

WHITTIER

**ROCKHOUNDER**  
GEM & MINERAL  
SOCIETY

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**General Meeting:**  
**“ABALONE, AN ORGANIC GEMSTONE”**  
**Thursday, October 22 at 7:30 PM**



*Does this building make my butt look big?*  
(Seen on a field trip)

# ROCKHOUNDER

## THE PREZ SEZ:

**W**ell, guess what? The show is here again and it got here so fast. Now it is imperative to get started on the display you are doing for the show, it's your time to shine and to brag.

There is a lot of sweat that goes into putting on the show. Your help is needed in all phases from putting in your display and if you are physically able to help move things into the hall and setting up. During the show moving around perhaps to let someone else have a break. This helps a lot, than just sitting and only doing one thing throughout the show. And of course on Sunday is the somewhat organized mayhem of tear down. And finally on Monday putting all of the equipment to bed.

So you can take my word on it, everyone is needed to put on a great show and you being there during all phases is greatly appreciated.

Rah-rah-sis-boom-ba, Yeah WGMS!!!

*Joe Goetz*

**WGMS General Meeting  
Thursday, October 22, 2015 at 7:30 PM**

**“ABALONE, AN ORGANIC GEMSTONE”**

**L**u Hernandez will give a presentation at our October 22 meeting. Lu is the owner of Abalone King and he is very knowledgeable about his business, will talk to us about the dangers of cutting abalone and how to do it safely.

*Marcia*

**Whittier Show Update**

**T**he show committee is working to make this year's show a success and our best success will be the attendance of our members to help out.

David Martinez will be in charge of the kitchen and we again need donations of: soft drinks (brand names only), water, commercially pre-packed cupcakes, and cookies. There will be a kitchen sign up schedule at the September meeting.

We also need items for the silent auction. It does not have to be rock related...someone may just be looking for a bargain on an item you are tired of looking at. Of course rocks will be the main focus.

Raffle prizes are needed. Art Ragazzi will be accepting them at the show.

I will bring a case sign up sheet at the September meeting. You are encouraged to show off the items you have made, collected, or purchased.

We look forward to seeing you at 3 PM on Friday, October 16 for set up and helping out at the show.

*Marcia*

**Show Schedule:**

Friday 16th:	Set-up	3:00-8:00 PM
Saturday 17th:	Doors open	8:00 AM
	Show Opens for Business	10:00 AM
	Show Closes for the day	5:00 PM
Sunday 18th:	Doors open	9:00 AM
	Show Opens for Business	10:00 AM
	Show Ends	5:00 PM
	Tear Down	5:00-9:00 PM

**And the Nominations Are...**

The Nominating Committee met and came up with the following list of Club Officers for the 2016-17 term.

- President: OPEN!
- 1st Vice Pres. Frank Winn
- 2nd Vice Pres Art Ragazzi
- Treasurer Jay Valle
- Secretary Yvonne Morton
- Federation Dir Tony Fender

As you can see we have a solid slate of Officers for the next two years with one minor exception... We have NO volunteers as yet for the most important position of them all, PRESIDENT.

We will be accepting nominations for any Officer position, including but not limited to President at the October Meeting after the Show. See you there.

**Minerals– Managing the Fear**

By Mark Nelson, EMT, Safety Chair

Via The CFMS Newsletter—September 2015 edition

**A**t a recent field trip to collect samples of Serpentine, the California State Rock, one new member expressed a reluctance to attend because "they contain asbestos". In 2009, California State Senator Gloria Romero (24th district in Los Angeles County), introduced a bill that would remove serpentine as the state rock and lithologic emblem and would leave the state rock unspecified. Her reason, as stated in the bill, is because "serpentine contains the deadly mineral chrysotile asbestos, a known carcinogen, exposure to which increases the risk of cancer mesothelioma" - despite the fact that there is no such mineral as *chrysotile asbestos*.

Professor Gordon Brown, the Chair of the Stanford University of Geological & Environmental Sciences, specializes in environmental geochemistry and aqueous and surface geochemistry. His study of the top rocks and minerals which can have deadly consequences to humans include Cinnabar, Galena, Pyrite, Fluorite, Quartz, Chrysotile, K-Feldspar, Phenacite, Erionite, Hydroxyapatite, and Crocidolite.

