

October 2001

**Contra
Costa**
MINERAL + GEM SOC.
WALNUT CREEK, CA
Concord, CA

Diablo Diggins

Program for October

By Ann Matthews, Vice President-Programs

The Annual Auction will be October 5th. The General Meeting is occurring a week earlier than normal due to a church function. The Annual Auction is always fun and it is amazing the variety of items that members donate to support the fund raising effort. Remember to bring an interesting item to donate to the auction.

Refreshments to be brought to the meeting are—**Betty Carpenter, Walter & Gail Carr, Ken Caudel, Clayton Cochran, Mary & Nicole Crenshaw, and Walter Cuenca.** If you can not make the meeting or bring something, please make arrangements with another member.

The September Program was done by Contra Costa M&GS member **Doctor Walt Carr**, about a topic that wets most peoples appetites, Chocolate. I am sure the local stores had an increase in chocolate purchases after this interesting presentation.

Next Meeting is October 5th at 7:30 pm, at the First Presbyterian Church, 1965 Colfax Street, Concord. Corner of Salvio & Colfax Strs. Free parking at City of Concord garage on Salvio.

Election Of Club Officers is coming Soon.

By Lee King, Election Committee

We have some opportunities coming up for you to do something new to support

the club. If you have not been in an office or it has been some years since you held an office, now is your turn to step up to the plate and join the team. The Officers make sure we have monthly meetings, field trips to go on, a written record for current and historical activities, someone to pay our bills, and a leader to keep us all moving in the same direction.

The five officer positions to be filled are:

President

First Vice President (Programs),

Second Vice President (Field Trips),

Secretary,

and Treasurer.

Questions about the process and to volunteer—call **Lee King** as soon as possible. He hopes to hear from you before the next General Meeting.

Pick up the phone and dial 686-3927 or e-mail him at icanjet@msn.com



Show Corner

By Sam Woolsey, Show Chair

Advance admission and raffle tickets will be available for purchase at the October meeting. Admission tickets make the perfect gift for friends and

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Diablo Diggins
Contra Costa Mineral & Gem Soc.
PO Box 4667
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

neighbors. Pay off that debt with an invitation to visit a truly beautiful event. And take a chance on the cash prizes (\$150-1st prize, \$100-2nd prize, and \$50-3rd prize).

Let me say again – attendance is the heart of our show. For us it is a labor of the heart because we want to showcase our hobby, our talents, and our collections. But for our dealers, attendance is the core of their participation. Lets show them the best of our talents – pulling in the gate.

Speaking of attendance – we've signs made for everything and everywhere. Signs for bulletin boards at office, the hairdressers and barber shops, diners and donut shops, libraries & schools – and yes, the rear windows of your cars. Many attendees last year reported learning of our show for a car-window sign in the shopping center parking lot. Come early to the October meeting – EARLY THIS MONTH – OCTOBER 5th – and get your signs – for both your cars. All three??

And I must take this time and space to thank George Matthews, Glen Hubbard, Lee King, Jim High, Tom Umholz, Charlie Bon – and especially George Matthews for the many hours of work they all expended in preparing the cases, trailer and show gear for the big weekend.

Show time is also – for us – volunteer time. Contact me at the numbers below – or at the meetings – and help our Year 2001 show become the success that it can be.

Silent Auction for the November show!

By *David Kleesattel*

Home Phone: (925) 798-8240
Work Phone: (510) 874-4500 x541
Cell Phone: (925) 209-8240
email: daveklees@aol.com
Hello everybody -

As you know, our 2001 show is rapidly approaching, and we still need rock donations for the Silent Auction. Last

year the Silent Auction was a big success ...that's the good news, the bad news is that now our supply of "auction rocks" is very low (about one half of where we were last year at this time). So we need to build up our supply so we can offer quality rocks throughout the entire two-day show in November.

We're looking for big rocks to little rocks...whatever you have, we're not that picky. Our intent is to auction rocks that can be used in lapidary arts, but last year we were very successful with selling rocks for landscaping (I'm sure we all have some "yard" rocks), and with smaller "specimens" for the younger collectors.

Now's a great time to rid yourself of those extra rocks that you collected with the best intentions, but just never seem to get around to doing anything with them. This is a very good cause...and we promise to find good homes for these rocks.

If you have "extra" rocks that you would like to donate, please contact me. I will come to your place and pick them up...so you won't even have to move them...it doesn't get any easier than that. Just give me a call or email to arrange a pick-up time. And of course, you can bring donations to the monthly meetings if you prefer.

Thanks for your help and generosity...Let's make this year's show the best ever.

Field Trips

By *Hazel Woolsey, Vice President-Field Trips*

COOP trips are rescheduled frequently! ALWAYS call before driving a long way for nothing! To assist, the COOP group has established a web site where their latest field trip information can be accessed.

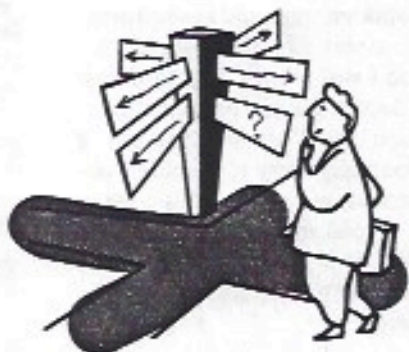
<http://www.coop.freecservers.com/coop-fieldtrips.html>.

