

*April 2002*

WHITTIER



**ROCKHOUNDERS**

GEM & MINERAL  
SOCIETY

**Black Opal, Boulder Opal and What Makes Opal Valuable  
Presented by Dave Burton**



**You want to rock-collect where? Come on, punk..MAKE MY DAY!**

# ROCKHOUNDER

## THE PREZ SEZ:

In my January President's Column I shared a little bit about having prior experience serving in the office of President in other organizations. I indicated, based on my observations as a member of last year's WGMS Board, I anticipated that as this year's President, my role, if summed up in one word, would be "facilitator." I am delighted to report that one-quarter of the way through the year, I was right.

As those of you that have experience with organizations are aware, while a host of similarities can be found when making comparisons between organizations, the "culture" or "dynamics" that prevail within any individual organization can vary significantly. I have been in the situation where as President I had to assume responsibility for directing what a club was doing, and where it was going. I have not had to do that with WGMS. Instead, I have had the opportunity to play my very small facilitator role during the last few months while our Club's Board members stepped forward and did the hard work, and made the tough decisions that I feel compelled to share with you in the rest of this column.

This year, when **Les Roy** went to representatives of the Whittier Masonic Temple to discuss continuing to use their hall for our annual Show, he was confronted with new (unacceptable) requirements on how we were going to be able to use the facility, as well as a prohibitive increase in the rental fee. By the time the Board next met, **Les** had already begun scouring Whittier for other potential venues. When the Board met and learned about the situation with the Masonic Temple, the consensus was unanimous that

(Continued on Next Page)

### The Prez Says...Continued

#### Cover Picture

This steer wasn't about to get out of our way during a recent visit to Burro Creek, Arizona. Fortunately for us, it didn't come to blows. But on page 7 you can read about a field trip disaster where the cow and car did have an unfortunate "meeting of the minds".

**Program for April 25  
David Burton Talks Opal!**

**T**he April presenter will be **David Burton**, owner of Lapidary International. He will of course be speaking about opals, focusing on the formation and mining of black opal and boulder opal and what makes opal valuable.

**Mr. Burton** is the owner of an opal mine in Australia and his travels take him worldwide to locate these beautiful gemstones. His store in Buena Park specializes in fine opals and he has quite a collection. It should be an enjoyable evening.

*James LaBorde*

another location had to be found. Many Board members then made suggestions and scouted potential Show locations, with **Les** continuing to lead the charge.

While many of us on the Board were visiting potential show locations, and sharing our thoughts with each other, **Vern Cliffe** was sitting down and laboriously drafting show floor plans to try to determine if various sites could accommodate our needs. As the group tentatively zeroed in on the Whittier Community Center, it was left to this year's Show Chair, **Jay Valle** to get together with City representatives to "work out the details."

In addition to the contributions that I have already mentioned made by three Club members, they and **Jack Zywocienski, James LaBorde, Sylvia Cliffe, Marcia and Joe Goetz, Isabella and Bill Burns, Kathy Valle, and Kathy and Jerry Turner** also visited potential show venues and attended Show Committee meetings. With everyone sharing their thoughts, concerns, and years of experience and wisdom, a problem that could have provided a crippling blow to the financial underpinning of our Club's continuing existence was efficiently and effectively dealt with.

On behalf of everyone in the Club (after all, one of my functions is to represent the Club membership, as appropriate), **well-done Guys!**

**Art**

## **Gem Show News**

**H**ooray!! We have a show location. The **WGMS 2002 Gem Show** will be held at the Whittier Community Center, just a block away from the Masonic Temple where we have held the show for the last 25 years. Your Show Chairman closed the deal on Monday, April 8.

The second Show Meeting for 2002 occurred on April 11 at the **Turner's** Whittier house. We are now on schedule to hold the show on October 19 and 20. Dealers are in the process of being notified, show flyers will come out soon for distribution, and assignments have been, er... assigned. The Theme is "**Gems in Our Backyard**". We are looking for a "center of show" display and the Grand Prizes are being sought.

