

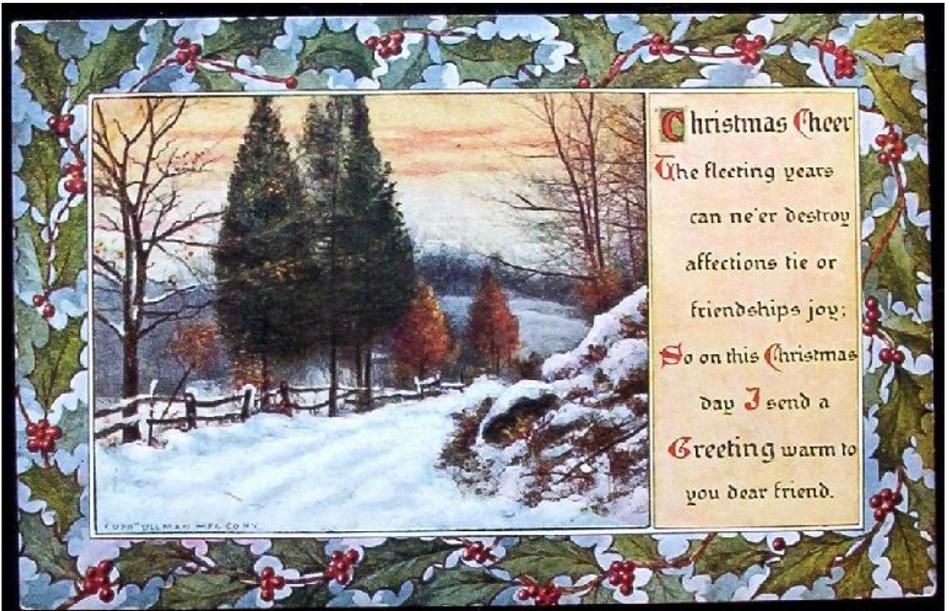
DECEMBER 2008

WHITTIER



ROCKHOUNDING
GEM & MINERAL
SOCIETY

Christmas Party Time!!



Antique Christmas Card

ROCKHOUNDER

THE PREZ SEZ:

My gosh it is December already. Where has the year gone to? Though there have been days that seemed to go on and on. I guess when you are going through each day; the year seems like such a long time. Now as this year is coming to a close and the next is going to begin, you sit back and think about the memories of fieldtrips and other events.

We had a great show, many great fieldtrips and other personal events. We still have our annual Christmas potluck this month and perhaps a day trip or two (weather permitting). Besides all the shopping and cooking this time of the year brings with it.

One important thing that still seems to be done is to write to your representative and voice your opinion about the land bills that are coming up. If your existing representative has been voted out of office write to both the existing and the new one that will be starting in January 20Th.

Many you and loved ones have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! And I'll see you at the Potluck.

Joe Goetz

Seen on a Fortune Cookie...

The person who learns to laugh at himself will never cease to be amused.

WGMS Christmas Party

Saturday, December 20, 2008

Hosted by Jerry & Kathy Turner

at their Whittier Home.

Schedule

Social Hour: 6:00 to 7:00 PM

Dinner: 7:00 PM until we are done.

Come join us for our annual Christmas Holiday Party on Saturday, December 20. Jerry and Kathleen Turner are once again opening up their beautiful home for our potluck and festivities. There will be a gift exchange after dinner.

“Social Hour” begins at 6:00 PM. This is a time when we can enjoy the company of our fellow WGMSers, tell stories and talk about rocks, kids, grandkids or whatever comes to mind. Following that, at around 7:00 PM, the main course will begin. Dinner is potluck and you should bring a main dish, salad or dessert to share. Plates and silverware will be provided, and some drinks, but if you want something specific, you can bring that as well. If you want a hint as to what to bring, give Kathy Turner a call and she will suggest a dinner item.

You need to contact Kathleen Turner at (626) 696-3222 to let her know you are coming, get directions (if needed) and talk about potluck ideas.

There will be a gift exchange and the rules are as follows:

1. Participation is voluntary.
2. To receive a gift you must bring a gift for each person in your party wishing to exchange gifts. For a guest to participate, you or they must also provide a gift to exchange.
3. The value of the gift should be at least \$10.00 and should be marked as for a man, woman or either. Gift choice is up to you but lapidary or hobby related items are always appreciated.

This promises to be an memorable night so come and share it with us.

Dues Are Due!

