

Millennium Edition

WHITTIER

ROCKHOUNDING
GEM & MINERAL
SOCIETY

*It's Show Time!! The Excitement Starts
10 AM sharp on Saturday, October 20th.*



October 2001

**“Geodes Where and Why They Form”
October 25 General Meeting**

Ray **Richie** will be presenting a program on geodes. Ray has done exhaustive research into the formation of these beautiful natural objects and will give some insight into how and why nature creates them.

Some of you may also know Ray as the husband of the CFMS 1st Vice-President and President Elect for 2002, Joanna Richie.

Jack Zywocki

September Meeting Notes

Todd **Schwalter** presented an excellent program about Tagua Nut Carving. Tagua Nuts, also known as Vegetable Ivory, are used as an inexpensive substitute for elephant ivory. Mr. Schwalter displayed several of his fine carvings which he used to demonstrate the various techniques and styles of producing finished items. He showed the tools he uses and how to select them. Todd also had uncut Tagua Nuts and one of the spiny pods in which they grow. It was an interesting overview of this carving specialty.

During the business meeting, **Joe Goetz** asked for nominations for the 2001 WGMS Board of Officers and was able to complete the list (see opposite page for the nominees).

Final plans were discussed for our upcoming **Geode Show**. **Vern & Sylvia Cliffe** are still planning to go to the **Jade Festival** in Pacific Grove and should return with some of **Don Wood**'s collection for display at the show. These jade objects, along with other displays of jade, will be on stage for all to see.

In Member news:

- * **Ed Piechota** is at the Whittier Presbyterian Hospital with kidney failure. He is currently undergoing kidney dialysis, which will be on-going.
- * **Sylvia Cliffe** severely injured her back and is in considerable pain. Knowing how much she enjoys rockhounding and fieldtrips, we wish her a speedy recovery.

F o r t h e S h o w , D o n ' t F o r g e

*** 2 pies and a 6-pack of name-brand sodas**

Show Schedule

The following is the show schedule of events.

Date	Activity	Time
Friday, October 19	Setup	starts at noon
	Spaghetti feast	5 – 6 PM
Friday, October 20	Final Setup/cases	9 – 10 AM
	Crowning of Queen	9:30 AM
	Doors open to Public	10 AM
	Doors close to public	5 PM
Friday, October 21	Doors open to Public	10 AM
	Final Drawing begins	4 PM
	Doors close to public	5 PM
	Tear-down	5 PM after public cleared from building

2002 Nominated Officers

The following **proposed slate of WGMS Officers for 2002** was “filled out” at the September Regular Meeting.

- President Art Ragazzi**
- 1st Vice-President..... James LaBorde**
- 2nd Vice-President Jack Zywocienski**
- Secretary Marcia Goetz**
- Treasurer Jay Valle**
- Federation Director Bill Burns**
- Directors Kathy Turner, Jerry Turner, Joe Goetz**

I want to thank **Joe Goetz** and **Art Ragazzi** for doing a fine job on the Nominating Committee.

JValle

Honoring Two of Our Own

In times past, the club has honored members by forwarding their names to the Federation for recognizing work members have done for WGMS. During the most recent times, *Les Roy* and *Jim Akin* were the recipients of the CFMS recognition award for their tireless efforts on behalf of the society.

In a slight “switch” of policy, at the September 27th regular meeting the club surprised two of our own by presenting certificates to *Jay Valle* and *Dottie Jacobs* for their contributions to the society.

F q v certificate was for her excellent job she has done during the last year as Treasurer. Unfortunately *Dottie* wasn’t there due to time-consuming preparations for her son’s upcoming wedding. Maybe she’ll find out about the award when she reads the bulletin, which may be out before the board meeting on October the 4th. The second certificate was presented to *Jay Valle* for his leadership as president for the last two years. (*Jay*, for those of you who haven’t kept up on current events, is getting married to *Kathy Piechota* at *L c home* on Saturday, October 6th in a garden setting ceremony. In addition, he is putting out the bulletin several days before the event and making sure the two WGMS Show banners get to the Masonic Temple to be hung advertising our show, as well as last minute errands for all the miscellaneous knick-knacks needed for the wedding!).

If the bulletin editor can shrink copies of the certificates for the bulletin, then everyone will be able to see them.

The idea came out of somewhere and *Marcia Goetz* made up the certificates and *Vern Cliffe* arranged to have them framed.