**JValle**

## **March Meeting Notes**

**I**f you missed the March General Meeting, you missed both a very interesting and entertaining program presented by **Nikki Stull**. During her college studies in Volcano Geology, she traveled to several active volcanoes, in both international and domestic locations. She studied with some of the premiere volcanologists and one of her field trips took her to Iceland.

Iceland volcanoes are unusual in that they occur under glacial sheets of ice. This creates several interesting effects. For one thing, observing the eruption under the ice is difficult to impossible, with only a cone-shaped hole in the glacier to identify the location of the eruption. Water is melted in enormous quantities which collect under the ice until it finds a way out of the ice. Then a "flash flood" of devastating power occurs which may continue for several years. The Icelanders have developed their own system of warning people when to stay out of the dry, barren washes that are the potential drainage points for the huge volumes of melt-water.

The other part of the meeting included our first Silent Auction of the year. The quality and quantity of material which was donated for the event was overwhelming. The items to bid on included cabinet specimens of crystals and minerals, as well as fine gem material from all over. The bidding was active and everyone went home with something. Thank you all who brought in donations and thank you to those who participated in the auction action.

**The Whittier Gem and Mineral Society**

Presents:

**“FUN WITH ROCKS”**

“FUN WITH ROCKS” is a series of classes which will introduce the students to various aspects of the Lapidary Arts including identifying rocks and minerals, carving stones, how to cast jewelry, and wire wrapping art.

Each class features a different speaker and a new topic.

Classes are held at the Whittier Senior Center at 7:00 PM on the following dates:

**April 4 & 18, May 2 & 16, June 6 & 13**

For Information Call: (562) 943-8634

**Sylvia Presents: Gemstone Carving  
April 18, 2002**

**T**he April 18th class will be presented by Sylvia Cliffe and will discuss the art of stone carving. These classes are being presented under the auspices of The Whittier Community Center and are being held in Room 6 at the Senior Citizens Center at 7:00 PM on the days listed. See the flyer above for information on this class and the rest which are still to come.

Bill and Isabella Burns presented the first class on April 4th.

## **Two Burro Creek Experiences**

**T**wo groups from the **WGMS** went to **Burro Creek, Arizona** this year. The first party was led by **Vern and Sylvia Cliffe** during the third week of March and consisted of three vehicles and riders. The second group consisted of **Jay and Kathy Valle**. Their visit was the first week of April.

Our story begins with **Vern and Sylvia**. They had been off-roading and rock collecting with **Dottie Jacobs** and **Warren Dowler**. The only problems they had encountered for the first few days was a single flat tire, on the Cliffe "Jimmy". On one of their last scheduled days at "The Creek", they decided to eat dinner in the copper mining town of Bagdad, about 20 miles away. Everything was fine until they started for home after dinner. On the winding road between Bagdad and Hwy 93 they met a cow. Both the Jimmy and the cow lost. Fortunately, Vern and Sylvia didn't hit the cow full on, but even so, the front end was crushed (the cow suffered fatal damage, too, and a State Trooper put it out of its misery with his trusty shotgun). Luckily, Vern and Sylvia weren't hurt, but at this point, their rock trip was over.

**Jay and Kathy's** experience was a little less dramatic. They arrived in camp and spent the entire week rock hunting and exploring by themselves. The temperatures during the day were in the mid-90s in most areas but in the collecting locales, the heat was sometimes measured at over 100 degrees. The intrepid duo continued to collect until the first flat tire. Apparently, a sharp piece of agate had slashed through the center of the tread, destroying the tire. A trip to Wickenburg, Arizona, 60 miles away was required to replace the tire. The next day, the second flat tire occurred, this one less severe. This time, the tire was repaired in the local town of Wikieup.