Oct. 6&7: Estate Sale – Minerals, Geodes, & Lapidary materials. The Thomas E. (Gene) Darter Collection. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. 750 So. I. St., Livermore

Oct. 6&7: Estate Sale – Rocks. Idle Wheels Trailer Park, San Pablo. 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Call Hazel for map. 925-837-3287

Oct. 13: Pulga, CA. Pulga jade. Contact Will Corey. 209-383-5037

Oct. 13-14: 1st Annual Tailgate Jamboree. Kennedy mine in Jackson. Attendance free. Fee for spaces, dry camping, pancake breakfast. See Hazel Woolsey for application. 925-837-3287



Oct 13-14: Clear Creek. CCM&GS. Contact Hazel Woolsey. 925-837-3287 or e-mail sdwools@earthlink.net

Thanksgiving COOP Trip: Barstow area. Mother Lode Club. Contact Will Corey. 209-383-5037

Many thanks from Grab Bags & Wheel of Fortune to **Charlie Bon & Charlotte Boehra** for polished rocks and to **Mike & Phyllis Howard** for pottery shards.

Education Report

By *Dick Pankey, Education Chair*

Ophelia Hicks will teach the class on SOAPSTONE CARVING on Wednesday evening, October 17th and 24th, in Room 208, at the Diablo Valley Adult Education Center, 3100 Oak Park Blvd., in Pleasant Hill at 7:00 PM. There are 4 different figures you can carve. Bring the following tools if you have them: a "beer" flat, rag, wood files and rasps, felt tip pen, and a small (2") paint brush. If you don't have any of these tools they will be provided. This class is open to all members, first timers and those who have taken previous carving classes. Sign up at the October meeting or call **Ophelia Hicks** at 685-7625.

Here is additional information from Ophelia: Suggested tools are an exacto knife or pocket knife (remember the tools will be used on rocks!), a hacksaw or coping saw (a hacksaw blade wrapped with tape at one end works fine), a wood rasp as a coarse file, a round rat-tail file, a square file, a woodworking gouge, a felt pen, a drill bit with a glove to turn by hand, or a hand drill, sand paper.

We will work on trays and newspapers. Soapstone is very slippery if it gets on the floor so I will bring a mop so we can wipe the floor at the end of each class night. I also have extra tools that can be used so don't stay away if you think you don't have what is needed. This class I will have several shapes for you to choose from so if you have attended in the past there will be something new for you to carve.

Be sure to sign up. I look forward to have a full class. Thank you. Ophelia.

So far this year we have had some great classes and project nights: glass fusing, a unique necklace using a sewing machine, railroad spike scenes, wire trees, round wire jewelry, wax fabrication for lost wax casting, cabbings, seed bead flower pins, slate carving and critter nights, and soon soapstone carving. Each year I put in 2 Education cases at the Show and I would like to include as many examples of each of these classes as possible. I would like to borrow projects from everyone who took a class this year. Please mark your items and bring them to me at the October meeting. They will be returned to you at the close of the Show. Please share your projects.

I am now planning classes for next year. We have lots of talented people in the CCM&GS. Please share some of your time and your talent. If anyone has a class they would like to teach, please let me know. I will be happy to help you plan and prepare. We are having good participation in our classes and we appreciate the people who have stepped forward to share their time and expertise. Also, please let me know

what classes you are interested in and I will try to find teachers.

Adult Education class-Minerals & Gems--Are you interested in jewelry and lapidary arts? An opportunity for a hands-on experience in a variety of basic and introductory craft skills. Co-sponsored by Contra Costa Mineral and Gem Society. Meetings usually 3rd and 4th Wednesday of the month. New students always welcome. Phone Richard Pankey (925)439-7509 for information. Course number 083050, Instructor Staff, Wednesday, Ongoing classes, 7-10pm Room 208, PHEC, No Fee.

C.C.M. & G. Society ANNUAL PICNIC

By Betty Pankey, Social Chair

With a slight touch of fall in the air, the yearly picnic was enjoyed by 21 persons. As usual, all the potluck dishes were delicious, with all different dishes of chicken. Ann Matthews surprised Sam Woolsey with a birthday cake, which happened to be right on the day he was born.

After dinner we had an enthusiastic group of bingo players. Glen Hubbard's wife won the most prizes. As usual, everyone donated many rocky items for prizes.

We were glad to see our Prez, Joe Yarbrough because he was unable to fly home for the general meeting.

Hope to see more members next year.

Picnic Remembrance by Ophelia Hicks

Betty and Dick Pankey got to the Baldwin Park in Concord early so they could choose the picnic area. They picked a perfect spot. Sun, shade, and breeze - couldn't have been nicer. When the Hicks' arrived at eleven Dick & Betty had the tables, with covers, set up ready for the food and prizes. Also an orange pic plate on a stick by the side of the road alerted everyone to the

correct area. Twenty one members converged on the picnic sight - each bringing food and Bingo rock prizes.

