

WHITTIER



ROCKHOUNDING

GEM & MINERAL
SOCIETY

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March Program:
Ghost Towns of America

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Camp at the Lower Noonday Mine - President's Day Field Trip
Note the triangular PLS sign on the middle-left
(See article starting on page 10)

ROCKHOUNDER

THE PREZ SEZ:

March is here already and the thoughts are turning to the season of spring. Your thoughts about your gardens and what annuals or veggies are going to be planted this year. Or perhaps spring cleaning is on your mind. Whatever is coming to mind this time of year (and it seems to be flying by) there are fieldtrips coming up many to places we've not been to in a long time or even maybe is the first time going there.

Rock Gabbers is off to a fine start, the last one was attended by ten or more people. Everyone made a twisted link chain, some better than others, however what was learned was how to solder without melting the silver wire. The next one will be even more of a challenge, since the wire will be an even finer gauge of wire. If you didn't make the last rock gabbers, do come to this one, you won't be disappointed!

Now is the time to start planning your case for the show this year. Whether you're going to put in cabochons or finished pieces or a fine self collected mineral case, it is all good. If you like metal detecting and want to show off some of what you found then this is the show you've been waiting for!

The fieldtrip this time is to the Amboy-Cadiz Area. The trip is planned as an over night trip. You can however make it a day trip (it would be a long day) and it should be a fun trip. I know there are trilobites and a dolomite in the area. Dave is also planning to go to the area with peridot, which alone would be enough for me to come out for the day!

Have a safe and pleasurable day, Joe Goetz

WGMS General Meeting

Thursday, March 23, 2006

at 7:30 PM

As program Chairman, I have been given the opportunity to check a video program out of the private collection of Marcia Goetz. So our program will be a video about Ghost Towns of America or a program about Gemstones in America and how they are found and made into jewelry. The Board will make the choice of which one to use. So come to the next meeting prepared to learn about our hobby.

Izzie

News From Around the Club...

Happy Birthday and Best Wishes to President Joe Goetz who officially goes "*over the hill*" on March 19. This is his **50th b'day** and he is planning on celebrating it in true rockhound fashion by going out on a field trip. Congratulations and we'll see you out at Amboy.

A letter and \$3.00 check was received at the club mailbox from the **South Bay Lapidary and Mineral Society**. The letter stated that the \$3.00 was in payment for a copy of our field trip map set. It was unclear where they had already received a copy or if they wanted us to send them one. So the addressee was contacted and here is the story. Apparently one of their members had attended our Gem Show last year and had purchased a set of WGMS field trip maps. He then made a photocopy of his set and donated it to his club. Someone in the club pointed out that this was stealing and so they sent us a check to cover the \$3.00 cost of the map collection. **Thank you South Bay Rockhounds for your thoughtfulness and honesty.**

The 2006 edition of WGMS Membership Guide with the current roster is hot off the press and you should be receiving them in the next couple of weeks. If you find any errors, contact Jay Valle and he will do his best to fix them.

The following books will be available for purchase at the next meeting:

- "Gemstones of North America", Volume III, by John Sinkankas
- "Gem and lapidary Materials", by June Culp Zeitner
- "Photographing Minerals, Fossils & Lapidary Materials", by Scovil

Rockgabbers
April 1, 2006
1:00 to 5:00 PM
at Jay & Kathy Valle's

The February Rockgabbers was held at Jerry & Kathy Turner's home and the project of the month was making a figure eight chain. Twelve members of the club attended, and made chains. The chains were great, and everybody learned the basics of silver soldering. The potluck was great as usual.

Scheduling around field trips, club shows, and other club workshops, it was again decided to hold the workshop on a Saturday, and April 1st was the chosen date. Rockgabbers will meet at Jay and Kathy Valle's home at 1:00 pm, and will conclude with a potluck at 5:00 pm.