In the first event, Vern and Sylvia's accident, a common local road hazard was encountered after dark with disastrous results. They were lucky to have other vehicles with them to provide assistance and medical help which, fortunately, was not needed. The accident occurred on a paved, well used road, and emergency vehicle arrived in a short period of time.

Jay and Kathy's problems with their tires pointed up the very real dangers in off-roading by yourself, especially in the heat. There was plenty of water on board, and the Creek was nearby much of the time, but their explorations took them about 15 miles from State hwy 93 at the farthest extent. That would make for a long, possibly life threatening hike, especially if it had to be attempted in the heat of the day.

**April 20-21: Field Trip to Lavic Siding**

Our April field trip is going to be to Lavic Siding. We will camp in the usual place with a potluck dinner Friday and Saturday night. Several locations will be "explored".

For more information, call Joe Goetz at (626) 914-5030.

*Joe Goetz*

**ARE YOU A PROFESSIONAL?**

**T**he following short quiz consists of 4 questions and tells whether you are qualified to be a "professional". The questions are not that difficult. And all are related to the prior answer.

**Question #1:** How do you put a Giraffe in the refrigerator? The correct answer is: Open the refrigerator, put in the Giraffe and close the door. This questions tests whether you tend to do simple things in an overly complicated manner.

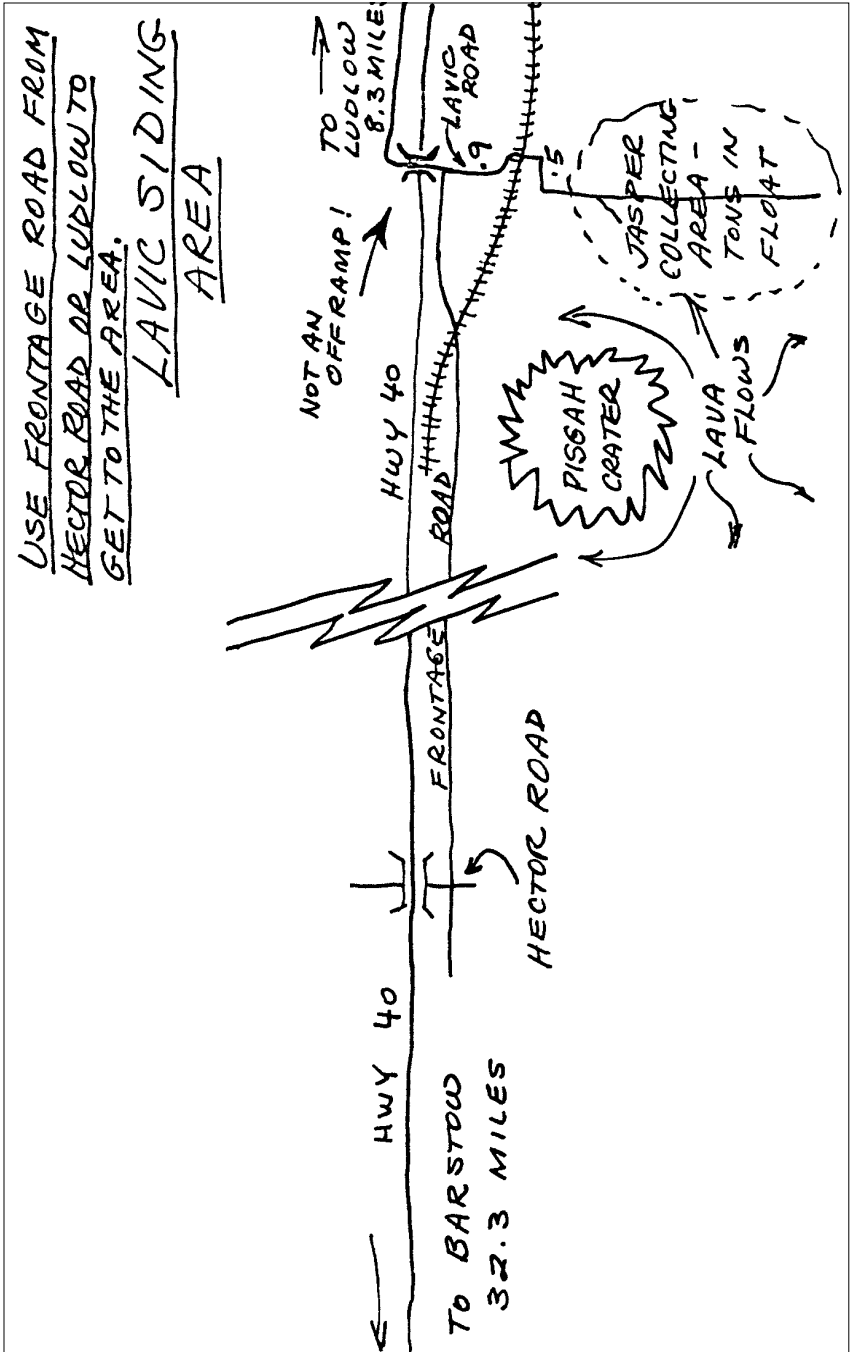
**Question #2:** How do you put an Elephant into a refrigerator? Wrong answer: Open the refrigerator, put in the Elephant and close the refrigerator. Correct Answer: Open the refrigerator, take out the Giraffe, put in the Elephant and close the door. This question tests your ability to think through the repercussions of your actions.