It only seems a year ago that we were reminding you that your WGMS DUES ARE DUE and here it is that time again. As always, if you have already paid for 2009 or joined the Club at our October Show, you do not need to pay again.

The Dues Schedule is as follows:

- Single Adults - \$15.00
- Married Couple - 25.00
- Juniors (under 18) - \$5.00 each
- Students (18 or over, in college) - no charge

Thank you for your continued support for our club.

Rockgabbers

The Rockgabbers met on November 15th at Tony and Sandie Fender's home. The primary project for this month was bezels. The standard method of making bezels is to attach the bezel to a sheet of backing material. Another approach is to attach a shoulder to the inside of the bezel to support the cab. Both of these methods were taught and the people chose what type of bezel they wanted to work on. Jerry also used the rolling mill to make his own bezel wire.

Tony showed some techniques for making prongs which we may explore further in future Rockgabbers if people so choose.

Sandie and Tony also showed their experiences with fold-forming, and there was considerable interest in this technique. Using this method to make a leaf will be the primary object for the next meeting which will be on February 7, 2009 at Jerry and Kathy Turner's home. The material needed is a sheet of fairly thin metal such as brass, copper or even tin. The sheet needs to be about 3 X 6 inches and about 24 gauge or so. Much thicker than that and it becomes very hard to work as you fold it up, and much thinner than that and the finished product doesn't have the structural strength required. The tools required are a small vice, a couple of pairs of duck billed pliers, a small hammer or mallet, a raising hammer, an anvil and a pair of shears.

As always the meeting concludes with a potluck dinner.

Sandie and Tony Fender

Why Hunt Rocks

By Jay Valle

It seems to me that real outdoor enthusiasts are becoming harder and harder to find. Many, if not most Americans are content just to play their computer games or watch what passes for reality on television. When they do come out to see the natural world they typically visit the well known places where they can be spoon fed mother nature, then go home. My own appetite for the “great outdoors” was acquired early. My parents introduced me to camping, my grandfather taught the basics of hunting (never saw a deer when I had a gun in my hand), and the Junior Chairman for the Castro Valley Gem Club introduced to me to the pleasures of rock collecting (she was my best friend’s mom). Being a rockhound allows me to indulge my passion for each of these activities.

Camping is one of life's simple pleasures. You can sleep in a car, on the ground, use a tent or wallow in the comfort of a little house on wheels (motor home). I prefer “dry camping” in my tent trailer. With “dry camping” you can choose to be alone or be with others of like spirit, but you must bring everything needed with you. And the comfortable feeling of a warm campfire on a cold evening, or the vision of a star-filled sky on a moonless night are only a couple of the fringe benefits.

I am a hunter by nature, though I never carry a firearm. It may seem silly to visualize a rock in the crosshairs of a gun but there you are. The prey is an illusive and rare chunk of fine quality agate, jasper or other semi-precious stone, having extraordinary color and inclusions, priceless when found. When bagged, it becomes an object of fascination, something to brag about and tell stories of. There are the preliminaries when you survey the hunting zone, refer to miscellaneous and arcane maps, and consult with other hunters about rumors and successes. Then you must get the “lay of the land”, discover the trails and haunts of your chosen prey. It may be high up on a mountain, down a distant canyon, or hidden beneath a grassy plain. Successful hunting strategies must vary with the terrain and the object being hunted. Finally the actual stalking of the prey begins, hopefully culminating in a successful and satisfying hunt.

In the final analysis, though, for me rock collecting is a vast and unending treasure hunt. There will always be something else to see and find. Each journey out into the field is another chance for adventure and an opportunity to find mundane or spectacular specimens Every wash or hillside is a place with potential. Old maps may lead to a golden trove or just another “cool” place to explore. It is always great fun.

Lapidary Journal Magazine is now Jewelry Artists

Sometime in the last several years, we dropped our subscription to Lapidary Journal due to their focusing more on Jewelry than the Rockhound field.

After sending out publicity notices to the three rockhound field magazines for the PLS show scheduled for March next year, the Lapidary Journal magazine letter was returned by the post office indicating the address was no longer valid.

Believing the magazine had changed addresses, I ventured into the depths of the on-line world to find the answer.

The name has been changed to Jewelry Artists, and at this time is being listed on-line as: Lapidary Journal Jewelry Artists Magazine

Jewelry Artists Magazine has some of the same features as Lapidary Journal, and as such, Rockhounds should take advantage of some of them, such as "Show Listings".

