

October 2003

WHITTIER

ROCKHOUNDER
GEM & MINERAL
SOCIETY

Joan Licari Presents:
“Geology of the Wiley’s Well Area”



“Whale” of a Geode or “Guppy in an Aquarium”
From Clarence Pool’s Collection

ROCKHOUNDER

THE PREZ SEZ:

Drum roll please! As you should know from previous issues of the **Rockhounder**, this month, on the weekend of October 18 and 19, your club will be putting on our **Fifty-Fourth Annual Gem Show**. For the second time, we will be using the **Whittier Community Center** for our venue. This annual event not only serves as our best vehicle for showing off our club and recruiting new members, but also provides the income base that sustains the club throughout the year.

Again this year, as our show chairman, **Jay Valle** has done an excellent job organizing and guiding us in our show preparation. We will once again put together a show that every one of us will be proud to be associated with. If you can assist in the show set-up on **Friday, October 17**, or for some portion of **Saturday or Sunday, October 18 and 19**, do not be bashful about giving Jay a call indicating your willingness to pitch in and help.

Many club members have already assisted in show preparation by contributing one or more raffle prizes. Have you something to contribute? Even if you are unable to formally commit to assisting during the show, please note elsewhere in this copy of the **Rockhounder** information about what you can bring to the show even if you are only able to “drop in” this year.

As we did last year, we will also hold our post show, **October 23** general membership club meeting at the **Whittier Community Center**. With our usual meeting location in use for a Hallowe'en celebration, we must move our regular meeting location each October. Having our October meeting in the same building as the show allows us to invite prospective club members we meet during the show to return to the same building for our next membership meeting.

Once again, if you are not already involved, give Jay a call if you can help with the show. We will identify a way for you to participate that is sensitive to the time that you can commit, and/or the interests that you have.

Thank you, and keep those rocks polished.

Art

**General Meeting
October 23 at 7:30 PM
“Geology of the Wiley’s Well Area”**

The October Regular Meeting following our Gem Show typically features a program related to the Show theme. This year, we will meet in Room 5 at the Whittier Community Center, just down the hall from where the Show will be held.

Joan Licari will be our guest speaker at the October 23 meeting. In keeping with our GEODE theme this year, Ms. Licari will inform and educate us in the geology of Southern California collecting areas, with an emphasis on the Wiley Wells area and a discussion of the geodes found there. It should be an enjoyable evening and we would like to see all of you there.

Biography of Joan Licari

Joan Licari graduated with B.A. and M.A. from U.C. Berkeley in paleontology. She has a Doctorate in Environmental Science and Engineering from UCLA. Research included mapping of geology and paleontological study of amber deposits in Chiapas, Mexico. Has worked for the United States Geological Survey in Pacific Outer Continental Oil and Gas Operations. Served as Professor of Earth Science at Cerritos College for 37 years and as adjunct faculty at California State University at Los Angeles.

James LaBorde

A Word of Appreciation

I want to express my appreciation to all the club members and friends that sent cards, flowers and called with words of encouragement after my recent right knee surgery. So far, my recovery seems to be somewhat ahead of what I experienced with my left knee surgery in January this year.

I’m looking forward to recovering enough to “get out and find more bragging rocks” before the end of the year. Thanks again for your kind thoughts and words.

Sylvia Cliffe

**It's SHOW TIME!
October 18 & 19**

By now you should all be aware that the Whittier Gem & Mineral Society's 54th Annual Gem Show is here. Your 2003 Show Committee has been hard at work on all those myriad details that need to be ironed out to insure a successful and profitable production.

I want to thank those who have been instrumental in bringing us this far and to thank in advance those of you who will be helping us present our annual Gem Show. It is a big job with a large supporting cast. Please come out and lend us a hand, even if only for a few hours.

On Friday before the Show, we need as many helpers as can make it to set up show cases, the Sales Table, etc. and on Sunday we will need people to help to tear down.

Kathy Valle has asked me to thank those who have already donated items for the Donation Award Drawings and to say that we still need a few more items to go into the Raffle Display Case.

