

WHITTIER

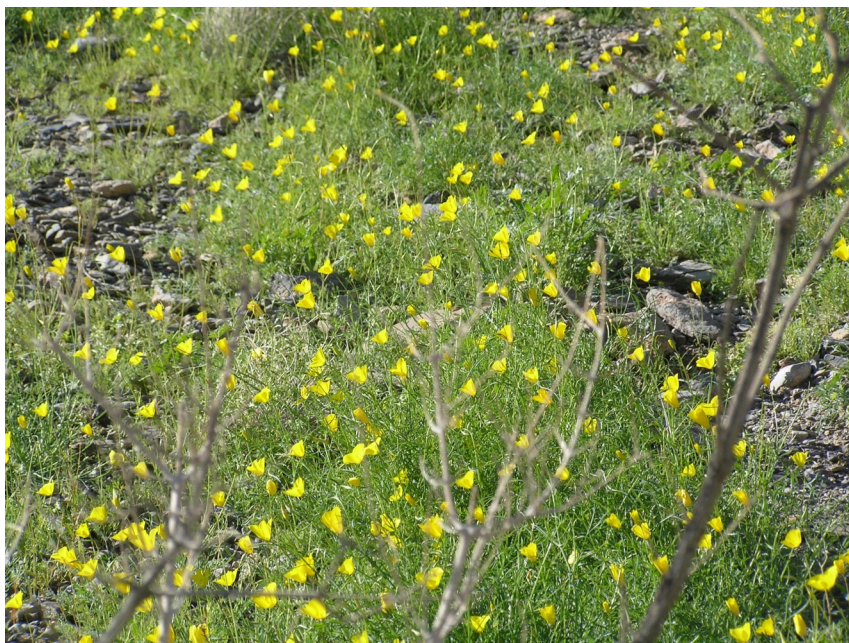


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February 24th Program:

Fossils of the Fabulous Green River Formation



Desert Poppies in Bloom Near Blythe, California

ROCKHOUNDER

THE PREZ SEZ:

Hello Everyone!

I know January and early February are slow times with the club as everyone is generally off at Quartzite, Clouds Jamboree or Tucson (or in some cases more than one of the above). If you are participating in one of these events, I hope you have a wonderful time.

As everyone gets back into the swing of things after the holidays and all the big events, it is important to remember that the club has plenty to do too. The board will be meeting to start preparing for the show, planning will occur for other events this year as well. Its never too early to offer help or proffer suggestions. If you are able to help out with the Show or with any other club function please let one of the board members know. If there is something you would like to see, please let us know. Remember this is your club and we want to to our best to ensure it is what you want it to be.

L c o g u

Former WGMS Member Makes the News

One of our founding members, Lily Bell was watching the Channel 4 evening news on January 14 regarding the terrible mudslide which had occurred in La Conchita, California. The reporter was interviewing an elderly man who was 100 years old and had lived there for a long time. He was quoted as saying, "I don't plan to move anywhere."

Lily Bell recognized that man as a former member of the WGMS (some of our long-time members may remember him and his wife) - Stanley Henny and his wife Marcini.

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WGMS General Meeting

Thursday, February 24

at 7:30 PM

Fossils of the Fabulous Green River Formation

Located on the common borders of Wyoming, Colorado and Utah, there are the remains of several prehistoric lakes which contain abundant fossils. Over millions of years, fish of many species have died and been preserved in the clays and sands of each of these locations. This fossil-rich area is called the Green River Formation because of the river of the same name which meanders through the fossil beds. And fish aren't the only fossil which are found here. There are birds and reptiles, plants and leaves, and a dizzying array of insects, including butterflies and spiders. It is an amazing repository of complete or mostly complete animals.

Nora DeDontney will be talking about the **Green River formation**. The talk will include the geology of the region, the changes in the ecology that have occurred, and the fossils that are found in the region.

V q p { " H g p f

Dues are Over-Due!

For those of our members who have not paid their 2005 dues, and you know who you are, please send them in ASAP. This is the last year that we will have a grace period through March 31. Starting this year, the grace period for next year's dues will be from October 1 to December 31, to coincide with our annual Gem Show.