**Question #3:** The Lion King is hosting an animal conference. All the animals attend except one. Which animal does not attend? Correct answer: The Elephant. The Elephant is in the refrigerator.

**Question #4:** There is a river you must cross. But it is inhabited by Crocodiles. How do you cross it? Correct answer: You swim across. All the Crocodiles are attending the Animal Meeting. This tests whether you learn quickly from your mistakes.

**Results:** According to Anderson Consulting Worldwide, around 90% of the professionals tested got all the questions wrong. But many preschoolers got correct answers. Anderson Consulting says this conclusively disproves the theory that most professionals have the brains of a four year old.

*From the Pegmatite 4/02*





## **Warning about Sending Gems & Pearls by U.S. Mail!!!**

**T**hanks to Anthrax in the mail, the **U.S. Post Office** is now using heavy radiation on some of the mail to kill any **Anthrax spores** that might be present.

**The GIA (Gemological Institute of America)** sent out a warning to jewelers about sending gems & pearls through the U.S. mail. "This type of ionizing radiation is often used intentionally to change the color of some gem materials-and could produce an undesirable result as well. We at GIA...decided to test the effect of the proposed postal irradiation process on gem materials."

"Titan Scan Technologies...agreed to run tests for us under the same conditions that are being used by the post office. For these initial tests, we chose gem materials that we know to be affected by irradiation in a significant way. This group consisted of two types of cultured pearls plus eight different gem species and a number of varieties of those species-all of which were natural-for a base of 16 different samples, as follows:

- Diamond - near colorless
- Diamond - gray (due to inclusions)
- Kunzite
- Morganite
- Cultured Pearl - bead-nucleated saltwater
- Cultured Pearl - tissue-nucleated freshwater
- Quartz - colorless
- Quartz - yellow (citrine)
- Sapphire - light blue
- Topaz - colorless
- Tourmaline - near colorless
- Tourmaline - bi-colored green and pink
- Zircon - colorless
- Zircon - yellow
- Zircon - green

We made up three sets of these samples and placed them in boxes that were packaged in the same manner that we routinely use to ship gems from the

GIA Gem Trade Laboratory. Because stones are often shipped through the mail more than once..., we asked to have one package scanned just once, another scanned twice, and the third scanned four times-to see if the cumulative effect of multiple scans caused any significant difference.

**Results.**

After we retrieved the packages, we first checked for the presence of residual radiation on the unopened packages as well as the individual samples. Fortunately, no residual radiation was detected.

