

February 2002

WHITTIER



ROCKHOUNDER

GEM & MINERAL
SOCIETY



ROCKHOUNDER

THE PREZ SEZ:

Greetings:

I watched the Olympic Opening Ceremonies last night. It makes me want to get in the jeep and just drive the ten hours to Salt Lake City to catch an event or two during the upcoming three day holiday weekend. Common sense will probably take control, and I will stay home and try to catch as much TV coverage as I can. Hopefully, I will be able to do this without becoming so sleep deprived that I get my finger stuck in my computer keyboard, or catch a finger hanging up the phone.

Common sense and how it applies to the club is what this month's column is about. For the last couple of years, our Club has been finding it difficult to balance the budget. Common sense tells us that a failure to balance our budget puts our long term viability as a club at risk. Enhancing our Club's financial viability will be the Board's number one priority for this year.

After reviewing last year's finances at our last Board meeting, the consensus was that our problem is not with our expenditures so much as it is with our revenues. To improve our revenues, you will see a reinstatement of some things from the past, and the trying of some new things. For example, each quarter this year, we will be conducting a silent auction at our monthly

(Continued on page 5)

The Prez Says... Continued from page 3

Cover Picture: "The Rock"

"The Rock", a rather hefty chunk of Tri-Color Marble and the "strong back/weak mind group that removed it from its resting place. This picture was taken during the 2000 Stoddard Wells Tailgate (see article on page 6).

Program for February 28

Our scheduled speaker for the February General Meeting backed out at the last minute and we haven't confirmed a replacement program in time to publish the bulletin. We will have a program but it will just be a surprise.

James LaBorde

Dues Are Due!!

Many of our WGMS members have already paid their dues for 2002 and I thank you.

The following is the dues schedule for Year 2002 and is unchanged from last year. Dues can be paid at the February or March meetings, or mailed directly to the WGMS Treasurer, Jay Valle (his address is listed below).

- Adult Individuals .\$.15.00
- Married Couples...\$.25.00
- Juniors.....\$.5.00

Dues can be mailed to: **Jay Valle**
1421 Latchford Avenue
Hacienda Heights, CA 91745

February Displays

Now that the Holiday Season is over and you've all had a chance to catch our breaths, it's time to think about the rocks in our lives.

For displays this year we will follow through on birthday gemstones. February is amethyst, so bring amethyst or any stone that is purple shades. You are always welcome to bring to bring any stones recently collected, or worked on, finished or not. Please bring something to share and inform others,

Sylvia Cliffe, Display Chairman

meetings. Watch for notifications in the Newsletter for these and participate by bringing an item(s) to the meeting, or by purchasing something. If you have any ideas concerning new ways to generate club revenue, please do not hesitate to share your ideas with any Board member.

Expenditures for the hall for our annual show, or monthly rent for our meeting room, or printing and postage for our Newsletter and so on, are not things that we can eliminate. Perhaps there is a meeting room somewhere in town that would be less expensive than where we currently meet. If you have a contact, or idea about a change in our meeting site that might save us money, let one of us on the Board know so that the practicality of moving can be considered. The Board is reviewing this, along with everything else in the budget.

Your 2002 Board has adopted a budget for this year that we think with careful management will find us in the black at the end of the year. Any ideas or assistance that you can provide, however, that will allow us to reduce expenditures, or enhance revenues, will be appreciated.

Art

WGMS Board Member E-mail Addresses

Here are the e-mail addresses of WGMS board members:

- *Isabella & Bill Burns isnbil@aol.com
- *Jay & Kathy Valle jvalle@aqmd.gov
- *Vern & Sylvia Cliffe cliffehouse@earthlink.net
- *Jerry & Kathy Turner jturn@ix.netcom.com
- *Les Roy yorsel5@aol.com
- *James LaBorde james0570@aol.com
- *Joe & Marcia Goetz joenmar1@gte.net
- *Sandie & Tony Fender afender@cco.caltech.edu
- *Jack Zywocki zywski@aol.com

***Quartzsite Field Trip Report
January 26-27, 2001***

We didn't get "underway" until late Wednesday and encountered a moderate amount of wind, but primarily on the Indio-to-Wiley's Well rest area where we spent the night. (Great place to spend the night with lots of room to park an RV, there's also an RV dump station). Journeyed into Quartzsite the next morning and located the Kaiser Rock Club signs and decided to join their campsite that had been set up by **Fred & Jean White**. Also members from the Orange Belt Mineralogical Society were with them by previous arrangement. The Kaiser club has an interesting "fire pit". It's the tub from inside an old washing machine, with three folding legs and a "jack" screw in the center with a grill on top. Other than taking up room to transport, it makes a great unit to "contain" the fire.