The dues schedule is as follows: **Single Adult = \$15.00**
 Adult Couple = \$25.00
 Junior (<18) = \$5.00

Send your dues to: **Jay Valle**
 1421 Latchford Avenue
 Hacienda Heights, CA 91745

Thanks for your continued support.

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Member News...

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In a card received from Mary Rose Merton January 28th, she wrote:



Dear Vern & Sylvia,

The month of December of it, was put on hold! November 28th, after a lovely Thanksgiving trip to Catalina with some of my children, I was in a restaurant I got sidetracked talking to my daughter and instead of stepping down I stepped forward and missed the steps! Four of them. Anyway, I fractured my hip in 3 places and broke my shoulder and was otherwise traumatized. I spent 3 days in the hospital and 28 days in rehab.

However, I am pretty strong and am healing well. The therapist and surgeon are pleased with that. I am not able to drive yet but I feel healthy. I use a cane and I am now by myself and doing well. I've baked cookies and coffee cake and did the laundry!

The children have been so helpful and good to me.

Love to you both,
Mary Rose.

The Gemstone Opal

- < Chemistry: $\text{SiO}_2\text{-nH}_2\text{O}$, Hydrated Silicon Dioxide;
- < Class: Mineraloids;
- < Uses: As a gemstone and ornamental stone;
- < Group: Some mineralogists place Opal in the Quartz Group.

Opal has been a popular gem for many centuries and has a very interesting structure. Opal is considered a mineraloid because this structure is not truly crystalline. The chemistry of Opal is primarily SiO_2 and varying amounts of water. The amount of water varies from 5 - 10% and greater. This water can help geologists determine the temperature of the host rock at the time the opal formed.

Although there is no crystal structure, (meaning a regular arrangement of atoms) Opal does possess a structure nonetheless. Random chains of silicon and oxygen are packed into extraordinarily tiny spheres. These spheres in most Opals are irregular in size and inconsistent in concentration. Yet in Precious Opal, the variety used most often in jewelry, there are many organized pockets of the spheres. These pockets contain spheres of approximately equal size and have a regular concentration, or structure, of the spheres. This has the effect of diffracting light at various wavelengths, creating colors. Each pocket produces a different color, with a different intensity depending on the angle from which a viewer sees it. The multicolored flashes of light that Opal emits gives it a truly beautiful and valuable look.

Physical Characteristics:

- < Color is white, colorless, pale yellow, pale red, gray or black when impurities are common. Diffraction can cause flashes of any color of the rainbow (opalescent).
- < Luster is vitreous to pearly.
- < Transparency: Crystals are transparent to translucent.
- < Crystal System does not apply because opal is amorphous.
- < Habits include massive, cavity-fillings such as in fractures and geodes, nodular or as a replacement of other minerals and wood.
- < Cleavage is absent.
- < Fracture is conchoidal.
- < Hardness is 5 -6.
- < Specific Gravity is approximately 2 - 2.5 (light).
- < Streak is white.
- < Associated rocks are chert (a form of microcrystalline quartz), volcanic rocks and many others:

- < Other Characteristics: Some opal fluoresces and it can be very sensitive to impacts and low temperatures:
- < Notable Occurrences include Western USA; Mexico; Australia and many other localities around the world.
- < Best Field Indicators are color play (opalescent), low density, lack of cleavage and crystal faces and fracture filling tendency.

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**Opal Mountain Opal
 How to Get the BIG PIECES**

The best way to get opal at the various locations is to not to attack the seam directly (as the opal shatters easily and all you'd have are little chips), but rather you remove the host rock that contains the seam of opal. The distance from the seam edges should be 3" to 6". Then have a plastic bag large enough to place the whole thing into. Close it up and get it in your vehicle out of the sun. The reason is the opal in the states contain a high percentage of water and if they dry out too quickly the opal will just craze (tiny cracks) making it virtually impossible to do anything with the stone. Once you get home find a place such as the garage and put the bag in the back corner away from the door and sunlight, tear a small hole into the bag (2" approx.), now forget it for 6 months to a year.