The contact address is as follows:

Jewelry Artists Magazine
300 Chesterfield Parkway Suite 100
Malvern PA 19358-8715
610-232-5700

(Note: You can still submit your show dates through their webpage at: <http://www.lapidaryjournal.com/>)

Vern & Sylvia Cliffe

My Typewriter

Xvxn though my typewriter is an old model, it works quite well except for one of the keys. I wish many times that it worked perfectly. It is true that there are forty-six keys that function well enough, but just one key not working makes the difference.

You may say to yourself, "Well, I am only one person. I won't make or break the newstetter." But it does make a difference because the newstetter, to be effective, needs the active participation of every member.

So the next time you think you are only one person, and that your efforts are not needed, remember my typewriter and say to yourself, "I am a key person, and I am needed very much to write articles for the newstetter."

Thank you, The Editor

From Chips Newsletter via MOROKS 1-05

**Field Trip Report
Whittier Club Claim
November 1-2, 2008**

Mother Nature seemed unable to make up her mind. It was hot and cold, windy and calm, rainy and dry. Nevertheless, 20 enthusiastic rockhounds and guests came out to enjoy our first real field trip of the post-summer season.

I came out on Halloween and installed the combination lock on the gate, then took off with Don and Kathy Eschbach to explore a couple local sites. When we returned, several campers had already arrived. With the exception of Pat Mogan, the NOC crew camped out at the OakTree Inn. That night, we roughed it at Peggy Sue's Restaurant. The winds were light and the evening mild, so we enjoyed a fine campfire with most of our 'hounds on hand, including the motel group.

Saturday began as a fine sunny day and progressed to gale force winds and finally to drenching rain. Fortunately, it all occurred in the best possible order.

Jerry and Kathy Turner started off things right by serving homemade waffles to any and all comers. Those pastries were wonderful and mighty tasty (thanks, Jerry & Kathy). Then we began the day's collecting at the Whittier Club Claim where the Saturday Field Trip Leader, Joe Goetz explained about the Honey Onyx Claim and how we mine it (when we mine it, that is... it is really hard work!). Next we visited the red moss agate location, then back to camp for lunch, picking up a couple late-comers on the way. In the afternoon, we visited one of Joe's "secret" locations for agate, jasper, palm root and almost anything else you can think of (you never know what you will find at that spot). By now the winds were becoming stronger and rain could be seen falling in the far distance. Our last stop was an agate location known to us as "Jason's Place" after the person who first showed it to us. By this time, the winds were threatening to carry us away bodily and sprinkles were beginning to fall. Time to run for shelter.

Our motel campers headed back to Peggy Sue's while the rest of us dashed into camp and prepared a fine potluck meal. 14 people attended and participated as the skies opened up and it poured buckets of rain. That did not dampen the party, though. Fine food was served in Jerry and Kathy Turner's new-used motor home. Most of the potluck attendees enjoyed the comfort of this beautiful home-on-wheels while the remaining few separated into the other trailers and vehicles, returning for seconds and desserts. In spite of the inclement weather, every one was in good spirits and had a good meal and a

good time. The wines thoughtfully provided by Pat Mogan, the Turners and the Ragazzi's no doubt helped as well. No campfire was possible that night due to the constant rain.

Sunday morning arrived cold, clear and moderately windy. Due to the time change (the end of daylight saving's time), everyone was up and about relatively early. A few of our 'hounds had to sneak away back to civilization early, including Saturday's trip leaders Joe and Marcia. Most however remained at least for the morning field trip which I led to "Bill and Izzy's Place" off of Harvard Road, named for... well, you get the idea. I was worried that the road might be muddy from all the rain, and some standing water was seen, but road conditions turned out to be just fine. The collecting was excellent due to the nice scrubbing job courtesy of Mother Nature. Returning to the motel, we enjoyed a catered lunch at Penny's Diner and then dropped off the majority of our NOC contingent.

The remaining field trippers now numbered just 6 individuals in 3 vehicles. Carolyn Duncan of the PLS Club had a special collecting site request, so I led the group to the brown moss location near the famous Paul Bunyan Agate Mine. After some instruction in what we were seeking and how to train your eyes to spot the pieces, moderate success was achieved by all. We then attacked the "little green hill" and collected chalcedony roses until time to head back to camp. Another pair of campers left us at this time. Dinner was another Peggy Sue gastronomic creation (delicious really... trust me). Afterwards, we enjoyed a final campfire during which the wind was persistent but not overwhelming. The night was clear, much cooler and full of stars. The moon was a 1st quarter crescent and did nothing to block our view of the night sky. I brought out my camera and tried a few pictures of the Venus, Moon, Jupiter (or Mars) conjunction with some success. A couple of shooting stars were seen as well. The roaring fire came to an end when the firewood ran out, thus ending a fine day and a nice evening.