After setting up, we returned to the frontage road to place club signs (**PLS**, **PLS/WGMS**, (home made) and **Wgms & Friends**) to guide in the late comers).

Thursday was quite calm and Friday through the weekend was beautiful weather. We visited the POW WOW, Desert Center and Tyson Wells. The POW WOW had beautiful display cases again this year, Desert Center had lots of beautiful Lapis from Afghanistan (priced from \$50 to \$90 a pound). One dealer was offering Sodalite spheres as Lapis until **Sylvia** corrected him (the prices were Sodalite prices anyway). Tyson Wells had its usual conglomeration of garage sale items and there were some very good bargains, providing you weren't looking for rocks and minerals.

Ed & Corinne Imlay spent a couple of nights with us before heading out to visit one of their sons. **Warren and Louise Dowler**, moteling it in Blythe, visited us and also joined us for potluck dinner at 4 PM, Arizona time, before the sun went down on Saturday late afternoon. They headed east for a conference that **Warren** wanted to attend. **Bob & Dorothy Brower** visited Cloud's at their new location in Laughlin as well as Quartzsite but made the trip earlier in the week. **George Snyder** we heard was there but for some reason we didn't connect. **Izzie & Bill Burns**, as visitors and **Walt & Joan Abramson** as dealers were there. **Jack Zywocki** apparently by-passed Quartzsite and visited the Cloud's locations in Laughlin and the Ari Indian Casino in the area.

In reflecting on this field trip a number of thoughts surfaced. While PLS/WGMS clubs had a specific weekend in mind, the event(s) covered such a long time period and scattered locations, there were opportunities for indi-

viduals to plan their visit at times other than the scheduled field trip. Health problems made one member couple and their friends to plan their trip a week later. The declining number of club members, plus the advancing age of members has cut deeply into the will or desire to go on field trips. Also previous collecting areas are now off-limits due to massive federal land closures. It's become quite evident that if the "remaining" club members wish to continue to field trips with more than one or two other couples, it's desirable, and an advantage to have clubs combine members for trips for education and enjoyment of the great outdoors.

The combined clubs field trip chairpersons will be looking for input from all members covering field trips. Please be prepared to answer a few questions regarding your own thoughts about what the breadth and scope of future field trips should be.

Vern & Sylvia Cliffe

**Gems! The Art and Nature of Precious Stones
at The Bowers Museum of Cultural Art
16 February - 2 June, 2002**

Curated by Bowers President Peter Keller, Ph.D. and Mike Scott, this exhibit will feature some of the finest known gems in the world, including a 480-carat golden sapphire, 10-carat Burmese ruby, 60-carat fine blue sapphire and 250-carat tanzanite. *"Gems! The Art and Nature of Precious Stones"* will answer the basic questions of gemology, present delicate and rare gems and portray gemstones as art, focusing on some of the most notable artists known today. Artists will include: Munsteiner and Dreher from Idar Oberstein, Germany; John Marshall from Seattle, Washington; and numerous anonymous Asian master carvers. One highlight will be a 220-pound rutilated Quartz carving by Munsteiner, know as Metamorphous.

Regular Museum Hours:

Tuesday - Sunday: 10:00 am - 4:00 pm, Closed Mondays and some holidays

Address: The Bowers Museum of Cultural Art
2002 North Main Street, Santa Ana
(714) 567-3600

**Castle Butte Field Trip
February 23rd & 24th**

The day starts, it is overcast. Only these are not clouds, these are plumes of dust and gas. The earth is shaking and there is a roar, a roar from a distant mountain. There is a flow of red streaming down the mountainsides and the air is heavy with the smell of sulfur.

The ash is settling turning lakes into mud pools, killing all the creatures that swam there yesterday. Trees that once stood proud against the sky and rustling in the wind are now toppled and being buried in the falling ash. So is the nature of things...

All is silent now; only the wind moves little dust flurries here and there. Time and the elements do their jobs of erosion and re-contouring the landscape. Rain falls and washes some of the mountain downstream. Where there is ash it soaks in. The trees are metamorphosing and minerals are being dissolved and redeposited. This goes on for millions of years.

Today, present day, the area has changed drastically, the area is dry with little vegetation. The roar of so long ago has been replaced, not by other volcanoes, but by machines that fly overhead. The lakes have become mud or salt flats and the once mighty mountains have worn away. The only thing left is the hard rock that once was molten. These days they are called buttes and the one we're interested in is called Castle Butte.

