



Diablo Diggins

Contra Costa Mineral and Gem Society

Since 1950

“We Dig Rocks”

Concord, CA

Vol 62, No. 2

This Newsletter is available by e mail - contact the Editor

February 2014

President's Welcome for February



What could be better in this dark winter month than to get together with friends and like-minded rockhounds to share an evening of fun and learning? At our program this month, we'll be hearing about finding gold—the metal of love—especially when given as jewelry!

Our society has a long history of providing a wide range of benefits for our members. However, two popular benefits may cease until we can find people to take over those committees.

Love the snacks at meetings? Me too! But without someone to set up the table, provide the beverages, and tidy up the table after, we will not be able to offer them. Can you take on this position? The work is before and at the close of meetings, so you never miss the program.

The Education committee sets up the fun and educational classes that many members enjoy. The job could be divided up so one person does the craft classes and another does the mineral and rock classes. If you're able to do half or all of this, let me know. Otherwise, the soapstone carving class in March may be the last class for a very long time.

Looking forward to seeing you on February 10!

Donna Albrecht, President
Contra Costa Mineral and Gem Society
Contact me: donna-at-albrechts.com

Next General Meeting
Monday, Feb 10 7:30 PM

February Program

California's Mercury

Mercury Deposits of the California Coast Ranges



During the first few years of the California gold rush, miners extracted gold using panning and sluicing methods. Quickly as the placer deposits became scarce, gold mining evolved to hydraulic mining, hard rock mining, and finally to large-scale dredging of low-grade gravel deposits.

Speaker Bill Motzer at the Sutter Buttes, California. Photo courtesy Bill Motzer.

In these advanced methods of exploration, separation of the gold from the bearing material was required, and mercury was the material of

choice. Thus, early on in California history, gold and mercury mining became inexorably linked. In some respects mining of mercury became as important as mining the gold itself.

Fortunately –for the miners– significant mercury deposits were discovered throughout California's Coast Ranges, most notably in New Idria (Central Coast), Mayacamas (Clear Lake), and New Almaden (west of San Jose). Mined mercury was transported to the gold country of the Sierra foothills where it was instrumental in the processing of gold throughout the latter half of the century.

One recent writer observed the ultimate transport was from the Coast Range to the bottom of San

Francisco Bay where it has now become a major environmental concern.

This is the story of this month's speaker, Dr. William Motzer. Dr. Motzer will discuss the geologic origins of mercury, its mining history, and its activity in the environment, including conversion to the toxic methylmercury which concentrates in the larger fishes of the Bay.

Dr. Motzer is Senior Geologist at Todd Engineers in Alameda. He holds a Ph.D. in Geology from the University of Idaho, is a Certified Hydrogeologist and a registered Professional Geologist in California and five other states.

Bill has extensive experience in water quality chemistry and environmental forensic investigations. He has worked from Alaska to Mexico in investigations involving hot spring mercury and gold deposits and has conducted more than 400 environmental projects, including gold mining litigation, throughout California and the western states.

By Harry Nichandros
Program Chairman

Lustrous, radiating, red cinnabar (mercury sulfide) crystals richly cover the vertical matrix on this excellent specimen from the famous Almaden Mine of California, 2010. Photo: Rob Lavinsky, iRocks.com – CC-BY-SA-3.0. (Used with permission.)



Board Meeting

Wednesday Feb 5, 7:00 PM

New Articles for March *Diablo Diggins*

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and needs items on time to complete the newsletter timely. The President asked people to take a trip and take pictures and create a brief write up for the newsletter so we can all enjoy it. Debbie and Larry Blevins graciously volunteered to manage the Refreshment table for the meeting. We need a member to volunteer to take Refreshments so we can continue to have snacks and beverages after the program. Call the President to help us by taking over Refreshments.

Program-Program Chair Harry Nichandros introduced the program Red Treasures of the Rockies about rhodocrosite from the Sweet Alma mine. He saw this DVD as a new member and he was so impressed he woke up Therese when he got home to tell her about it. The presentation ran for 70 minutes and it was educational about mining and also creates an enhanced appreciation for the work entailed in locating and extracting mineral specimens. The next program will be a talk by a gold consultant.

Next Board of Directors Meeting is February 5th,
February General Meeting is on February 10th.
Meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM. Submitted by
Mary Hicks, Secretary

Display Case Trophy

Can You Make the Plastic Base?



Do you have a table saw? Can you cut Lucite sheets?

We are looking for someone to make sixty trophy bases for our November 2014 Show. Each year the

club presents a trophy to each of the display case preparers to recognize and thank them for their display case presentation at the Show.

Last year Matt and Ann Matthews made the trophies as shown in the photo. They have retired to Oregon, and we are looking for someone to carry on for this year's Show.

The club provides the all the materials. We need someone who can cut and sand the 2"x 3" plastic bases. If this is something you can do, give me a call or email. (By the way, you are not alone; Matt is still available by phone to share his expertise.)