Monday morning – 47 degrees and a light wind felt great (makes you wonder when summer is going to end). Carolyn and I made a run over to the red agate area one last time, joined later by Pat. Returning to camp, the tent trailer came down and we abandoned the Whittier Club Claim for another year.

Postscript: For whatever reason, this particular trip is well attended every year and is always a lot of fun. Joe Goetz led a great field trip on Saturday and my group on Sunday seemed to be pleased with our day's events. Rock was collected and a good time was had by all.

Jay Valle

Desert is a Rockhound's Paradise

Blythe Area Chamber of Commerce

The desert surrounding Blythe and the Palo Verde Valley in which it is located, is called the "Colorado Desert". All areas are easily accessible with a pickup, and many places can be reached in the family car. A brief description is given here about several popular locations, and additional information is available through The Blythe Area Chamber of Commerce.

WILEY WELL

Location: 26 miles southwest of Blythe. West on I-10 approximately 17 miles to Wiley Well Road and Rest Area, then south 9 miles on well-maintained road to Wiley Well. This is the most popular collecting area in the Colorado Desert. Areas called Potato Patch, Cinnamon Beds and Hauser Beds are some of the many sites where seam agate, large geodes containing calcite crystals; nodule (deep blue) beds and more are located. Collecting is free and the Bureau of Land Management maintains several excellent campgrounds.

LITTLE CHUCKAWALLA MOUNTAINS

Location: 40 miles west of Blythe and south off I-10 at Desert Center.

Material: Geodes in deep rich blue, lavender, pink and tan, banded with turtleback agate and fortification moss, as well as chalcedony amygdals, rhombs, jasp-agate and agate. Good level desert campsites but no water and limited wood.

RIVER TERRACE AGATE, WOOD & JASPER

Location: 20 miles south of Blythe on State Highway 78. In times past, the Colorado River cut many channels across the desert. Logs of petrified wood and other gemstone material were swept away from their source in Arizona, Utah and other places to the north. Crushed in their violent journey to the south, many finally ended up as huge piles of rock we call terraces.

Material: Fine quality agate, jasper and petrified wood. Two of these locations are close to Blythe. Both are easily reached in a pickup truck. The Palo Verde Terrace is okay for passenger cars.

PALO VERDE MOUNTAIN FOOTHILLS

Location: 25 miles south of Blythe on State Highway 78.

Material: Geodes, agate, petrified wood, chalcedony roses and mineral specimens. This area is also easy to reach. Just park your vehicle off the road at any of the places available and hike. A good place to start is about 5 ½ miles south of Palo Verde on State Highway 78. This is a large area and contains many different types of interesting things to collect. Selenite (blades tipped with white) as well as clear pieces can be found in some of the canyons. Clam

shells are occasionally found that indicate the area at one time was a lake of inland sea.

MIDWAY WELL

Location: 25 miles south of Blythe, 18 miles south of Palo Verde on the Ben Hulse Highway (State Highway 78). This is a wild and beautiful region in the southeast corner of our desert.

Material: Paleozoic coral, agate, jasper, petrified wood, geodes, nodules, chalcedony, palm root, dumortierite, to name a few. Camping is open desert, no facilities, water or wood.

EARP BADLANDS

Location: 50 miles north of Blythe. Several roads lead into the badlands, and while okay for a trailer, sections crossing washes may require some shovel work to make them passable.

Material: Red, Yellow, Green, and Brown Jasper, Jasp-agate, banded agate and chert. Camping is open desert, no facilities, water or wood.

ARLINGTON MINE

Location: Some 30 miles northwest of Blythe. The Arlington Mine has been idle for many years. It is actually a district composed of a number of mining claims which were most active during World Wars I and II. Manganese was the ore mineral. U.S. Gypsum's Midland Plant is located north in the Little Maria Mountains.

Material: botryoidal psilomelane, cabachons.

Camping is open desert, no facilities or water, some wood in the washes.

OPAL HILL MINE

Location: 25–30 miles south of Blythe.

The Opal Hill Mine is a private claim and the only site in California where high quality fire agate is found. For those who prefer to acquire their fire agate with no exertion whatsoever, nicely finished and polished pieces are sold at the mine for very reasonable prices. Digging fees are subject to change. Bring your own food, water and beverages.