Kathleen Turner requested that WGMS Members bring **2 – pies** (no cream pies, please) and **2 – 6-packs of name brand sodas**.

Isabella Burns has a few cases left to fill. Call her if you want to display your collection. We are also doing a Club case this year and we would like Members and Guests to bring a special geode from their personal collections.

The Show Schedule is as follows:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Fri, October 17: 3 – 8 PM | Setup and Show Preparation , helpers needed. This is also the time to set up your Show Cases. |
| Sat, October 18: 10 AM – 5 PM | Opening day , setup of cases allowed during the 9 – 10 AM hour before the scheduled 10 AM start time. |
| Sun, October 19: 10 AM – 5 PM | 2nd day of Show . Final drawing for raffle prizes from 4 – 5 PM. |
| Sun, October 19: 5 – 8 PM | Tear down , lots of helpers needed. |

**WGMS Officer
Nominations for 2004**

The Nominating Committee has prepared a slate of candidates to serve as Officers in 2004. The proposed candidates are:

- PresidentJames LaBorde**
- 1st Vice PresidentIsabella Burns**
- 2nd Vice President.....Art Ragazzi**
- Treasurer.....Jay Valle**
- Federation DirectorBill Burns**
- Directors:.....Les Roy**
-Jerry Turner**
-Jack Zywocki**

Nominations from the General Membership will be received at the October General Meeting and the election will be held at the November General Meeting.

News from around the WGMS

Ernie Gaytan is recovering from cancer treatment at a convalescent hospital in Pico Rivera. Ernie is an Associate Member who helps out at our annual show every year. He also teaches silver casting in Montebello. Please send your cards and letters to: Ernie Gaytan, 628 N. Montebello Blvd., Montebello, CA 90640. Drop him a line to let him know that we are thinking of him.

Al Burns broke his hand while attempting to perform an unusual feat. He is recovering quickly but you should ask him to tell you how he did it.

Walt Maurer, a long time member of the WGMS, died August 23, 2003. Walt was in declining health for the last couple of years and was unable to enjoy the hobby any more. Sympathy cards and letters can be sent to: Ollie May Maurer, 9817 Cullman Avenue, Whittier, CA 90603.

In Honor of Stupid People...

In case you needed further proof that the human race is doomed through stupidity, here are some actual label instructions on consumer goods.

- On a Sears hairdryer -- Do not use while sleeping. (Well rats!! that's the only time I have to work on my hair.)
- On a bag of Fritos -- You could be a winner! No purchase necessary. Details inside. (the shoplifter special)?
- On a bar of Dial soap -- "Directions: Use like regular soap." (and that would be how???....)
- On some Swanson frozen dinners -- "Serving suggestion: Defrost." (but, it's "just" a suggestion).
- On Tesco's Tiramisu dessert (printed on bottom) -- "Do not turn upside down." (well...duh, a bit late, huh)!
- On Marks & Spencer Bread Pudding -- "Product will be hot after heating." (...and you thought????....)
- On packaging for a Rowenta iron -- "Do not iron clothes on body." (but wouldn't this save me more time)?
- On Boot's Children Cough Medicine -- "Do not drive a car or operate machinery after taking this medication." (We could do a lot to reduce the rate of construction accidents if we could just get those 5-year-olds with head-colds off those forklifts.)
- On Nytol Sleep Aid -- "Warning: May cause drowsiness." (and...I'm taking this because???....)
- On most brands of Christmas lights -- "For indoor or outdoor use only." (as opposed to...what)?
- On a Japanese food processor -- "Not to be used for other use." (now, somebody out there, help me on this. I'm a bit curious.)
- On Sainsbury's peanuts -- "Warning: contains nuts." (talk about a news flash)
- On an American Airlines packet of nuts -- "Instructions: Open packet, eat nuts." (Step 3: maybe, uh...fly Delta?)
- On a child's Superman costume -- "Wearing of this garment does not enable you to fly." (I don't blame the company. I blame the parents for this one.)
- On a Swedish chainsaw -- "Do not attempt to stop chain with your hands." (Oh my Goodness...was there a lot of this happening somewhere?)