As is usual for rockhounds, the food and the chit-chat was enjoyed by everyone. Then the bingo game ensued. There was much fun and laughter as the winners claimed their awards. Anyway, for those of you who didn't attend, you missed an enjoyable event. Besides, you didn't get to sing Happy Birthday to Sam Woolsey.

In alphabetical order, those who participated in the fun were: Mary Hicks, Marlow & Ophelia Hicks, Jim & Connie High, Glen and Jennie Hubbard, Lec & Betty King, Matt & Ann Matthews, Dick & Betty Pankey, Bob & Ann Pevahouse, Doug Rue, Al & Shirley Schleif, Sam & Hazel Woolsey, and Joe Yarbrough.

Recipe for a summer salad.

8 ox. container of cottage cheese. I used low-fat small curd.

8 oz. container of Cool Whip I used no cholesterol style.

Sm size can of drained crushed pineapple.

One box of jello.

Can of drained mandarin oranges

Mix together everything but the jello.

Just before it is time to put it on the table, mix in 1 box of jello. It is still creamy for about an hour after which it sets up. I mixed in sugar free orange jello.

Strawberry jello is good with strawberries. Another choice is to make it with celery, avocados and ripe olives. Any flavor jello may be used but lime goes well with this version.

The Reading Room

By Marlow Hicks, Librarian

I am looking forward to having new members learn about our great resource-the library. We have collected many interesting and useful books over the years and continue to develop with the inclusion of videos.

Book #43. *Rocks and Minerals of California and their stories*. By Brown and Allan.

This book has 48 rocks and minerals of California in color and locality maps. The authors write "With a rock pick (available at most hardware stores), a seeking eye and a pair of good legs, you are prepared for the adventure of exploring one of the most interesting worlds of nature. Anywhere where there are hills or mountains or stream beds you are likely to make a surprising discovery." Chapters contain the nature and a brief history of California rocks as well as the pictures and maps.

Gem for October

Gems-Opal or Tourmaline which stand for Hope. Information from *Gems & Jewelry* by Joel Arem, c.1975.

Opal has been called the Queen of Gems. Few descriptions are adequate to describe the finest opals: a white, snowy landscape dotted with fireflies of red, gold, blue, purple, and green; a black night streaked with rainbow lightning; the aurora borealis captured in stone. Mysterious, elusive, varied, and delicate, opal has been treasured since ancient times for its unique properties and beauty.

Opal is silicon dioxide, and thus closely related to chalcedony. But while chalcedony is just silica, opal contains a variable amount of water in its structure. Opal is softer than quartz gems at 5.5 to 6.5 on the Mohs scale. It is much more fragile and brittle than chalcedony. But what makes opal distinctive is its unique play of color, called "fire."

There are four types of gem opal:

White opal is opaque, white material that looks much like porcelain. The colors appear as flashes, speckles, or sheets of rainbow colors. **Black opal** also contains fire, but the body color is dark gray or black. This accentuates the color play, producing a dramatic effect.

Water opal is transparent, colorless opal that contains brilliant flashes of color swimming within it. **Fire opal** is transparent opal with an orange or red

body color. It may or may not display fire.

The ancient Romans had a passion for fine opals, and the Senator Nonius had one coveted by Marc Antony. Nonius was forced to choose either giving up the gem or exile from Rome; he chose the latter. This esteem of opal continued until the 17th century. At this time the opal was believed to be a hard luck stone. Sir Walter Scott wrote a novel called "Anne of Geierstein," in which an opal played a malevolent role.

Famous opals from Australia have been named Empress, the Red Admiral, the Pandora, Light of the World, and the Harlequin Prince.

Terms sometimes applied to opal are **harlequin** (a mosaic of angular patches of fire); **flame opal** (regular color bands or streaks); **gold opal** (the whole surface of which glows with a golden sheen); **girasol** (a wave of blue light on a transparent background); **opal-onyx**, a material built up of alternating layers of common opal and precious opal.

Stone of the Month

By Douglas Rue

Editor misplaced report. Report will be in the next bulletin.

Membership

Jim Bufton Membership Chair

Birthdays

Louise Gilley	10/4
Scott Pevahouse	10/12
Betty Jerde	10/13
Sandy Rouze	10/17
Ken Williamson	10/18
Bill Morgan	10/19
Mary Crenshaw	10/22
Richard Dennis	10/26
Gloria Going	10/27

Membership fees: Initiation \$5, Regular member \$10, Associate \$5, Junior \$1.

Back to the Future

By Duaine Eggleston. Historian

Here is an excerpt from a 1959 Contra Costa M&G newsletter.

"Surely there is a mine for silver, and a place for gold which they refine---Men put an end to darkness and searchout to the farthest bound the ore in gloom and deep darkness---and the thing that is hid, he brings forth to light." Job 28

So we shall see where they search out the gold for we are fortunate enough to have our Jine field trip in gold mine area! We generally do not have two consecutive over-night trips, but a later date may be too late for a conducted tour through the Gold Crown Mine. Hard-working field trip chairman, Bart deLorenzo has gone to all the trouble of making up the attached map which clearly shows route to be taken and time and place of meeting. Thank you very much Bart! After hearing Mr. Giles speak at May meeting and drooling over those marvelous specimens he had on display, I'm sure this June 22nd field trip is one not many of us will want to miss.