After that time open the bag and pull it back over the opal/matrix, with chisel and hammer start to remove the matrix. Opal in Calif has a great deal of pressure on it and by removing the matrix from the opal starts to release it. But don't remove all of it at once, I know that this tempting to do, however you do not want to release too much pressure too quickly. You'll want to remove no more than say an inch to an inch and a half all round the outside, the reason you need to let the opal stabilize before continuing to remove the matrix. Once you have removed some of the matrix (rhyolite), pull or put the opal/rhyolite back into the plastic bag for a day or two or three before doing again. As you remove and stabilize the opal over a period of time, be patient, because what you want are large pieces and this is the way to do it.

Once you have the pieces go and have fun!!!

L q g " I q g v /

**OPAL MOUNTAIN FIELDTRIP
February 19, 20 and 21, 2005**

When you hear the word opal, you might think about the white colored cabochon with flashes of red, green, yellow and other colors as well. To those outside the hobby may even think the finished stones they see in the stores are what are actually coming out of the ground. Some I have talked to are surprised that there is a place in California that you can find opals, much less an entire mountain of it. They are ready to go and scoop up all those cabochons right then and there. However, we know this not the case. We know the opal to be found there is common opal not fire opal. We also know it comes in a variety of colors; honey, peach, cherry, green and combos of colors. But take heart - these colors of opal can be faceted or carved and made into cabochons! There are some at home shopping networks that sell faceted cherry opal and call it Mexican fire opal. And they sell it for a pretty penny!

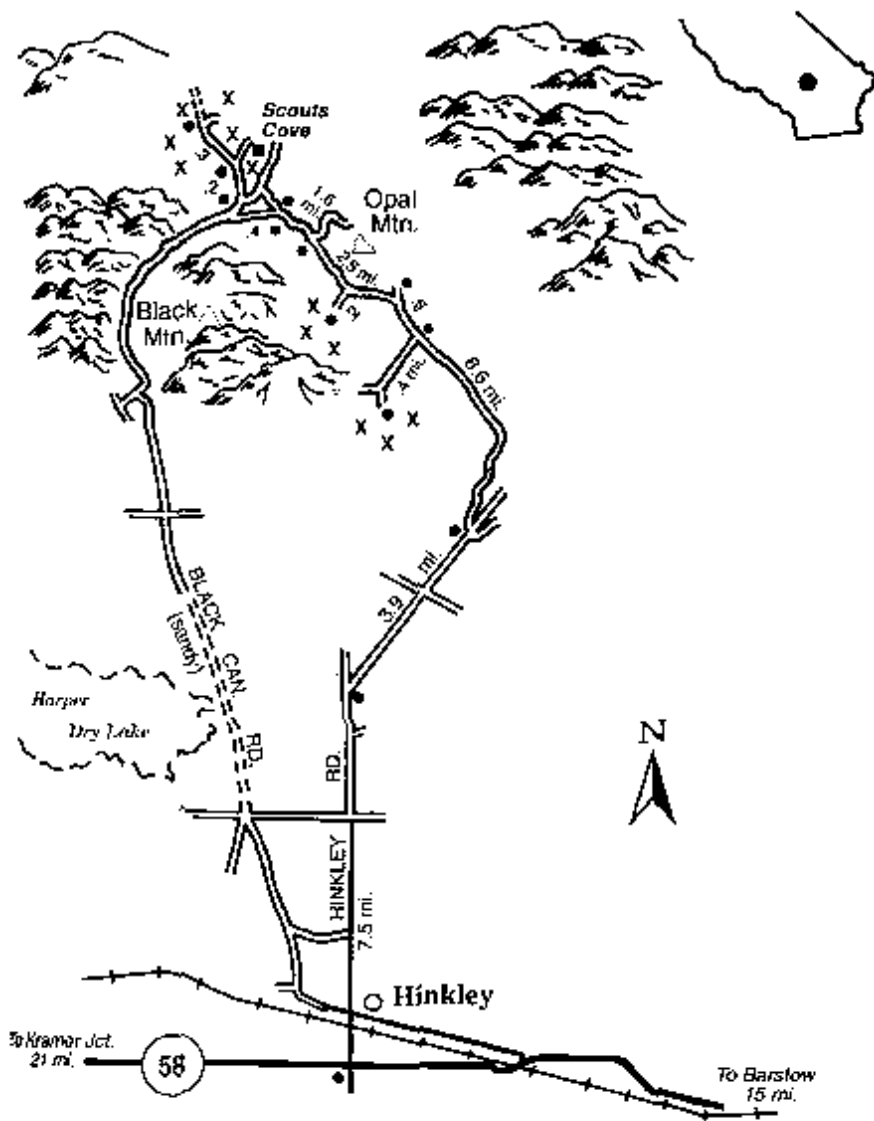
While this trip is close enough to done as a day trip, I believe it is better to camp out at a location that's within short travel distance to the various collection spots. If camping isn't your thing, you have the option of staying in Barstow or even Mohave and driving from there. For those who do camp you should know this is typical desert camping meaning you bring water, food, a camera and the essentials (including a potty, walking around in the dark to "do in the bushes" is not fun) with you as well as some wood for the campfire weather permitting.

