beachcombing:
that first glass ball gives you the bug

A beach, an ocean tide, a sack, spare time and the driving force to discover a treasure from the sea are essential ingredients in the making of a "hard-core" beachcomber.

It's finding that first glass ball that gives you the bug, said Doc Bedillion, a beachcomber for 11 years. Doc and his wife Erma moved to Ocean Shores in 1956 and built their house close to the ocean. Only the dunes separate them from the beach and beachcombing.

Doc had been bit by the beachcombing bug before moving to Ocean Shores when he found his first glass ball on a Washington beach. "I'll go out in 60 mile-an-hour winds to comb the beach," said Erma. "Sometimes I'll drive him down to the jetty and he'll walk back and other times he'll walk up and back."

Wrapped in rain slicker, boots, gloves and stocking cap with a miner's light and lantern, Doc is ready for a midnight excursion of beachcombing. "From midnight to 4 a.m. is my favorite time to walk the beach," he said. "You usually don't run into too many people during that time but I have met a few."

Clues to Doc's hobby are evident throughout their home, which they designed. The dozens of glass balls blend right in with the Polynesian motif of the house.

A row of balls hangs from a beam in the living room with the ornaments ranging in size from one a foot in diameter to smaller ones that fit in the palm of your hand.

A fishnet filled with a couple dozen balls hangs in the entry way, and that group is the result of just one trip to the beach.

Glass floats are a prized find for novice and accomplished beachcomber alike but according to Doc's inventory of finds the second one in amongst the rocks," Doc said.

The pieces of bone have been exposed for a while because they have been bleached white and been worn down by the waves, he said.

Some of Doc's other finds include the small glass rolling pin floats, plastic floats, metal floats used by Russian ships, hatches, crab pot floats, bee pots, sake bottles, bait boxes, an assortment of fishing gear, and tags sent by researchers to check the ocean currents.

He brings home everything he finds that looks as if it has some potential of being an addition to the collection, Erma said. Many times he doesn't know what he has until he brings it home and cleans the sand off it, she said.

He picks up most anything, yet he'll walk right past a beautiful piece of driftwood, she said, "That's my department. I hunt for the unusual pieces of driftwood."

January, February and March are the best months for beachcombing, according to Doc. Of course, this past winter January and February weren't the best because there were few storms, he said.

The best time to go beachcombing is after a storm with a west wind because the west wind blows the glass floats out of the Japanese current onto the beaches here, he said.

Doc's advice to the novice beachcomber: always be watching, looking for the treasures.
Beachcombing for Japanese Glass Floats

Beachcombing for Japanese Glass Floats, a book by Willers, is renowned for its captivating stories of the discovery and classification of these ornaments. The book is filled with insights into the art of beachcombing, a practice that not only involves the collection of glass floats but also the stories and adventures associated with them.

The book delves into the history and significance of glass floats, explaining how they are found on beaches around the world. Willers shares personal anecdotes and vivid descriptions of the glass floats he has collected, including their colors, shapes, and origins. This makes the book not only an informative resource but also a compelling read for anyone interested in the cultural and historical aspects of these floating objects.

The book also includes detailed instructions on how to beachcomb effectively, guiding readers on where and how to find glass floats, along with tips on how to preserve and display these treasures.

Overall, Beachcombing for Japanese Glass Floats is a rich source of knowledge and entertainment for both beginners and seasoned beachcombers, offering a unique glimpse into the world of glass floats and their intriguing history.