

## **A Little Bit of Beadin'**

By Mary Larson of The Technocrat (Butte Tech) 1998

Beads inspire a vision of the sixties when "flower power" was the motto and hippies sported tie-dye and mood rings. Though the image of the hippie has faded, beads as an expression of style and creativity have not. Butte's very own Garden of Beadin' is concrete proof. Located in the uptown area, Garden of Beadin', though small, is a busy place. Owner, Heidi Kinzer, a self-taught "beader" founded the store nearly a year ago when she couldn't find the materials to supplement her own hobby.

Then Kinzer moved her supplies into the two-room store at the corner of West Park and Montana, she never thought she'd fill the front room. But as she says "beads are almost an addiction" and the store is packed with every kind of bead from all over the world. She buys materials from importers who stock goods from Japan, Africa, Czech Republic, India, and Austria. Seed Beads (the tiny glass beads often used in Native American beadwork) come in every color imaginable. There are also multicolored Cloisonné beads in the shape of turtles and butterflies. She also stocks a variety of bone, clay, and ceramic beads. Kinzer sells all the materials and tools for beadwork including beading thread, hammers for metal-working, and jewelry pliers. Displayed on the wall and in cases are materials such as French hooks for earrings and spring-ring clasps for necklaces. For hemp-lovers, there are several different colors blue, green, turquoise, yellow, purple, and the ever-popular natural.

Kinzer also sells books for beginners, and the store is even set up so customers can work at the beading table in the back and get help from an expert. Kinzer volunteers her time (during store hours of course) to help people create jewelry. She believes that the key to a thriving business is "If you are willing to help people. Success has a lot to do with how you treat people" She also offers beading classes which vary from "learning the basics" to making beaded amulet bags. Pre-registration is required for class and prices vary from \$8 to \$15.

Garden of Beadin' is not limited to beads. Unique gifts reside in every corner of the store. Thirty-six different types of incense sticks fill glass jars in the backroom. There are imitation cologne scents like Obsession or Sunflower, eyebrow-raising scents like Witch Doctor, and of course, the tried and true Nag Champa. Hand-packaged incense gift bags containing an incense boat and ten sticks are for sale at \$8.95. The incense boats can be purchased and vary in style from etched soapstone to wood and metal styles.

Kinzer also sells soapstone figurines of elephants, rabbits, and turtles; as well as soapstone jewelry boxes inlaid with flowers and designs. The jewelry boxes come in varying sizes-some just large enough for a ring or two and some large enough for a collection-and in varying prices from \$4.50 to \$32.00. Next to the soapstone display, aromatherapy candles occupy an entire shelf. A large glass case also houses a multitude of sterling jewelry, some with eye-catching Celtic designs. Velvet purses, either plain or embroidered with flowers, are scattered throughout the establishment as well.

Kinzer, who grew up in Whitehall, not only runs a successful business but also attends Montana Tech as a part-time student majoring in business. She says that working and going to school is stressful but believes it helps her to understand her courses better because she can apply the principles directly to her business. When asked what she likes best about the Garden of Beadin' Kinzer says she likes "being her own boss".