Next, we examined all the individual stones for obvious changes in appearance. All the gem materials (including the pearls), other than diamond, showed a dramatic change in color.

...for most of the samples, the changes were just as dramatic in the box that went through only one scan as in the box that went through four. However, the degree of change was different for some stones. For example, the colorless quartz in the box that was scanned once came out a medium brown; a similar sample in the box scanned twice turned dark brown; and the third sample, scanned four times, became almost black. For the other gems, there was no visible difference related to the number of scans."

The GIA Laboratories only tested the above named gems, but changes could happen to other gem materials that were not tested. Post office officials stated that AT THIS TIME they were only irradiating some of the mail, and in particular, letters and flat envelopes, and "PROBABLY nothing will be done to packages that are sent registered or certified, since we now require information from the sender."

**SO, BE WARNED!**

Ken Rogers, kenrogers4u@juno.com

*Forwarded by Vern Cliffe*

## **Crackle or Click?**

From Mel Albright, AFMS Safety

**A**ll rockhounds work with tools that are powered by electricity. And I'm sure we all trust their safety.

But - things do wear out. There are manufacturing errors. Shorts do occur. Things can go wrong. In today's world of triple case tools, we all assume that the tool is safe even if something goes wrong inside. Too bad it's not always true.

Electric tools can shock you. The shock may be small if you are not grounded or if you do not complete a circuit.

If the floor is wet, you may be grounded. If there's a water or gas pipe around, you may be grounded. If you're wet, you may be grounded. If you have the wrong shoes on, you may be grounded. If you're in the swimming pool and touch an electric appliance - you're it. All this is to say that you cannot bet your life that you are NOT grounded.

To complete a circuit means you are connected between the two power lines of your electricity supply or between the power ground and a charged line. With old tools, you may remember a tingle or worse when you held or touched a tool or electric appliance. When two wires in an electrical lead touch, there is a new circuit formed and sparks fly.

If you ignore all this and go merrily on your way, you may never have a problem. Or, tomorrow you may get a charge of electricity that knocks you down or even kills you.

There's a great way to be sure no one is ever hurt by an electrical shock. It is a device called a ground fault interrupter. This device is built to detect when there is a sudden increase in the power going through a circuit and will break the circuit when one occurs. This means when you short something out, you'll hear a click rather than hear a sizzle or a crackle or be hurt by an electrical short.

There are two types of GFI available. One type replaces the switch in your circuit box and protects everything on that circuit. These are best, but must be installed by an electrician. Definitely not do-it-yourself. The other is a small unit that replaces the wall socket unit you use to plug something into the wall. If you know how to change these, it can be a do-it-yourself project to install one. You may have seen one of these if you have stayed in a fairly

modern motel. Every motel/hotel bathroom plug now has a GFI. You'll see the usual sockets and a small re-set button.

Get GFI installed wherever electrical tools are used or even for the whole house. IT CAN BE LIFE SAVING - YOURS!

WARNING - these don't work right on the old fashioned two wire, un-grounded electric circuits in old houses. That makes a re-wiring job an old house an excellent idea since old wires short in the walls.

*AFMS Newsletter 4/02*

### **One Little Straw**

When times are the worst and your feelings are raw  
You reach out and grasp that one little straw  
The one important thing that makes you go on with your life  
To keep you from ending it and getting away from the strife  
When your world's upside down and your heart turned to stone  
And you sit in the dark feeling so all alone  
You hold onto the thing that makes it all seem worth while  
The only thing that keeps you from leaving in a big grand style  
You treasure your straw, the most important thing in the world  
It helps you to cope when your life's knotted and curled  
People can laugh at my straw, poke fun, and sneer  
But my little straw is the only reason that I'm still here  
I've kept it close, very precious to me  
And kept it hidden for no one to see  
But I'm telling it now and you should be told  
I have a straw that I love, and treasure, and hold  
People don't think about straws or that they have merits  
But in my little world, mine has 24 carats  
So if your world is in turmoil and your heart filled with pain  
And your life seems worthless with nothing to gain  
Find your own little straw to keep and treasure  
One little thing where you can find pleasure  
These are but words, but one thing is clear  
Find something in your life that you can hold dear