There will be a potluck on Saturday evening around 5:00 PM. Sunday morning possibly go and do a little exploring around.

To get there: get to highway 58 either from Mohave or from Hwy 15 at Barstow. If coming from Mohave go east on 58 and get off at the Hinckley off ramp, turn and head north through town. From Barstow, take Hwy 58 west about 10 miles to Hinkley. Continue north after the pavement ends (total distance from highway 58 is approx. 7-1/2 miles) bearing right at the fork in the road. Continue for 3.9 miles and bear left at yet another fork in the road and go then another 6.6 miles to a general area for collecting. There will be signs along the way; they may be "W" or "PLS" or both at the appropriate places and will lead you to camp.

*Y k v j " Q r c n " F t
L q g " I q g v | . " H k g n f*

OPAL MOUNTAIN



The History of Valentine's Day

Every February, across the country, candy, flowers, and gifts are exchanged between loved ones, all in the name of St. Valentine. But who is this mysterious saint and why do we celebrate this holiday? The history of Valentine's Day -- and its patron saint -- is shrouded in mystery. But we do know that February has long been a month of romance. St. Valentine's Day, as we know it today, contains vestiges of both Christian and ancient Roman tradition. So, who was Saint Valentine and how did he become associated with this ancient rite? Today, the Catholic Church recognizes at least three different saints named Valentine or Valentinus, all of whom were martyred.

One legend contends that Valentine was a priest who served during the third century in Rome. When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage for young men -- his crop of potential soldiers. Valentine, realizing the injustice of the decree, defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. When Valentine's actions were discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death. Other stories suggest that Valentine may have been killed for attempting to help Christians escape harsh Roman prisons where they were often beaten and tortured.

According to one legend, Valentine actually sent the first 'valentine' greeting himself. While in prison, it is believed that Valentine fell in love with a young girl -- who may have been his jailor's daughter -- who visited him during his confinement. Before his death, it is alleged that he wrote her a letter, which he signed 'From your Valentine,' an expression that is still in use today. Although the truth behind the Valentine legends is murky, the stories certainly emphasize his appeal as a sympathetic, heroic, and, most importantly, romantic figure. It's no surprise that by the Middle Ages, Valentine was one of the most popular saints in England and France.

While some believe that Valentine's Day is celebrated in the middle of February to commemorate the anniversary of Valentine's death or burial -- which probably occurred around 270 A.D -- others claim that the Christian church may have decided to celebrate Valentine's feast day in the middle of February in an effort to 'Christianize' celebrations of the pagan Lupercalia festival. In ancient Rome, February was the official beginning of spring and was considered a time for purification. Houses were ritually cleansed by sweeping them out and then sprinkling salt and a type of wheat called spelt

throughout their interiors. Lupercalia, which began at the ides of February, February 15, was a fertility festival dedicated to Faunus, the Roman god of agriculture, as well as to the Roman founders Romulus and Remus.

To begin the festival, members of the Luperci, an order of Roman priests, would gather at the sacred cave where the infants Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome, were believed to have been cared for by a she-wolf or lupa. The priests would then sacrifice a goat, for fertility, and a dog, for purification.

