

# The Rock Slab News

OCTOBER 2008 VOLUME 45 ISSUE 10

The Purpose of the Searchers Gem & Mineral Society  
*By-Laws, Article 1, Sec. 2*

This society was formed for the purpose of banding together a group of congenial persons for the purpose of studying mineralogy and the earth sciences by means of association with other mineralogical societies and with their members; presentation of public exhibitions, lectures, and similar programs; field trips for exploration, study and collecting of specimens; the encouragement of interest among young people and the fostering of interest in mineralogy and the lapidary arts; the procurement and maintenance of collections of minerals, mineral products and related pictures, writings and other information thereof; and all other means which are appropriate to the accomplishment of the primary objectives above set forth.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Keith Droste

Well, another year of rocks and Searchers is coming close to ending. Hard to believe that the holidays are just around the corner. Searchers has had a great year so far and will end with a big smile at our annual Christmas party. If you haven't made your reservation, you can make them on our website: <http://www.searchersrocks.org>. Select "Meeting Programs" on the left of our home page and scroll down to December meeting and follow the instructions. Should be a great affair! The room only seats 65 people so get your reservations in early. That about does it for this message, so let's all get out to the October meeting and enjoy "An Account of Rock Hounding" by Herb Beckman. Should be another special night.

## OCTOBER PROGRAM

By Walter Mroch

The October Program will be "An Account of Rockhounding" presented to us by Herb Beckman who is a longtime Searcher member and our talented and knowledgeable workshop coordinator.

## SUNSHINE REPORT

By Beth Pelfrey

Longtime member Nancy Norlund spoke with Walter Mroch recently. Her cancer is persistent and requires an aggressive treatment to begin next week. Those of you who know Nancy remember how much fun we had at the annual shows, at the meetings and what a hoot she, Jerry and Trona were on field trips. Send some cheerful notes her way!

Nancy Norlund  
21212 Banff Lane  
Huntington Beach, CA 92646-6806  
(714) 960-6957

## BULLETIN

At the November meeting there will be discussion and voting on the proposed dues increase.

**Happy Birthday to all those Searchers' members who celebrate their birthdays in September!!!**

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Check our website for unexpected changes in schedule!  
[www.searchersrocks.org](http://www.searchersrocks.org)

**General Meetings:** 7 PM, 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month,  
 Jan - Nov

**Board Meetings:** 7PM, Thurs. after general meeting,  
 Jan - Nov

**Workshop:** Thursday, 6 – 10 PM, free wire-wrap class.  
 Saturday, 3 – 7 PM Free silver-smithing class 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays (schedule varies).

**No workshops:** Nov 23 & 25.

**Location:** Anaheim Downtown Community Center  
 250 East Center St.  
 Anaheim, CA 92805

**Mailing Address:** Searchers Gem & Mineral Society, Inc.  
 P.O Box 3492  
 Anaheim, CA 92803

**Website:** [www.searchersrocks.org](http://www.searchersrocks.org)

**Membership Dues:** Individual \$20  
 Couple \$25  
 Junior (17 & under) \$2  
 Valid Jan.1-Dec.31,not prorated

**Bulletin:** Submissions due 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of the month via e-mail to: editor@searchersrocks.org.  
 Bulletin distributed 1<sup>st</sup> week of each month. Mail exchange bulletins to the editors:  
 Kathy Clark  
 18661 Silver Maple Way  
 N. Tustin, CA 92705-2144

**Charter Date:** April 20, 1958

**Affiliations:**

- California Federation of Mineralogical Societies
- American Federation of Mineralogical Societies

## SEARCHERS BOARD

### Officers

President	Keith Droste	714/563-4754
1 <sup>st</sup> V.P. (Programs)	Walter Mroch	714/826-2132
2 <sup>nd</sup> V.P. (Field Trips)	Clarke Benich	714/639-9927
Director	Steve Duncan	714/724-7102
Secretary	Kathy Clark	714/639-9927
Treasurer	Pat Lynch	909/393-2186
Federation Delegate	Virgil Talbott	714/871-7900

