

WHITTIER

ROCKHOUNDER
GEM & MINERAL
SOCIETY

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General Meeting: January 26
"The Benitoite Mine"



These two small cacti were spotted while exploring near Brenda, Arizona.
(They look like a spiny pair of Mr. Potato Heads.)

ROCKHOUNDER

THE PREZ SEZ:

Before saying anything else, I would be remiss in my first President's message of the year if I did not thank our outgoing President, Jerry Turner, and his hard working Board, for what they have done for everyone of us during the past two years. Thanks everyone.

So, here we are! A New Year and a new Board for our Association, sort of. The new year part is absolutely correct. The part about new leadership for the Association might be seen as somewhat misleading when you understand the full context of how our great organization is being managed over time.

There exists a core group of individuals that continue to step up year after year to assume responsibility for ensuring that our Association continues as the vibrant part of our lives that we all want and expect it to be. While I have stepped forward to again serve as our Association's President, I do so knowing that I am supported by a group of additional Board members that are just as dedicated to the health of our Association and continuing the fine work of past Boards as I am. With their support, I know that we can promise you a good, rocking, 2012.

For those of you that may not have yet heard, we made enough money at our October show to maintain our finances at a level that will help us through another year. The show dealer table rental income, raffle ticket sales at the show and monthly General membership meetings, a yard sale here or there, and any other type of fund raiser that we undertake throughout the year, are the activities that finance our ability to operate the Association.

(Continued on page 4)

WGMS General Meeting

Thursday, January 26, 2012

at 7:30 PM

"The Benitoite Mine"

The January program is a DVD "The Benitoite Mine". All the program guide says is that it is "Professionally produced, and describes the history of California's State Gem, the role of Rod Dalles, and Coalinga."

Marcia Goetz

Dues Are (Over) Due!

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.

The Prez Says

(Continued from page 3)

Member participation in any and all such activities is the best way those of you who have not assumed an official role as a Board member, can take to make your contribution to our continuing success.

With all of that just said, let's get this year going with some wonderful camaraderie and great rockhounding!

Art

Victoria Stone -

When man-made is worth as much as natural

By Crazy Cabbers Gina Webb CM

Taken from the August edition of the High County Glemmings newsletter of the Henderson County Gem & Mineral Society

This is a cab I recently cut from this material.

There aren't many de- signer cabochons cut from Victoria Stone that truly showcase the phenomenal patterns and chatoyant character of this material. In fact, there are very few cabochons cut from this material at all, relatively speaking.

The reasons for this are twofold. Number one, there is only a limited supply of this material left in the world for reasons I will address shortly. And, two, much of this material was decompressed hastily and improperly which rendered it useless for any lapidary purposes.



Production of Victoria stone ceased upon the passing of its creator, Japanese scientist Dr. S. Limori, in the 1980's. Yes, it is a lab created mineral and the secret of its formula was lost with his passing.

It is not, however, considered to be a synthetic or simulated gemstone, but rather a re-constructed stone made from a very laborious process using natural raw minerals (quartz, feldspar, magnesite, calcite, fluorspar, etc.). The entire process took months to complete. The final result was an entirely new mineral similar to nephrite jade, but the arrangement of actinolite crystals is quite different. Instead of the crystals interlocking and tying together as they do in jade, they have crystallized into fan- like shapes that provide the chatoyant patterns that characterize this material.

The raw minerals were first heated to extremely high temperatures into a molten magma to which special crystallizers and crystal habit regulators were added in a controlled environment. The magma was then poured into boules and placed under incredibly high pressures, around 2000 pounds of pressure to be more precise, and then cooled over a period of about 35 to 40 days during which time the chatoyant crystals were formed. Upon completion, the boules were sold with specific instructions on how to decompress the material for use in lapidary purposes. It was a difficult and tedious process to decompress the boules properly.

(Continued on page 8)

Editor's Note: The following technique is described in detail for treating opals with Opticon to repair and/or stabilize the stones. In theory, it should work as well for other hard-to-polish or soft stones (dinosaur bone comes to mind).

Treating Fractured Opals

This is an e-mail I received from a good friend and a customer on treating fractured opals.... I cannot personally vouch for the procedure because I have not tried it but he swears by it and I have seen some amazing pictures of opals that he has treated in this manner.

