



Fall / Winter 2010

# shore lines

## The View from Here

by Mary Beth Beuke

*The last word from NASGA's former President*

### "Festive Sea Glass"

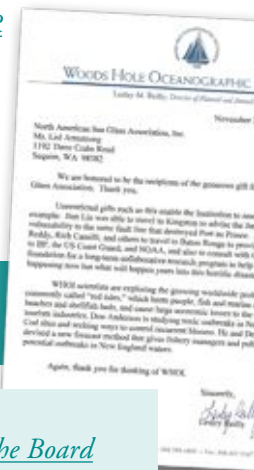
We thank the dozens and dozens of volunteers that pulled together a wonderful event for the world's sea glass community; The 2010 Sea Glass Festival! The October event held in Cape Cod proved to be another festive celebration where thousands of people from all over the globe gathered to enjoy two days of sea glass bliss in Hyannis, Massachusetts. Festive indeed! A full slate of top quality educational lectures were offered, a Shard ID area was staffed, the "Collector's Corner" was expanded and sea glass art and gifts were in colorful abundance. The event culminated with the largest pool of entries submitted for the annual Shard of the Year Contest. In addition, profits from the event were donated to both local and international shoreline restoration organizations. It is our hope that the aire of celebration, the colorful array of sea glass specimens and the gathering of enthusiasts were enjoyed by all. Highlights can be viewed from the SeaGlassAssociation.org website and in this post-festival "Shorelines Newsletter." Here's to our wonderful volunteers and to another fantastic event.



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**NASGA Cares...** *This year NASGA has made donations of \$2,500 to The Ocean Conservancy and \$2,000 to Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.*

## 2011 Sea Glass Festival, Long Branch, NJ

On October 8th & 9th, 2011, beachcombers from around the world will assemble at the Ocean Place Resort and Spa, in Long Branch, NJ, for the sixth annual North American Sea Glass Festival. Located on the Atlantic Ocean, this upscale resort is one hour, by car, from Midtown Manhattan, and is also a one-hour drive from Newark Liberty International Airport.

The event will feature sea glass aficionados, including artisans, who will be offering their nautical creations for sale, as well as collectors of the popular coastal

gems, who will be eagerly sharing their unique, accrued sea glass exhibits, with attendees.

In addition to various sea glass related lectures and seminars, another highlight of the Festival will be the renowned "Shard of the Year" contest, complete with an awards ceremony and cash prizes, and culminating in the announcement of the grand prize winner, who will receive \$1,000 for having the most desirable, rare piece of sea glass.

Visit [seaglassassociation.org](http://seaglassassociation.org) for up-to-date information.

Click [A Letter from the Board](#) for more information about the date of the festival.

**Do you have a piece of sea glass that might be the next "Shard of the Year"?**

Get more info about the contest by clicking [Shard Contest](#).

# Collector Interview: Mary Louise "Wiesy" Lauffer

St. Thomas, VI



**NASGA:** How did you become interested in collecting sea glass?

**Lauffer:** Growing up "down the shore," I started early on collecting shells, dried crabs and the like from the sandy beach. About 40 years ago I moved next to a pebbly beach, where to my delight I found sea glass

and pottery shards. I was hooked! At that time, I only picked up blue glass and blue and white pottery. When I settled in the Caribbean, I expanded my scope to include other colors. My husband's extensive antique bottle collection inspired me to find shards that matched the color and type of bottles. Then the serious collecting started! Now I love to match historic bottle lips, pontil marks, embossing, lettering, color and shape with their sources. Of course, I'm happy just to find beautiful frosted gems of any type.