There are several types of rock and gems for us to find. There's bloodstone, purple agate, red agate, petrified palm, petrified wood and others types not yet discovered. I know we have been here several times in the past few years, however it's a good place to use as a base from which to our searching. Brown butte isn't far away or even Haystack Butte. There are several quarries around, some may be active and others not, but there is always something to discover.

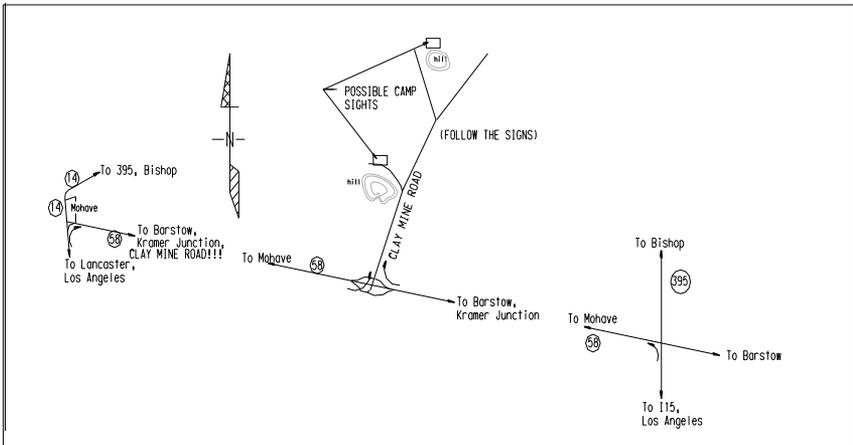
There are two ways at least to get there, the way you choose will probably be determined on where you live. From the west end of the San Gabriel valley, take the 210 west to the 5 interchange, then transitioning to the 14 which will

take through Palmdale, Lancaster and Mohave. From Mohave take the 58 highway (which actually is just as you get to the southern end of Mohave) east. Go to Clay mine Road get off the freeway and head north. After about a mile start watching for the signs, which will lead you to camp. From the eastern end, go east to the 15 interstate, head north to the 395; take the 395 north to Kramer junction. At Kramer Junction turn left on to the 58. This puts you heading west toward Mohave, get off the freeway at Clay Mine Road and go north.

Try to get to camp by 8:00 AM (8:15 to 8:30ish) for those who are doing this as a day trip. I realize this may mean that you'll have to get up really early, but I think it's worth it. You may want to try and come out Friday and sleep in your vehicle til Saturday. If you come to camp and no one is there, I'll leave a message on my tent or tent trailer, whichever I bring out. We'll be running on channel 14 on the CB radio or even if there is someone you know on the trip and they have a cell phone and you know the number, then call them and find out where we are!

We'll be having potluck on Saturday night around 4:30ish or 5:00ish. Weather permitting a campfire later. Sunday some may want to collect some more before heading home and will go home first thing. So I invite you to come on out and have a good time.

Somewhere in California, Joe Goetz



The Mystery of “The Rock”

During the 2000 Stoddard Wells Tailgate, a group of rockhounds from several clubs, including myself and Art Ragazzi, decided to go over to the Tri-Color Marble area and try our luck. When we arrived, we found several new diggings and new material for the collecting. Upon locating a likely seam of marble, a few good men set to work with sledgehammers, chisels and pry bars, and managed to remove some very nice, quality pieces of the famous marble. One large chunk, though, gave us quite a bit of trouble and finally, with the help of several people (cover picture), it was removed from its resting place. It came out of the ground like a tooth out of a socket. We rolled it down the hill to the road and took a look at it.

It was about 3 feet long, 2 feet high and another 2.5 feet wide. Initially, we took turns whacking on it with the large “BIG DOG” sledge to try to break it up into shareable chunks. Not a dent! The only thing we managed to do was to chip a few large, thin flakes from around the edges. Next we tried to load it up into Art’s SUV, but most of the helpers had left and it was too heavy for 3 of us to pick up (we estimated the rock to weigh in the neighborhood of 600 pounds). So we left it.

My next meeting with the rock was about 2 months later. I was obsessing about it and decided to go for a visit. There it was, right where we left it. Other strong arms had obviously tried to break it up without any more success than we had. Kathy (my lovely wife) and I studied it for a while, trying to come up with a plan of attack. We decided to roll it further down the hill to a small pile of rock and dirt, back the car up to it and try to roll it in. We found that the car and dirt pile didn’t quite line up, so we gave up and left for the day.