Professor Brown's study further explains about Hydroxyapatite, stating that this Apatite variation can be a serious health threat because it can form deposits in human heart valves and arteries - despite the beneficial aspect that it is the main mineral of which dental enamel and dentin are composed and are essential in dental and joint replacements. He also explains that "Quartz in fine particulate form has been known since biblical times to cause respiratory effects (silicosis or silicotuberculosis). Workers in the 'dusty trades' - mining, sand blasting, quarrying, metallurgy, construction - suffer from these diseases. There is also concern about the potential of silica in other areas, including lung cancer and other cancers, kidney disease, and immunological problems." He acknowledges that Quartz cutting tools and weapons (producing

sharp edges), semiconductor (Silicon Valley) are very useful in our lives. Should we ban the use of the beautiful Apatite Gemstone and beads? Or avoid handling quartz crystals? Let's manage the fear! Let's use knowledge and common sense and take a view similar to that of using tobacco: If you crush it, roll it, and smoke it you have a greater than normal chance of developing a health is-sue.

Back to Serpentine. First, "serpentine" refers to a group of minerals, not a rock. The term "serpentine" is the proper term for the rock that is mostly made up of one or more of the serpentine group minerals. The term "asbestos" does not have a unique association with ANY particular mineral. It is derived from the term that de-scribes the fibrous nature of a mineral material. Varieties of asbestos from a completely separate group of minerals, called the amphibole group, are considered to be the most dangerous form. The health danger of asbestos is when people breathe the powdered form into their lungs - and not just once or twice, but chronically over many years. As KQUD Public Media For Northern California contributor, Brian Ro-mans, puts it - "walking on, being near, handling, or even eating a piece of serpentinite might be harmful is if someone hurled a piece at you. To reiterate, one must inhale the powdered version into their lungs for it to be harmful."

As reported by THE VUG.com Senator Romero's Bill, SB624, was introduced to address issues involving "solid waste: garbage and refuse disposal district: governing board membership". Two months later she revised the bill to refer to the California Integrated Waste Management Board. A month later the bill was apparently hi-jacked by special interest groups (probably deep-pocket litigation advocates) to remove Serpentine as The State Rock of California be-cause of "its association with an increased risk of the cancer mesothelioma." After an uproar of response by intelligent Californians Senator Romero allowed it to die in committee. What Senator Romero's bill did was to attempt to

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**FIELD TRIP to WGMS Honey Onyx Claim  
November 7-8, 2015**



The field trip will be to the Whittier Gem & Mineral Society's Honey Onyx Claim, located just east of Barstow. The honey onyx is still there but it is hard rock mining. If you have any or have seen it, you know that it is well worth the effort involved. Usually we use our Claim as a base of operations for daily field trips to the surrounding collecting areas. The access to the camp area requires unlocking a combination lock and opening a locked gate. The combination is 4321. After you pass through the gate, you must lock it behind you (this is very important). Follow the "P/W" signs to the camp.

**YOU WILL FIND A COMBINATION LOCK ON THE GATE.  
THE COMBINATION IS 4321.**

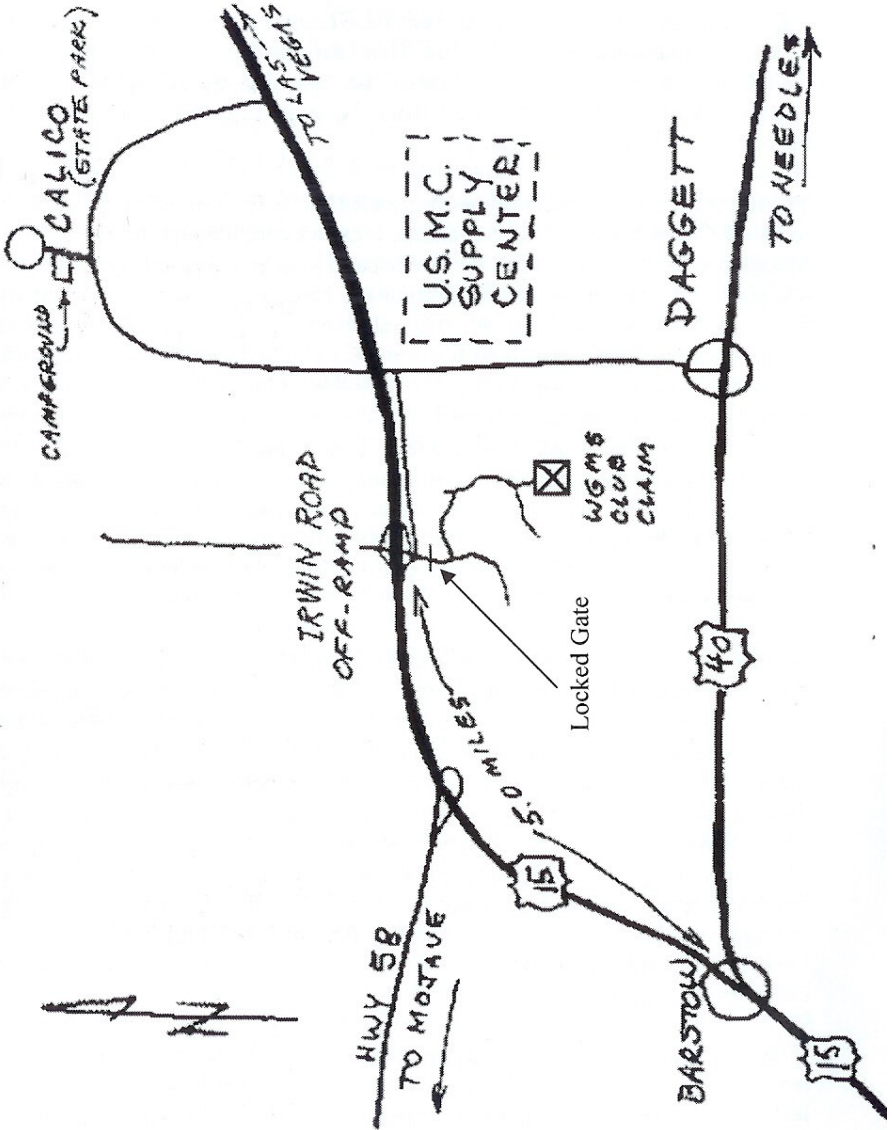
There will be guided field trips on both Saturday and Sunday and we will leave from the Oak Tree Inn (each day at 8:00-8:30 AM. To get to the Oak Tree Inn take the Ghost Town Rd exit off of the 15 freeway, turn right, turn right again and go past the gas station and you will see the motel on the right. Saturday evening we will meet at Peggy Sue's Restaurant for dinner.