There are too many rock hounding sites in our Colorado Desert to list here. The Blythe Area Chamber of Commerce has more detailed information and maps available to the rock hounder, hiker or desert camper.

NOTE: Some areas of the desert have been closed to visitors. Check with the local Bureau of Land Management Office before proceeding.

<http://www.blytheareachamberofcommerce.com/rockhound.htm>

The 12 Symbols of Christmas By Joan Morris

Every year around this time we haul out the familiar Christmas decorations and begin transforming our suburban abodes into wintry castles. There's the old plastic Santa your parents bought you the year you were born, the half dozen candy canes left over from two holidays back, the bright red ribbon that will hold the mistletoe spray above the door. Each one, like an old friend, finds its usual place in our home. But just how well do you know them? You may remember when you got them, but do you know how these objects became an original Christmas symbol? Here's a gift you can open early-the story behind these 12 symbols of Christmas.

Christmas Bells: From the mighty toll of church bells to the giggling of jingles, bells play a big role in Christmas lore. In ancient pagan winter rites, bells were rung to ward off evil. The bells became a natural part of Christmas, calling the faithful to prayer and announcing Santa's arrival.

Candy Canes: At one time, candy canes were nothing more than straight, white sugar sticks given to children to keep them quiet during long church services. Although some believe the red stripes were added for religious symbolism, candy makers from the 1800s said they were just trying to make the canes attractive. The cane shape is said to reflect shepherd's crooks or the letter "J" for Jesus.

Eggnog: This traditional drink dates back to the Renaissance. Those were the days before refrigeration, and eggs and milk had a shelf life. Brandy, Madeira wine or sherry was sometimes added to a milk and egg drink as a festive preservative. Thus eggnog was born and became a natural part of the Christmas tradition. "Nog" may refer to the wooden noggin it was served in or may be a combination of the words egg and grog, egg-n-grog, eggnog.

Elves: Scandinavian pagans believed house gnomes guarded their homes against evil spirits. In the 1800s, when Christmas became a full-fledged celebration again, Scandinavian writers reworked the gnomes into mischievous creatures called elves, who are the true friends and helpers of Santa Claus.

Santa Claus: There is little doubt that Santa Claus is based on St. Nicholas, who long had established a tradition of giving. Early Byzantine portraits show him with a long white beard. St Nicholas also became linked with Christmas because his feast day is celebrated December 6. But when some took offense at gift giving in the name of a saint, folklore stepped in to create Santa Claus. Almost every country has its version of Santa Claus, from the Dutch Sinterklaas to the Brits' Father Christmas.

Flying Reindeer: Santa needs something to pull his sleigh, and the pickings are slim around the North Pole. Laplanders, however, believe Santa imported some reindeer, known for their prowess in the snow. On Christmas Eve, the elves cook up some magic powder to sprinkle on the reindeer and give them their flying ability.

Fruitcake: Although some consider this like coal in the stocking—an Italian tradition where good children get chocolate and bad get coal—fruitcake enjoys a milder association with Christmas. Tradition calls for a dessert to be served after Christmas dinner, but given that it was winter, the only thing readily on hand was preserved fruit. Thus fruitcake was born, and people used to be thankful for it.

Mistletoe: Druids were big into mistletoe. Whenever enemies met under the mistletoe, they were required to lay down their swords and make nice for a while. Mistletoe was also a pagan fertility symbol. A kiss was exchanged for a mistletoe berry and the kissing continued as long as the berry supply lasted.

Wreath: Those evergreen bough shaped into rings got their start among pre-Christian Germanic Folk who, during the cold winter darkness, gathered wreaths of evergreen and lighted in belief that spring would come again. By the 16th century, Catholic and Protestant Germans, who adopted the tradition, began using wreaths and candles to celebrate Advent.

Ornaments: The first decorations were fruits, used in pagan rituals to encourage tree spirits to return in the spring and sprout anew. People were decorating trees in their homes as far back as 1605, but it took Queen Victoria and Prince Albert in 1846 to make the practice forever fashionable. A sketch of the royal couple in front of a decorated tree launched a thousand ornaments.

Stockings: A wealthy nobleman had fallen on hard times and was unable to provide a dowry for his three daughters. Legend has it that St. Nicholas, a holy man fond of giving anonymously to the needy, dropped a bag of gold through an open window to provide for the first daughter. The second night he dropped a bag for the second daughter. On the third night, finding the window closed he dropped the bag down the chimney, where it landed in a stocking hanging from the mantle to dry. After that, who wouldn't take a chance on hanging a stocking by the fire?