*Llao Huntzinger, Chloride, Chloride Chronicle 4/02*

**CFMS Gem Shows**

- Apr. 27-28**      **Lancaster, CA.** Antelope Valley Fairgrounds  
155 East Avenue, Hours: 9-5 both days
- May 4-5**        **Anaheim, CA.** Searchers Gem & Mineral Society  
43rd Annual Show, America's Treasures  
Brookhurst Community Center, 2271 West Crescent Ave.  
Hours: Sat 10-6 Sun 11-4:30
- May 4-5**        **Bakersfield, CA.** Kern County Mineral Society  
Kern County Fairgrounds, Hours: 10-5 both days
- May 18-19**      **Yucaipa, CA.** Yucaipa Valley Gem & Mineral Society  
Scherer Community Center, First Street & Avenue B  
Hours: 10-5 both days
- May 18-19**      **Newbury Park, CA.** Conejo Gem & Mineral Club  
Borchard Park Community Center, 190 Reino Road  
Hours: Sat 9-5 Sun 10-5
- Jun. 1-2**        **Glendora, CA.** Glendora Gems  
Goddard Middle School, 859 E. Sierra Madre  
Hours: Sat 10-5 Sun 10-4
- Jun. 1-2**        **SanDiego, CA.** San Diego Lapidary Society  
Al Bahr Shrine, 5440 Kearny Mesa Road  
Hours: 10 - 5 both days
- Jun. 29-30**      **Culver City, CA.** Culver City Rock & Mineral Club  
Veteran's Memorial Auditorium  
Culver Blvd. & Overland Avenue  
Hours: Sat 10-6 Sun 10-5  
Web Site: <http://www.gembiz.com/ccrnc/fiesta.htm>

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**(626) 792-6161  
 FAX (626) 792-1226  
 Web site: [www.calgold.net](http://www.calgold.net)**

**Editor:** Jay Valle, 1421 Latchford Avenue, Hacienda Heights, CA 91745  
 Home: (626) 934-9764; E-Mail: [jvalle@aqmd.gov](mailto:jvalle@aqmd.gov)  
**Bulletin exchanges** are welcome and should be sent to the editor.

**Affiliations**



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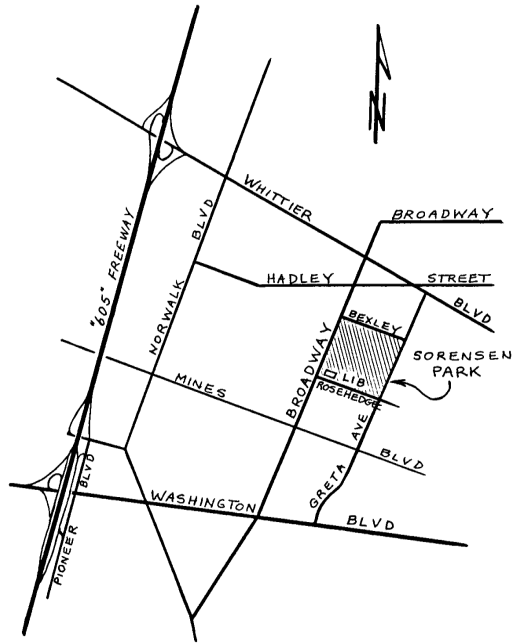
**Whittier Gem and Mineral Society, Inc.**

Post Office Box 865

Whittier, California 90608-0865

**Editor: Jay Valle, 1421 Latchford Ave.**

**Hacienda Heights, CA 91745**



Meeting Date: **April 25 at 7:30 PM**  
Location: **Sorensen Park (See Map)**