**NASGA:** What is it about sea glass collecting that you enjoy?

**Lauffer:** I can't think of anywhere I'd rather be than on a beach, or in the water! I love exploring, discovering.

**NASGA:** Where do you collect your sea glass?

**Lauffer:** I collect in the Caribbean, and very occasionally in Maine in the summers.

**NASGA:** Can you share one of your memorable beachcombing experiences?

**Lauffer:** In 1986, my husband and I were camping on



a cay, after a storm. We found over 20 beautiful fish floats, all colors and sizes, that had probably been stuck under reefs for years. Luckily we also found a large fish net to secure them in our 16 foot dinghy for the long trip home! My favorite floats are a huge turquoise with a hemp net, two lavenders, and one encrusted with shells and coral.

*I love to match historic bottle lips, pontil marks, embossing, lettering, color and shape with their sources.*

**NASGA:** What are some of your other favorite pieces of sea glass?

**Lauffer:** Hard question to answer! All my favorite pieces have interesting features, some just for the texture or shape, others with history or character. I love antique shards with large or strange bubbles,

pieces that have been in the water so long that they have eroded paper-thin, or like Swiss cheese. I'm particularly in love with those shards from the same bottler, from different time periods, so spelling and location name often differ. All Caribbean islands have been under many flags, so you can imagine there are many variations. I'm hoping to collect all the spellings from the P. Heering Company. Then, the colors! Love those frosty teals and turquoises. Out of those, the teal bottle lips are my favorites. Over the years, I have amassed a large collection of antique bottle tops, and love the unique way each one has worn. The majority are black, but in that group they show blue, teal, amber, in addition to the typical olive, when held to light. I also have my favorite black bottle bottoms, too!

**NASGA:** Do you know the origins of these pieces?

**Lauffer:** Thanks to my husband's bottle collection, I have been able to ascertain the origins of lots of historic

*See INTERVIEW, continued on page 3*





*Black glass shards and some of the types of bottles they originated from.*

## Interview *From page 2*

shards by specifics like pontil and mold marks, shape and thickness of bases and sides, lips, lettering and color. The Caribbean had a rich shipping history from the 1600s to late 1800s, so many shards found here are from European and American trading vessels, either jetsam or resulting from shipwrecks. On my island, there was a small population and poor economy from late 1800's to 1950's, so more recent shards are likely to be from late 20th century dumps too close to the shore.

## A Letter from the NASGA Board Members

January 18, 2011

Dear Friends,

The North American Sea Glass Association sincerely apologizes for any inconvenience or disappointment created by our booking the 2011 festival during Yom Kippur. Our event has been traditionally held on Columbus Day weekend and the facility in Long Branch, New Jersey was contracted without knowledge of the holiday overlap. Two weeks after signing the contract we were alerted to the issue and immediately attempted to

### **NASGA: What do you do with your sea glass?**

*Lauffer:* I enjoy it! I constantly rearrange and reorganize my collections and change displays. Our house has open shutters, with only a few glass windows, but each of these has bottle and sea glass displays, usually in color ranges. Sea glass is embedded into garden walls and step-stones, large pieces, along with other marine artifacts, are outside in garden, fish floats hang from gingerbread, different types of glass and pottery are in bowls. Now, my art studio is where chaos lives, with disorganized tubs of find which are put into mosaics, mobiles, calabash masks and collages, and jewelry. My next major project is to construct two "bottle bottom walls" for gardens, which should empty out my milk crates! Soon, I will start a website to sell sea glass so others can appreciate our finds, and give us more room at home!

### **NASGA: Do you have a sea glass collecting tip you would like to share with us?**

*Lauffer:* The definition of serendipity comes to mind: "a propensity for making fortunate discoveries by accident." I don't beachcomber with a mission, but am delighted for any interesting finds that show themselves in my meandering path. Whether it's driftwood, a weathered shell bit, an unusual pebble, jetsam, animal tracks or a glass or pottery shard that comes my way, or not, I'm just happy to be out enjoying the natural beauty of the shore. Some of my most interesting finds have come when and where I least expected them.

I hope others will tread lightly, protect our fragile coastlines, and certainly not "litter" new glass "for the future."

change the event date. The facility made it quite clear that we were not able to be released from our agreement.