Hey guys, this works!

Here is my procedure on Opticon for opals. This is done without the use of a vacuum machine and the results are very good! First I cut my opals to the desired shape with my opal blade (.006 diamond blade). I also use my saw blade to rough dome my cabs. This is done very slowly. Most people will grind the dome with their first stage of grit. After you have roughed in the stone and it is dry, place the stone or stones in a pint mason jar. It is more cost efficient to do several stones at once.

Fill the jar with Opticon (resin) to just cover all the stones by 1/8-1/4 inch over the stones. Place the jar on a coffee machine burner, like an old Mr. Coffee machine. Turn on the machine like you would if you were making coffee and cover the pint jar with a doubled piece of foil (do not put lid and ring on). Cook the opals for 6-8 hrs. After you are done cooking the opals remove the opals from the heat, take off the foil and pour as much of the Opticon out of the jar as you can, use oven mitts...that jar is mighty hot!!!! After you have gotten the hot resin out, put back on heat for a minute or so. Once you've done this procedure a few times you can empty out the resin pretty fast and don't have to return it to the heat. The whole point is to keep the stones hot.

After you empty the resin, place the lid and ring on the jar and tighten. Set aside for 8 hrs. When it cools the lid will pop and create its own vacuum. I usually start in the morning and then let the jar cool overnight. After it has set for 8hrs or more, open up the jar and remove the opals one by one, cleaning off the resin with a paper towel. Use gloves (surgical or latex) when doing this. You do not want to get this stuff on your hands!!!! Get

another pint jar out for the hardener, ring and lid also. Place opals on a piece of foil and take hardener bottle and apply it to the stones (don't use a whole lot but the stones have to be wet). Get a pair of chopsticks or shishka-bob sticks and roll the stones so every part is wet with hardener. Take the jar and run it under as hot of water as your sink puts out, (pre heating it. Don't get the inside wet). When the jar is fairly warm, place the opals (on the foil) down in the jar. I normally shape the foil first to fit down into the jar. Place the jar on the coffee machine burner and cook 2hrs, covering it with foil. About 1 hr into the cooking, get your chopsticks and roll the stones in the hardener at least once. It is very important that you do not breath the fumes; hold your breath when you do this.

After about 2 hrs., remove from heat and place lid and tighten ring on jar. Set aside for 6-8 hrs., the lid should pop or suck down on this also. After it has set 6-8 hrs., open up jar and remove stones (with gloves on) and wipe off any remaining hardener. Let stones sit for a day or until they don't feel sticky. Dop up your stones and proceed to polish them. Keep in mind; the Opticon only penetrates so far into the stone, 1/16-1/8 inch maybe. So the less gouges in the stone the better. I have yet to replace a ring on either jar, they keep sealing (10 times so far on both rings).

Opticon is an optical grade polymer resin, clearest of clear. It can save a stone that normally would have to be re-cut or used for chip inlay...crushed. There is nothing wrong with using Opticon but you need to state that the opal has been treated with it. Paul Downing has a good view on morals of the use of this product. Some people will treat their high-end stones with Opticon to stabilize the stone from possible damage in the future. Opticon will protect or save you from future grief. Opals are so awesome and I if you can keep one whole or save a fractured stone all the better. You just need to state the fact that you treated the stone. It doesn't harm or affect the beauty of the opal and can only be detected under a microscope and special lights. The stone will "fluoresce" or glow a reddish color under magnification, otherwise it is undetectable by the human eye, even with a loupe. This procedure does not make the stones invincible but they will last a whole lot longer, be less fragile, and much more stable. P.S. I don't treat every opal I cut, just problem ones.

Hopelessly addicted
Jeff Norman

From The Opal Express, 11/11

**WGMS Field Trip - Quartzsite
January 18 thru 22, 2012**

If you like going to gem & mineral shows then Quartzsite is the tailgate you've been waiting for. It is a collection of rockhound oriented shows featuring hundreds of dealers with products for whatever your take is on our hobby. Slabs and rough from all over the world for lapidarians, beads and bead stuff for beaders, minerals for mineral collectors... you get the picture. It is a rockhound wonderland.