The project this month will be an elongated loop chain. This project will build on the skills learned at the previous meeting. The chain can be made of any gauge material that you choose. The thicker the silver the easier it is to solder, but the less elegant it looks. 22 or 24 gauge makes a very attractive and wearable chain. I will have silver available for those who wish to purchase from me. It costs about \$1 per foot, and a 24 inch chain uses about 5 feet of material. The design can be adapted to your taste. Twisting the chain a quarter turn changes its appearance completely, and making it from square wire instead of round wire is still a different look. Square wire can be twisted to form a spiral prior to making the rings and this gives a bright sparkling appearance.

You will need a torch, some needle nose pliers, and a set of snap ring pliers which are available from Harbor Freight.

Note from Jay & Kathy about the potluck: Paper plates, silverware and napkins will be provided. Coffee, lemonade and water will also be supplied but if you want some other beverage, BYO (bring your own). Bring a potluck item and optionally, a snack item to share during the workshop.

Contact Jay Valle at (626) 934-9764 with questions or if you need directions.

March Birthstone: Aquamarine

Birthstone Color: Pale Blue

If you can picture the cerulean blue waters of the Mediterranean, you will understand why the birthstone for March is named Aquamarine. Derived from the Roman word "Aqua," meaning water, and "mare," meaning sea, this pale blue gem does indeed resemble the color of seawater. The ancient Romans believed that the Aquamarine was sacred to Neptune, the god of the sea, having fallen from the jewel boxes of sirens and washed onto shore. Early sailors wore aquamarine talismans, engraved with the likeness of Neptune, as protection against dangers at sea.

The association with water led to the belief that the Aquamarine was particularly powerful when immersed. Water in which this gemstone had been submerged was used in ancient times to heal a variety of illnesses of the heart, liver, stomach, mouth and throat. Aquamarines were also used to reverse poisoning and to aid in fortune telling.

The Aquamarine is a member of the beryl family. Beryl is a mineral that crystallizes within large grained igneous rocks on the earth's crust. It varies in color from clear to vibrantly colored gemstones such as the Emerald. Beryl was used as far back as 2,000 years ago to correct vision, and it continues to be used today in the manufacture of eyeglasses. It is a very hard mineral, making the Aquamarine a durable gemstone for use in jewelry.

Aquamarine varies in color from blue-green to a light sky blue, but gems containing green are often heat-treated to remove this less desirable color. The majority of Aquamarines, unlike other gemstones, are flawless. It is a relatively abundant gem, the largest deposits being in Brazil, but other sources of Aquamarine are in China, India, Australia, Africa, and the United States.

A gift of Aquamarine symbolizes both safety and security, especially within long standing relationships. Some people even say that the Aquamarine reawakens love in a tired marriage, so if you want to bring back that spark in your partner's eyes, you might consider this gem as an anniversary gift!

Alternate Birthstone

An alternate birthstone for March is Bloodstone, a dark green opaque quartz flecked with red spots. The name Bloodstone derives from the legendary

belief that the red coloration resulted from the blood of Christ spilling onto green jasper during the crucifixion. For this reason, too, the stone has been called "martyr's stone." Bloodstone is mined in India, Brazil, Uruguay, Australia, and the United States. Ideal for carving into cameos and beads, this stone symbolizes courage.

From <http://www.about-birthstones.com/>

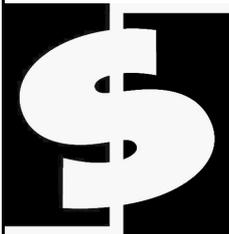
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The Whittier Gem & Mineral Society is happy to welcome a new sponsor of our Club, South Western Federal Credit Union.



**South Western
Federal Credit Union**

Contact (562) 694-8296 for information

Field Trip Ludlow to Chambless March 18-19, 2006

Get Your Picks on Route 66.