In spite of Rain, Rain and more Rain the following persons went to Clear Creek for May 18th-19th (1959) field trip: President Joan Soule, Frankie Estes, Madeline and Dick Normand, Bart deLorenzo, Glenn Shanks, Peter Remmers, Dave Davis, Woody Wood. What became of Phil Crappa who started out with cars from Holister? Rains forced all except one 'pup' tent occupant to sleep in cars, but did not prevent them from obtaining some fine jadeite. They also succeeded in getting some green agate-like material possibly solidified serpentine. Sunday afternoon Madeline and Dick Normand, Dave Davis and Woody drove on to a fine tourist camp at Porterville. Monday they spent in area about 2 miles from Porterville where dark and lighter green jade is obtained. They managed to bring back several hundred pounds of good jade, so they were loaded-down what with Clear Creek material also.

They report a fine, worthwhile trip in spite of persistent rains.

CFMS Shows

OCTOBER 3-7, JOSHUA TREE, CA. Sportsmans Club, Sportsmans Hall, 6225 Sunburst Ave., Wed.-Sat. 8-5, Sun. 8-3. Gary Palmer (760)366-3430.

OCTOBER 12-14, MOAB, UTAH. Moab Points & Pebbles Club, Spanish Trail Arena, 3641 S. Hwy 191, Moab, Utah.
www.geocities.com/moabrockclub/gemshow/

OCTOBER 13-14, TRONA, CA. Searles Lake Gem & Mineral Society, 13337 Main St., Sat. 8-5, Sun 8-4, Bonnie Fairchild (760)372-5356.

OCTOBER 13-14, TURLOCK, CA. Faceters Guild of Northern Calif., Inc. Stanislaus County Fairgrounds, 900 N. Broadway St., Sat 10-5, Sun 10-4. Marion Roberts (209)538-0197.

OCTOBER 13-14, JACKSON, CA. Fossils for Fun Society, Kennedy Mine in Jackson. 10-4 both days. Dan Brown, (209)2955710 or danbrown@volcano.net

OCTOBER 20-21; ANDERSON, CA. Shasta Gem & Mineral Society of Redding. @ Shasta District Fairgrounds. 10 to 5 both days. Alex or Kelly Stoltz (530)474-4400.

OCTOBER 20-21, PLACERVILLE, CA. El Dorado County Mineral & Gem, El Dorado County Fairgrounds, 100 Placerville Dr., 10-5 both days. Jackie Cerrato (530)677-2975.

OCTOBER 20-21, SANTA ROSA, CA. Santa Rosa Mineral & Gem Society Veteran's Memorial Auditorium, 1351 Maple Avenue, Sat 10-6, Sun 10-5. Bonnie Wood (707)869-9385.

OCTOBER 20-21, WHITTIER, CA. Whittier Gem & Mineral Society, Whittier Masonic Temple, 7604

Greenleaf Ave., 10 to 5 both days. Jay Valle (626)934-9764

NOVEMBER 3-4, CONCORD, CA. Contra Costa Mineral & Gem Society, Centre Concord, 5298 Clayton Road. 10-5 daily, Sam Woolsey (925)837-3287.

NOVEMBER 2-4, EUREKA, CA. Humbolt Gem & Mineral Society, Redwood Acres Fairgrounds, 3750 Harris Street. Fri. (kids only) 9-6, Sat. & Sun 10-6. Mike Martin (707)839-5422.

NOVEMBER 3-4, OXNARD, CA. Oxnard Gem & Mineral Society, 800 Hobson Way, Sat 9-5, Sun 9-4. "Gems for the Holidays" Jingle Bell Rocks. Webmaster@ogms.net

NOVEMBER 3-4, RIDGECREST, CA. Indian Wells Gem & Mineral Society, Desert Empire Fairgrounds, Mesquite Hall, 520 S. Richmond Rd., hours 9-5 both days. John De Rosa (760)375-7905.

NOVEMBER 17-18, LIVERMORE, CA. Livermore Valley Lithophiles, "The Barn", Pacific Ave. at So. Livermore Avenues. Sat. 10-5, sun. 10-4. Bill Beiriger (925)443-5769

NOVEMBER 17-18, VICTORVILLE, CA. Victorville Gem & Mineral Club, 14800 7th Street, Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-4. Gil Gilbert (760)868-6900

NOVEMBER 24-25, BARSTOW, CA. Mojave Desert Gem & Mineral Society, Barstow Community Center, 841 S. Barstow Road, 10-5 both days. Bob Depue (760)255-1030

DECEMBER 1-2, SAN BERNARDINO, CA. Orange Belt Mineralogical Society, corner of E Street & 31st Street. Sat 10-6, Sun. 10-5. Tony Gilham (909)8202122

AMERICAN FEDERATION/REGIONAL 2001 SHOW SCHEDULE
SOUTHWEST FEDERATION
November 3-4, Pascagoula, Ms.

