

WHITTIER

**ROCKHOUNDER**  
GEM & MINERAL  
SOCIETY

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Meeting Date: March 24  
“How to Find Good Rocks”



The little “town” of NOTHING, Arizona is one of the access points for Burro Creek, a popular collecting area. As you can see, Nothing is rapidly being reduced to less than nothing.

# ROCKHOUSER

## THE PREZ SEZ:

There's a television show on the Discovery Channel called "Dirty Jobs". This guy, Mike Rowe, goes about finding the dirtiest most unpleasant jobs that people do, and steps in as an apprentice. He may be mucking out the bottom of a sludge filled tank, or shoveling what's left of the cows dinner after the cow is through with it, all for the entertainment of the TV watching public. I think people would watch mold grow if you put it on TV and called it a "Reality Show". Well Mike, have I got a job for you -- cleaning out a slab saw!! Who would think that after cutting a measly couple of hundred little slabs that you would end up with about an inch of modeling clay, or something very much like it, covered with a thin film of oil in the bottom of your saw. It even gets worse if you have been cutting jasper with hematite inclusions. I think my saw has been jinxed. With every scoop of that reddish brown glop that I take from the saw, there is a small oily mass that seems to be propelled as if driven by a magnetic field onto the clothes or over the side and on to the driveway which in turn requires cleaning. But that's another show.

Perhaps I complain too vigorously. I have been putting the task off for too long, not because I dread the job but because I'd rather be cutting that latest rock. We say that geodes are "Natures Grab Bag", but every rock has that same quality. For every rock we put into the saw we are looking for that WOW factor. There is something special about collecting a rock, and by cutting and polishing, turning it into a beautiful gemstone. And then with a little metalwork creating a piece of jewelry for yourself or your significant other. It's OK to look at the finished product and say with pride "I did that, from beginning to end."

(Continued on page 4)

**WGMS General Meeting**

**Thursday, March 24, 2011**

**at 7:30 PM**

**How to Find Good Rocks!**

**R**obert Burson is a proud member of the Anaheim Searchers and a sometimes leader of field trips. He has taken many photographs of his adventures and uses them to educate his listeners on the finer points of rocks and how and where to find them. Come and enjoy learning as Robert teaches us.

*Marcia Goetz*

**Prez Sez**

(Continued from page 3)

That's what rock hounding is all about. It's why we band together for mutual support when we go out on field trips so that when little kids on trail bikes turn to their parents and say "Daddy, why are all those crazy people over there picking up rocks?", we don't feel so bad.

Speaking of field trips, unfortunately both of the planned trips for February fell victim to the weather. March brings us both the Stoddard Wells swap meet, and a trip to Chuckwalla Springs. Stoddard Wells is a great opportunity to pick up rough, often from collectors who were collecting in the "good old times" when diamonds and rubies and nuggets (oh my!) paved the desert. All kidding aside, it is a great place for rough, and that piece of used lapidary equipment that we just can't afford to pass up. Chuckwalla springs is also a good destination. I have seen some very nice material come from the area.

Enough rambling for now. See you in the desert.

*Jerry*

**BE SAFE – BE WELL**

Don Monroe & Linda Behr - Safety Committee

**Gems Are Where You Find Them**

**W**e all like to attend gem shows and go on field trips. We always hope that we are going to find a treasure or, at least, something that will fit into our hobby. Many of us definitely carefully examine the material for sale at club meetings and at lapidary schools where there are many items from other locales.

I hear so many stories from fellow rockhounds about “good stuff” that shows up in strange places. I believe these stories because I have seen some of the finds and even made a couple myself.

A couple of years ago I was crossing the parking lot at William Holland Lapidary School and found a really nice piece of opal rough in the gravel. I do not know how it got there but I am reasonably sure that it originally came from Australia and was accidentally dropped between the classroom building and the campground. Vehicle traffic had scratched it up a bit but it was still very usable. I made a lot of inquiries but was never able to find the former owner.

