



Editor's Note: 2002 has been a year of terrible fires across the western United States. One of our clay friends, Jeanette, was involved in an evacuation.

Here is the story of one person who was evacuated from the Show Low, Arizona, fire and survived and the Random Act of Kindness that has helped her heal. Here is the story of Jeanette's Gift of a Lifetime, a group of polymer clay artists who contributed beads and Donna Westfall, who turned the beads into this beautiful doll.

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### Bead Contributors

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### Jeanette's Story

#### **Tuesday afternoon:**

As we back out of the drive, Robert exclaims, "Oh my God!" and stops. I asked him what's up? He said, "Look," and as I looked, I screamed in horror. At this time the fire was maybe 2-3



hours old. We did not know at that time where it was, but already knew it was not good.

**Wednesday:** The fire just exploded. I went out at noon to see what was going on, walked to the end of the drive, and my heart sank. The western sky was black as far as you could see. Evacuations had already begun near the fires' edge. From what we learned, these plumes were not just smoke, but actually contained fire within them and were their own weather source.



**Saturday:** We seemed a bit less on edge. We even felt good enough to remove some items from the car, which we had already placed there on pre evacuation orders. We even felt good enough to go fishing. Boy, we couldn't have been more WRONG. Someone on the lake had a

radio and he gathers his things and yells, "Out!" Our hearts leapt from our chests. We headed home. Two hours later, it was our

turn to leave our house and home behind. Show Low is being evacuated.

**Tent City:-** I looked at the faces that were there and those yet arriving. Blank. They were blank. We borrowed a tent so we could keep our Furbies with us and there we all called home. information seemed much harder to come by out on that field. Each morning we would turn on the radio in the car to hear as much as we could. **Sunday, Monday and Tuesday:** Really hard. The temperatures reached near 100 degrees. **Wednesday:** We got a totally different weather picture, a bit of rain and cooling of the temps..



**Thursday:** Oh my! To me, it was the hardest of all. I had gone to the trunk of the car with a nice breeze in my face coming from the west, but this was not good.

As I stood there, ash began to fall. We were well over 70 miles from the fire. All I could do was cry. That night seemed the longest of them all.

**Friday:** THANK YOU, GOD! The winds changed. They went in the complete opposite direction than they had been. There was talk of possibly going home in the next 3-5 days. The major towns had been saved by the fire line drawn by the firefighters. This is the day little "Brimstone" entered our lives.

**Saturday:** Weird morning. 8:30 a.m. and people were scurrying everywhere. Not knowing what was up, I yelled across the field. People said we are going home. 9:00 a.m. and the official word came. We literally threw all in the car. On the main road home people from the town were lined up waving at us all as we left. Again I cried. Driving up the main highway there were people that had already posted "welcome home" signs everywhere. We now turned into that most familiar street then into the drive. Robert and I bailed out of the car, grabbed each other, stood there, and now both of us in tears, gave thanks to God. Our home was spared, our city was spared, our lives intact. We sat quietly that afternoon. I am really not sure how to put it into words -- to sink into such despair and then to rise so high.

**The Package:** Donna told me to open the card first. Okay, well I thought (get caught thinking a lot) it was clay or other goodies she sends me periodically. As I read the card, Robert was busy unpacking. First the beads appeared then the rest of "her." We are both stunned. Robert says, "You have one heck of a bunch of friends." I sat her on the table outside and laid each string of beads out to read the names and see the unbelievable work before me. I sat there for over an hour just shaking my head.

As for the doll itself, Donna hand crocheted the dress and

top. The doll top/body, hands and head are made with PC and I think the hair is mohair. She hand painted the eyes and lips. From the elbows to the top of the hands she has placed lace. Each bead is threaded through a thin ribbon and the ribbon is embedded into the top of the head to hang the doll. It appears that Donna placed wire in the underside of the body to loop the ribbon onto and tie to. To all involved in this GIFT OF A LIFE TIME, Robert and I both thank you. This gift has been a source of pride and given me a sense of caring I have never felt before. I have never met a single one of you, yet I feel as if you are all the best and most caring friends anyone could have. How the PC world comes together for a friend and the complete generosity it has! Yup, (sniff-sniff-sniff) and most unexpectedly. I got the bestest friends. TRULY.  
Love and peace,  
Jeanette

From Donna

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