**Materials which may be collected:** honey onyx, red moss agate, petrified wood and palm root, algae agate, and other unnamed agate, jasp-agates, jaspers, fossils, etc.

**Tools:** rock pick and bag for general collecting: sledges, wedges, chisels, pry bars, etc. for those rockhounds who really want to get serious with the honey onyx.

**Supplies:** Barstow is very close. For beginning rockhounds (without campers, trailers, etc.) you may wish to stay in a motel in town and drive to the Club Claim each morning – many of the regular folk on the trip stay at the Oak Tree Inn (760-254-1148 ext. 400), the address is considered in Yermo.

**Contact: Joe Goetz at (626) 260-7239** for questions or further information.





## **Minerals– Managing the Fear**

*(Continued from page 7)*

use the “boogeyman” of asbestosis to frighten the other lawmakers.

In the same way, because Uranium, Platinum, Granite, Feldspar, Mica, Zircon, Malachite and the Rare Earth Elements are mildly radioactive some teachers will not allow it in a classroom for fear of the reaction of parents (don’t mention the 0.1 uSv of radiation emitted by a banana). The “fear Flag” gets raised, no one wants to get it near them and our students get a kind of reverse education. In our hobby we must be more educated, but some of us still focus on the vague threat and ignore the science and common sense.

My father served as a machinist mate in the U. S. Navy during the last years of WWII in the Pacific. He remembered the sailors passing the tedious days by hitting the insulation around the steam pipes and watching the clouds of dust that billowed into the air from the pulverized pipe insulation (asbestos is an excellent heat insulator). In 1998 he died of mesothelioma. Should the slight and potential hazards of a rock or mineral keep us from enjoying their beauty and from turning them into works of art? Of course not. Neither should it keep us from collecting and enjoying our State Rock!

My safety Advice for handling Serpentine is, as with any rock or mineral ,“after handling rocks don’t swallow the rocks; don’t trip over Serpentine while collecting it; watch for ants, spiders and other critters when poking around rocks; never grind, inhale, smoke, or snort rock dust and - use water and a mask when grinding or polishing all rocks!

Sources for this article include: KQUD Public Media For Northern California \_ Brian Romans, ([science.kqed.org/quest/2010/08/05/learn-the-facts-about-serpentine](http://science.kqed.org/quest/2010/08/05/learn-the-facts-about-serpentine)); Professor Gordon Brown of Stanford University ([emsi.stanford.edu/doc/MostDangerous-Minerals.doc](http://emsi.stanford.edu/doc/MostDangerous-Minerals.doc)) Vug ([www.the-vug.com/vug/article284](http://www.the-vug.com/vug/article284)).

## **Mineral Cleaning for Amateurs - How to Use Oxalic Acid**

*By John H. Betts*

**A**nthing that has the word "acid" sounds ominous. But oxalic acid is easy to find, use and the safest for the home. In fact it is found in many vegetables including spinach. It is used to dissolve the iron oxide (brown) stain on all minerals. Specimens collected at Phoenixville, Ellenville, Case Quarry, NH smoky quartz and many others clean up beautifully with oxalic acid. Zeolites do not respond as well, so you should test beforehand on small specimens to see how they react.

To make this as simple as possible I will give a step by step guide to its use. Do not take any shortcuts or make substitutions.