Thank you Dottie Jacobs for this very funny e-mail

SAFETY
Fires During Fueling Operations
by **Chuck McKie, CFMS Safety Chairman**

I've mentioned some of this before. It is such a serious subject that it bears repeating. In the first case, the (cell) phone was placed on the car's trunk lid during fueling; it rang and the ensuing fire destroyed the car and the gasoline pump.

In the second, an individual suffered severe burns to their face when fumes ignited as they answered a call while refueling their car.

And in the third, an individual suffered burns to the thigh and groin as fumes ignited when the phone, which was in their pocket, rang while they were fueling their car.

You should know that mobile phones can ignite fuel or fumes.

- Mobile phones that light up when switched on or when they ring release enough energy to provide a spark for ignition.
- Mobile phones should not be used at filling stations, or when fueling lawn mowers, boats, etc.
- Mobile phones should not be used, or should be turned off around other materials that generate flammable or explosive fumes or dust (I.E. solvents, chemicals, gases, grain dust, etc.)

To sum it up, hear are the Four Rules for Safe Refueling:

1. Turn off engine.
2. Don't smoke.
3. Don't use your cell phone - leave it inside the vehicle and turn it off.
4. Don't re-enter your vehicle during fueling.

Bob Rankes of Petroleum Equipment Institute is working on a campaign to try and make people aware of fires as a result of "static electricity" at gas pumps. His company has researched 150 cases of these fires. The results were very surprising:

1. Out of 150 cases, almost all of them were women.
2. Almost all cases involved the person getting back in their vehicle when

the nozzle was still pumping gas. When finished, they went back to pull the nozzle out and the fire started as a result of static.

3. Most had on rubber-soled shoes.
4. Most men never get back into their vehicles until completely finished. This is why they are seldom involved in these types of fires.
5. Don't ever use cell phones when pumping gas.
6. It is the vapors that come from the gas that cause the fire, when connected with static charges.
7. There were 29 fires where the vehicle was re-entered and the nozzle was touched during re fueling from a variety of makes and models. Some resulted in extensive damage to the vehicle, to the station and to the customer.
8. Seventeen of the fires occurred before, during or immediately after the gas cap was removed and before fueling began.

Mr. Renkes stresses to NEVER get back into your vehicle while filling it with gas. If you absolutely HAVE to get into your vehicle while the gas is pumping, make sure when you get out, to close the door TOUCHING THE METAL, before you ever pull the nozzle out. This way, the static from your body will be discharged before you remove the nozzle.

CFMS Newsletter 10/03

I knew it. I knew it.

They finally released the ingredients in Viagra.

- 3% Vitamin E
- 2% Aspirin
- 2% Ibuprofen
- 1% Vitamin C
- 5% Spray Starch
- 87% Fix-a-Flat

Via the Internet

The Hauser Geode Beds

By Delmer G. Ross

Professor of History, La Sierra University

Originally appeared in Rockhound Notes, February 2001

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The dull thud of picks, the crunch-swish of shovels, the tink-plink of rock hammers, and the occasional delighted, "I found a nice one!" all help to mark the location of the Hauser Geode Beds on an early spring weekend. Hundreds of holes dug into light-greenish colored volcanic ash under a nearly cloudless blue sky confirm it. Sometimes dozens of rockhounds may be found digging for geodes at this desolate appearing region of northeastern Imperial County, in southern California.

The geode beds are named for Joel F. Hauser, who discovered them with the help of his very observant father in the early 1930s. Twenty five years earlier, the elder Hauser, George, had been a partner in Hauser & Giddings, a Colorado Desert freight line operating mainly between the Southern Pacific Railroad at Glamis, and the Palo Verde Valley town of Blythe. As he slowly drove heavy, freight-laden wagons across the desert, he followed two basic routes.

The preferred route led through Palo Verde Canyon. It was the shorter, more direct route. It was also subject to flooding and washouts, especially during the usual late summer monsoons.