The NASGA Board and our festival committee earnestly hope that many of you can join us for a portion of the event. We are deeply sorry that our efforts to move the event date were unsuccessful. Please know that every attempt was made to change the date after the oversight was identified.

— *NASGA Board of Directors*

**[Seaglass.Ning.com](http://Seaglass.Ning.com)**

Interested in becoming part of our sea glass community?  
Just click [Seaglass.Ning.com](http://Seaglass.Ning.com) to find out how.



# Beachcombing for Shipwrecked Treasure

by Ellie Mercier

Beachcombers, who yearn to discover shipwrecked treasure, do not have to resort to scuba diving, in order to be successful. Objects derived from shipwrecks wash ashore on coastlines around the globe, especially within days after a violent storm.

Similar to time capsules, shipwrecks reflect a cross section of different cultures and eras. In many ways, if we pay attention, the coast reveals clues about past civilizations, through artifacts, shipwreck research, and stories from pirates and sailors.

Beachcombers seeking remnants derived from shipwrecks, have varying opinions about the types of objects that would be considered 'good finds.'

Examples of shipwrecked treasures that are collected by beachcombers, include antique pottery and pottery shards, from various eras, coins, assorted beads, intact bottles, buccaneer buckles, buttons, utensils, and even jewels and antique ship parts. Specific ship parts that are often of interest to collectors include nails, wood slats, rusty older-style anchors (common on early vessels), and later anchors, boasting rare figureheads on the ends of the anchors' long metal stocks. The Great Lakes region, especially, is home to many earlier ships, and archeologists are often even confused when attempting to identify discovered antique ship parts.

One's chance of unearthing shipwrecked treasure will obviously increase if combing in locations that historically



Some of the thousands of coins recovered from the wreck of the **Faithful Steward** which sank in 1785. Most of the coins recovered have wash ashore in front of the wreck over the years.



These utensils, found washed ashore on the Maryland coastline, are remnants of church 'tent camps', small tent villages, complete with tabernacles, set up during summers in the nineteenth century.

*Beachcombers seeking remnants derived from shipwrecks have varying opinions about the types of objects that would be considered good finds.*

celebrated bustling seaports, or on beaches infamous for housing an unusually high number of wrecks. South Nags Head is a prime example of a beach where numerous ships met their demise, and as a result, was nicknamed, 'The Graveyard of the Atlantic.' Antique ship parts are often found on the shores of the Outer Banks, since many of the wrecks occurred over two to three centuries ago. Other promising areas to search for shipwrecked treasure, due to their high concentrations of shipwrecks, in addition to North Carolina shores and the Great Lakes, are coastal areas of Florida, and the mid-Atlantic, or Delmarva Region. In addition, combers may increase their chances of 'striking gold,' by searching the beaches of Gloucester Massachusetts, (especially if searching for pottery shards), the Maine coastline, San Francisco, and Bermuda.

In addition to combing near coastal waters known for their high rate of shipwreck incidents, other tips for beach combers seeking prosperous areas in which to search for treasure, include discovering areas that were home to earlier civilizations, and of industries such as factories, ports, and shipping merchants. Researching the archives at local libraries, especially historic newspaper clippings, interviewing senior residents who are natives of an area, and visiting historical societies or a town's local Chamber of Commerce, can all reveal important clues about whether shipwrecked treasure is prominent in certain locations. When speaking to locals, valuable questions to ask include inquiring about past accounts of locally discovered treasure, accounts of specific shipwrecks, or if there are other local residents who may have information regarding shipwrecks and wrecked treasure.

See *SHIPWRECKED*, continued on page 5



## Shipwrecked *From page 4*

Conditions of nature that increase combers' chances of finding remnants from shipwrecks, include searching between one hour before, and one hour after low tide, combing in the presence of a full moon, especially in late fall, as spring tides are known to produce an increase in the number of remnants, washed ashore, and again, searching after a major storm.

