WHITTIER ROCKHOUNDER GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY

DECEMBER 2012

December 15, 2012
WGMS Annual Christmas Party
(See page 4 for details)

ROCKHOUNDER

THE PREZ SEZ:

As we all say, "time flies," and it definitely does at this time of year. I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving, and is looking forward to a great holiday season. Ginger and I were in Egypt on Thanksgiving day. There was no turkey or ham in sight, let alone any of the other trimmings we traditionally enjoy on that day. We had to celebrate with a toast with a glass of wine and Italian food. Since the "revolution," as Egyptians now mark time, pre- and post-revolution, alcohol is becoming harder and harder to get, so we were grateful for that glass of wine.

Because I was out of the Country I was not able to attend the November field trip to the Club Claim. I was happy to hear that we had some new members in attendance. I hope we made them feel right at home with our group.

As you will find in more detail elsewhere in this issue of the newsletter, our event in December is our Annual Holiday Party. This will substitute for our regular General Membership meeting of the month. We will be conducting one business item, the installation of our club officers for 2013.

With the year drawing to a close, I look forward to working with the Board and every one of you to make next year one filled with great opportunities for wonderful rockhounding and camaraderie. My excitement is already beginning to grow in anticipation of the 46th Annual Q.I.A. Pow Wow, January 23-27, 2013, in Quartzsite, Arizona.

See you at the Annual Holiday Party, and around the campfire.

Art

WGMS General Meeting

Thursday, December 15, 2012

WGMS Christmas Party!!!

Jerry & Kathy Turner's

Social Hour: 5:30 - 6:30 PM

Dinner: 6:30 PM

If it is December then the meeting must be a **POTLUCK DINNER** and **CHRISTMAS PARTY**. Members and friends of the WGMS will be coming together at Jerry & Kathy Turner's house starting at 5:30 PM for a "Happy Hour" social time and eating at about 6:30 PM. Their home will be festively ornamented and prepared for their (hopefully) not yet holidayed-out guests. We will dine with friends and fellow members, celebrating the holiday season and the end of yet another year in the life of the Whittier Gem & Mineral Society.

By the way, if you want to participate in the annual holiday gift exchange, the rule is bring one gift for each person in your group. The value should be under $10 and ideally be rock related (not a requirement). Participation is, as always, optional. However, if you don't bring a gift you will not receive a gift.

This event is RSVP so please contact Kathy Turner at:

(562) 696-3222

to let her know how many to plan for and to discuss what to bring.

M a r c i a

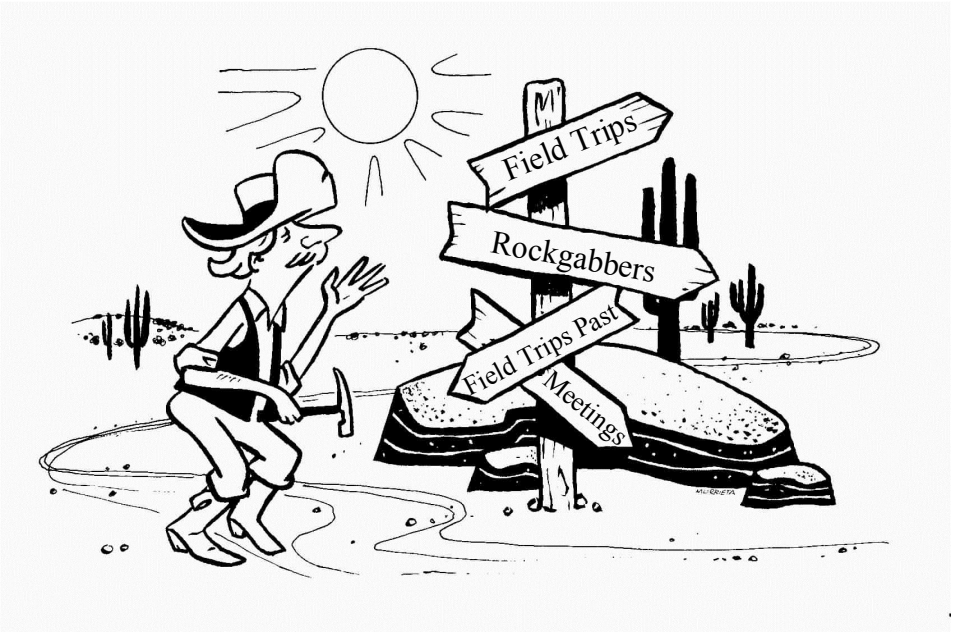
Dues Are Due!