The alternate route, used mainly when flooding in the canyon closed the canyon road, led from the little community of Palo Verde, near the Colorado River, west to the southern stretch of the Mule Mountains. After crossing over a low pass in the Mules located only a mile or so east of the present-day Coon Hollow Campground, it continued west, through what today is known as Ashley Flats, to another low pass some eight road miles away, near today's Potato Patch. Then, turning southward for a mile or two, then southeastward, it eventually rejoined the main Blythe-Glamis road.

Forced to use this alternate route twice a week for sometimes two or three months every year, the senior Hauser had many opportunities to note the odd, spherical rocks that were common in several places in the low hills where the route turned southward. He even reflected on the possible reasons for their roundness, without reaching any conclusion.

More than two decades later, when his son, Joel, who had become a

rockhound, showed him some of the nodules and geodes he had been collecting, George remembered those round rocks he had seen in the desert. Perhaps they had been geodes. He urged his son to search the area.

Although Joel wondered if an exploratory trip to the Colorado Desert would really be worth the time he might need to spend on it, he eventually decided to give it a try. He bought a well used Model A Ford for \$37.50, loaded it with supplies, and set out for the desert. Although the landscape had changed since the senior Hauser had last seen it more than twenty years earlier. Joel had little trouble locating the region of the strangely rounded rocks. Moreover, just as Joel's father had explained, in many places -- especially in depressions -- the ground was literally covered with very dark colored round stones measuring anywhere from an inch to six inches in diameter. As he looked around, he noticed several that were even larger. He had reached an area just northwest of what today's rockhounds call "The Potato Patch."

Joel climbed out of his Model A, and gathered up a few of the stones. Then he got out his rock hammer and gave the first of his rocks a hefty thump. Not much happened, except that the dark coloring scratched off where he had hammered, showing that the stones were coated with desert varnish. He tried again, using more force. This time he succeeded in cracking open a fine "thunderegg," as nodules and geodes are sometimes called. He took a whole carload back home with him.

Joel then got busy cutting and cracking open what he had hauled back. Most turned out to be solid-centered nodules. They were his favorites because of the great variety of interiors, with banded agate of various colors and often containing crystals that had grown together into a solid mass. Some even had what appeared to be solidified seascapes. Others were hollow geodes, often lined with quartz or calcite crystals. Having determined that he really had stumbled onto an easily reached and plentiful source of thundereggs, he publicized his discovery so that others could enjoy collecting their own.

Incidentally, the word, "thunderegg," which includes both nodules and geodes, appears to have first been used by the Indians of central Oregon. It is said that they believed that Thunder Spirits living in volcanoes sometimes fought battles in which they hurled thunder, lightning, and stone "eggs" at each other. Perhaps those Indians knew what they were talking about, because parts of Oregon also offer spectacular geodes and nodules!

Be that as it may, Joel Hauser's fellow rockhounds soon began pouring into the region. Some doubters found it hard to believe his account, but they soon

learned that his discovery was everything that he had described. There were so many thundereggs that for two or three years collectors searched only the surface of the region they were beginning to call "Hauser's Hole." Once the surface material in one area had been fairly well picked over, rockhounds would just move on to another spot. In time, though, productive locations became ever more difficult to find, and a few disgruntled collectors began to grumble and gripe about how Hauser's Hole had "played out."

Judging by what his father had told him and what he himself had observed, Joel guessed that there should be other thunderegg-rich areas not far from his original discovery. Therefore, in 1937 he determined to go to the west side of the Black Hills and work his way east in search of new deposits. One evening as he was setting up camp, he noticed some possible nodules in the light green colored volcanic ash at the edge of a wash. He further discovered that by digging into the bed of ash, which was just under the surface of the ground, even more might be obtained. The next day he and two of his friends started digging in earnest. The result was astounding. As Joel explained: "we dug out so many geodes we couldn't haul them all home."

Because the thundereggs were found in the bed of volcanic ash, the newly discovered collecting area became known as the "Hauser Geode Beds." Rockhounds have been digging nodules and geodes out of the Hauser Beds ever since.

From time to time unhappy collectors still complain that the Hauser Beds are played out. And it may well be that existing holes will no longer yield much of interest. But that only means that it is time to be venturesome and start digging in virgin territory -- often a few feet away from an existing hole will do.