Many beachcombers frequently discover antique coins near the Indian River Inlet, Delaware, due to the wreck of the 'Faithful Steward,' in 1785. The Faithful Steward was an Irish immigrant ship, bound for Philadelphia, when it sank 150 feet off of the Inlet. Ever since a group of Boy Scouts found numerous English and Irish half-pennies, from this Wreck, during an outing in the 1930's, numerous treasure hunters often convene in this location, after a major storm. Because this stretch of beach in Delaware is so popular, locals actually renamed the area, 'Coin Beach.' Many combers have also reported finding gold and silver coins, near the Inlet, which were apparently considered 'basic' pocket change, in the 18th century.

For more information on discovering shipwrecked treasure, contact Dale Clifton, of the Discovery Shipwreck Museum, in Fenwick, Delaware, visit local maritime museums, or speak to other traditional beachcombers, who have been successful, in their quest for treasure.

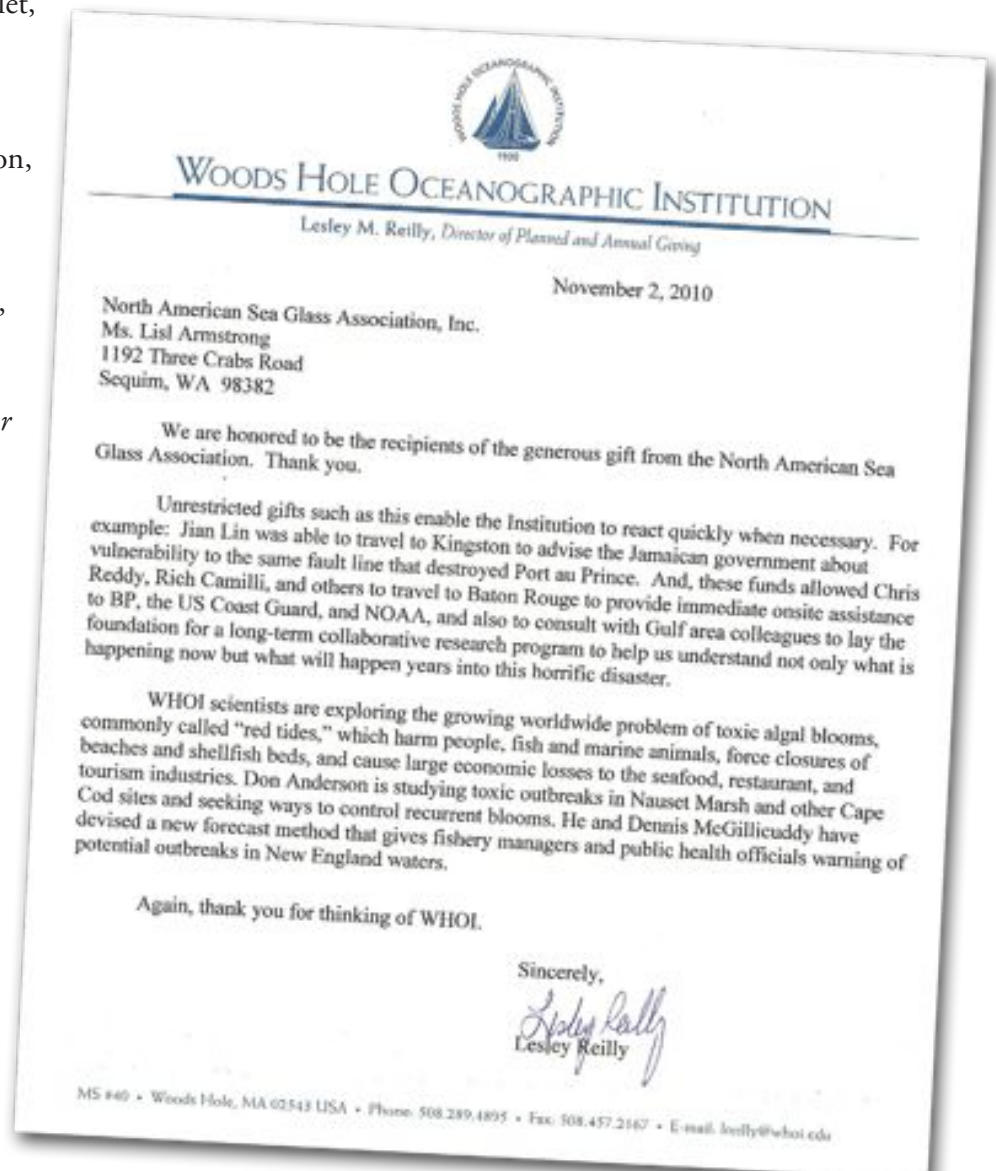
*Ellie Mercier is an artist and avid sea glass collector / researcher, A.S.G.S. and proprietor of Annapolis Sea Glass Studio ([www.annapolisseaglass.com](http://www.annapolisseaglass.com)).*



