



SUSAN ABE / Clackamas Print

Ann Hoke's bracelet shows both geometric patterns and sculptural ruffles. "Freeform peyote is my favorite technique," said Hoke, a member of the Willamette Valley Bead Artisan's guild. The beads are Delicas, from Japan, a relatively new product known for uniformity. "I like the feeling when they click into place."

Peyote weaving: New rage for an ancient art

SUSAN ABE
Staff Writer

"I have seen nothing which...teaches the basic concepts of the peyote stitch," says Barb Grainger in the introduction to her book *Peyote at Last*. That was six years ago; today the Willamette Valley is full of bead shops and those shops are full of books on peyote. Spurring the renaissance are bead artists like the members of the Willamette Valley Bead Artisans Guild who exhibited at the Oregon City Carnegie Center last month.

The principal medium for these artists is seed beads, bits of colored glass a millimeter or so across, threaded one at a time on needles so fine they're constantly bending and breaking. The designs are a complete Art History course in themselves, from primitive to representational to abstract. The overall effect is one of pure molten color.

Beads—decorative objects with a hole to put a string or wire through—have been known to almost every culture in human history. Besides the glass, there are metal, wood, clay, bone, shell and stone beads.

"My favorite beads are vintage seed beads, beads that are many, many years old that have been saved," said beader Priscilla Schrock.

Most of the pieces on display at the Carnegie Center had a base of peyote or gourd stitch. Although similar methods of weaving beads were developed around the world, it is so called because, in North America, it was used to

decorate sacred objects, including gourds, for Native American peyote ceremonies.

Peyote is popular because it's reasonably quick, reasonably durable and extremely versatile. Contemporary peyote can be freestanding or worked around an object. Beads can be woven into a fabric with multi-colored patterns or pictures, or built up into multi-textured sculptures.

ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB & Around the Town

• Willamette Valley Bead Artisans Guild:
<http://members.aol.com/WVBAG/main.html>

• Info, instructions, other links: <http://beadwork.miningco.com>

• WVBAG meets at 2 p.m., the first Sunday of each month, at the Carnegie Center, 7th and John Adams, Oregon City.

• Ann Hoke will teach freeform peyote through the Milwaukie Ben Franklin store in May and June.

Alberto Rios of Arizona State University, the winner of five Pushcart Prizes, will read his fiction and poetry in the Gregory Forum tomorrow, May 6, at 7 p.m. Free.

Gaines shares wisdom in a workshop for writers

SANDY LUPO
Contributing Writer

"Read, read, read; write, write, write."

This was the advice given by Ernest J. Gaines to Clackamas creative writing students recently in a writing workshop.

Gaines is the highly acclaimed author of *A Lesson Before Dying* and *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*. He was at Clackamas April 23 for this workshop and an evening reading.

For this workshop, Gaines had critiqued 12 works by Clackamas students, making handwritten comments on each piece. He talked to students, teachers and other admirers about his work and the craft of writing.

Gaines said that the book that influenced him most was the one he wanted to read, but could not find: the one that rang true to his experience of his own people, time and place.

"If the book you want doesn't exist, you try to make it exist," he told *The Washington Post*. "I tried to put it on the shelf, and I'm still trying to do that."

Gaines warned students to beware of the pessimist in and around them who would tell them there is nothing left to say - that it has all been written. "No one has written your moment," he said.

"The job of any writer is to write truly about what he knows and feels," Gaines said. He also quoted

Mark Twain: "The object of writing is not to preach and teach, but at the end it should do both."

Gaines had other advice for aspiring writers.

"Keep it simple. Read the great speeches—you just cannot improve on 'Jesus wept,' or Chief Joseph's 'I shall fight no more forever,'" Gaines said. He says he writes so a high school student can read his novels, and pointed to J.D. Salinger's "Catcher in the Rye" as a classic example of greatness in simplicity.

"I look for good, clean first sentences," Gaines said. "I have thousands of choices of books to read, and if the opening sentence doesn't catch my attention, I put the book down. Put action in the first sentence," and Gaines laughed.

Gaines believes in creating strong characters.

"I have to get that voice of my main character clear in my head." He then laughed and told of the time that comment evoked a newspaper headline, "Writer Hears Voices."

Gaines writes about powerful human emotion, and the actions they cause, and wishes more writers wrote with more heart.

"Above all," he says, "tell me a good story! I cannot write just for publication; I must have a story that possesses me, a story I can't escape writing. Then the rest will come, like a train ride across America—you know you are going to New York, but you don't know what will happen along the way."

For this reason, Gaines takes

years to develop and write his novels, and has not completed another since *A Lesson Before Dying*.

Gaines, when he is writing, starts his day early with a walk and breakfast, then settles in for five or six hours of writing, five days a week. He told the group he writes his first draft of a novel or short story by hand, on white, unlined paper. Next, he types his manuscript, re-writing as he goes, to make sure his details are relevant to his characters and his descriptions are not one-dimensional. Then he sends his work to his editor who puts it in proper form for the publisher.

When the galleys are returned to Gaines, he re-writes again. If he gets stuck, he returns to the great writers to see what they have to say. Thus his eight-word advice to aspiring writers is: "READ, READ, READ; WRITE, WRITE, WRITE; RE-READ; RE-WRITE."

In addition to teaching creative writing at University of Southern Louisiana every fall, Gaines travels extensively. He and his wife Dianne recently spent about a year in France, where Gaines taught the first ever creative writing class at the University of Rennes. Dianne speaks French, while Gaines does not, so she enhanced his work and their excursions immensely, Gaines said. She also assists him at home, screening some of the many manuscripts he receives for critique. *A Lesson Before Dying*, which won the 1994 National Book Critics Circle Award, is dedicated to Dianne.

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