About ten years ago I was digging up my mother’s flower bed for her. Now this happened at our family farm in Bartow County Georgia in an area where I have found Civil War artifacts and, on rare occasions, a few local minerals such as barite, quartz and hematite. But I found a really nice sapphire crystal of the type that we find in North Carolina but about 150 miles south of where we usually find such gems. I inquired of many local experts and have not found a clue of how that stone wound up in our yard.

I know you are thinking that I am lucky or some sort of expert but that is not the case. About 6 years ago we had a family taking classes at our school and they had two young teenage boys. The boys spent a lot of time exploring our mountains and one day they came in with a small bag of beryl crystals of unusual quality. They never revealed where they found the stones. I think it shows that stones and gems are every where and we just have to look for them.

Many of our safety articles tell about bad things that happen to good people. This article tells about good things that can happen to good people.

*The Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc. Newsletter, Lodestar Jan 2011*

## **The Argo Tunnel**

By Harry Wagoner

In January of 1859 George A. Jackson discovered gold at the confluence of Chicago Creek and Clear Creek near Idaho Springs, Colorado. The creeks and hills around Idaho Springs yielded over \$1,700,000 in gold, worth \$18 to \$35 an ounce at the time. After the creeks were panned out, mines began to open up in the mountain. In less than 3 years from 1859 to 1861 over 13,000 mining claims were filed. Many successful mines were on Seaton Mountain, located between Idaho Springs and Central City. As mines approached 1,000 feet in depth, water and flooding became a problem. The construction of a tunnel under the mines was proposed to provide transportation of the gold ore and drainage for the mines. Samuel Newhouse formed a partnership with Thomas Weir and John Montgomery and they began to raise money for a tunnel project. The tunnel would be named the Argo Tunnel and would be the largest mining project in the world at that time. When completed it would be the longest tunnel in the world then.

The tunnel was started in 1893 and eventually reached a progress rate of one and a half miles per year and was completed in 1910, reaching a length of 4.16 miles. The tunnel was 12 feet in diameter for the first two and one half miles with double tracks and a drainage ditch in the center, with the remaining tunnel being 6 feet in width. The tunnel had a downhill grade of .3% for drainage of water and to provide easy exit of the ore cars. The end of the tunnel is 1,300 feet below the surface with a concrete lined shaft to provide hoisting of the ore to the surface. Electric powered motors (locomotives) delivered 4 ton ore cars to the shaft which hoisted 3 cars at a time up to a 50 ton storage bin where they were dumped. The bin fed the mill, which processed the ore at the surface. In 1943 the Kansas Shaft (mine) had quit pumping water in anticipation of the Argo crew finding the shaft and draining it. The whole Nevadaville area was flooded with water 1,200 feet deep and many of the flooded mines above the Argo were leaking into the tunnel. It was estimated that the water pressure was over 500 p.s.i. when blasting holes were drilled into the rock. On January 19, 1943, about quitting time, a crew of 4 men was setting the last charge of the day to clear obstructions in the tunnel. Something went wrong and the resulting blast let loose a torrent of water that drained most of the mines and killed the crew of 4. The tunnel was never reopened after the accident. It had helped provide employment for thousands of miners in over 600 mines for over 50 years.

*The Cuyuma Agate Explorer 9/10*

## Meet the Quartz Family

**P**apa and Mamma Quartz Crystal belong to a very large family of rocks. They are called the Quartz Crystal Family to distinguish them from Uncle Agate's family and Aunt Opal's family, and a whole raft of cousin Quartzes.

Then too, Mamma Quartz's maiden name was Rock Crystal. They came from Herkimer County, New York, and Papa often called her his little "Herkimer Diamond". She was very lovely - nicely shaped and perfectly clear and sparkling. Papa Quartz was Milky Quartz and, while he was nicely shaped too, he didn't sparkle like Mamma.

Papa and Mamma Quartz had quite a large family. First there was lovely Rose Quartz. She often bemoaned the fact that she was dumpy and didn't have Mamma's nice figure. But she was so sweet and rosy pink that no one cared about her shape. She got her healthy color from eating her Titanium every morning when she was a baby crystal.

Next came Amethyst. She took after Mamma Quartz with her nice shape and sparkling, clear colour, except that Amethyst was the colour of violets. She hadn't much cared for Titanium when she was a baby but she loved Manganese which gave her the lovely lavender hue.