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 2012 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.



WGMS
3rd ANNUAL TRIVIA
A YEAR OF THE "ROCKHOUNDER" IN REVIEW

This year, the November General Me a few people were on hand to enjo contest. So for your enjoyment, her page 13.

WGMS Trivia

1. The native Indians would travel 60 miles by canoe to San Clemente Island for the purpose of:

a. Enjoying cocktails in soapstone goblets
b. Collecting soapstone
c. Volleyball tournaments

2. Our WGMS President is:

a. Jerry Turner
b. Art Ragazzi
c. Art Turner

3. Soapstone has the feel of:

a. Soap
b. Cat's fur

4. Soapstone helped the Scandinavians enter the bronze age when they discovered it could be carved into molds for:

a. Jello salad
b. Jewelry findings
c. Knife blades and spearheads

5. Soapstone is an easy stone to fashion because of the softness. However, it does have a grain or stress lines which can cause it to:

a. Break
b. Bubble like soap

6. What manmade reconstructed stone is made from a process of melt-

ing quartz, feldspar, magnesite, calcite and fluorspar together and placed under 2,000 pounds of pressure?

a. Conglomerate
b. YAG
c. Victoria Stone

7. Perfectly round or symmetrical pearls are common?

a. Yes
b. No

8. A shimmering rainbow that seems to hover above a pearl's surface is referred to as.

a. Shine
b. Orient
c. Gleam

9. Septarian Nodules come from Utah

a. Yes
b. No

10. The Rockgabbers report in the newsletter is to report on:

a. What news people are talking about in that month
b. The project that is going to be or had been done that month
c. Listening to stories of rocks

11. Last year a full ring was made from 1 (one) singular diamond was unveiled. It was valued at $70 million.

a. True
b. False

12. Our October meeting program featured Stan McCall who showed us how he makes his:

a. Intarsia
b. Beads
c. Beer

(Continued on page 8)

T R I V I A

(C o n t i n u e d) f r o m p a g e

13. Victoria Stone was invented by:

a. Queen Victoria
b. Dr. S. Limori
c. Mr. Stone

14. The field trip to the Himalayan Tourmaline dig starts with:

a. Filling buckets with water to throw on the dirt pile
b. Kneeling to pray for a really great stone
c. Filling bucket with dirt to sift

15. Smithsonite is a mineral named in honor of James Smithson, founder of the Smithsonite Institution:

a. True
b. False

16. June's field trip to Cerro Gordo takes you to an elevation of:

a. 3,000
b. 6,250
c. 8,500

17. On the Castle Butte fieldtrip Marcia led us astray trying to find opalized wood:

a. True
b. False
c. What you find is where you find it

18. Moonstone is a member of the feldspar family. It is only found in the color white because our moon is white.

a. True
b. False

19. The most desired color combinations of Kentucky agates is:

a. Orange and yellow
b. Gray and pitch black

c. Pitch black and deep red

20. The Nakhlite rock is really an alien visitor to our planet:

a. True
b. False

21. The official California State Symbol of California Prehistory is an obsidian "chipped stone bear" designed by California Indians 7,000 to 8,000 years ago:

a. True
b. False

22. An asterism is:

a. A star in the Milky Way when it twinkles in a certain way
b. A vision problem
c. A star on a stone caused by fibers in the gem

23. Alexandrite, June's gem stone, is a phenomenal stone because:

a. It glitters
b. It is rare
c. It is a color change stone

24. Fire agate gets its fire from:

a. Limonite
b. Hot embers in the stone
c. A glow that comes from magic

25. Cerro Gordo is almost void of gems and minerals.

a. True
b. False

26. In February Jay and Don went on a scouting trip and visited an important location. That location was:

` a. A positive energy site for alien landings
b. The Roadman Mountains Petroglyphs
c. Area 51

Vandalism Solved by Geological Detectives"
By Dr. Charles E. Miller, Jr.

The Industrial Development Department of the Penn Central Transportation Co. submitted two rock samples to the PA Geological Survey with the following problem. New automobiles from Detroit were arriving in New Jersey with smashed windows, dents, and scars resulting from rocks thrown at the passing railroad cars. The problem was whether, from an examination of the rocks found in the automobiles, the Survey could identify the location of the vandalism, so that concentrated policing procedures could be initiated. Obviously, the whole length of track between Michigan and New Jersey could not be policed. In addition, there were two routes that could have been used to transport the automobiles: one through New York and one through Pennsylvania, making any policing job even more difficult.