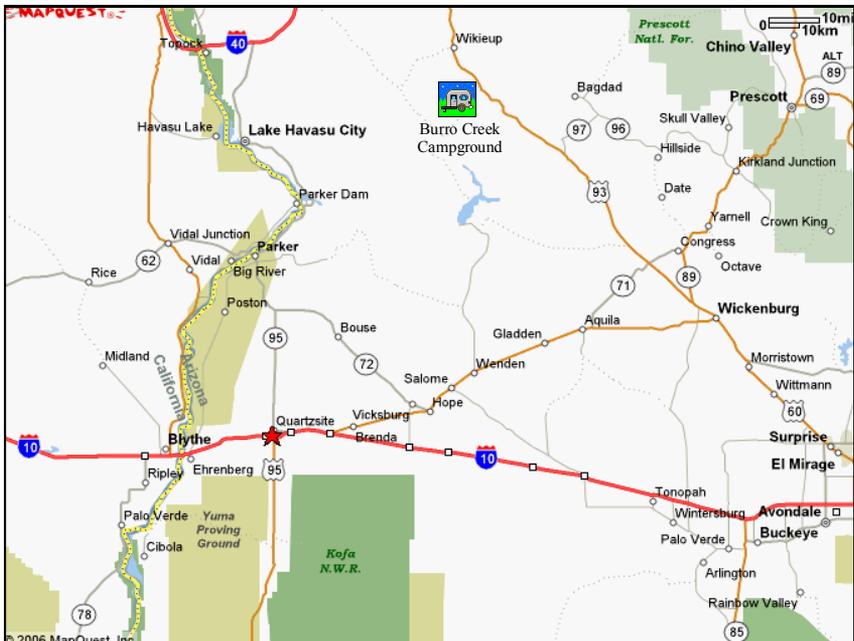
On March 18-19, our field trip will be along the famous Route #66, from Ludlow to Chambless.

We will have the opportunity to collect - peridot, copper specimens, apache tears, dumorturite, clustered garnets, epidote, iron specimens, algal marble, roses, geodes, nodules, and trilobite fossils.

Our Camping and meeting location is at the B.L.M. campground at the entrance to Amboy Crater Scenic Area, off the National Trails Highway (Route #66). The Camp is approximately 30 miles east of Ludlow on National Trails Highway, or 3 miles west of Amboy, which can be accessed off I-40 on Kelbaker Road.

Contact Dave Kelty at (626) 303-7821 for more information.

Dave Kelty



**Extended Field Trip
Burro Creek
March 20 - 26, 2006**

A group of rockhounds will be meeting at Burro Creek after the official Club field trip for a full week of field tripping. This is an "unofficial" rock trip attended by rockhound friends with the stated purpose of enjoying a very scenic location, relaxing campfires, exploration of local areas and probably a little rock hunting.

This classic location is most famous for the Arizona Purple Agate which can be collected here, but dendritic opal, brecciated jasper, and many other varieties of lapidary materials are found as well. You may also see rugged canyon views, peccaries (wild pigs), burros, cattle, deer and any number and types of birds, animals and flowers.

We will be camping at the **BLM Burro Creek Campground** located 60 miles north of Wickenburg on Hwy 93. This is a fee location, \$10.00 per day. It has bathrooms and drinking water, and is situated in a beautiful desert canyon oasis next to the creek. If you want, rock collecting is permitted right outside camp along the creek (I have collected some fine material on my morning walk.)

Directions to campground (See map on page 8) via the "Southern Route" starting at Quartzsite: From Quartzsite go East on I-10 to Hwy 60. Take Hwy 60 until you get to Aquila. From there turn onto Hwy 71 and follow until you get to Hwy 93. Go north about 35 - 40 miles until you see the Burro Creek Recreation Area signs on your left. Note: you will pass the inconsequential "town" of Nothing, Arizona about 10 miles before the campground turnoff. The camp is 1 mile down a paved road to the bottom of the canyon.

Contact: Jay Valle at (626) 934-9764 or jvalle@aqmd.gov

For even more information try:

BLM webpage <http://www.blm.gov/az/kfo/burrocr.htm>

**Field Trip Report - Tecopa Minerals
President's Day Weekend
By Jay Valle**

It was cold, someone had a really bad day, and rock was collected. If that is all you need to know then stop reading now because I am going to expand somewhat on that initial statement.