The local Quartzsite rock club, The Roadrunners, lead field trips each day of the Pow-Wow to various local collecting areas (the field trip schedule is listed on the opposite page). If those trips don't tickle your fancy then come on some of ours 'cause we lead field trips too.

At the time of this printing, I had not received any info on where we will camp this year or who is going. Usually, the WGMS/PLS groups have camped somewhere in Scaddam Wash (east of Quartzsite).

If you are planning on making this trip and want to find where other like-minded members camping are at, you need to contact Joe Goetz at (626) 914-5030 to receive the latest information.

Jay Valle

Victoria Stone

(Continued from page 5)

Victoria Stone has a hardness of 5.5 to 6.0 on the Moh's scale, a specific gravity of 3.02, and a refractive index of 1.62. It is said to have been created in 20 different colors, but evidence of only 15 has been found. Produced from 1960 to the 1980's, they are - green, sky blue, reddish purple, yellow green, blue green, sky indigo, chocolate, yellow, deep indigo, white, quiet green, quiet yellow, quiet blue, grey, and black.

There was also a transparent, or translucent, variety of Victoria Stone that was created for faceting purposes. It was cooled down in one day so that it wouldn't crystallize to form chatoyant patterns. It came in 8 different colors, including sapphire blue, emerald green, amethyst purple, ruby red, topaz, aquamarine, garnet, and peridot green.

(Continued on page 10)

QIA Pow Wow 2012

Starts Wednesday, Jan. 18 thru Sunday, Jan. 22, 2012

We have 460 vendor spaces outside and 70 vendor spaces in the main hall. Dealers come from all over the world to participate in the Pow Wow. All vendors merchandize must be 75% gem, mineral or jewelry related. There is free admission and free parking with two shuttles running throughout the day from the parking area to the main hall. Home style cooked meals are served each day. If you want a quick lunch, you can stop by the sandwich window. You can view 52 showcases of beautiful gems, minerals and jewelry. In the Hobby Room you will see many beautiful displays of other hobbies such as painting, quilting, beading, wire wrap and much more. Pow Wow is the main fundraiser for the QIA

QIA Pow Wow Field Trips 2012

<u>Date</u>	<u>Mineral</u>	<u>Departure</u>	<u>Miles*</u>
1/18	Brown Banded Rhyolite	East	38
1/18	Red Jasper Hematite	North	41
1/19	Wiley's Well Geodes	East	125
1/19	Green Banded Rhyolite	North	26
1/20	Pastilite	East	100
1/20	Bacon Rock	North	24
1/21	Yellow/Red Jasper	North	42
1/21	Birds Eye Rhyolite	South	57
1/22	Desert Roses	East	62
1/22	Earp Purple Jasper/Agate	North	96

- Milage is round trip. All trips leave at 9:00am sharp.
- Nonmembers are required to buy \$2 temporary membership for insurance purposes.
- Bring pick/hammer, bag or pail,water, lunch & chairs.

For more information contact :

Quartzsite Roadrunner Gem & Mineral Club
Phone (928) 927-6363

<http://www.qiaaz.org>

Victoria Stone

(Continued from page 8)

Many have spent thousands of dollars trying to reproduce this material, but none have succeeded. So, alas, Dr. Limori's secret formula remains a mystery. Not even his son could reproduce it. All that remains in the world is what was produced and purchased 30 to 50 some years ago (that which was decompressed properly, that is).

Hence, its value remains steady and rising, even in this economy.

In Japan, Victoria Stone is considered to be a sacred mineral and purported to bless that which it touches. I'm not sure about that, but I do love working with this material. I find it to be quite easy to cut and polish. It is a relatively soft stone, not as soft as, say, Onyx, but enough so that the 80 grit grinding step may be skipped altogether when rough shaping a cabochon. In fact, I would suggest that due to its coarse grit that it be skipped, but that's a personal call.

A good starting point is the 120 or 180 grit wheel, although you may start at the 100 grit grinder if so desired, but be careful as this material grinds away fairly quickly. Once a decent rough shape is acquired, the remaining steps are usually a breeze. Next, I proceed to the 220 grit grinder to smooth out what will be the final shape, also making sure I have a well rounded dome at this point, before beginning with the pre-polishers.