Over the next year I would periodically check on THE ROCK and ponder on how to move it without destroying our car. Eventually, we returned with friends and developed a plan to remove the rock with the help of extra people, a strong tripod and an engine hoist. Plans were made and equipment prepared. One last time, we made a call on the rock but this time, to our dismay, we didn’t find it. It was gone.

This is where the mystery begins. Where did THE ROCK go? How did the collector of this massive block actually get it out. We looked around and we found a couple of odd clues; a bloody shoe and a set of false teeth. We don’t know what this means but we really want to find out.

JValle

Ed Piechota

April 29, 1934 to February 9, 2002

Long-time WGMS Club member Edward “Fast Eddie” Piechota passed away February 9, 2002 at the Whittier Presbyterian Hospital from complications due to dialysis. He is survived by his wife of 44 years, Flo, daughter Kathleen Valle and son-in-law Jay Valle.

Ed was born April 29, 1934 in Chicago, Illinois. As a youth, he moved to Southern California with his family, graduating from South Gate High School in 1952. After high school he entered the U.S. Air Force where he met his wife, Florence, at a USO hall. Abandoning the military life after 10 years, he entered the business world, eventually retiring from Blue Cross after 20 years.

For the last 37 years Ed was a resident of Whittier, CA. He was a 15-year participant in AA and a member of the Whittier Gem & Mineral Society for 29 years, attending many field trips and club events.

Ed, Flo and Kathy used to go on rock trips in a Volkswagen Van which had been modified for camping. It wasn't 4-wheel drive but Ed still managed to get it to where he wanted to go anyway.

One of his favorite field trip stories was a collecting adventure in Nevada. The WGMS group was off-roading, looking for a collecting locale when they came on a large ranch building with lots of lights and its own landing strip. There were no paved roads leading into the property. Camp was set up nearby and it was later discovered, to the intrepid explorer's chagrin, that the brightly lit building was an exclusive brothel! Clients could only get there by flying in. The women-folk were mortified and the men-folk intrigued. However, the next morning camp was moved away from that location to another less controversial site. Oh, and I understand that they did collect some rocks, too.

Family and friends are invited to the Valle home in Hacienda Heights on February 23, 2002 starting at 2 PM to reminisce about his life. Contact Kathy Valle at (626) 934-9764 for directions or more information.

Safety - Floods

By Chuck McKie, CFMS Safety Chairman 2002

Compiled from NOAA, FEMA, and The American Red Cross.

Part 1

WE are having more rain than usual this year and many of us here in California live in areas prone to flood. Many of our homes are in low lying places or are near where the man made dykes are very old and often breach and where the large volume of water from the swift flowing rivers over flow their banks. Therefore, we should take precautions to protect ourselves.

FLOODS.

FLASH FLOODS - Flash floods are the number 1 weather-related killer in the United States!

How do flash floods occur? - Several factors contribute to flash flooding. The two key elements are rainfall intensity and duration. Topography, soil conditions, and ground cover also play an important role. Flash floods occur within a few minutes or hours of excessive rainfall, a dam or levee failure, or a sudden release of water held by an ice jam. Flash floods can roll boulders, tear out trees, destroy buildings and bridges, and scour out new channels. Rapidly rising water can reach heights of 30 feet or more. Furthermore, flash-flood-producing rains can also trigger catastrophic mudslides. You will not always have a warning that these deadly, sudden floods are coming. Most flood deaths are due to FLASH FLOODS. Most flash flooding is caused by slow moving thunderstorms, thunderstorms repeatedly moving over the same area or heavy rains from hurricanes and tropical storms. Occasionally, floating debris or ice can accumulate at a natural or man-made obstruction and restrict the flow of water. Water held back by the ice jam or debris dam can cause flooding upstream. Subsequent flash flooding can occur downstream if the obstruction should suddenly release.

RIVER FLOOD - Flooding along rivers is a natural and inevitable part of life. Some floods occur seasonally when winter or spring rains, coupled with melting snows, fill river basins with too much water too quickly. Torrential

rains from decaying hurricanes or tropical systems can also produce river flooding.

URBAN FLOOD - As land is converted from fields or woodlands to roads and parking lots, it loses its ability to absorb rainfall. Urbanization increases runoff 2 to 6 times over what would occur on natural terrain. During periods of urban flooding, streets can become swift moving rivers, while basements can become death traps as they fill with water. Listen for distant thunder, runoff from a faraway thunderstorm could be headed your way. Look out for water rising rapidly. Nearly half of all flash flood fatalities are auto related! In your automobile look out for flooding at highway dips, bridges, and low areas.