It was Friday afternoon, about 3 PM, and the temperature was a comfortable 60 something degrees in the sun. Rain and cold weather had been predicted for the Death Valley areas throughout the weekend, but for rockhounds, rain is frequently our friend, cleaning and revealing hidden treasures, so I was not worried (too much). I was first to arrive, then Vern & Sylvia Cliffe, followed shortly thereafter by our field trip leader, Dave Kelty. We placed the first of three club signs at a bend in the road to give those who would be coming later an indication of which way to go. Funny thing about those signs, they can turn in the wind (this bit of data will be important later in the story). The next sign was set out at the turn onto Western Talc Road and the final sign was at the camp location. Camp was quickly thrown together. Vern & Sylvia parked their trailer and they were set. I sited my tent trailer and 15 minutes later, I was done. Dave spent somewhat more time setting up his unique tent trailer which just happens to be missing the tent part. He created the walls with blue tarps and in spite of sometimes windy and wet weather, survived comfortably with no apparent problems. We skipped the campfire due to gusting winds. (The temperature dropped to about 35° F that first night.)

Saturday morning dawned cold and clear and slightly windy. We waited for late arrivals, and then left for the Western Talc Mine, only about 2-miles away. The talc mine, or more correctly, talc mines cover many acres and include outcrops high up on the hillsides and a large open pit mine area with some collapsed vertical shafts along the bottom. On this day, I explored the pit and Vern & Sylvia checked out the rock piles at the top. Down below, I found a couple of interesting outcroppings of talc, one of which was a tan color with dendrites, the other mostly white with translucent green areas in it. Climbing back to the top, I showed off my specimens and it was decided that we would continue with our scheduled visit to Sperry Wash and come back to collect the talc later. And so away we went.

We proceeded to a location Sylvia identified as the original club collecting area. This location also agreed with the old guide books which Dave had brought, and the directions given by Geoff Caplett (PLS). Sperry Wash is a classic collecting area for petrified wood, palm root, and agate of various shades of red, green, brown and mixtures. Much of the agate contains

inclusions of moss, sagenite and palm fibers. Petrified wood rootlets are common. Our time here was mainly spent in exploring, locating places to collect. Agate and palm root was found with Sylvia finding the "catch of the day", a 10 lb. or so chunk of palm root, covered with eyes. We returned to camp in the mid-afternoon to find Chris Kyte (PLS) waiting for us.

On the Importance of Good Initial Directions (and Signage)

Chris arrived in camp in the early afternoon but had actually been in the area somewhat earlier. He had encountered an errant sign which had led him off in the wrong direction. The PLS signs we are using right now (there are no WGMS signs at present) are created out of PVC tubing and slide over a stake driven into the ground. The actual signs are triangular in shape and can be oriented so that they form an arrow pointing the way to go. Unfortunately, in a good (bad) wind, they will sometimes turn on the stake, pointing in an unintended direction. This is what happened to our 1st sign. It had rotated in the wind until it pointed to a dirt road leading away from the main road. This is how Chris found it and so he turned and followed the other road for some distance without finding our camp. Eventually, he turned around (not a mean trick with a tent trailer behind) and went back to the main road and the lying sign. Correctly assessing the problem, he continued further on down the road, shortly coming upon the turnoff and our actual camp beyond. He quickly set up his tent trailer and about that time, we returned to greet him. His was the first but mildest "bad day".

As we were setting up for our evening potluck, Eva, a guest on some of our field trips showed up. Eva is a rockhound from the Palomar Club who travels with her longtime companion, Gecko (a dog). She has only about 2 years rockhounding experience but she has great enthusiasm for the hobby and particularly likes field trips. I had sent her directions to our camp location but the map which we provided her left off one minor detail, the name of the road to turn onto for the last 8 or so miles. Eva had come out Friday afternoon but not knowing about the turn she continued up the wrong road to the mileage listed on the directions and, lo and behold, there was a road leading up into the hills. Thinking that this must be the place, she followed the dirt track until she reached a really bad spot and decided to turn around. It was here that she got hung up. As it was now dark, she camped out there for the night.