Let’s not let this idea die out, as there are other members who should be recognized for their contribution and dedication to the society as a whole.

Vern Cliffe

Lavic Junction Field Trip Report September 29-30, 2001

The September field trip to Lavic Junction was enjoyed by seven rockhounds on Saturday the 29th. Immediately upon arrival at the "bowl area" campsite agate was found on the ground and in the adjacent area. Collecting of "baby diaper" and other agates was done while waiting for others to arrive. The group left about 9:30 am for the morning trip to the Cady Mountains Area North of Ludlow and West of Broadwell dry lake. The objective was to visit three sites with the first being the Old Dominion Mine. The trail one-half mile east of the mine contained a former prospect area but rock hounding was poor. The next area was the hills 2-1/2 miles east of Sleeping Beauty Mountain. However, the stream has washed out the road crossing and the adjacent terrain did not permit cross-country travel around it. Exploration of the upper half mile of this wash was not fruitful. As the clock hands had passed 2 PM the third site was eliminated, and the group returned to the "bowl area" for a tailgate lunch. By this time the weather was warm with a soft breeze that made the desert pleasant.

The afternoon trip objective was to find the Amethyst mine about one mile north west of the Silver Bell Mine. Traveling west on the pipe line road one member spied small and large pieces of agate in the road rock fill and we then did some collecting from the road bed. It appeared that the material was not local as it was not present in the lava deposits adjacent to the road, but had been hauled from a quarry to make or repair the pipeline road. At the amethyst mine, it appeared that the mine had not been worked for some time; however some small amethyst crystals were found on the down hill debris. It seems that the rock tailings at the bottom of the mine face needs to be pushed down the hillside to expose the lower face of the mine wall. Without having any shovels or hard rock tools the group returned to the parking area for water, a short rest, pack up and departure for home or camp.

We want to thank Vern and Sylvia Cliffe for planning this trip and wish Sylvia a speedy recovery from her aching back.

Courtesy of Warren Dowler

**October 27 - 28 Field Trip to the
Whittier Club Claim
(see map on facing page)**

The field trip for October will be to the famous stomping grounds of the Whittier Club -- the Whittier Club Claim! Let's all come out and show our guests a good time.

Potluck is Saturday night, to be followed by a blazing campfire, weather permitting.

Because of the short winter hours, we will start our collecting adventures at 8:00 AM, going to that distant hike over to the Honey Onyx. Possibly before lunch, we will head out to Mule Canyon (if not before lunch, definitely after). Depending on the time, we may do a bit of exploring as well.

Happy Hour will be at 3:30, followed by dinner at 4:30.

Sunday, before lunch, we will go to Harvard Road to see if we can find an unchipped rock (Jason Badgely has preceded us). Maybe we should dub it "Jason's Kanan Road East". Rumor has it that we may visit a new area for palm and agate (new to us, at least).

Joe Goetz



WHITTIER CLUB ONYX

APPROXIMATELY 115 MILES FROM WHITTIER

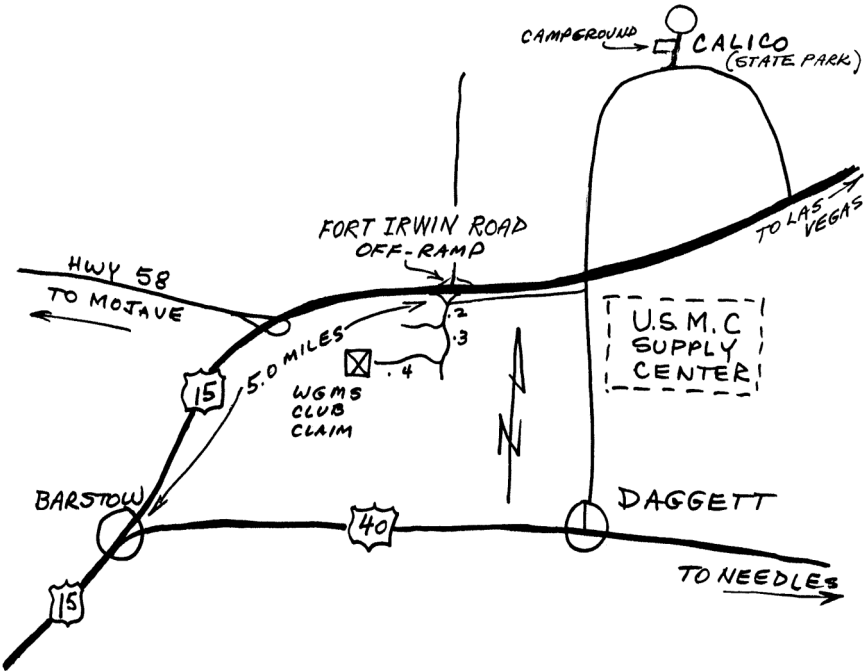
COLLECTING MATERIAL:

HONEY ONYX — COLLECTING AT THIS LOCATION CAN ONLY BE DONE AFTER RECEIVING PERMISSION FROM THE WHITTIER GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY, % CLAIMS SEC., P.O. BOX 66, WHITTIER, CA 9060



TOOLS — HEAVY EQUIPMENT, CHISELS, PRY BARS, SLEDGES, WEDGES, ETC.

SUPPLIES IN BARSTOW. FOR INTERESTED BEGINNING ROCKHOUNDS (WITHOUT CAMPER, TRAILERS, ETC.) YOU MAY WISH TO STAY IN A MOTEL IN BARSTOW AND DRIVE TO THE CLUB CLAIM. AN EASY WAY TO GET TO KNOW THE "WORKINGS" OF A ROCK CLUB FIELD TRIP.



October Birthstone

October has two birthstones - opal and tourmaline.

The name opal is derived from the Sanskrit word "upala," as well as the Latin "opalus," meaning "precious stone." Opal is a gemstone of much variety; the ancient Roman natural historian Pliny once described it in the following way:

"... it is made up of the glories of the most precious stones. To describe it is a matter of inexpressive difficulty: There is in it the gentler fire of the ruby, the brilliant purple of the amethyst, the sea-green of the emerald, all shining together in an incredible union."

The opal is a fragile hydrated silica material, made of submicroscopic silica spheres held together by more silica and water. It is a soft stone, easily altered in appearance by changes in heat and pressure. This mineral contains varying amounts of water within it that determine the appearance of the gemstone. When water evaporates out of an opal, the stone appears slightly smaller and the stress of the evaporation creates cracks on it.

Opals are formed in near-surface volcanic rocks, within cavities and cracks. In sedimentary volcanic ash rock, percolating water in the ground dissolves silica that eventually precipitates to form the opal, sometimes becoming the replacement material for fossils -- shells, bones, wood -- whose original material had dissolved away.

Opals are famous for their "play of colors" -- many stones flash the colors of the rainbow when moved, due to the interference of light on small cracks and other internal structural differences. Opals also have characteristic colors due to impurities within the stone. The milky or pearly appearance of some opals are due to inclusions of tiny gas bubbles. Yellows and reds betray the presence of iron oxides. The spectacular black opals that sometimes flash green, blue and red get their color from magnesium oxides and organic carbon within the stone. Perhaps the most valuable opal pattern is the "harlequin," large angular patches of red, yellow and green resembling the checks on a clown's costume.

The principal source of opals is Australia, noted for its magnificent black opals. Fire opals were first mined in Mexico, and continue to be produced today. In the United States, brilliant fire opals are also found in Nevada. Other commercial sources of opal are Brazil, Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Japan and Ireland.

There is an Indian legend about the origin of the opal. Quoted from "Gemstones" by Willard Heaps:

"...the gods Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva once vied in jealous love for a beautiful woman. This angered the Eternal, who changed the fair mortal into a creature made of mist. Thereupon each of the three gods endowed her with his own color so as to be able to recognize her. Brahma gave her the glorious blue of the heavens, Vishnu enriched her with the splendor of gold, and Shiva lent her his flaming red. But all this was in vain, since the lovely phantom was whisked away by the winds. Finally, the Eternal took pity on her and transformed her into a stone, the opal, that sparkles in all the colors of the rainbow."

To ancient Romans, the opal was a symbol of love and hope. Orientals called it the "anchor of hope." Arabs say it fell from the heavens in flashes of lightning. It was believed to make its wearer invisible, hence the opal was the talisman of thieves and spies.

During the Medieval period, a change in color intensity of an opal was believed to indicate if its wearer was ill or in good health. The opal was supposed to maintain a strong heart, prevent fainting, protect against infection, and cleanse foul-smelling air. The stone, as in ancient times, was still regarded as a symbol of hope.

