

# ROCKHOUND RAMBLINGS

MAY 1, 2010

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PASADENA LAPIDARY SOCIETY



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Spring is a time of new growth and rebirth. And the intense brilliant green of the Emerald, May's birthstone, is as refreshing to the eyes as a spring garden after a rain. Within it's depths are often tiny fractures or inclusions, which the French call "jardin," or garden, because of their resemblance to foliage. The name, as we know it now, is believed to come from an ancient Persian word translated to Latin as "smaragdus." Eventually, over time, this corrupted to "emerald."

The ancient Romans associated this gemstone with fertility and rebirth, and dedicated it to Venus, the goddess of love and beauty.

Emperor Nero supposedly watched gladiator fights through a large transparent emerald as he found the color to be calming.

The Ancient Egyptians were known to engrave Emeralds with the symbol for foliage to represent eternal youth, and to bury these jewels with their dead. They mined Emeralds in the eastern desert region 2,000 years before Cleopatra's birth, braving extreme heat, scorpions and snakes to search for the beautiful crystals. During Cleopatra's reign this was her favorite gem and she claimed the Emerald mines as her own.

..... Continued on Page 7 .....



## President's Message



*Well, spring is here with wonderful weather for the field trips!*

*Our club has some new members and I wish to welcome them to our society. I*

*encourage you to join the fun of field trips and the monthly workshop.*

*We have some of the best teachers of the lapidary arts anywhere in the greater Los Angeles area. I want to thank all the members that keep this club running smoothly and so much fun.*

*..... Drew Wilson*

## Membership Dues Revision

Members will vote at the May meeting to establish individual member dues at \$20. A second adult member at the same household, will be \$15. Junior members (under 18) will be \$10. Third and further additional members at the same household will be \$10 each.

## May General Meeting

### Door Prize Drawing

Sylvia Cliffe announces that the MAIN PRIZE at the May meeting will be the winner's choice of a slab of tiger eye OR a slab of Crazy Lace agate from Mexico.

Other prizes will be a thick "round" of petrified limb from the Blue Forest, Wyoming; Polka Dot agate from Richardson's Ranch, Oregon; brecciated jasper from Arizona; Flame Agate from Mexico; White Sagenite Agate from Arizona;

Chartreuse Chrysoprase from Australia; and sagenite agate from Freddie's Ranch, Nipomo, CA. **Almost ALL** of the prizes are either in short supply or no longer available - except from private collections.

### Program

On May 18<sup>th</sup>, 1980 Mount St. Helens erupted with a fury that few people expected. The devastation to the mountain habitat was enormous. Nature has since healed itself and the mountain is starting to grow

again. Sandie and Tony Fender visited the mountain both before the eruption and numerous times since. They have chronicled the beauty of this majestic lady prior to 1980, the vastness of the devastation that occurred, and the way this mountain has recovered over the years. On this 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the eruption, they will present their video "The Eruption of Mount St. Helens".

Don't miss it!

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**Newsletter Articles** or corrections should be sent to the editor: **Mark Nelson**, 1475 Paseo Maravilla, San Dimas 91773. (909) 592-1322 or to [mnelsonair@aol.com](mailto:mnelsonair@aol.com)

## Membership and Meeting Locations

**Membership** is \$17 per calendar year and includes one copy per family of the monthly club newsletter. Renewals are due by the December General Meeting. Mail membership checks to the address on page 8.

**Board Meetings** are held at 7:30pm on the first Wednesday of the month at the former IndyMac Bank on the northeast corner of Santa Anita and Foothill in Arcadia. All PLS members are welcome to attend.

**General Meetings** are held on the third Wednesday of the month at 7:30pm at the Sierra Madre Masonic Center, 33 E. Sierra Madre Blvd, Sierra Madre. Guests are welcome!

**Field Trips** are scheduled each month. Refer to the newsletter for weekend and location.

**Workshops** are offered to all members - normally on the first Sunday of each month. Refer to the

announcement in the newsletter for the hours. Location is 252 Bella Vista in Pasadena.