CFMS Hall of Fame Award

By Shirley Leeson, Chair, AFMS Bulletin Editor's Hall of Fame, September CFMS Newsletter

This year the Bulletin Editor's Hall of Fame chose Beverly Moreau, editor of Northrop Grumman Gem & Mineral Club. Also chosen was Shirley Schleif, former editor and designer of one of the most endearing fellas, "Diablo Dan and his burro". For many years in the 1960's and through the 1980's, Shirley turned out a different cover for her bulletin. If you have a chance to see some of these "originals" do so. It will warm your heart and that of any rockhound who is fortunate enough to see them.

Poetry

Via Al Weymouth, CHIPS, Fresno Gem & Mineral Society, August 2001

Al Weymouth found this in a dinosaur park in Oregon a long time ago. It was carved on a marble stone.

ANTEDATING YOU AND I

OR ANY GLEAM IN HUMAN EYE

THIS WAS FLORA PREHISTORIC

SHADING FAWNA DINOSAURIC

THAN AS FOSSIL EONS LAY

QUITE RESISTANT TO DECAY

SO-IF IN EGO YOU WOULD SERVE

YOUR NOBLE FORM TO LONG PRESERVE

YOU MAY LIKEWISE AGES MOCK

JUST CHANGE YOURSELF INTO A ROCK.

Black Rock Country

Source: www.rangers.org/desert.html via the Marin Mineral Society's newsletter *The Tumbler*.

Geologically, the Great Basin in North America is a fault block formation: the crust of the earth between the Sierra and Rocky mountain ranges is stretching from east to west, and is broken into blocks. The faults dive into the earth at roughly 60-degree angles and the blocks tilt forming the mountain ranges and low basins. Many valleys here are at least at 4,000 feet above sea level and all have internal drainage...in other words, water does not flow out to the oceans. Black Rock Country is a small portion of the Great Basin and encompasses the Black Rock Desert, Hualapai Flat, Fly Hot Springs and surrounding mountain ranges with names such as Granite, Calico, Black Rock and Selenite.

The Black Rock Desert is a lilt alkaline playa, 3,848 feet above sea level, filled with silt as deep as 10,000 feet above sea level. The Sierra range is now high enough to cut off incoming Pacific rainfall, creating a desert from what was once a wet, warm and lush landscape. Crustal spreading has resulted in the Earth's hot mantle being near enough to the surface to heat ground water, creating the many hot springs.

Seventy million years ago, the Black Rock Desert was a valley that filled with water during the Pleistocene ice age, becoming a segment of the immense Lake Lahontan. At its greatest expanse, 13,800 years ago, Lake Lahontan covered 8,665 square miles and reached a depth of 885 feet at the site of today's Pyramid Lake. Imagine this ancient sprawling lake with narrow arms, separating range after range in western Nevada into long peninsulas and islands. Giant mammoth, camel, horse and saber-toothed tiger roamed the marshy land. The largest mammoth ever found in North America was discovered in a channel of the Quinn River in Black Rock Desert. This

Imperial Mammoth was 50 years old about 17,000 years ago, weighed about 13,000 pounds and was 13 ft high at the shoulders.

Despite its initial appearance, Black Rock Country is far from being a wasteland. The dominant flora of the region are salt tolerant sagebrushes, salt bushes, greasewood, shadscale, rabbit brush, bitterbrush and grasses. Just a few examples of the diverse fauna consist of deer, bighorn and pronghorn sheep, mountain lions, coyotes, jack rabbits, kangaroo rates, bats and numerous lizards, snakes (including the rattler), spiders, scorpions, butterflies and many birds.

Plants and animals adapt to the harsh desert environment in unique ways. Some plants reduce the size or number of leaves during the dry season and others have waxy or gray colored leaves. Animals harvest water by drinking dew and eating plants with high water content. Some come out only at dawn, dusk or at night, burrowing in a deep hole during the day. Hair and feathers create insulation to help keep heat out and water in; light coloration reflects solar radiation. Valuable lessons can be learned from the plants and animals of the desert for our own survival in the hot, dry environment.

Humans are believed to have reached the Great Basin about 11,500 years ago, arriving via the Bering Land Bridge from Siberia. These Asian Americans were semi-nomadic hunter-gatherers. Excavated Pyramid Lake caves indicate that at least three different prehistoric human cultures migrated through the basin between 9500 B.B. and 1400 A.D. When the first European American explorers visited, the inhabitants were the Kuyuidokado, or Northern Paiute, numbering 6,000-7,000. Relationships between the Northern Paiutes and early white settlers were until the late 1850's. Conflict between the two groups came to a head in 1860 at the Battles of Pyramid Lake. Most of the Paiute descendants are now on a reservation surrounding Pyramid Lake.

Black Rock Country remains sparsely populated today. Agricultural activities

produce garlic see, onions, potatoes, pinto beans and forage crops such as hay and alfalfa. Mining of gold, silver, oil, opal and sulfur has been undertaken on a small scale. Gypsum mining is a major industry; cattle and sheep ranching is as primary livelihood. In the 1940's and 50's, the Black Rock Desert was used as a bombing range by the military and live ammunition can still be found. Today the desert basin is used for low altitude training runs. In 1997, a British racing team set the world land speed record on the Black Rock playa with a four-ton, jet-powered car named Thrust 2. The principal recreational users of the desert today include rockhounds, land sailors, history buffs, 4WD enthusiasts, amateur rocketeers, and the community of Burning Man.