For some reason the grumbling mounted in the late 1980s and early 1990s, even though in 1992 and 1993 new holes were opened at the south end of the Hauser Beds that yielded many hundreds of thundereggs. To make matters worse, two years later an enterprising individual had a mobile home towed to the southern end of the beds, and he started charging \$5.00 per person who wanted to dig. When questioned about it, he explained that he was only doing what other mine owners were doing elsewhere. He even put up a roadblock to help him enforce his charges. Because the greater part of the geode beds are on public land, and because they had been mined by the public for more than a half century and therefore supposedly were not open for just anyone wishing to establish a mining claim, that line of reasoning did not play very

well with collectors. Neither the Bureau of Land Management, which oversees most public land in the area, nor Imperial County accepted the interloper's view of the matter either, and BLM rangers and county law enforcement officers eventually evicted him.

Toward the end of 1996 a rockhound who was willing to do some digging proved to all that the Hauser beds were anything but played out. He also proved that a little bit of good luck can help tremendously. As he approached the northern extreme of the geode beds one day, he noticed where someone had dug down anywhere from one to two feet below the surface over an area measuring about fifteen by twenty-five feet. Naturally enough, he wondered what might have caused anyone to be so enterprising. So he got out of his car, grabbed up his shovel and rock hammer, and walked over to see what he could.

Right off, he realized that the dig was an old one. There were full sized creosote bushes growing in the bottom. While there was one place where someone had turned over a few shovelfuls of soil very recently, it appeared that no other soil had been disturbed since the creosotes had started growing, certainly several, and perhaps many years earlier. He chose a spot six or eight feet from the newly turned earth, and began to dig into the dirty-cream colored volcanic ash. In a matter of minutes he was turning up one or more geodes in nearly every shovelful! Most were a little more than three inches in diameter - about the same dimension as a medium sized orange. Some were four and five inches in diameter and many were smaller. Quite a few were doubles or even triples.

Some friends and I went to see the new dig and discovered that not only were there many geodes and nodules, but also that the acquisition rate was about 60 to 90 nice looking ones per hour! We left with several hundred. By late 1998 when the hole began to yield mainly small thundereggs, it measured about six feet wide by ten feet long, and was almost eight feet deep. In the two years that rockhounds had been digging there it had yielded literally thousands of geodes.

So, are the Hauser Geode Beds played out? Hardly! In fact, it still is possible to find geodes lying about on the ground and waiting to be picked up, just as Joel Hauser did nearly seventy years ago. In 1997 my wife and I spotted a half dozen medium-sized ones in less than five minutes as we slowly drove down a short bajada at the north end of the Hauser Beds. While they were

almost black with desert varnish on the outside, the interiors were as pristine and beautiful as any. I also know of a large geode, measuring about two feet in diameter, that is in plain sight on the surface of the ground! Don't bother to try to find it, though, because you will be disappointed. When a friend and I went out with a pickup to try to load it, we discovered a large crack that allowed us to see that there was nothing worthwhile inside. That's the way it is with thundereggs. Some are spectacular. Others are duds.

Nowadays Hauser Beds geodes are most often found by digging down beneath the dark colored, desert varnished surface into the volcanic ash that generally covers them. The ash varies in color from cream, through light gray, to pale green. Much of it is relatively soft, but in some areas it has so compacted that it has become semi-vitreous and quite hard.

Those who travel to the Hauser Beds today are often told to dig where they see that others before them have been digging. It is not bad advice, but it often means that about all that will be dug up will be someone else's leavings, often small nodules an inch or so in diameter that settled to the bottom of a pile. It frequently is best to begin digging at an undisturbed surface near a hole that has been dug by another rockhound. Then, if lucky, one can sometimes unearth layer after layer, starting with large geodes and continuing with progressively smaller ones as one digs deeper.