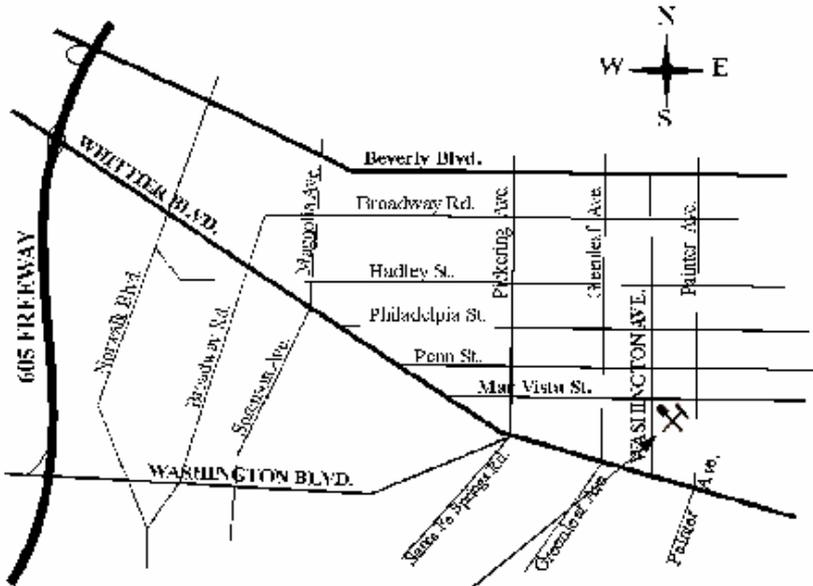
Christmas Tree: Like most things Christmas this is a tradition linked to the Druids' winter solstice celebration. The Druids revered the oak tree, but believed the evergreen had magical properties because it thrived despite the season. As Christianity adopted and supplanted many pagan rituals, the evergreen became a symbol of Christmas of everlasting life and hope.

--Via Contra Costa Times 12/03, via Mineral Memos, 12/05

Upcoming CFMS Gem Shows

- Dec 6-7** **Barstow, CA.** Mojave Gem & Mineral Society
Cora Harper Community Center, 841 S. Barstow Road
Hours: 10-5 Both Days
- Feb 13-22** **Indio, CA.** San Gorgonio Mineral & Gem Society
Riverside County Fair & National Date Festival
Gem and Mineral Building Bldg #1
46-350 Arabia Street
- Feb 27 -** **Imperial, CA.** Imperial Valley Gem and Mineral Society, Inc.
Mar 8 Gem and Mineral Building on Fairgrounds
Hours: Fri, Sat & Sun - Noon - 10, Mon-Thu 4pm - 10pm
- Mar 7-8** **Ventura, CA.** Ventura Gem and Mineral Society, Inc.
Seaside Park, Ventura County Fairgrounds
Hours: Sat. 10 - 5, Sun. 10-4
- Mar 13-15** **Stoddard Wells, CA.** Victor Valley Gem & Mineral Club
Held off Stoddard Wells Road in Apple Valley
Tailgate Map (Google): N34.670650 W117.108983
Hours: 10-5 Daily
- Mar 28-29** **Torrance, CA.** South Bay Lapidary and Mineral Society
Torrance Recreational Center, 3341 Torrance Blvd.
Hours: Sat. 10 - 5, Sun. 10-4
- Apr 3-5** **Bakersfield, CA.** San Joaquin Valley Lapidary Society
Kern County Faigrounds,
1142 South P. Street - Corner S. P & Belle Terrace
Hours: 9-5 Daily
- May 30-31** **Glendora, CA.** Glendora Gems
859 E. Sierra Madre Ave. Glendora
Hours: Sat. 10 - 5, Sun. 10-4
- June 5-7** **Woodland Hills, CA.** Rockatomics Gem & Mineral Society
Pierce College - Victory & Mason
Hours: 10-5 Daily

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



MAR VISTA & WASHINGTON AVE.  WHITTIER COMMUNITY CENTER

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Affiliations



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



Whittier Gem and Mineral Society, Inc.
Post Office Box 865, Whittier, California 90608-0865
Editor: Jay Valle, 1421 Latchford Ave.
Hacienda Heights, CA 91745

Date: December 20, 2008 at 6:00 PM
Location: The Turners
(See article on page 4 for info)