Thanks, Harry
Show Chairman

Display Report - January Meeting

There are four competitive categories each month. Everyone is invited to vote on the entries in each category. The winner in each category receives a prize of five dollars, and the person who has won the most competitions for novice cab during the year will advance to "pro" status and be awarded a Diablo Dan silver pin.

Novice Cabs - No entries

Pro Cabs - five entries

- A - Barrie Bieler - Petrified Wood
- B - Joe Yarbrough - Blue Lagoon Agate
- C - Paul Black - Idocrase
- D - Dave Kleesattel - Montana Agate (winner)**
- E - Mary Bufton - Rhodonite

Shape of the Month - Oval - Three entries

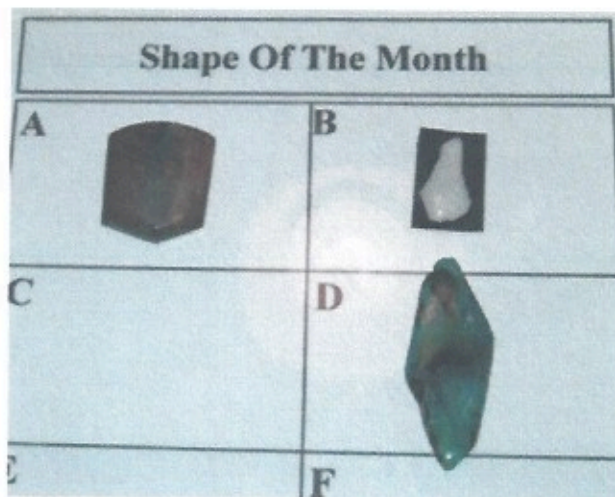
- A - Barrie Bieler - Jasper & Hematite
- B - Mary Bufton - Australian Opal (winner)**
- D - Dave Kleesattel - Chrysocolla & Malachite

Faceted Gems - No entries

2014 Shape of the Month Cabs

- January - Irregular
- February - Heart shape
- March - Oval
- April - Round
- May - Pear (Teardrop)
- June - No competition (Auction night)
- July - Freeform (No symmetry)
- August - Triangle
- September - Marquis (Cat's eye)
- October - Rectangle (or Square)
- November - Oval
- December - No competition (Christmas party)

Paul Black
Display Chair



Bead-In

Friday, February 21
6:30 PM
Jeannie Russo's house
RSVP to Jeannie

Bring your own project.

I have some "St. Patrick's Day" themed projects if anyone would like kits for them.

I will be happy to email pictures.

Thank you.
Debbie Blevins

EDUCATION

SOAPSTONE CARVING – We've all admired rocks that have been carved into beautiful items. Dick Dennis will be teaching a hands-on class for soapstone carving on March 29 at Connie's Barn. The class is scheduled for 9 am to 3 pm. Dick has the soapstone. You bring any files or rasps you have. Because of the one-on-one instruction, there are only six slots for this class, so sign up at the February or March meetings.

Donna

FEBRUARY BIRTHSTONE AMETHYST



Amethyst, the gemstone believed by ancient Greeks and Romans to ward off the intoxicating powers of Bacchus, also is said to keep the wearer clear-headed and quick-witted. Throughout history, the gemstone has been associated with many myths, legends, religions, and numerous cultures. English regalia were even decorated with amethysts during the Middle Ages to symbolize royalty. It has been associated with many myths, legends, religions, and numerous cultures. Amethyst is purple quartz, a beautiful blend of violet and red that can be found in every corner of the earth. Historically, the finest amethyst were found in Russia and were featured in much royal European jewelry. Today, while Brazil is the primary source of this gemstone, fine material can be found elsewhere, especially in Zambia

From the February 2014 issue of "Chips" - Fresno Gem and Mineral Society



OUR NEWEST LIFETIME MEMBERS

Lifetime membership was granted to Barrie Bieler and Joe Yarbrough (center)
Their honors were presented by Mary Jernigan (left) and Dave Klessattel (right)



Federation Director's Report

By Dick Pankey, Federation Director

One of the many outstanding programs of the CFMS is the Earth Science Studies Program that is dedicated to the promotion and the education of the Earth Sciences, and directed strongly toward the lapidary arts and various disciplines pertaining to it. The next session is on March 30th to April 6th at the Desert Studies Center near Baker, Ca. on Zzyzx Road. The cost is \$390 per person, which includes instruction, room and board. Instruction includes classes in lapidary (cabochon making), silver fabrication, wire art, soft stone carving, hard stone carving, field trips, copper enameling, silver and gold casting, glass bead making along with other disciplines as the cycles change. They are planning 3 days of field trips and flint knapping. If you are interested don't delay in registering because this session fills up fast. Forms are available on the CFMS web site at www.cfmsinc.org under Forms. If you have any questions about the sessions at contact me.

