



Focus On... Nan Charif

Nan Charif, one of Sonoran Glass School's Flame Shop Instructors, started in glass art as a bead stringer. She bought beads at local stores and scoured the Gem Show each year for unique finds. She reached a point when she wanted to put her own designs into jewelry and not just buy beads from other sources. Nan took a torchworking class and was immediately hooked. That was 15 years ago, in January 2005.

Nan started at the torch but after a few years she took a fusing class and then got hooked on that too. Nan had her own studio, including three kilns, and she expanded quickly. She loves doing kiln work and says that anything that doesn't turn out she uses in a pot melt to create a different piece. To Nan, fusing is like putting puzzles together and then melting them down to see what happens.

Knowing that Nan had worked as a hair stylist, we asked her if there was a common creative thread between cutting hair and working with glass. She replied, "Hmm... that's an interesting question. With hair I use a human (hair) to create something of beauty and with glass I use a hard piece of glass to be melted into another form. In both cases I'm taking something, either hair or glass, and creating something new with it, and hopefully something beautiful."

Nan explains that working with glass is her happy place, her slice of heaven, and her sanity. She loves being in her studio with music playing and creating either at her torch or cutting up glass and arranging it.

She started at SGS about 13 or 14 years ago as a volunteer. In 2010, she received an award for being the longest volunteer at that time. About eight years ago, Nan became an instructor.

"For me, there is no greater satisfaction than teaching glass to new people at SGS and getting them hooked on the art of creating in this medium. then seeing them come back and watching them grow as artists."

Teaching torchwork is not without its challenges. Nan shared that she was starting a beginning bead class and there were several ladies, who were also friends, in the class. One of them announced that she was deathly afraid of fire. Nan explains she was standing there thinking, "Really? You signed up for a torch class!" So Nan calmly told her that she would learn to not be afraid of the torch, to respect the fire, and learn how to work with it. It was a seven week class and by the end of it the woman told Nan she wasn't afraid of fire any more. Nan felt very accomplished as a teacher at that moment.

"I love that we can do ANYTHING with glass here at Sonoran. Flame shop, warm shop, hot shop and cold shop all under the same roof. Everyone here is so dedicated to glass art and it shows."