The next morning, Eva unsuccessfully attempted to free her car and while she was working on it, Gecko wandered down to the road where he was spotted by a passing vehicle and picked up as a stray. Now she was stuck 10 miles from Tecopa and had lost her dog. Eva hiked down to the road and

hitched a ride into Tecopa (as did Gecko, now that I think of it). There she found some very friendly people. She told them about her car being stuck and her dog being lost and they helped her. A man took her back to the stuck vehicle where they jacked up the car and pulled it free. In the meantime there was no sign of Gecko. Returning to town, she was delighted and much relieved to find that Gecko had been picked up by some town residents out for a day of off-roading. Eva's story about losing the dog had swept through town and everyone now knew her tale (what a grapevine). They were there waiting for her to return to reunite the pair. Apparently, it is not unusual for people to come out and lose pets (or leave unwanted pets) and the local townsfolk collect them as a kindness before they coyotes find them. Talk about lucky. Anyway, Eva showed them the map and described the camp location, and someone directed her down the correct path. So she finally arrived at camp after her "really bad day". She joined us for potluck and as the wind was blowing and some rain was beginning to fall, everyone turned in (no campfire). The temperature fell to 29° F during the night.

Sunday morning was wet and cold. We had planned to go to the Kingston Range for amethyst, a location at about 5,000 feet in altitude. Since the snow level was down to about 3,000 feet, it was decided to pursue other options. We started with a visit to the nearby trilobite location. It was slightly windy and definitely cold when we got there. Dave showed us what to look for and as we searched the slabs of slate for fossils, a very light snow was falling with perfect snow flakes which were large enough to be seen. It was a magical moment. Dave found the "catch of the day" by turning over a flat section of rock and finding a cluster of complete trilobites. We continued on to Shoshone for lunch and on to an agate location just past town. Some agate was found and, returning to Shoshone, we gassed up and drove on out to the pin-fire opal site described accurately on the Rockhound Notes web page. After some trial and error, we found the formation that the fire opals were to be found in and collected until late afternoon. Fun and opals were collected by all.

Back at camp, the wind had died and skies were clear, so after a fine potluck meal we adjourned to the fire ring for our first campfire of the trip. It was great. I must tell you that, in my mind at least, a field trip is not complete unless it includes a campfire. We enjoyed the heat of the fire and talked about whatever came to mind. The temperature bottomed out at 25 degrees during the wee hours of the night.

Monday was clear and promised a warmer day than any we had experienced so far. Two things were decided. First, we would try for the Kingston Range Amethyst and, second, most of us would stay until Tuesday before going

home. A number of reasons for staying were offered including avoiding the Come-Home-From-Vegas crowd, and reports that Cajon Pass was iced up and partially snowed in clinched it. The real reason, of course, was that we were having a good time, in spite of the cold, and an extra day, for whatever reason, sounded pretty good. To paraphrase an old saying, "The worst day of rockhounding is better than the best day of work."

The path to the amethyst area was directly through the scenic heart of the Kingston Range. Sylvia's memory was surely an aid because when we reached the general area, she remembered the old road and the direction that it went toward to mountains above. The original road was long gone though and no trace remained. After some cautious exploring, a 4-wheel drive trail was located which ended at the collecting location. There were patches of snow around us where we parked but the collecting area was mostly clear and amethyst was found by all who looked. Dave found some individual amethyst crystals and my finds were massive, in tight interwoven seams of quartz crystals. It is truly beautiful country and I would like to go back when it is warmer. Each time the sun would go behind a cloud we would freeze and when the sun came out again it was hot (relatively speaking, of course). After we had our fill of mountain climbing, we returned to the main road and checked out several of the mines which we had passed on the way up. There were several types of serpentine, marble and hematite to be found. Eventually, we returned to camp where Dave took his leave of us (he says he went home??). The rest of us savored a last meal together and another hot and roaring fire before turning in. (The overnight temp was pretty darn cold again but I think you get the idea now).