Pre-polishing starts with the 320 grit belt, moving on to the 400 grit belt, and ending with the use of the 600 grit belt. It should take no more than about a minute or so at each pre-polishing step. After pre-polishing, I then use a 3000 diamond grit polishing belt, taking my time at this step to achieve maximum desired results.

A final polishing option is the use of Linde A polishing powder on a special buff, but this step is not really required for this material. I usually have a very nice high sheen after finishing with the 3000 diamond grit. I've read that polishing Victoria Stone can also be done using a dry leather buff with tin oxide, but I haven't tried that method.

I hope this has been informative. I really enjoyed researching this material further and learned even more this time around. When you get the opportunity, please take the time to stop by the lapidary workshop in the back of the Mineral and Lapidary Museum and check out for yourself what we're working on or, better yet, come work in the shop yourself. The supervisors are very helpful and newcomers are always welcome.

Via The Goldrush Ledger 10/11

The La Brea Tar Pits, Los Angeles, California

By Ed Kiker

I recently was able to visit the La Brea Tar Pits in Los Angeles, California. It used to be away out of town but Los Angeles grew up around it. In the early days it was dug up and mined in a huge open pit for its asphalt for paving roads. Some of the tar was distilled for fuel oil.

The preserved bones of thousands of Pleistocene animals were found in it and sent to museums around the world. These pits were what a paleontologist calls a “predator trap.” An animal such as a rabbit or mammoth might come to drink what it thinks is water, only to get caught in the tar and begin to sink. A rabbit’s screams might attract a hawk which would lock its talons onto the rabbit, then gets its wings caught in the tar, then they would both disappear into the oily ooze. The cries of a mammoth would attract dire wolves and saber tooth cats which would try to attack it, only to get caught and sucked down. Literally thousands of animals were caught in this way, sometimes whole packs of wolves at a time.

Later the area around it was graded and re-vegetated to approximate its original condition, more or less. Today the tar pits appear to be a lake of water several hundred square yards in size, but the water is just a sheen on the top of new tar which continues to bubble up along with methane gas. The tar is not hot, just slightly warm. The tar pits are surrounded by a fence so no people or their pets can get caught in the tar. Next to the tar pits is the Page Museum, with hundreds of tar-stained skulls on display, entire skeletons, and even beetles. They have a great Museum Store which can be accessed on-line.

The day I visited they had just mowed the grass in the front lawn, and just a few feet from the museum door tar was bubbling right up in the lawn. I asked the fellow at the information desk if he might have a container of some kind so I could collect some of the tar for my mineral collection. I was not the first to ask because he was ready for me with a screw-top container, hand-cleaner, and hand-towels. He made me feel very welcome. I went outside and scooped as much as I could into the container without getting much cut grass. It was very thick and sludgy. When I got home I warmed it up and poured it into a glass salad dressing cruet with a glass stopper and put it in a display case in my living room right next to the cruet of Deep Horizon oil spill oil.

When I proudly showed my girlfriend my La Brea Tar Pits tar and Deep Horizon oil she declared them unfit for a living room and suggested I put them in the garage. I will miss her.

(Continued on page 13)

Honor Roll of Presidents

Lest we forget who has been at the helm in the past, here is the Honor Roll of previous and current Whittier Gem & Mineral Society Presidents. You can see that many of these "doers" are still active members, and some have done the job more than once. Joe Goetz has been *The Prez* in three different decades, Jerry Turner in two.

The President leads the way and (hopefully) the Club follows.

1952	Ken Tharpe	1983	Bob Dietl
1953	George Cyrog	1984	Pat Maggs
1954	Blanche Hutcheson	1985	Vern Cliffe
1955	Bill Burns	1986	Ken Manning
1956	Donna Patrick	1987	Joe Goetz
1957	Sol Stern	1988	Jim Bennett
1958	Sylvia Cliffe	1989	Mike Maneth
1959	Jim Berry	1990	Mike Maneth
1960	Eunice Berry	1991	Mike Maneth
1961	Dora Stern	1992	Sandie Fender
1962	Marian Hubbard	1993	Sandie Fender
1963	Bruce Buell	1994	Joe Goetz
1964	Del Jones	1995	Les Roy
1965	Frank Hewlett	1996	Les Roy
1966	Mick Wingett	1997	Les Roy
1967	Art Logue	1998	Jerry Turner
1968	Bill Burns	1999	Isabella Burns
1969	Muriel Berg	2000	Jay Valle
1970	Lefty Stroh	2001	Jay Valle
1971	George Merton	2002	Art Ragazzi
1972	Floyd Berg	2003	Art Ragazzi
1973	Margery Horsfall	2004	James LaBorde
1974	Lefty Stroh	2005	James LaBorde
1975	Bob Carlisle	2006	Joe Goetz
1976	F.E. Sleep	2007	Joe Goetz
1977	F.E. Sleep	2008	Joe Goetz
1978	Norm Donaldson	2009	Joe Goetz
1979	Muriel Berg	2010	Jerry Turner
1980	John Isenbarger	2011	Jerry Turner
1981	Jerry Turner	2012	Art Ragazzi
1982	Francis Gilbert		