Smoky Quartz was the oldest boy in the family. Mamma Quartz really had a time at breakfast with her babies; each one liked a different food. Smoky wouldn't eat anything but Carbon, so he had a grayish colour.

Little Citrine Quartz started out to look just like her sister Amethyst, but one day in the hot summer she got overheated and her lavender colour turned to a deep yellow. But she didn't care, really, because she was different from the others and still quite pretty.

The Quartz Crystal children had a younger brother whose name was Ferruginous Quartz, but almost everyone called him "Ferry". He was quite a handsome boy with an attractive red colour which Mamma Quartz insisted was because he was such a good child and ate his daily portion of Iron eagerly.

That's just about all of the Quartz Crystal family except the Ghost. He was known as Phantom Crystal and he looked like all the rest of the family except that you could look right through him and see another crystal inside.

The Quartz Crystals were all quite important people: Papa Quartz was content to do just ordinary things but Mamma was a brilliant actress and little Rose, Amethyst and Citrine Quartz Crystal all grew up to be lovely jewels. Smoky and Ferruginous, the boys, took after their father and worked at ordinary jobs. Papa and Mamma Quartz Crystal were certainly very proud of their big family.

*From The Jaspilite via Glacial Drifter 03/82 & Oregon Rockhound 11/82, via The Calgary Lapidary Journal 10/10*

**Field Trip  
Chuckwalla Springs  
March 19-20, 2010**

**T**he March Field Trip is a multi-day adventure to the Chuckwalla Springs area. We will be collecting agates (plume, moss, fortification, and banded), and Jaspers of many colors. Sagenite is found here too. There are also agate filed geodes and amygdales. Plan to arrive on Friday after work to camp at the Graham Pass/ Chuckwalla Springs junction - between Desert Center and Blythe.

**Saturday:** Caravan from camp to collecting sites near the Orocopia Mtns to a fluorspar mine and bloodstone collecting area, then continuing along the old Bradshaw Train and over to Graham Pass Road from the south. A brief stop at the Graham Pass summit to collect at the sagenite area then back to camp. If we are having too much fun we may have to edit some of the Saturday activities.

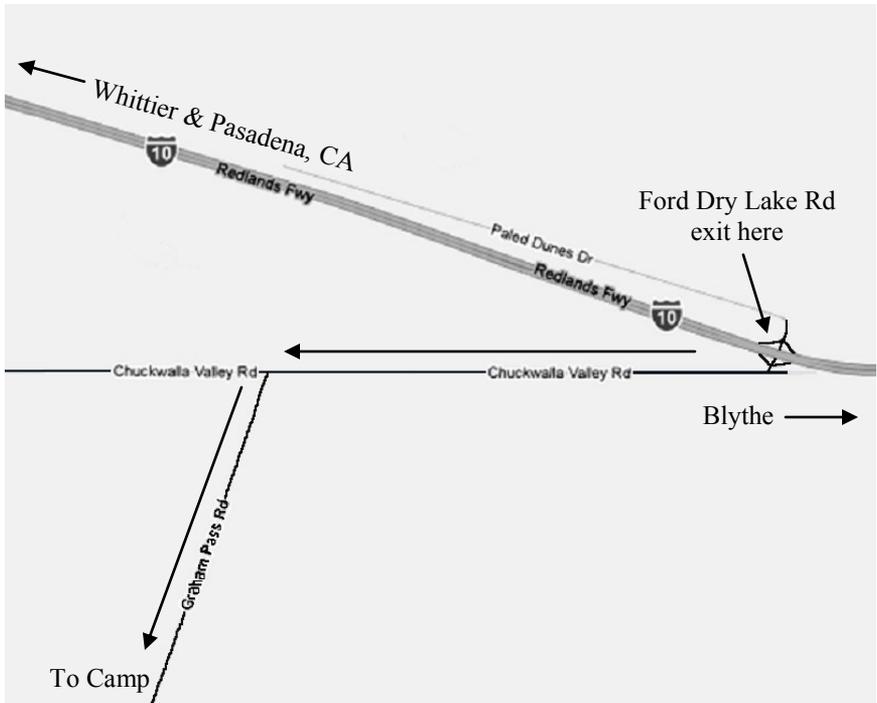
**On Sunday** we will spend the entire day in the Chuckwalla Springs area. This is an all day adventure. Some of us will return home on Sunday afternoon, others will do some further exploring and collecting Monday morning before returning and breaking camp.