Along those two railroad routes there is an incredible variety of rock types and many of them can be found at several different places along the two routes. Here though, the Survey had a bit of luck. The rocks that caused the damage were examined microscopically in the Pennsylvania Geological Survey laboratory. Both were found to be a coarse-grained (pegmatitic) gneiss containing feldspar, quartz, biotite mica, chlorite, and slender crystals, probably of apatite. These minerals and the rock texture provided the critical clue that the rock specimens ere from a metamorphic terrain.

The mineralogy of the rock samples permitted the search to be narrowed to southeastern New York and Pennsylvania. These areas, known as the Reading Prong in New York and the Piedmont in Pennsylvania, both contain metamorphic rocks. Could the Survey narrow the problem area further? They thought so. The rock type of the thrown samples occurs along the Penn Central Railroad in Pennsylvania, but there it usually has less biotite and almost never any apatite. On the other hand, rocks containing these minerals are common in a limited area of southeastern New York. Therefore, the Survey suggested that the most likely source of the thrown rocks would be along a stretch of tracks in the vicinity of West Point, north of New York City. This was confirmed by Penn Central's own geologists in an independent study of only the northern route.

The results came in. Policing action by the Penn Central Railroad was initiated in the West Point area. Sure enough, several of the culprits were spotted there in action, and appropriate measures were taken by the railroad. Case closed.

Serpentine
by Don Huber, McPherson Gem & Mineral Club

July was an anniversary of sorts for two rocks I took to our club's July meeting. For it was exactly 60 years ago that I picked the two rocks up at South Pass, Wyoming, while on a field trip. Both rocks are serpentine, but two different varieties. One is the massive dark green variety, the other a light yellow variety called retinalite with traces of fibrous chrysotile.

The name comes from the Latin – serpentines "resembling a serpent" from the mottled shades of green it often has, or perhaps its name comes from the fact it often has wavy streaks in it that might resemble a serpent, Green may be the most common color, but it can be white, brownish yellow, red, or black.

Serpentine is actually the name for a group of minerals, and for the group the hardness varies from about 2 to 5. The specific gravity varies from 2.2 to 2.6. Any rock we might find that has a green or greenish-gray color with a waxy or greasy feel might be serpentine or might have some serpentine in it. It's harder than talc and softer than jade. Most serpentine has a composition close to the ideal formula of Mg3Si205(OH)4, a basic magnesium silicate, but the magnesium can be replaced by other elements, giving us a number of varieties. Some are rich in iron, others in aluminum, manganese, lithium, nickel or zinc. One of the world's most important sources of nickel is in New Caledonia where the nickel occurs in a serpentine.

There are three main serpentine minerals that have the above formula. They are antigorite, chrysotile and lizardite. Chrysotile we also know as asbestos. Because these three all share about the same chemical formula, they are called polymorphs. Polymorphs are minerals with the same chemical composition but different crystal structure. Other polymorphs we're familiar with are diamond and graphite - both composed of carbon -- and pyrite and marcasite -- both iron sulfide. The reason the different varieties of serpentine differ in form is complicated, but is thought to be due to minor impurities, variations in temperature and pressure, differences in water content, or the kinds of minerals present during formation. Any or all may be involved.

Great serpentine exposures occur in California's Coast Ranges and are identified by the shiny, greenish, slick-sided surfaces in roadcuts. In 1965 California's legislature designated serpentine as the "Official State Rock." This was at a time when much asbestos was being mined there. But in October 2009 the Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization began a campaign called "Drop the

(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 11)

Rock" to remove this designation. (See Los Angeles Times article of July 2, 2010). They were not wanting a rock that can cause disease to be their state rock. This past May a bill was passed by a committee that would strip serpentine of its state-rock title. The bill is now being debated by California's governing bodies.

We're all familiar with asbestos and how getting rid of it in our homes, schools and other buildings has been a major undertaking in the past several years. William Nesse in his textbook, Introduction to Mineralogy-2000, argues that much of this has been a waste of time and money. He doesn't dispute the health risks associated with chronic occupational exposure to asbestos fibers, but he doesn't think this risk can be carried in linear fashion to the low level exposure that might be found in homes, schools, and other buildings where asbestos fibers are part of ceiling tiles, electrical fixtures or insulation. He says, in fact, that we are continuously exposed to low levels of natural mineral fibers in the air and water as the result of normal weathering processes of rocks.