Fallon, Nevada

By Jasper's Jargon, Monterey Mineral and Gem Society

Over the weekend of June 30, Bill McFalda, Joe and Sean McPherson, and myself went exploring to places near Fallon, Nevada. On Saturday our first stop was to a Rock Shop in Fallon where the owner, Sonny, drew up some maps for us showing where we might try looking for wonderstone and agate. The first hunting locality was east of Fallon at a place called Wonderstone Mountain. Any guesses as to what you find at Wonderstone Mountain? That's right, jasper. No just kidding, you find wonderstone...tons and tons of wonderstone!! Actually the first place we stopped at had well worn pebbles of wonderstone that were nicely colored. These went promptly into the tumbler when we got home. This site also had small pieces of whitish, blue agate; some with lacey striations in them. From here we went to the Wonderstone Mountain and collected several buckets of nice wonderstone.

Our next stop was further out east of Fallon to an unnamed locality where small geodes, agates and jaspers can be found. We searched high and low and found some mostly small pieces of this and that. It was a pretty spot and I will

probably go back there some day to spend more time exploring. Sean and Joe found some critters in a water trough while we were here and, get this, one of the animals they saw was a bat...a living bat...barely alive in the water. This was definitely its lucky day as the boys plucked it out of the water and set it free.

Our last stop was at Rawhide, Nevada to look for petrified wood. The pickings were slim...very slim, and I was disappointed as I have found some good pieces here in the past. Sunday we went out to the Cowboy mine which is located about 20 miles due north of Bridgeport, California. We spent the day poking around the mine finding garnets, quartz crystals, feldspar crystals, epidote crystals and even what looks like bits of turquoise. It is a very scenic spot. The best news here is the Joe did not fall into any of the mine holes or get stuck trying to squeeze through any of the mineshafts.

Overall, we had a good time. I wish we had been more successful at finding food rock material but that's how it goes sometimes.

How to find the fire in fire agate.

Via Cabber, via Gabber, via Breccia, via the CHIPS, August 2001.

Fire agate is a quartz-based rock with layers of iron oxide in Chalcedony which results in iridescence. It occurs in nodules of milky or grayish translucent chalcedony. Sometimes it is found in botryoidal growths in geodes and in chalcedony roses.

Fire agate appears as a dull, reddish brown layer, but when the surface layers are removed it exposes the rainbow colors of iridescence. The fire is brought out by tumbling, trimming, and grinding off the outer layers to expose the iridescence. Polishing magnifies the fire.

Here's how to find the fire.

Remove the matrix, then tumble polish it. Tumbling removes excess chalcedony.

When polished, remove excess stone around the edges, then polish and set.

Allow the stone to retain its irregular shape and polish slowly, so you don't go through the fire layers. The graceful natural shapes are superior to those cut to calibrated sizes, as the best fire doesn't always fit a mold.

To set it off, mount in a custom made gold or silver setting.

Fire agates are found in Arizona, California, Idaho, Mexico and other places.



To Russia for Jade

By Richard Hughes and Nikolai Kouznetsov from the September 2001 SMS Matrix, Sacramento Ca.

This article was offered in the recommended websites section of the April Matrix but for those of you without access to the web here it is in black and white. It will be presented in three installments.

About the Authors

Richard Hughes is an author, gemologist, and webmaster at Pala International, Fallbrook, California. He also has his own personal web site: www.ruby-sapphire.com Nikolai Kouznetsov is president of Stoneflower, a Moscow-based company specializing in Russian gems, minerals and fossils. Today he resides in Fallbrook CA. This article originally appeared in GemKey Magazine, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp.58-66.

Abstract: Up until recently, gem-quality imperial jadeite was found only in Upper Burma. But starting in the early 1970's, jadeite was found at Itmurundy in Kazakhstan. A few years later, fine jadeite was found in the Polar Urals at Pusyerka, and in 1992, in Khakassia, about 100 km outside of the capital of Abakan.

This article is the first extensive description ever published in English on the Russian jadeite deposits and is based upon visits by Nikolai Kouznetsov to these deposits in the early 1990's and both authors' visit to the Polar Urals and Khakassia mines in August, 2000.

IT IS AN OLD AXIOM that precious stones are rarely found in good places and nowhere is that more true than with jade. Burma, the world's premier source features mines located in a miserable piece of SE Asian shrubbery that would have even George of the Jungle screaming for Agent Orange. Thus when I learned that top-grade jadeite had been discovered in Russia, I quickly made plans to expect the worst. Topped up my life insurance, said my last good-byes to relatives and friends, gave away my collection of Velvet Underground records and canceled my lifetime subscription to the Watchtower. That last one really hurt.

My companion and guide for my Russian sojourn was Nikolai Kouznetsov, an ex-KGB Kazakhstan-born Russian whose love of gems and minerals is matched only by his prodigious consumption of vodka.

Our journey to the Russian jade mines began in the capital of Moscow, a citywide case of schizophrenia caught somewhere between Tzarist excess, a Joseph Stalin commie habit and a burgeoning case of youthful freedom. Moscow is a beguiling collection of contradictions.