The boys then sliced the goat's hide into strips, dipped them in the sacrificial blood and took to the streets, gently slapping both women and fields of crops with the goathide strips. Far from being fearful, Roman women welcomed being touched with the hides because it was believed the strips would make them more fertile in the coming year. Later in the day, according to legend, all the young women in the city would place their names in a big urn. The city's bachelors would then each choose a name out of the urn and become paired for the year with his chosen woman. These matches often ended in marriage. Pope Gelasius declared February 14 St. Valentine's Day around 498 A.D. The Roman 'lottery' system for romantic pairing was deemed un-Christian and outlawed. Later, during the Middle Ages, it was commonly believed in France and England that February 14 was the beginning of birds' mating season, which added to the idea that the middle of February -- Valentine's Day -- should be a day for romance. The oldest known valentine still in existence today was a poem written by Charles, Duke of Orleans to his wife while he was imprisoned in the Tower of London following his capture at the Battle of Agincourt. The greeting, which was written in 1415, is part of the manuscript collection of the British Library in London, England. Several years later, it is believed that King Henry V hired a writer named John Lydgate to compose a valentine note to Catherine of Valois.

In Great Britain, Valentine's Day began to be popularly celebrated around the seventeenth century. By the middle of the eighteenth century, it was common for friends and lovers in all social classes to exchange small tokens of affection or handwritten notes. By the end of the century, printed cards began to replace written letters due to improvements in printing technology. Ready-made cards were an easy way for people to express their emotions in a time when direct expression of one's feelings was discouraged. Cheaper postage rates also contributed to an increase in the popularity of sending

(Continued on Page 12)

The History of Valentine's Day

(Continued from page 11)

Valentine's Day greetings. Americans probably began exchanging hand-made valentines in the early 1700s. In the 1840s, Esther A. Howland began to sell the first mass-produced valentines in America.

According to the Greeting Card Association, an estimated one billion valentine cards are sent each year, making Valentine's Day the second largest card-sending holiday of the year. (An estimated 2.6 billion cards are sent for Christmas.) Approximately 85 percent of all valentines are purchased by women. In addition to the United States, Valentine's Day is celebrated in Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom, France, and Australia.

Valentine greetings were popular as far back as the Middle Ages (written Valentine's didn't begin to appear until after 1400), and the oldest known Valentine card is on display at the British Museum. The first commercial Valentine's Day greeting cards produced in the U.S. were created in the 1840s by Esther A. Howland. Howland, known as the Mother of the Valentine, made elaborate creations with real lace, ribbons and colorful pictures known as "scrap".

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Rock and Mineral Test

Are you a rockhound or rockhead? Test your knowledge of mineral and rock names by putting one of the names listed below into each blank.

- a) Albite f) Diamond k) Gneiss p) Quartz
b) Apatite g) Fluorite l) Gypsum q) Rubies
c) Chert h) Gabbro m) Mica r) Scheelite
d) Cinnabar i) Garnet n) Onyx s) Spinel
e) Coal j) Granite o) Pyrite t) Zircon

- 1. The geologist played poker, but wound up losing his _____.
2. The bar where mineralogists break the Ten Commandments is called the _____.