He also thinks that it's extremely unlikely that human biological defenses would not have developed some level of protection in the last millions of years. Actually it's the serpentine variety crocidolite that poses the greater health risk and not chrysotile, and it's chrysotile that is used in the large majority of products containing asbestos in North America.

Serpentine is considered a beautiful rock by many. It is fairly soft, takes a nice polish, and has been used for thousands of years to fashion vases, vessels and other carvings. It's also used for building facing. Chrysotile has many industrial applications.

References:

- *Frederick Pough, Peterson Field Gu*
- *John Sinkankas, Mineralogy*
- *William D. Nesse, Introduction to*
- *AGI, Dictionary of Geological Term*
- *Wikipedia*
- *Charles Sorrcll, Golden Book of Ro*
- *Edward Dana, Textbook of Mineralog*
- *Answers.com/serpentine*
- *Mayo Clinic.com*

From The Post Rock, 8/2010 via Goldrush Ledger 12-11

WGMS
3rd ANNUAL TRIVIA
A YEAR OF THE "ROCKHOUNDER" IN REVIEW

Answers

1. b. Collecting soapstone (Oct)
2. b. Art Ragazzi (Jan)
3. a. Soap (Nov)
4. c. Knife blades and spearheads (Oct)
5. a. Break (Nov)
6. c. Victoria Stone (Jan)
7. b. No (Feb)
8. b. Orient (Feb)
9. a. Yes (May)
10. b. The project that is going to be done or had been done that month (Mar)
11. a. True (Apr)
12. b. Beads (Oct)
13. b. Dr. S. Limori (Jan)
14. c. Filling bucket with dirt to sift (May)
15. a. True (Jun)
16. c. 8,500 (Jun)
17. a. True (May)
18. b. False (Jun)
19. c. Pitch black and deep red (Sept)
20. a. True (Sept)
21. a. True (Nov)
22. c. A star on a stone caused by fibers in the gem (Aug)
23. c. It is a color change stone (Aug)
24. a. Limonite (Aug)
25. b. False (Jun)
26. b. The Roadman Mountains Petroglyphs (Mar)

The Digital Rockhounder

This Newsletter is available by e-mail as a full-color PDF. If you wish to receive the WGMS Rockhounder directly to your computer, send an e-mail to **res19pnb@verizon.net.**

Editor

Upcoming CFMS Gem Shows

Dec 1-2 **BARSTOW, CA.** Mojave Desert Gem & Mineral Society
Cora Harper Community Center
841 South Barstow Road (North of I-15)
Hours: 10 - 5 daily
Website: www.mdgms.org

Dec 7-9 **SAN BERNARDINO, CA.** Orange Belt Mineralogical Society
Western Regional Little League Ball Park
6707 Little League Drive
Hours: 9 am to Dusk daily
Website: http://OBMSrocks.yolasite.com

Feb 15-24 **INDIO, CA.** San Gorgonio Mineral & Gem Society
Riverside County Fair & National Date Festival
46-530 Arabia Street
Hours: 10 - 10 daily

Mar 2-3 **ARCADIA, CA.** Monrovia Rockhounds
The Arboretum & Botanic Gardens
301 Baldwin Avenue (Ayers Hall)
Hours: 9:00 - 4:30 daily
Website: www.Moroks.com

Mar 2-3 **VENTURA, CA.** Ventura Gem & Mineral Society
Ventura County Fairgrounds, 10 W. Harbor Blvd.
Hours: Sat 10 - 5; Sun 10 - 4
Website: www.vgms.org

Mar 9-10 **SAN MARINO, CA.** Pasadena Lapidary Society
San Marino Masonic Center, 3130 Huntington Drive
Hours: Sat 10 - 6, Sun 10 - 5

Mar 23-24 **TORRANCE, CA.** South Bay Lapidary & Mineral Society
Ken Miller Recreation Center, 3341 Torrance Blvd.
Hours: Sat 10 - 5; Sun 10 - 4
Website: www.palosverdes.com/sblap

May 3-5 **BISHOP, CA.** Lone Pine Gem & Mineral Society
Bishop Fairgrounds, Sierra Street & Fair Drive
Hours: Fri 6 - 9; Sat. 9:30-5; Sun 9:30-3

WGMS MEETING LOCATION!
Whittier Community Center
7 6 3 W a shington Ave. Whittier

Editor: Jay Valle, 1421 Latchford Avenue, Hacienda Heights, CA 91745
Home: (626) 934-9764; E-Mail: wrongwaybart@yahoo.com

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

Affiliations

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