The first stop in Moscow was Stoneflower, Nikolai's mineral and gem company, housed in Andreievsky Monastery, which dates to the 16th century. It was here that I viewed my first Russian jade and also here that I drank my first Russian vodka. Both

events would be repeated many times during my three weeks in the country.

Two days later, we set off for Salekhard, from Sheremetev #2, one of Moscow's six airports. At some point in the Soviet period, it was decided that an airport was needed for each point on the compass—a sweet thought, but one that makes for pure hell flying into Moscow with the idea of changing planes and departing in a different direction.

At Salekhard, we are met by Sergei Mikheev, one of the discoverers of the Polar Urals jade deposits.

From Salekhard, a short ferry ride across the River Ob brings us to Labutnangyi, but now without incident. Our captain ripped a rail off another ferry leaving the dock. No doubt he had been hitting the vodka.

A one-hour drive brings us to Kharp, at the base of the Ural Mountains, where we will spend the night. One thing about the roads up here is that you don't need to worry about driving at night, because during the summer, there isn't any—night, that is. August in the Arctic Circle is the time of "white nights." When the sun does dip below the horizon, it is for just a brief period, before coming back just two or three hours later.

Kharp is quite frankly, depressing, a monochrome mixture of rust and concrete, a gray gulag of a town, whose major industries are cement and prisons. Even the sky displays a leaden, industrial quality. Not even the slightest attempt is made at gaiety or beautification, as if even the thought is too much work under these harsh conditions.

This is the land of permafrost. While no snow is visible, only the first few feet of earth are thawed; below that all is frozen. To beat the cold, all the houses are built above the ground and insulated pipes also run above ground. At times, one sees telephone poles sticking out at crazy angles, evidence of the yearly cycle of freezing and thawing that makes it impossible to anchor anything into the soil.

We arrive at the Kharp "Sheraton," our night stop, a dimly lit above-ground cellar. Take a cheap Indian brothel, reduce the size of the windows and paint everything gray and you'll get the picture. But our room does have an attached kitchen. This is a common feature in Russian hotels, for the concept of restaurants and dining out is a new one in the former Soviet Union. Even today, years after the fall of communism, less than one percent of the population of Russia takes more than one restaurant meal per year. Yes, per year.

Transport to the mines, some 160 km from Kharp, was via a Russian armored personnel carrier (APC). After climbing aboard in a vacant lot in the middle of Kharp, our driver turned over the engine and the roar called out: "Arc you ready to RUMBBBBLLLE?"

Verily. Banking quickly out of the lot, one city block later we encountered a river. Whoosh, our vehicle splits the water like Moses parting the Red Sea. Then it was up onto the opposite bank and thus began one helluva ride. I felt simultaneously like a can of paint in a shaker and Rommel in a blitzkrieg on the Russian steppes. Tree in the way. No problem—drive right over the sucker. Rivers? We crossed several that were close to two meters deep. Over hill, dale, mound, rock, and every other manner of obstruction. Mud, rocks, trees—nothing could stop us.

After my 1996-97 visits to Burma's jade mines, I thought I knew what a bad road looked like, but these polar paths were their equal to the nth degree. The difference was our vehicle, which made mincemeat out of every type of terrain thrown at it. After an hour of white knuckling across tundra, river and forest, I turned to Nicky and asked about just how far away these mines were. With a sly smile he replied: "Only nine more hours." "Nice," I thought as I chewed on my tongue.

To be continued.

Alien Crystals

Via Pineywoods Rooter, via Earth, 4/98, via Petrograph, via Gem-N-I, September, 2001.

Alien doesn't always mean extra-terrestrial. Alien can mean just not in its native land. Quartz, one of the major building minerals would appear to be native everywhere. Not so. Take Bermuda, it has a volcanic base without enough silica to produce quartz. The top half of the island is made of limestone from local shells and corals.

Geologist Burrce Reuger of Colby College, Maine, had been studying Bermuda's past vegetation and climate and kept encountering quartz grains in the earth he was digging. Alien Crystals? Comparing the 'finger prints' of the crystal, Reuger determined that the quartz likely came from beaches of northeastern America, 600 miles away, and had been being deposited for the last 3800 years!

The wind couldn't carry the grains in; colonists didn't arrive until 1610. What transported the grains? Consider. Birds carry grains in their crops to help with digestion, and Bermuda is smack in the middle of a migratory route. After checking present birds on Bermuda and finding quartz in over half of their crops, Reuger calculated it would take 16,000 to 60,000 birds visiting each year to account for the quartz he found. The number fit with the actual numbers of migratory birds visiting the island.

Greenstone

Via Mineralog via Lapidarian via Petrograph via Ye Old Timers Mineral Club, Sept-Oct. 2001

Early white settlers to the west coast of New Zealand found Maoris using a tough, hard and very green stone to make weapons, tools and articles or personal adornment. Pounamu, which translates as greenstone, is nephrite jade. In the mountains near Hokitida a large deposit was found, but the mountains are so ruffed, the jade once mined must be airlifted out by

helicopter. The Maori gave names and meanings to the many shades of green that naturally occur—*inanga*, whitebait, for a very pale shade or *totowaka*, a rare greenstone streaked or spotted with red.

Words you won't find in the Dictionary, but should!