The California Federation has many programs and activities that serve the member societies, the individual members, children and future rockhounds and the general public. More details on all CFMS and AFMS events and activities are available on their respective web sites (www.cfmsinc.org and www.amfed.org). The monthly CFMS Newsletter can be found on the CFMS web site – www.cfmsinc.org and is available to everyone. I try to highlight the many programs and reports each month but I can't cover every detail. There are typically 20 to 25 articles, reports, announcements and other information in each newsletter. I encourage all interested, curious members to go on line and check out the web site and the newsletter.

Also check out the American Lands Access Assoc. web site (www.amlands.org) for the latest news on land use and access issue affecting rockhounds.

Attend and Exhibit at the CFMS Show

The 2014 CFMS Convention and Show Will be held on May 30, 31 and June 1 in Pomona, CA. This is the BIG SHOW for the CFMS and is hosted by the Pasadena Lapidary Society. The show committee has issued a call for Competitive and Non-competitive entries for this show. At our show last November I saw a lot of outstanding cases that are worthy to be shown at this show and several that are competition quality. Competitive and non-competitive exhibiting is open to all society members. Entry forms are available on the CFMS web site. Contact me with question and for details.

Dick Pankey



CONTRA COSTA MINERAL & GEM SOCIETY www.ccmgs.org

P0 Box 4667, Walnut Creek, CA 94596

General Meeting: Second Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m. (Third Monday of the month in June)
Centre Concord, 5298 Clayton Rd, Concord, (Clayton Fair Shopping Center, about 0.2 miles northwest on Clayton from Ygnacio Valley Road) Cross street Balhan Drive, next to Clayton Valley Bowl, free parking

Membership Fees: Initiation \$5; Regular Member \$10, Junior \$1

VISITORS ARE WELCOME! BRING A FRIEND!

Board and Committee Members 2014

Please do not publish this list, Editor

President

Donna Albrecht

donna@albrechts.com

1st Vice President, Programs

Harry Nichandros

925 674 7055

[nichandros\[at\]juno\[dot\]com](mailto:nichandros[at]juno[dot]com)

2nd Vice president, Field Trips

Kelly Plumb

510 799 4633

Kellyplumb900@yahoo.com

Secretary

Mary Hicks

925 779 0698

maryhicks@comcast.net

Treasurer

Mary Hanjes

925 932 4345

b0sc057@gmail.com

Federation Director

Dick Pankey

925 439 7509

Dickpankey@juno.com

Ecology

Open

Publicity

Joanne Caskey

(925) 689-2119

jcaskey@comcast.net

Property

Open

Hospitality

Debbie Blevins

925-680-6562

Display

Paul Black

925 212 3255

challengerdev@comcast.net

Librarian

Connie Klein

925 689 4051

connieklein@astound.net

Show

Harry Nichandros

925 674 7055

[Nichandros\[at\]juno\[dot\]com](mailto:Nichandros[at]juno[dot]com)

Historian

Hazel Woolsey

925 837 3287

Education

Open

Refreshments

Open

Membership

Mary Jernigan

925 429 2748

M10jernigan@yahoo.com

Bulletin Editor

Terry Caskey

925 689 2119

tcaskey@comcast.net

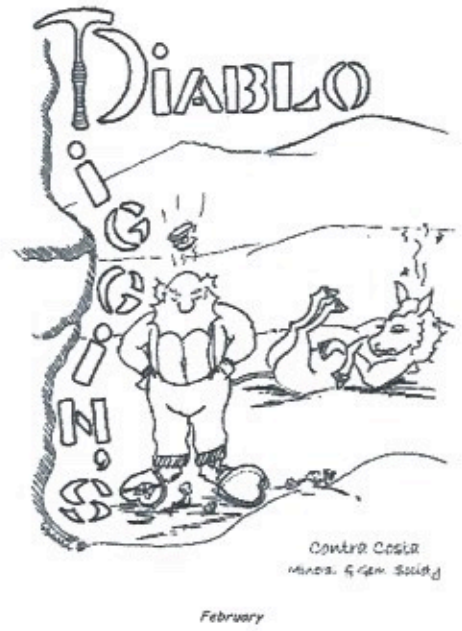
Past President

Therese Clark

925 674 7055

February 2014

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First Class
Member of American and California Federation of Mineralogical Societies

Contra Costa Mineral and Gem Society
P.O. Box 4667, Walnut Creek, Ca 94596

Diablo Diggins

Newsletter of the Contra Costa Mineral and Gem Society

www.ccmgs.org

Editor-Terry Caskey

Send reports to tcaskey@comcast.net

The Contra Costa Mineral and Gem Society was formed in 1950 to encourage the study of the lapidary arts, mineralogy and field collection.

Members meet the second Monday of each

month (third Monday in June) at Centre Concord, 5298 Clayton Rd, Concord, Ca

94521 (Clayton Faire Shopping Center

between Ygnacio Valley Rd and Balham

Dr, next to Clayton Valley Bowl).

Visitors are welcome! Bring a friend!