Purchase a one pound box of Oxalic Acid (OA) powder at your local hardware store in the paint department or at a paint store. It is used as wood bleach and will be labeled as such. The most common brand is Rainbow.

Fill a plastic one gallon container 3/4 full with **distilled** water. Pour in the OA crystals and stir for five minutes. Be careful not to inhale any powder when adding the crystals. Once the OA is dissolved top off the container to a full gallon. Label the container and put out of reach of children or pets.

When you are ready to use it place your specimens in a plastic container and add enough OA solution to cover. Set aside for

*(Continued on page 12)*

**Mineral Cleaning for Amateurs -**

*(Continued from page 11)*

several days.

Heat speeds up the reaction, as does agitation. If you have a hot plate and can set up outdoors or in an area with good ventilation the repeat step 4 but heat the solution to bath water hot (110° f.). Never Boil! You will find that an hour in hot solution will usually do the trick. Best of all is an ultrasonic cleaner with built in heater. Sometimes only 30 minutes is necessary. But you should not put the OA directly into the stainless steel basin. Make a double boiler type of arrangement by partially filling the ultrasonic cleaner basin with water. Then place your specimens and OA solution in a plastic container or heavy duty plastic bag that is suspended in the water.

You can reuse the solution over and over. As it dissolves more and more iron it will get darker often taking on a green color. After it gets really dark I would discard it and mix a new batch.

Safety is important. OA solution is highly toxic. It can be absorbed through the skin and builds up in your organs cumulatively. Same goes for the fumes, which is why you never boil the solution and always have proper ventilation when using the heated solution. Be careful not to spill the solution on porcelain and keep away from food preparation surfaces.

After the iron color has disappeared then you can remove the specimens (with gloves on) and wash under running water for three hours. NOTE: If you have hard water in your area, it is smart to use distilled water for the first few rinsings to prevent the

formation of insoluble oxydates that will stain the specimen yellow when dry.

Then soak in clean water for a day changing the water as often as possible. The best formula for washing minerals is:

- Change the water every minute for an hour.
- Change the water every hour for a day.
- Change the water every day for a month.

The best way is to place the rocks to be washed in a 5 gallon bucket. Drill a small hole in the bottom, then fill with water and adjust the flow of the water trickling in to equal the flow out through the small hole. Acid is heavier than water. It will settle to the bottom and flow out through the hole. The trickle in ensures that all specimens are covered with water.

In spite of the fuss, this is the best all around method of cleaning minerals. I keep a large five gallon bucket with tight fitting lid filled and ready, I drop specimens in as I collect them. It always works and the large volume does not exhaust quickly. Mastering this technique will provide an important tool in your mineral cleaning and preparation arsenal.

This article and others can be found at Mr. Betts web site:

<http://www.johnbetts-fineminerals.com>

*Via Agate Explorer 9/15*

**Upcoming CFMS Gem Shows**

**Oct 10-11 TRONA, CA.** Searles Lake Gem & Mineral Society  
SLG&MS Show Building, 13337 Main Street  
Hours: Sat 7 - 5; Sun 7 - 4  
Website: [www1.iwvisp.com/tronagemclub](http://www1.iwvisp.com/tronagemclub) Show Pages

**Oct 11 FALLBROOK, CA.** Fallbrook Gem & Mineral Facility  
123 West Alvarado Street  
Hours: 9 - 4  
Website: [www.fgms.org](http://www.fgms.org)

**Oct 17 WEST HILLS, CA.** Woodland Hills Rock Chippers  
First United Methodist Church, 22700 Sherman Way  
Hours: 10 - 5  
Website: [www.rockchippers.org](http://www.rockchippers.org) Show Page

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**Oct 17-18 WHITTIER, CA.** Whittier Gem & Mineral Society  
**Whittier Community Center**  
**7630 Washington Avenue**  
**Hours: 10 - 5 daily**

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**Nov 7-8 ANAHEIM, CA.** American Opal Society  
The Phoenix Club, 1340 South Sanderson Avenue  
Hours: Sat 10 - 6; Sun 10 - 5  
Website: [www.opalsociety.org/](http://www.opalsociety.org/)

**Nov 7-8 OXNARD, CA.** Oxnard Gem & Mineral Society  
Oxnard Performing Arts Center, 800 Hobson Way  
Hours: Sat. 10 - 5; Sun. 10 - 4  
Website: [www.oxnardgem.com](http://www.oxnardgem.com) Show Page

**Nov 7-8 RIDGECREST, CA.** Indian Wells Gem & Min Soc  
Desert Empire Fairgrounds  
520 South Richmond Road  
Hours: 8 - 5 daily

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



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

**Affiliations**



California Federation of Mineralogical Societies  
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**Meeting Date: October 22, 2015**  
**Location: Whittier Community Center**  
**(See page 4 for information)**