The camp will be accessible by RVs and cars, although the last stretch of the road may need to be driven carefully. This will be a dry camp, so bring what you need. Don't forget sunscreen, hats and lots of water. It could be hot during the day and cold at night. Gas and simple supplies are available at Chiriaco Summit. Blythe has anything you could need, including motels (check the discount Desert Winds Motel). We will be having our traditional potluck on Saturday night, so bring something good to share. Telling lies around the campfire is also on the agenda. We will leave the camp every day at 08:30 AM. A high clearance vehicle will be necessary to reach the collecting sites, so we will carpool as required. You will want to take your lunch each day. Standard rock tools should suffice - rock pick, small shovel and spray bottle. You may also want a small sledge and gad to work the crevices.

**Directions:** Take I-10 east to Ford Dry Lake off ramp east of Desert Center. Turn right onto Chuckwalla Road (which parallels the freeway), and go back west for 2.9 miles to the junction with Graham Pass Road. This road has a sign (BLM vertical type). Turn left and go south for 5.9 miles to the junction with Chuckwalla Springs Road (there should be a sign here). Take the right fork and start looking for our camp. Chuckwalla road is paved but is sometimes torn up and rough. Graham Pass road is a good (by desert standards), graded, dirt road. From the Chuckwalla Springs turn off to camp is washboardy. Look for club signs to help you find your way. Without traffic it is about 3 hours from Pasadena/Whittier to the freeway turn off.

Please confirm your attendance in case there are changes. To confirm or for questions about the trip you can contact our trip leader, Joe Goetz (626) 914-5030, or Jay Valle of WGMS at (626) 934 9764.

*Article by Mark Nelson, adapted from PLS Newsletter, 02/10*



## **Cabochon “cutting”**

by Ron Gibbs

**C**abochon “cutting” is actually a misnomer, it should be called cabochon grinding or maybe cabochon shaping.

### **First what are Cabochons?**

The word cabochon comes from the French word *caboché* (meaning *head*.) Typically it is a gemstone with a convex (domed top) and flat bottom, but actually some people cut two sided cabochons with two domed “heads”. *In general it is any gemstone with a domed feature.*

Cabochons usually start their existence from a slab of rock, but they may be shaped directly from a small nodule. The typical process is to mark a rock slab with the desired shape, rough trim it with a small trim saw, and then finish by a series of grinding steps.

The process first removes excess material to form a shape using rough grinding wheels (80 – 220 grit), then using a series of wheels with much finer grits (280 - 600) the shape is refined and the surface is prepared for a polish.

Finally, after all visible scratches are removed, the stone is then polished using one or more polishing wheels with ultra fine powders on a rotating cylindrical pad.

Traditional cabs (short name for cabochon) are round or oval in shape. Beginners usually cut their first cab as an oval. There is a range of “standard sizes” for oval cabochons, and there is a variety of pre-made catalog jewelry that may be purchased within these ranges. Hence cutting a standard size insures access to a wide variety of pre-fabricated jewelry designs for cabochon setting.

As ones skill with metal setting techniques increases, then it is often more fun to cut what are called “freeform” cabochons. When creating a freeform cab it is automatically understood that a custom fitting must be created. And it provides far more freedom in the final design.

Cabochons are nearly always the appropriate cut for most “phenomenal” stones. These are stones that display a cat's-eye or star type of luster, like star-sapphire.

*Via Goldrush Ledger 2/11*

**Tips, Tools & Tricks to Help with Jewelry Projects**

(Posted on LARocks: Forwarded by Hank Cobb)

**F**or any of you folks who do metalwork to complement your lapidary, I'd like to mention my **Yahoo Group** called **BenchTips**. We post some of the best ways to get better quality in your jewelry work, shortcuts to save you time, and ways to modify tools or procedures to save money.