But the opal's reputation changed in the mid-14th century. The Black Death swept across Europe, killing one quarter of its population. The gem was believed to be the cause of death. When worn by someone struck with the deadly plague, it would appear brilliant only until the person died. Then it would change in appearance, losing its luster. In reality, it was the sensitivity of this stone to changes in temperature that altered its appearance, as the heat from a burning fever gave way to the chill of death.

In Elizabethan England, the opal was treasured for its beauty. Shakespeare wrote of it in the Twelfth Night as the "queen of gems." Queen Victoria presented her children with opal jewelry, thus making the stone popular. But the stone continued to have a mixed reputation, chiefly due to a novel written by Sir Walter Scott in 1887 that depicted it as a stone of evil.

In Australia, there is a legend of a huge opal that governs the stars and guides human love, as well as controls the gold in mines. But Australian aborigines see it in a different light -- to them, the opal is the devil that lurks in the ground, a half-serpent and half-human with flashes of wicked magic that lures men to destruction.

The alternate birthstone for October is the tourmaline, a gemstone that exhibits the broadest spectrum of gemstone colors. Gem-quality forms of this mineral have in the past been misidentified as rubies, emeralds and sapphires. In fact, a famous tourmaline -- the size of a pigeon's egg -- belonging to the Russian Empress Catherine the Great was long thought to be a ruby. The name of this gemstone is believed to derive from the Singhalese (Sri Lankan) word "toramalli," a term applied to yellow, green or brown stones, that means "something little out of the earth."

Tourmaline is a complex aluminous borosilicate mineral built of crystals with complicated aggregations of sodium, aluminum, boron, oxygen, hydrogen and silicon atoms. Other metals are also present within the crystal structure, and are responsible for the characteristic colors of the gemstones. Pink, for example, is due to the presence of manganese, while ferrous iron, chromium or vanadium betray their presence as green gemstones.

Most tourmalines are found in a myriad of colors: yellow, green, red, blue, pink, brown, black. Some even have bi-colored properties. A valued bi-colored variety of tourmaline, found in Brazil, is called the "watermelon." The outer edges of the gem are green, transitioning to a transparent white zone that gives way to a pink or light red interior.

Tourmaline has an unusual property. When it is warmed or rubbed, it attracts small bits of paper, lint and ash. This occurs because the gem becomes charged with static electricity. In fact, Benjamin Franklin used this gem in his studies of electricity. Maintaining a tourmaline exhibit at museums requires frequent cleaning of the gemstone because heat from lights of the display case create a charge in the stone that attracts dust.

Compared with other gemstones, tourmalines are a relatively recent discovery. Hence, it lacks the rich lore that accompanies many other precious gems. However, among some people, the stone is known as the "peace stone," believed to dispel fear and make its wearer calm.

*By Marc Airhart, Deborah Byrd, Shireen Gonzaga, June, 1999
Courtesy of Earth & Sky Webpage*

The Golden Era of the San Gabriels

By Wally Ford

It is well known that the gold discovery at Sutter's Mill on the American River is what sparked the rush of 1849. However, it is little known that in 1842, Don Juan found gold in Placerita Canyon. Within days, the word spread throughout southern California and into northern Mexico. Answering the siren's call, Mexican miners from Sonora, Mexico rushed north to the various rivers in the San Gabriel Mountains where the virgin placer deposits lay in waiting. Soledad, Pacoima, San Gabriel, and Lytle Creek canyons were heavily exploited.

Even before this, it has been said that some of the San Fernando and Santa Barbara mission neophytes were "employed" to pan the gravels near Newhall in 1842.

By the 1860's, the river gravels were facing depletion, encouraging the search for outcropping quartz gold veins. The Mexican miners working in Soledad Canyon were the first to exploit such new occurrences. The ore was crushed by a primitive mill called an arrastre to the consistency of sand and taken to the river and panned. Gold ran between \$30 and \$40.

Don Manuel Ravenna, a Los Angeles businessman, organized a copper mining company in 1862. The copper deposit had been located on the slope of Parker Mountain near Acton. Soon, a small cluster of shacks, a livery stable, and blacksmith shop became Soledad city. The operation was short-lived due to a drop in copper prices. The "town" was revived, taking on a new name, Ravenna, and becoming a gold-mining center in 1864.