The La Brea Tar Pits

(Continued from page 11)

Here are some items you may like to see on this topic:

1. DVD: Prehistoric Animals of the Tar Pits, on Amazon.com
2. DVD: La Brea Tar Pits, Los Angeles, on Amazon.com
3. The Tar Pits Slime Goopy Fun Prehistoric Super Sale, on Amazon.com
4. Book: Monsters Of Old Los Angeles - The Prehistoric Animals Of The La Brea Tar Pits [Hardcover], on Amazon.com
5. Official website of the Page Museum at La Brea tar Pits:
<http://www.tarpits.org/>

From the Huntsville, Alabama Gem & Mineral Society's newsletter "Rocket City Rocks & Gems", 1/11

The WGMS Rockhounder has Gone Digital!

Yes it is true. Your monthly WGMS Newsletter is now available by e-mail as a .PDF file. This change will allow us to do much more with the newsletter than we have been able to do with the paper copy. Photographs and images will be photo not printer quality and we can include a bunch more in each issue.

We have to have your e-mail address in order to send it to you, though. If you want, members can continue to receive the bulletin in the mail like you always have. Or you can save the Club some money by opting out of the snail mail and go electronic. You get to choose.

If you wish to receive the WGMS Rockhounder Newsletter as an e-mail attachment, contact me at [**res19pnb@verizon.net**](mailto:res19pnb@verizon.net) and tell me what address to send it to.

Thanks.

Jay Valle
WGMS Newsletter Editor

Upcoming CFMS Gem Shows

- Jan 27-28** **REDLANDS, CA.** Mineralogical Society of Southern California/Micro-Mineralogists
Pacific Micromount Conference
San Bernardino County Museum
2024 Orange Tree Drive
Hours: Fri. 4 - 10; Sat. 8 -10
*Field Trip on Sunday, January 29
Website: www.mineralsocal.org/micro/index.html
- Feb 17-26** **INDIO, CA.** San Gorgonio Mineral & Gem Society
Gem & Mineral Building, Bldg #1, Arabia Street
Hours: 10 -10 daily
Email: bert67@verizon.net
- Mar 5-6** **ARCADIA, CA.** Monrovia Rockhounds, Inc.
LA County Arboretum, 301 Baldwin Avenue
Hours: 9 - 4:30 daily
Website: www.Moroks.com
- Mar 3-4** **VENTURA, CA.** Ventura Gem & Mineral Society
Ventura County Fairgrounds. 10 W. Harbor Blvd.
Hours: Sat 10 - 5; Sun 10 - 4
Website: www.vgms.org
- Apr 28-29** **LANCASTER, CA.** Antelope Gem & Mineral Society
Lancaster High School. 44701 - 32nd Street West
Hours: 9 - 5 daily
Website: www.avgem.weebly.com
- May 5-6** **ANAHEIM, CA.** Searchers Gem & Mineral Society
Brookhurst Community Center, 2271 W. Crescent Avenue
Hours: Sat. 10 - 5; Sun 10 - 4:30
Website: www.searchersrocks.org
- June 30 -** **CULVER CITY, CA,** Culver City Rock & Mineral Club
July 1 Culver City Veterans Memorial Auditorium
4117 Overland Avenue (Overland & Culver)
Hours: Sat 10 - 6; Sun 10 - 5
Website: www.culvercityrocks.org

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



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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



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: January 26, 2011 at 7:30 PM
Location: Whittier Community Center
(See page 4 & 15 for info & map)