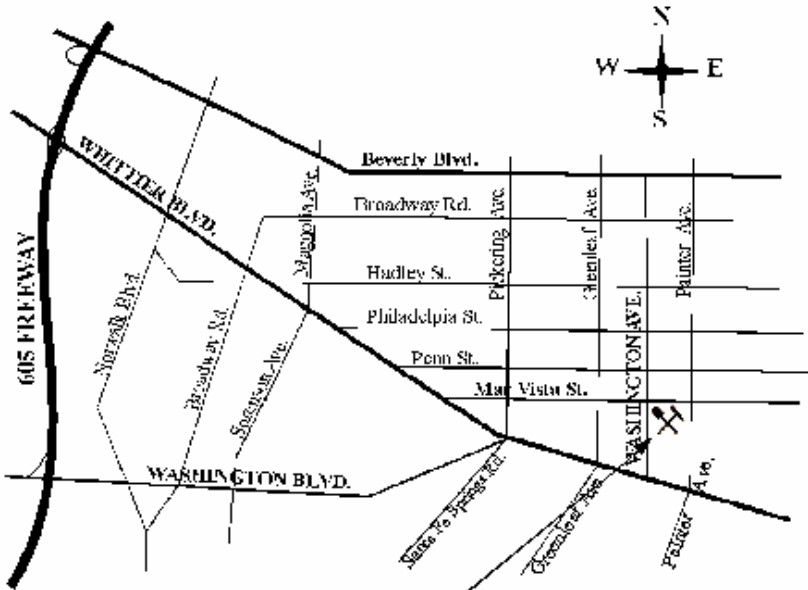
3. If we _____ rocks, we'll all lose our teeth.
4. There are four _____ to the gallon.
5. "What shall we give Mike?" "Let's give _____ new mineral for his collection!"
6. Fracture of the _____ column usually results in paralysis.
7. All of the talkative geology students were put in one row, soon christened the "_____".
8. When Fred Zir was swindled of his jewels, it was called the Great _____.
9. You sent her flowers? What a _____ thing to do.
10. If I don't get this _____, when someone walks in he'll fall through to the basement.
11. The mineral that is the very symbol of hunger. _____
12. The con man tried to _____ mineralogists with a fake ruby, but he got caught.
13. At the circus, a clown threw a fake rock at another and got a _____ in his face.
14. Put Nick's book _____ shelf where it belongs.
15. A baseball player's favorite gem. _____
16. If a rube is a type of hick, does it follow that hickies are _____?
17. Says one hip geologist to another, "Hey, that's really _____ man."
18. How to insult a geologist: look into his ear and say "I _____!"
19. If you drop a rock on your foot while in polite company, you should say "_____ all!"
20. Of all things, we must never take rocks for _____.

D { " J c t q n f " T g { p q n f u . " C r t k n " 3 3 . " 3 ; : ; = ' H t q o " J c t q n f " T g { p q n " f u) " J w o q w t " E q n n g e v

Upcoming CFMS Gem Shows

- Feb 18-27** **Indio, CA.** San Gorgonio Mineral & Gem Soc.
Riverside County Fair & Date Festival, 46-350 Arabia St.
Date Festival - Gem & Mineral Bldg #1
Hours: 10:00 am - 10:00 pm
- Mar 5-6** **Arcadia, CA.** Monrovia Rockhounds
The Arboretum of Los Angeles County
301 N. Baldwin Avenue
Hours: 9 - 5 both days
- Mar 5-6** **Ventura, CA.** Ventura Gem & Mineral Society
Seaside Park (Ventura Co. Fairgrounds)
10 W. Harbor Blvd.
Hours: Sat. 10 - 5; Sun. 10 - 4
- Mar 12-13** **San Marino, CA.** Pasadena Lapidary Society
San Marino Masonic Center
3130 Huntington Drive
Hours: Sat. 10 - 6; Sun. 10 - 5
- Mar 19-20** **Escondido, CA.** Palomar Gem & Mineral Club
Army National Guard Armory
304 Park Ave., Escondido
Hours: Sat. 10- 5 Sun. 10-4
- Apr 2-3** **Torrance, CA.** South Bay Lapidary & Mineral Society
Torrance Recreation Center, 3341 Torrance Blvd.
Hours: 10 - 5 both days
- Apr 9-10** **Hacienda Heights, CA.** Puente Hills Gem & Mineral Club
Steinmetz County Park Recreation Building
1545 S. Stimson Avenue
Hours: 10 - 5 both days
- Apr 9-10** **San Diego, CA.** San Diego Mineral & Gem Society
Al Bahr Shrine Center, 5440 Kearny Mesa Rd.
Hours: Sat. 9:30 - 5; Sun. 10 - 4
- Apr 23-24** **Bakersfield, CA.** Kern County Mineral Society
Kern County Fairgrounds
Hours: 10 - 5 both days

WGMS MEETING LOCATION!
Whittier Community Center
7630 Washington Ave. Whittier



MAR VISTA & WASHINGTON AVE.  WHITTIER COMMUNITY CENTER

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

Affiliations



California Federation of Mineralogical Societies
 American Federation of Mineralogical Societies
 Special Congress Representing Involved Bulletin Editors



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(see page 15 for map)