By the 1870's, lode mining had shifted up the Santa Clara River to the vicinity of what is now Acton. This, the Cedar mining district, became the most productive gold producer in the San Gabriel Mountains. The ore occurred in fractured granite, gabbro, and schist. The gold in quartz was free milling, with pyrite an accessory mineral. There were extensive underground workings, 1,000-foot inclined shafts, tunnels, and adits.

Of the dozen or so mines, the Buena Esperanza and Red Rover produced \$1.5 million. The High Grade and Puritan earned \$550,000. as many as 10 stamp mills were in operation.

Large-scale commercial hydraulic mining of the river gravels was feasible in the San Gabriel and Lytle Creek canyons. This process requires large volumes of water. Monitor or large nozzles played a powerful stream against

(continued on page 14)

The Golden Era of the San Gabriels (continued)

**CFMS GEM & MINERAL SHOWS
OCTOBER –NOVEMBER, 2001**

- Oct. 3 - 7 **JOSHUA TREE** - Sportsman's Club, Sportsmans Hall,
6225 Sunburst Ave. Hours: Wed. – Sat. 8 – 5, Sun. 8 – 3
- Oct. 5 - 7 **PACIFIC GROVE JADE FESTIVAL** - Featuring Jade
Cove Jade and the works of diver/sculptor *Don Wobber*
and others. (some of *F q p " Y q d r e a t i o n s* will be fea-
tured in our **WHITTIER SHOW** on the weekend of Octo-
ber 20th & 21st)..
- Oct. 13 - 14 **TRONA** - Searles Lake Gem & Mineral Society
13337 Main Street. Hours: Sat. 8 – 5. Sun. 8 – 4
- OCT. 20 –21 WHITTIER –THIS IS OUR SHOW!**
WHITTIER MASONIC TEMPLE,
7604 GREENLEAF AVENUE
HOURS: 10 –5 BOTH DAYS.
- Nov. 3 - 4 **FONTANA** - Kaiser Rock and Gem Club,
California Steel Industry Building, 9300 Cherry Ave.
Hours: 9 - 5 both days.
- Nov. 3 - 4 **OXNARD** - Oxnard Gem & Mineral Soc.
800 Hobson Way. Hours: Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-4
- Nov. 3 – 4 **RIDGECREST** - Indian Wells Gem and Mineral Society,
Desert Empire Fairgrounds, Mesquite Hall,
520 S. Richmond Road. Hours: 9 – 5 both days.

Vern Cliffe

the gravel banks, washing the material into sluices. Several million dollars of fine gold was recovered.

While visiting the Red Rover mine, a student in my geology class picked up a grapefruit-sized rock on the waste dump that had a thin gold seam running through it! Near the parked car, I found a raisin-sized nugget!

From The Agatizer 10/99, via CFMS Newsletter 10/01

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Bulletin exchanges are welcome and should be sent to the editor.

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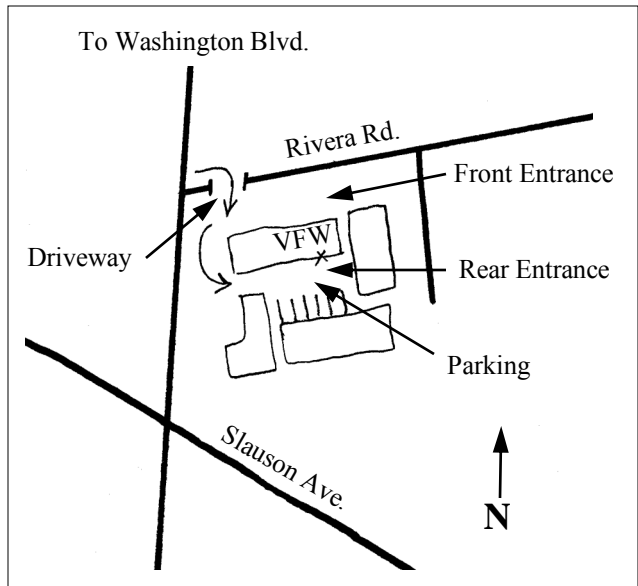
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Meeting Date: **October 25 at 7:30 PM**

Location: **VFW Hall, Rear Entrance**

11912 Rivera Rd., Ste. A

(use map above)