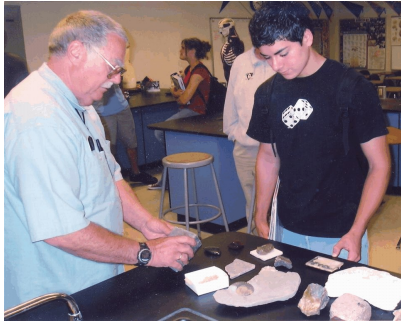
Workshops and field trips are for adult members and children with parental supervision. Eye protection and closed-toe shoes are mandatory for all participants.

**The Annual Show** is held the second weekend of March at the Masonic Hall, 3130 Huntington Dr San Marino.



## Ed's Corner

### EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH



Ed Imlay at local schools

**Ed Imlay's** presentation was well received by the students of Carver School. Many of them visited the annual show in March and the club received a check as a donation from the school.

If you know of a class that would like a presentation from Ed, please contact him at [edimlay@hotmail.com](mailto:edimlay@hotmail.com).

## DISPLAY TABLE

### NEW FORMAT COMING

Beginning with the June bulletin Ed will be commenting on the displays presented and recognizing those members in this space in the newsletter. Please bring interesting rocks, gems or jewelry for the May meeting. You can be creative in the display and lighting.

This is also an opportunity to bring an unknown rock, fossil or mineral for identification by other members. Place a small sign with "What Is It ?" next to your piece.

## THE CARAT

**DID YOU KNOW:** The word *carat* is derived from the Greek *kerátion*, "fruit of the carob", via Arabic *qīrāa* and Italian *carato*. Carob seeds were used as weights on precision scales because of their reputation for having a uniform weight. (However, a 2006 study by Lindsay Turnbull and others found this to not be the case – carob seeds have as much variation in their weights as other seeds!) This was not the only reason. It is said that in order to keep regional buyers and sellers of gold honest, a potential customer could retrieve their own carob seeds on their way to the market, to check the tolerances of the seeds used by the merchant. If this precaution was not taken, the potential customer would be at the mercy of "2 sets of carob seeds". One set of "heavier" carob seeds would be used when buying from a customer (making the seller's gold appear to be less). Another, lighter set of carob seeds would be used when the merchant wanted to sell to a customer.

In the distant past, different countries each had their own carat, roughly equivalent to a carob seed. In the mid-16th century the Carat or Karat was adopted as a measure of gold purity - roughly equivalent to the Roman *siliqua*. As a measure of diamond weight, from 1575, the Greek measure was the equivalent of the Roman *siliqua*, which was 1/24 of a golden *solidus* of Emperor Constantine; but was likely never used to measure the weight for gold.

In the USA the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has legislated and standardized the karat markings used within its boundaries for almost 7 decades now. Under these regulations, items 10 karat or greater are to be stamped with either "K" or "Kt." Decimal markings are also an option under the CFTC regulations (always with a "K" in the U.S. and never a "C") depending upon the use of various soldering requirements when setting stones, mounting crowns, or creating prongs.

## MAY WORKSHOP

*On April 7, we held our monthly workshop. The day was beautiful and pleasant. We had 16 members who attended to work on their projects. It was exciting to have new members that came for their first time. The workshop went well, and, everyone in attendance helped clean up and helped to break down the workshop. See the calendar for the next workshop. Thanks everyone,*

*Drew Wilson / Workshop Chairmen*



## Field Trips



### Memorial Day Weekend

One of our most popular weekend field trips is to the beautiful Owens Valley. This trip will take advantage of Memorial Day Holiday weekend from May 29-31.

As your field trip leader, I promise a fun field trip for the individual or family - including a return to the great crystal-collecting site at Crystal Ridge. We will also collect ammonite fossil casts in Union Wash. Paul Wendling has volunteered to demonstrate how to separate the fossils from the matrix. The field trip team and I are "fielding" the options of a visit The Haystack and collect epidote and beryl specimens, collecting apache tears, exploring the Tungsten Hills where good garnet specimens may be collected. One tantalizing possibility is to a little-known petrified wood collecting site. There are many collecting places to choose and it should be a great trip.



The campsite is the Glacier View Campground Diaz Lake, located one-half mile north of Big Pine, CA on Highway 395. The campground includes showers, 39 campsites - 9 with water and electrical hook-ups are available. Camping spaces are available for tents and larger RV's. No dump station available. Rates for dry camping is \$12.00 per night and \$17 per night for a space with hook-ups. They do not accept reservations, so folks are advised to arrive as early as possible - even consider coming in on Thursday night.