PLAN AHEAD:

Identify where to go if told to evacuate. Choose several places...a friend's home or a motel in another town, or a shelter.

GO TO HIGHER GROUND! - Even 6 inches of fast-moving floodwater can knock you off your feet, and a depth of 2 feet will float your car! NEVER try to walk, swim, or drive through such swift water. If you come upon floodwaters, STOP! TURN AROUND AND GO ANOTHER WAY.

MANY FLASH FLOODS OCCUR AT NIGHT...BE PREPARED TO TAKE QUICK ACTION. *How can a foot or two of water cost you your life?* Water weighs 62.4 lbs. per cubic foot and typically flows downstream at 6 to 12 miles an hour. When a vehicle stalls in the water, the water's momentum is transferred to the car. For each foot the water rises, 500 lbs. of lateral force are applied to the car. But the biggest factor is buoyancy. For each foot the water rises up the side of the car, the car displaces 1,500 lbs. of water. In effect, the car weighs 1,500 lbs. less for each foot the water rises. Two feet of water will carry away most automobiles.

(Continued next month)

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CFMS Gem Shows

- Feb. 15-24** **Indio, CA.** San Gorgonio Mineral & Gem Society
Riverside County Fair & National Date Festival;
Gem & Mineral Bldg (on the Fairgrounds)
46-350 Arabia Street, Hours: 10-10
- Mar. 1-10** **El Centro, CA.** Imperial Valley Gem & Mineral Society
Imperial Valley Expo & Fair
Hours: Mon. through Thurs. 4-10, Fri. through Sun. 10-10
- Mar. 2-3** **Arcadia, CA.** Monrovia Rockhounds, Inc.
The Arboretum of Los Angeles County, Ayres Hall
301 N. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia, CA 91007
Hours: 9-4:30 both days
- Mar. 2-3** **Ventura, CA.** Ventura Gem and Mineral Society
Seaside Park (Ventura Co. Fairgrounds)
10 West Harbor Blvd., Hours: Sat 9-5 Sun 9-4
- Mar. 9-10** **San Marino, CA. Pasadena Lapidary Society**
San Marino Masonic Center
3130 Huntington Dr.
Hours: Sat. 10-6, Sun.10-6
- Mar. 15-17** **Stoddard Well, CA.** Victor Valley Gem & Mineral Club
E-mail for directions or call
Nick (760) 246-7117 (8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.)
E-mail: gbeall5084@aol.com
- Mar. 16-17** **Hawthorne, CA.** Northrop Grumman Gem & Mineral Club
12329 Crenshaw Blvd. (Gate 16)
Hours: Sat 10-6 Sun 10-5
- Mar. 23-24** **Boron, CA.** Mojave Mineralogical Society, Inc.
Boron High School Multipurpose Room
Prospect Street, Hours: Sat 9-5 Sun 9-4
- Mar. 23-24** **La Habra, CA.** North Orange County Gem & Min. Society
La Habra Clubhouse, 200 W. Greenwood
Hours: Sat 10-5 Sun 10-4

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Affiliations



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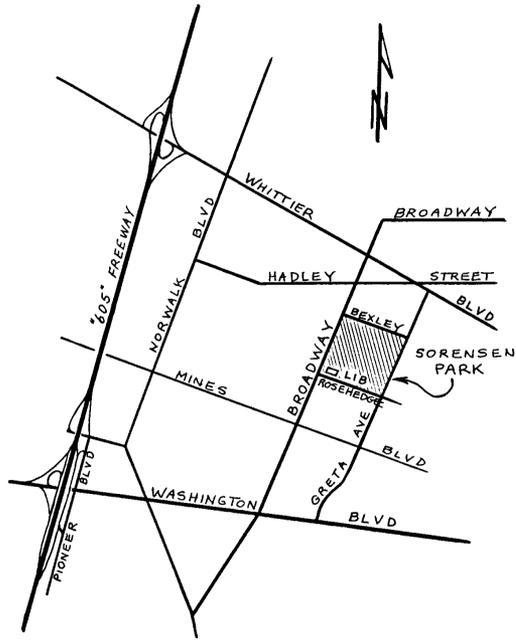
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Meeting Date: **February 28 at 7:30 PM**
Location: **Sorensen Park (See Map)**