Tuesday morning we went back to the talc mine. This time everyone made their way down into the open pit mine area and collected specimens of talc. Point of fact: Talc is a dense, heavy mineral, and it is a lot slower climbing out of a pit with a pack-load of talc than coming down with empty bags. After assisting everyone back to their respective vehicles (Eva made two trips into the pit to retrieve all the rock she found), Vern and Sylvia returned to camp to head for home and the remaining rockhounds (3) went back to the Sperry Wash petrified wood/agate location for one last try. Again, rock was collected with my chunk of palm root being the "find of the day" this time. Then it was time to break camp and off for home.

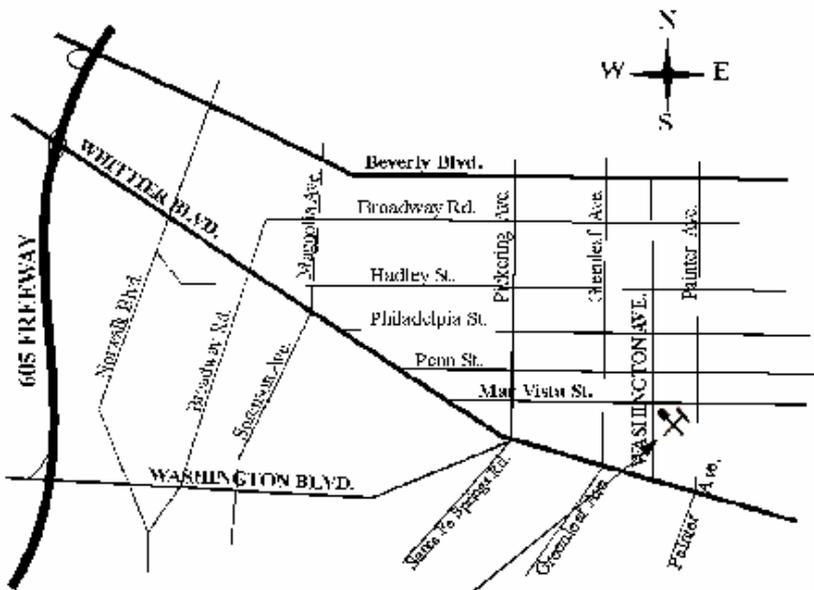
So, in spite of the weather, we had a good time. Every trip is an adventure and this one certainly had its moments.

As I said before, it was cold, someone had a really bad day, and rock was collected.

Upcoming CFMS Gem Shows

- Mar 11-12** **Escondido, CA.** Palomar Gem & Mineral Club
Army National Guard Armory, 304 Park Avenue
Hours: Sat. 10 - 5; Sun. 10 - 4
- Mar 11-13** **Victorville, CA.** Victor Valley Gem & Mineral Club Tailgate
Stoddard Wells (11 miles east of I-5)
Hours: Fri. & Sat. 8-5; Sun. 8-2
- Mar 11-12** ***San Marino, CA. Pasadena Lapidary Society***
San Marino Masonic Center, 3130 Hunting Drive
Hours: Sat 10 - 6, Sun 10-5
- Mar 18-19** **Bakersfield, CA.** Southern San Joaquin Lapidary Society
Kern County Fair Grounds
1142 South P Street & Bell Terrace Gates 28, 29 & 30
Hours: 9-5 both days
- May 20-21** **Newbury Park, CA.** Conejo Gem & Mineral Club
Borchard Park Community Center, 190 Reino Rd.
Hours: Sat. 9-5 Sun. 10-4:30
- May 20-21** **Yucaipa, CA.** Yucaipa Valley Gem & Mineral Society
Yucaipa Communiuty Center, 34900 Oak Glen Road
Hours: Sat. 9 - 5; Sun. 10 - 4
- Jun 3-4** **Glendora, CA.** Glendora Gem & Mineral Show
859 E. Sierra Madre
Hours: Sat. 10 - 5; Sun. 10 - 4
- Jun 3-4** **La Habra, CA.** North Orange County Gem & Mineral Society
La Habra Community Center, 101 W. La Habra Blvd.
Hours: 10-5 both days
- Jun 9-11** **Angels Camp, CA.** Calveras Gem & Mineral Society
CFMS Show
Calveras Co. Fairgrounds
Hours: 10-5 daily
Website: calaverasgemandmineral.org

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



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(see page 4 for information)