The area around the Hauser Geode Beds is rich in other desirable stones including jasper, pastelite, rhyolite, and various types of agate. Some of it is found as float on nearby stretches of desert pavement; some requires a small amount of digging. I found a four-pound chunk of really fine carnelian right in plain sight on the surface late in 1999. Some of the rhyolite at the southern end of the geode beds is full of small, crystal-lined cavities. It is colorful and slabs and polishes beautifully.

The best time to go digging for geodes is from late October to early April. High temperatures during the summer commonly reach 115 to 120 degrees, and there is almost no available shade. A vehicle with four-wheel drive and high clearance can be helpful, but is not necessary. Provided it is not so low to the ground that it nearly drags, a careful motorist can drive the family sedan to within a hundred yards of some of the best digs, and a little walking can take one to many more. You will find it advisable to travel at a reasonable speed and to be careful that sharp rocks do not put holes through your vehicle's tires, or worse yet, its engine pan. Watch out also for creosote bushes, they may look flimsy, but they have been known to penetrate the

sidewalls of tires.

When you go, be sure to go prepared. A little extra fuel and oil can be lifesavers. Some extra food can be useful, too. Above all, take plenty of water, because unless it happens to rain - which considering the annual average rainfall of less than four inches, is not likely - no water is available. Without even realizing it, a person digging on the desert can become seriously dehydrated in a matter of an hour or two, so, in addition to taking plenty of water, be sure to drink the water you take! A cell phone sometimes can be used to summon help if something goes wrong. But the best insurance against problems at the Hauser Geode Beds is to have another vehicle along. I know of several people who did not follow these precautions, and who perished of too much heat or too little water or both. One of the recent casualties in the region was a desert-wise rockhound whose vehicle got stuck in the spring of 2000.

Many of those who visit the area find so much to interest them that they stay several days. Should you decide to do that, you might consider camping at the Coon Hollow or Wiley's Well campgrounds in the Mule Mountains Long Term Visitor Area (LTVA). Both campgrounds offer pit toilets, picnic tables, water for uses other than drinking, and perhaps best of all, some shade. The fee for short-term camping during the regular LTVA camping season, from September 15 to April 15, is \$20.00 for a week or any portion thereof. Moreover, the camp hosts often can tell you where the best stones are currently being found. You may also camp in the rockhound area near the geode beds. Just stay on public land within 300 feet of an existing road. There are a number of very nice, level, shaded campsites available on the banks of different washes on the way to the Hauser Beds. The last several are at Middle Camp, 4.5 miles west of Milpitas Wash Road. From Middle Camp onward, while reasonably level possible camp sites abound, finding one with any significant amount of shade can be difficult. Those who prefer more comfort will find motels available in Blythe, approximately 40 miles north-east.

To reach the Hauser Geode Beds from Interstate Highway 10, turn south onto Wiley's Well Road, the exit for which is approximately fifteen miles west of Blythe, California. About three miles south of the divided highway, the paved road turns sharply right toward two state prisons, but you will want to continue southward on the graded dirt road. Some 13.5 miles south of the freeway you will reach the Riverside-Imperial County line. Your GPS coordinates should read N 33°25'48" by W 114° 54'11 " .

Wiley's Well Road becomes Milpitas Wash Road in Imperial County, though there may not be a sign to indicate the name change. On the other hand, you should see a sign indicating that the Hauser Beds are to the west. It was erected in early 2000 by the California Federation of Mineralogical Societies.

Follow the directions offered by the sign and, immediately south of the county line, turn right onto the track that angles southwest across the desert pavement. This will lead you slightly more than a half mile to what is generally known as the Black Hills Road at N 33°25'26" by W 114°54'37". Bear right, and continue on the most traveled road past a metal sign post marked "Ashley Flats." From this sign post, until you reach the road to the Potato Patch about 2.5 miles ahead, you will be traveling over the old, alternate Palo Verde-Glamis wagon road used by George Hauser when the regular road had washed out.

Continue driving in a generally westerly direction to a second metal sign post at a wye in the road. Your GPS coordinates should be close to N 33°24'49" by W 114°58'09". Located about 4.5 miles from Milpitas Wash Road (or Wiley's Well Road), this is Middle Camp. Take the left fork of the wye and cross the gravel bed of the Black Hills Wash. In one mile you will reach another junction at N 33°24'07" by W 114°58'41". This one is unmarked. The road straight ahead goes to the geode and nodule beds known as The Potato Patch. Black agate and geodes containing black calcite crystals may also be found along branches of this road.