By Junius Thomson, *The Conglomerate*,
Reno G&M Society

Bozone (n)—The substance surrounding stupid people that stops bright ideas from penetrating. The bozone layer, unfortunately, shows little sign of breaking down in the near future.

Decaflon (n)—The grueling event of getting through the day consuming only things that are good for you.

Grantartica (n)—The cold, isolated place where art companies dwell without funding.

Hemoglobe (n)—The bloody state of the world.

Intoxication (n)—Euphoria at getting a tax refund which lasts until you realize that it was your money to start with.

Kinstripation (n)—A painful inability to move relatives who come to visit you.

Lullabuo (n)—An idea that keeps floating into your head and prevents you from drifting off to sleep.

Board Meeting

By Louise Gilley, Secretary

No report this month.

General Meeting

By Sharon Neuhauser for Louise Gilley, Secretary

Thank you to Sharon Neuhauser for taking notes of Louise Gilley whom was unable to be at the General Meeting.

Meeting opened at 7:35 pm by acting President **Ann Matthews**. Our President **Joe Yarbrough** was back east on vacation and unable to fly home due to the terrorist attacks of September 11th. **Hawkeye (Marlow) Hicks**, a Pearl Harbor Survivor, lead the pledge of allegiance and we observed a minute of silence and prayer for those involved in the terrible acts on September 11th.

Hazel Woolsey had flyers available for events October 13 & 14, also for the Thanksgiving trip November 22 through 25. The Co-Op meeting was all business, no new trips planned for this year at this time.

The Black Rock Nevada trip included 23-25 people, 3 kids, and 5 dogs. They had a great potluck and found Christmas jasper, agate, small geodes and good weather.

Betty Pankey announced two guests, birthdays and anniversaries. **Ron Morris** won the great rock of Brazilian agate. **Al Schleif** collected for those not wearing name badges. Ann Matthews won the member rock.

Federation Chairman **Bob Pevahouse** states the Federation meeting in Southern California is November 18th, anyone wishing to learn more about the Federation is welcome to contact him. **Zyzzic** is a special camp on the Southern California desert held in Spring for those wishing to learn more on gem and jewelry making. For \$220.00 there are great rock trips and wonderful, interesting teachers, videos and night shows plus great friendships can be made.

The Natural History Museum has opened in Mariposa and displays a large jade from Monterey's Jade Cove.

The big Federation Show for 2-2 will be held July 12 through the 14th, "Treasurers of the Sierra Nevada" will be the theme and the show is in Placerville, California. The 2003 show will be in southern California.

Doug Rue Display Chair, announced one novice, 2 pro, and 4 faceted stones. The novice entry was by Glen Hubbard.

Dick Pankey honored **Mary Ann King** for giving a seed bead class, **Brownie**

Cameron and Shirley Schleif for delivering their slate class, by presenting each with a Diablo Dan coffee mug. October 17 & 24, **Ophelia Hicks** will teach soapstone carving. Anyone interested in teaching a class or wanting a special class just let **Dick Pankey** know.

All people who have taken a class this year in glass fusing, sewing machine necklace, decorating train spikes, wire jewelry or wax casting, seed bead flower pins or slate carving please bring your projects to be shown at the November show. Make sure to properly identify your items for **Dick**. **Walt Wright** will be giving a Petrified Wood Seminar on September 21 through 23.

Sam Woolsey thanked **Ann Matthews** for her delicious goodies and as a gracious hostess for the show meetings, and he thanked **George Matthews** for his roll in helping to build cases for the show. Thank you to **Connie Klein** for allowing us to place the trailer on her property and to **Marlow Hicks** for parking the trailer. **Sam** also thanked all the men who gave of themselves to help fix the trailer especially to **Jim High** for his great paint job.

Thanks to **Dave Kleesattel** for printing those great signs large and small fliers for our show. Dave needs good rocks for the Silent Auction. **Sam** asks members to please sign up to help at the show.

Duaine Eggleston needs pictures from this years trips for our history display.

Betty Pankey announced the picnic for Sunday.

Don Tompkins is having a yard sale rocks, rocks, and more rocks September 22 & 23rd.

Hawkeye Hicks, Librarian, announced videos and books that are available to all members.

Lee King is looking for volunteers for positions on our Board. Voting is coming up soon.

Acting President **Ann Matthews** reminded all that our October meeting is early, October 5th. Auction time, so clear the house, yard and bring an item

to be auctioned. All money goes for a geological scholarship fund.

The President introduced **Dr. Walter Carr** who gave a very enjoyable talk on "Chocolate." The talk gave us a history of the bean, where and how it is grown and the production of its use over the past few hundred years. There was a slide show, books, other props and of course the real thing, both bitter and sweet chocolate to taste. We all had a fun diversion from the horrible events of the week.

Sam Woolsey announced we will be giving away over \$150 in cash at our raffle at the show. Advance entry ticket sales for the show can be purchased for your guests too.

If anyone knows a schoolteacher in the earth sciences or geology, Sam will give the teacher 2 tickets to the show. Encourage all kids you know to attend our November show and remember to hand out fliers now.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Submit articles and news for the November **Diablo Diggins** by **October 18th**.

Board and Committee Members 2001

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