*This cannon was found by Dale Clifton, off of the Maryland coast. It took Clifton seven years, working two hours each day, to unearth the artifact from all of the sand and debris, in which it was buried.*

## Have you created something with sea glass?

Tell us about it. Send an email with a brief description and a photo (if applicable) to the [seaglassassociation.org](http://seaglassassociation.org) website.





# 2010 Sea Glass Festival in Review ...

Over 4,800 sea glass enthusiasts descended on Hyannis, MA for the annual NASGA Sea Glass Festival. Held at the Resort and Conference Center the festival featured sea glass artisans and collectors as well as lectures from beachcombing experts and historians. In addition, the “Shard of the Year” contest had over

1,500 shards entered. Cash prizes were award in several categories including the \$1,000 Grand Prize for the best overall sea glass shard. Below are a few photos of the event. For a slideshow of the event please go to the [NASGA](http://www.nasga.org) website.

*First in line... Whaooo!*



*It does not take long for the show to fill up with sea glass enthusiasts.*



*One attendee inspects various sea glass shards at one of the vendor tables.*

*Thank you to all who helped make this event a resounding success!*



*Richard LaMotte signs one of his books for a waiting fan.*

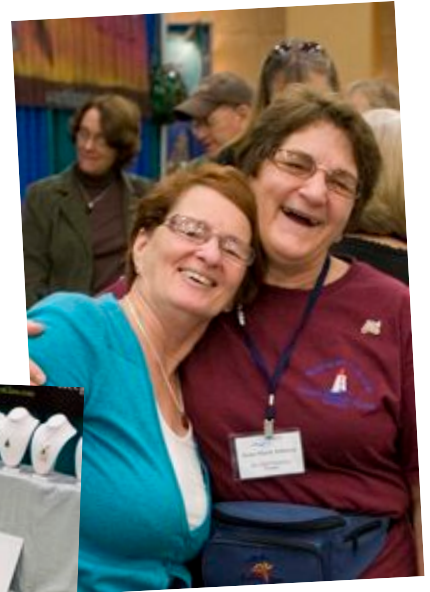


*See FESTIVAL, continued on page 7*



**Festival** from page 6

*Over 50 artisans bought their many wonderful sea glass creations.*



*Mike Smith, a bottle collector from Erie, PA, inspects a specimen at the Shard ID table.*



*Many enthusiasts brought their collections along to display in the Collector's Area.*

*See FESTIVAL, continued on page 8*





Over 1,500 sea glass gems were entered in the "Shard of the Year" contest in the hopes of winning the \$1,000 Grand Prize!



The judges had their work cut out for them in deciding all the winners of the different categories.



Judy Mahoney holds her Grand Prize shard.



The "Shard of the Year" is a rare, orange bead, perfectly conditioned and frosted.