He served as the first editor of the Society's newsletter, *The Bead Forum*, and was also the first president. He also supported the newsletter and subsequent journal with a fairly steady stream of interesting articles and reviews.

Having spent many years in Third-World countries, Pete was very cognizant of the fact that students living there were greatly hampered by a lack of funds to travel and complete reports. He, therefore, initiated The Horace C. Beck Fund for Bead Research

in 1991, which provided a modest stipend to those enrolled in institutions of higher learning in the developing countries of Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Three grants have been awarded to date.

In the mid-1990s, Pete saw the potential for using the internet to further increase the flow of bead-related knowledge. In 1997, he launched <www.thebeadsite.com> which gradually grew from a few pages to a major operation with a chat line and on-line book store which featured a wide selection of bead publications.

Pete also presented popular workshops on bead identification to various groups and bead societies, many of which he helped to found. In the early days, he also led several bead tours to Southeast Asia.

Pete not only researched beads, but he also helped other individuals with their research and gladly identified beads and provided what information he could to both professionals and amateurs alike. His primary concern was that researchers got their facts right and stressed the human element in their reports. As Pete was fond of saying, "It's not about beads. It's about people." He also condemned the looting of archaeological sites for their beads and urged collectors and researchers to not purchase such looted material.

Over the years, Pete has traveled widely and conducted research at many institutions around the world. The most notable include the Smithsonian Institution (Washington, DC), Denver Museum of Natural History, University of Chicago, American Museum of Natural History (New York), University of Alaska (Fairbanks), Columbia University (New York), Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), Awad Foundation (Egypt), Pondicherry Museum (India), and the Charles Beatty Museum (Ireland). He has also participated in or conducted several major research projects, among them the Integral Study of the Silk Roads: Roads of Dialogue (UNESCO), Arikamedu excavations, India (University of Pennsylvania and University of Madras), Berenike excavations, Egypt (University of Delaware/Leiden University), and the Seed Bead Project and the Middle Eastern Glass Bead Project (Center for Bead Research).

Pete has also participated in numerous conferences and workshops. Among them are the Archaeology-1980 Conference (Allahabad, 1980), Glass Trade Bead Conference (Rochester, 1982), First

International Bead Conference (Long Beach, 1985), Shell Bead Conference (Rochester, 1986), Seminar on Ancient Indian Glass (Pondicherry, 1986), and the Second International Bead Conference (Washington, 1990). His credits also include many lectures presented to various groups around the world including the University of Ghana, Oriental Ceramic Society, National Museum of the Philippines, Sarawak Museum, National Museum of Singapore, Pondicherry Historical Society, Asian Art Museum, and a myriad more. In addition, Pete has been director of the bead symposia held at the popular Bead Expos since 1992.

Many grants and fellowships have been awarded to Pete over the years. The first was the Dorothy Wetmore Gerrity Prize for Bead Research (1982). Then came a fellowship from the Alden B. Dow Foundation (1985), and grants from the Hagop Kevorkian Fund (1987) and the Bead Society, Los Angeles (1987). In 1987, he won the Kerr History Prize for his article "The Beads that did *Not* Buy Manhattan Island." Since then he has received grants from every North American bead society that has a grants program, as well as being awarded the Guido Award by the Bead Study Trust in England.

The bead world owes much to Peter Francis, Jr. He devoted most of his adult life to the study of beads and amassed a wealth of information on the subject. While he disseminated much of this through his numerous articles, books, lectures, and workshops, he sadly took a goodly part of it to the grave. What more would he have taught us if he hadn't been taken from our midst so soon? Much, I am sure. Many of us can, nonetheless, console ourselves with the knowledge that we had the opportunity to know him and to learn from him. And I also think he learned much from us. Goodbye, Pete. We will miss you.

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