The group's description: In every field the top pros always have their favorite ways of approaching common problems. These bench tips allow them to get quality results in a minimum of time. As a studio jeweler and more recently a classroom instructor I hope to use this list to share tips for jewelry fabrication, goldsmithing, soldering, forging, silversmithing, casting, and many other areas.

Please feel free to share your favorite bench tips as well. With a good dialog we'll all be able to improve our inventory of skills.

If you have any difficulty getting on the Group, please email me:

[Brad90049@yahoo.com](mailto:Brad90049@yahoo.com)

The group is called BenchTips at:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/BenchTips>

It's also on Facebook at:

<http://www.facebook.com/BenchTips>  
(you don't have to join Facebook to see the page)

-Brad Smith

*Via The Green Valley Rocker February 2011*

## **AFMS Code of Ethics**

**A** large measure of the enjoyment of our hobby consists of collecting in the field. For that reason, the members are proud to endorse the following:

- I will respect both private and public property and will do no collecting on privately owned land without permission from the owner.
- I will keep informed on all laws, regulations or rules governing collecting on public lands and will observe them.
- I will, to the best of my ability, ascertain the boundary lines of property on which I plan to collect.
- I will use no firearms or blasting material in collecting areas.
- I will cause no willful damage to property of any kind such as fences, signs, buildings, etc.
- I will leave all gates as found.
- I will build fires only in designated or safe places and will be certain they are completely extinguished before leaving the area.
- I will discard no burning material - matches, cigarettes, etc.
- I will fill all excavation holes which may be dangerous to livestock.
- I will not contaminate wells, creeks, or other water supplies.
- I will cause no willful damage to collecting material and will take home only what I can reasonably use.
- I will practice conservation and undertake to utilize fully and well the materials I have collected and will recycle my surplus for the pleasure and benefit of others.
- I will support the rockhound project H.E.L.P. (Help Eliminate Litter Please) and will leave all collecting areas devoid of litter, regardless of how found.
- I will cooperate with field-trip leaders and those in designated authority in all collecting areas.
- I will report to my club or federation officers, Bureau of Land Management or other authorities, any deposit of petrified wood or other materials on public lands which should be protected for the enjoyment of future generations for public educational and scientific purposes.
- I will appreciate and protect our heritage of natural resources.
- I will observe the "Golden Rule", will use Good Outdoor Manners and will at all times conduct myself in a manner which will add to the stature and Public Image of Rockhounds everywhere.

*Revised July 7, 1999 at the AFMS Annual Meeting*

**May 13-15 - ANDERSON, CA**  
**CFMS SHOW & CONVENTION**  
**"Northern California Treasures"**

Shasta District Fairgrounds - Anderson, CA  
Briggs Street (8 miles south of Redding)  
Exit 677 off Interstate 5 to Highway 273; 2.5 miles to Fairgrounds  
Hours: Fri. & Sat. 9-5; Sun. 10-4  
Show Chairman: Steve Puderbough - [steve@applyvaline.com](mailto:steve@applyvaline.com)  
Website: [www.superiorcal.com](http://www.superiorcal.com) **Forms are on this site**  
Website: [www.shastagemandmineral.com](http://www.shastagemandmineral.com)



**Northern California Treasures**  
May 13, 14, and 15, 2011

**California Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc.**  
**Show and Convention**

Shasta District Fairgrounds  
Briggs St. - Anderson, CA  
8 Miles South of Redding, CA




**Hours:**  
Friday: 9am-5pm  
Saturday: 9am-5pm  
Sunday: 10am-4pm

**Raffle**  
**Speakers**  
**World Class Displays**  
**Silent Auction**  
**Free Demonstrations**

**Adults: \$4.00**  
**Seniors: 65+ \$3.00**  
**Children: 13-18 - \$2.00**  
**Children: 12 and Under - Free**

**Minerals**  
**Fossils**  
**Beads**  
**Gems**  
**Jewelry**  
**Jewelry Supplies**

**Lots of stuff!**  
**Loads of Fun!**

**Come for Lunch and stay through closing!**

Sponsored by California Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc.  
Hosted by:  
Superior California Gem and Mineral Association a combined association of:  
Shasta Gem and Mineral Society, Inc. - Redding, CA. - [www.shastagemandmineral.com](http://www.shastagemandmineral.com)  
Paradise Gem and Mineral Club - Paradise, CA.  
visit us at: [www.superiorcal.com](http://www.superiorcal.com)