**MOON TRIVIA** - If you are travelling to the field trip camp on Thursday, the 27th, you will enjoy the full moon lighting up the majestic Sierra Nevada mountains. In our country this moon is variously known as the Planting Moon or Milk Moon.

If you are inclined to motel camp you had better make a reservation ASAP. This weekend is Bishop Mule Days and motels fill up quickly. As the Bishop motels fill the overflow will stay in Big Pine or even Independence. As of April 25th there were a few available at the Starlight, Big Pine and Bristlecone Manor Motels in Big Pine and at Ray's Den Motel 26 miles south in Independence (\$85 inc tax and breakfast). Web Sites with motel listings are: <http://local.yahoo.com/CA/Big+Pine/Travel+Lodging/Hotels+Lodging/Hotels+Motels> for Big Pine motels, and <http://www.independence-ca.com/lodging> for motels in Independence. Bishop is only 15 miles north and they have a lot of motels, subject to availability.

The plan is for all of us to meet Saturday morning (May 29) at 8:30am at the entrance to the Glacier View Campground. Hope to see you there!

..... Somewhere in California going the wrong way ..... *Joe Goetz*

**Directions:** Take I-15 or CA 14 north from the L.A. Basin to U.S. 395 north. Continue along this historic route until you get to Big Pine. Watch for the campground on your left as you pass Big Pine. To add to your enjoyment, buy or rent the books: *Geology Underfoot in Southern California* (Sharp/ Glazner) and *Why Stop? A Guide to California Roadside Monuments* (Johnson).

Members (photo at right) had a fine time collecting tourmaline at the Himalaya and Blue Lady Mines at the April Field Trip.

See Navarro's Creations (page 7) to put your tourmalines or hers into a gold setting.





## ROCK & MINERAL TERMINOLOGY - PART THREE

**brittle** - Form of tenacity which describes a mineral that gets hammered and results in a fine powder or small crumbs. Minerals that are not brittle are referred as Nonbrittle minerals. Brittle minerals leave a fine powder if scratched, which is the way to test a mineral to see if it is brittle

**cabochon** - Gem or stone without facets that is highly polished and has smooth, rounded edges.

**calcite (group)** - Group of minerals belonging to the carbonate group that are isomorphous with one another and have the same properties, such as that they all crystallize in the trigonal sect of the hexagonal system, and most commonly form rhombohedrons and scalenohedrons.

**caliche** - A white soil horizon consisting of calcium carbonate, typical of arid and semi-arid areas. Brief heavy rains dissolve calcium carbonate in the upper layers of soil and transport it downward; the rainwater then evaporates rapidly, leaving the calcium carbonate to form a new, solid layer of soil.

**cameo** - Gem with a design or figure carved out of the stone, and raised above the background layer

**carbonates (group)** - Group of minerals that contain one or more metallic elements plus the carbonate radical (CO<sub>3</sub>). Most are lightly colored and transparent when pure. All carbonates are soft, brittle, and effervesce when exposed to warm hydrochloric acid. The carbonates are divided into Calcite Group and Aragonite Group. The Nitrates and Borates are sometimes considered a category of the carbonates.

**cats eye** - A mineral with dense inclusions of tiny, parallel, slender, fibers that may cause it

to exhibit chatoyancy (an iridescent luster). The most notable cat's eye mineral is Chrysoberyl Cat's Eye, which is known simply as Cat's Eye. Other cat's eye minerals are termed by their respective names, such as a *cat's eye Quartz* is known as "Quartz Cat's Eye".

**cavity** - Hollow area in rock (sometimes called a *vug*) that develops because of some form of stress. Many cavities are lined with crystals.

**cementation** - The *diagenetic* process by which sediment grains are bound together by *precipitated* minerals originally dissolved during the chemical weathering of preexisting rocks.

**chert** - A member of a group of *sedimentary* rocks that consist primarily of microscopic silica crystals. Chert may be either organic or inorganic, but the most common forms are inorganic.