To continue toward the Hauser Geode Beds, though, turn right and cross a little wash. In approximately three-fourths of a mile, at N 33° 23'43" by W 114°59'16", the road ends at another that crosses at right angles at a point called Nodule Junction. Turn right. From this point onward, for the next 2.5 miles, several roads will lead off to the right of the most traveled road. They all go toward different areas of the geode beds.

Disregard the first one, though. It will be only two-tenths of a mile ahead, at N 33°23'42" by W 114°59'25". While it used to be the main road leading to the north end of the Hauser Geode Beds, it goes through private property, the owner of which closed it to public access late last year (2000). Maybe he got tired of the dust raised by passing vehicles, or, in this day of lawsuit-prone individuals, he may be concerned about possible liability should something go awry, or he may simply prefer total privacy. Some rockhounds who have passed through the entrance to his property have been escorted off with a stern lecture about property rights. The Bureau of Land Management is

aware of the situation and expects to act should the property owner do anything illegal. Thus far, though, he has only exercised his own rights. We should respect them.

Those who wish to do so may still visit the northern part of the Hauser Beds by turning west onto the next road, at N 33°23'24" by W 114°59'24", about seven-tenths of a mile ahead. While it goes to the central part of the geode beds, a foot trail leads northward from a small parking area at the edge of a steep-sided wash. Moreover, about halfway between the junction and the parking area, a small cairn marks the beginning of a rough, jeep road to the north end. Just respect private property rights by staying south of any fence lines or survey stakes that you may come across in the region.

From Nodule Junction, the most traveled road continues some 2.5 miles to the south end of the Hauser Beds, at N 33°22'34" by W 114°59'23". This is where, while he and his two friends set up camp, Joel Hauser noticed thundereggs galore in the volcanic ash lining a wash. Unless you have a high-clearance, four-wheel-drive vehicle, you probably should park on the desert pavement on the east side of that wash.

Once you have started digging for geodes, you likely will want to be careful not to break any. Most Hauser Beds thundereggs are extremely hard and can be handled quite roughly without causing them any harm. A very small percentage, though, contain large hollows, often enclosed within thin, brittle shells that are fairly easily damaged. Until you are certain of what you have found, it is best to play it safe. On the other hand, if you happen to break one just as you are pulling it free; do not despair. Keep on digging. You probably will unearth more shortly. You may even find one of the rare variety that is filled with amethyst crystals.

Happy digging!

Professor Ross can be reached at dross@lasierra.edu

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This Month’s Meeting Date: October 26

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

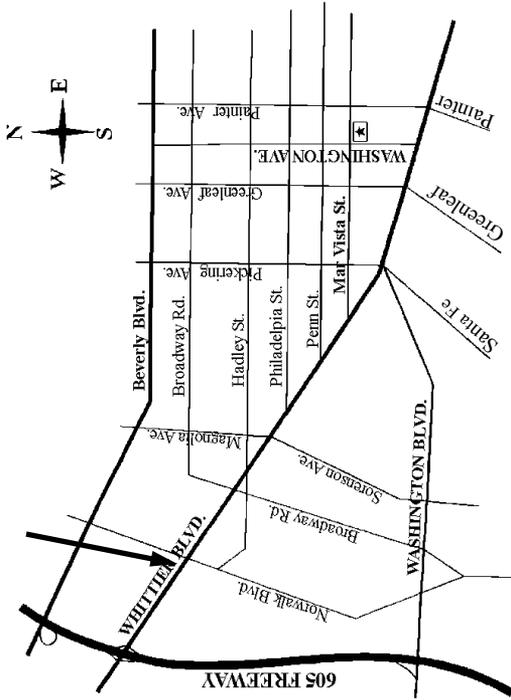
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Meeting Date: **October 23 at 7:30 PM**
Location: **Whittier Community Center**