**Upcoming CFMS Gem Shows**

**Mar 11-13 Victorville, CA.** Victorville Valley Gem & Mineral Society  
Tailgate at Verde Antique Quarry (Stoddard Well)  
Bell Mountain/Stoddard Well exit from I-15  
Hours: 8-5 daily

**Mar 12-13 SAN MARINO, CA. Pasadena Lapidary Society**  
San Marino Masonic Center, 3130 Huntington Drive  
Hours: Sat. 10-6; Sun. 10-4

**Mar 19-20 Bakersfield, CA.** San Joaquin Valley Lapidary Society  
Kern County Shrine Club  
700 south P. Street (P & Bell Terrace)  
Hours: 9-5 daily

**Mar 17-20 SAN BERNADINO, CA.** Orange Belt Mineral Society Tailgate  
Little League Western Region Headquarters  
6707 Little League Drive  
Hours: Thu 12-5, Fri 9-6, Sat 9-6, Sun 9-3

**Mar 19-20 ESCONDIDO, CA.** Palomar Gem & Mineral Club  
Orfila Vineyards, 13455 San Pasqual Road  
Hours: Sat. 9-5; Sun. 10-4

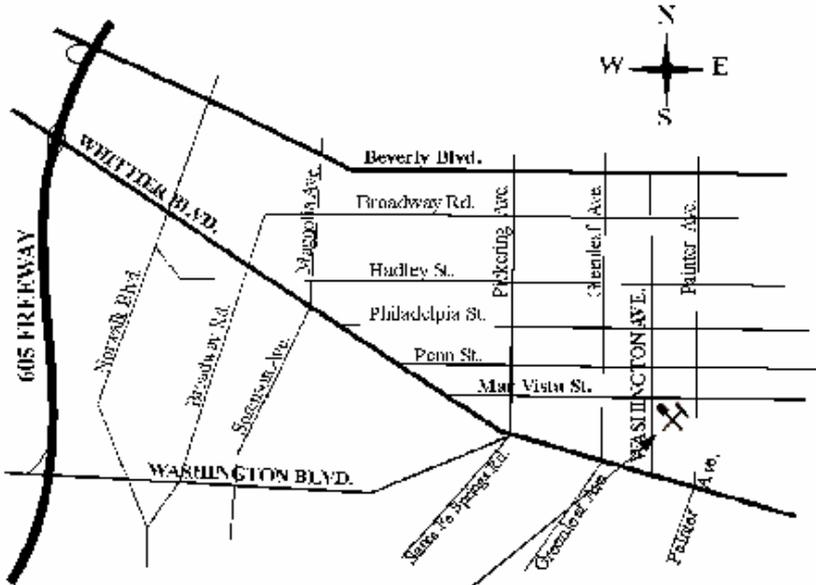
**Mar 26-27 TORRANCE, CA.** South Bay Lapidary & Mineral Society  
Ken Miller Recreational Center, 3341 Torrance Blvd.  
Hours: Sat. 10-5; Sun. 10-4

**Apr 8-10 Vista, CA.** San Diego County Council  
Antique Gas & Steam Engine Museum  
2040 N. Santa Fe Avenue  
Hours: 9-5 daily

**Apr 16-17 NEWBURY PARK, CA.** Conejo Gem & Mineral Club  
Borchard Park Community Center, 190 Reno Road  
Hours: Sat. 9-5; Sun. 10-4:30

**Apr 30 to May 1 ANAHEIM, CA.** Searchers Gem & Mineral Society  
Brookhurst Community Center, 2271 W. Crescent Avenue  
Hours: Sat. 10-5; Sun 10-4:30

**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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**Hacienda Heights, CA 91745**

**Date: March 24, 2011 at 7:30 PM**  
**Location: Whittier Community Center**  
**(See page 4 & 15 for info & map)**