**clast** - Fragment of rock or mineral broken off from a large piece.

### LOCAL ROCK AND GEM SHOWS:

**1-2--ANAHEIM:** 51st annual show, "Natural Treasures of Planet Earth"; Searchers Gem & Mineral Society; Brookhurst Community Center, 2271 W. Crescent Ave.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4:30; free admission

**7-9--COSTA MESA:** Show, "Gem Faire"; Gem Faire Inc.; OC Fair & Event Center/Bldg. 10, 88 Fair Dr.; Fri. 12-7, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$5 weekend pass

**14-16--POMONA:** Spring show, "West Coast Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show"; Martin Zinn Expositions LLC; the Fairplex in Pomona, 1101 W. McKinley Ave.; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$5; 110 wholesale and retail dealers

**16--SAN BERNARDINO:** Show, "Rings & Things Bead-Tour"; Rings & Things; Hilton San Bernardino, The Inland Ballroom, 285 E. Hospitality Ln.; Sun. 10-2; free admission; gemstones, bead strands, wholesale prices, findings, stringing supplies

**21-23--SANTA BARBARA** Show, "Gem Faire"; Gem Faire Inc.; Earl Warren Showgrounds/Exhibit hall, 3400 Calle Real; Fri. 12-7, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$5 weekend pass



## FARRIN O'CONNOR DESIGN

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### You Might Be a Rockhound If

- The city sends you a letter informing you a landfill permit is required to put any more rocks in the back yard.
- UPS has a regular pickup and delivery schedule for your house.
- You can debate for hours on the differences between spectrolite and labradorite.
- You shouted "Obsidian!" to a theater full of moviegoers while watching the Shawshank Redemption..
- Your children have names like Rocky, Jewel, and Beryl.



**Emerald Continued ...** She often wore lavish Emerald jewelry, and it is said that she bestowed visiting dignitaries with large Emeralds carved with her likeness when they departed Egypt.

In the sixteenth century, the Spanish Conquistadors were amazed to find the native people wearing Emeralds larger and more magnificent than any they had ever seen. Legend has it that Hernando Cortes, the conqueror of Mexico, tried to bring huge chunks of Emerald that he took from the Aztecs back home with him. However, one of his ships was shipwrecked, and delicately carved Emeralds in the shape of flowers and fish and other rare Emeralds, including an Emerald the size of a man's palm, became lost forever.

Although the natives attempted to hide their Emerald mines, the Spaniards soon discovered and conquered most of them. But it took twenty years before they found the abundant mining operation held by the Muzo Indians, and another thirty years to overtake this aggressive tribe. The Muzo mine was in the area known today as Colombia, and it remains the source of the most prized Emerald specimens. Other sources of Emeralds are Brazil, Zimbabwe, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Madagascar, Nigeria, and Russia.

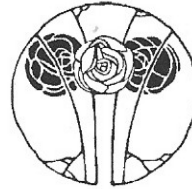
The Emerald is a member of the beryl family of minerals. The green crystals grow slowly within metamorphic rocks and are restricted in size by the rock, making large Emeralds rare and costly. Although this gemstone is relatively hard and durable, it must be protected from blows because the inclusions found within make it susceptible to breaking.

Some people believe that wearing an Emerald brings wisdom, growth, and patience. And, as any couple in a long-term relationship would agree, all of these qualities are essential for a successful and lasting love. This may explain why a gift of Emerald for an anniversary -- or anytime -- is considered symbolic of love and fidelity.

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### Emeralds In Ancient Texts

“And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald”. Revelation 4:3

The ancient writings of Veda, the sacred text of Hinduism, testifies to Emerald as being the “gem of good luck” and the “gem that improves one's well-being”.

The Islamic texts talk of heaven's garden as carpeted with emeralds.

# MAY 2010

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2 Work Shop	3	4 National Teacher's Day	5 Board Meeting	6	7	8
9 HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19 Meeting & Program	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27 	28	29 Field Trip Owens Valley
30 Field Trip Owens Valley	31 Field Trip 					

**May  
2010**

**The Pasadena Lapidary Society, Inc  
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1475 Paseo Maravilla  
San Dimas, CA 91773-3908**

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Pasadena Lapidary Society is affiliated with the California and American Federations of Mineralogical Societies.