### Committee Chairpersons

Anaheim Arts Council	Margaret Neeley	714/535-2030
Editor	Kathy Clark	714/639-9927
Historian	Beth Pelfrey	714/774-2754
Hospitality	Lorri Renck	714/397-3584
Library		
Membership	Kathy Clark	714/639-9927
Monthly Drawing	Skip & Connie Cone	714/827-8675
Phone Tree	Audrey Nichols	714/971-6789
Phone Tree Asst. 1	Sharon & Robert Burson	562/860-5938
Phone Tree Asst. 2	Karen Martinez	562/423-2832
2009 Show Chairman	Jim Williamson	714/995-9080
Show Co-Chair	Larry Richey	714/846-3573
Sunshine		
Veterans' Coordinator	Larry Richey	714/846-3573
Website	Walter Mroch	714/826-2132
Workshop	Herb Beckman	714/778-1496

**Sponsored by:**  
**Anaheim Arts Council**

## OCTOBER EVENTS

<u>Day</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Event</u>
2,9,16,23,30 4,11,18,25	6-10pm 3-7pm	Thursday Workshop (lapidary, wire wrapping) Saturday Workshop (lapidary, silversmithing)
14 16	7pm 7pm	October General Meeting Board Meeting
11 12	10am-5pm 10am-4pm	Vista Gem & Mineral Society's Show at Antique Gas and Steam Engine Museum 2040 North Santa Fe Avenue, Vista, CA for info call 760-724-0395 or 760-758-4599
11 12	7:30a-5pm 7:30a-4pm	67 <sup>th</sup> Annual Gem-O-Rama sponsored by the Searles Lake Gem & Mineral Society 13337 Main St.(corner of Main & Trona Rd.) Trona, CA 93592 for complete Show and Field Trip info see <a href="http://www1.iwvisp.com/tronagemclub/">http://www1.iwvisp.com/tronagemclub/</a> or call 760-372-5356
17 18 19	12-7pm 10a-7p 10a-5p	Gem Faire in Del Mar Del Mar Fairgrounds, 2260 Jimmy Durante Blvd. call 503-252-8300 or see <a href="http://www.gemfaire.com">www.gemfaire.com</a>
18 & 19	10am-5pm	Whittier Gem & Mineral Society Show Whittier Community Center 7630 Washington Ave., Whittier, CA call Jay Valle at 626-934-9764
26	10:30 -	Field Trip to OceanView Tourmaline Mine in Pala, San Diego Country \$60 fee Contact Trip Coordinator David Cheverier at <a href="mailto:cheverier@sbcglobal.net">cheverier@sbcglobal.net</a> for space availability

## NOVEMBER EVENTS

6,13,20 1,8,15,22	6-10pm 3-7pm	Thursday Workshop (lapidary, wire wrapping) Saturday Workshop (lapidary, silversmithing)
8 & 9		November Field Trip Hector Hills/Lavic Siding Areas
11	7pm	Searchers Annual Meeting Voting for 2009 Officers, Pie Night, RockSwap
23	10a-4p	Searchers invitation to Openhouse at Jewel Tunnel Imports More information & map in November Rock Slab

For a complete listing of Gem & Mineral Shows go to [www.cfmsinc.org](http://www.cfmsinc.org) and [www.gemfaire.com](http://www.gemfaire.com). And don't forget the Route 66 Gold Miners at [www.route66goldminers.org](http://www.route66goldminers.org) and the GPAA at [www.goldprospectors.com](http://www.goldprospectors.com).

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

### **Hello Searchers!**

We have an exciting slate of officers to present to you for the calendar year, 2009. I am going to give the name of the office, the name of the candidate and a very brief statement of their background.

At the October meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> I will officially place the slate into nomination and ask for nomination from the floor.

At the November meeting, the official ANNUAL MEETING of the club [WHICH IS ALSO PIE NIGHT!] we will be asking for any additional nominations from the floor, then vote on the officers of the club for 2009. [Can you believe it is almost 2009! I for one never thought I'd get this old much less live to 2009! Wonders never cease]. We need at least 45 members to be present at this meeting.

2009 has a nice steady sound to it. I am thinking it will be the year we as a club pull out of the doldrums of inactivity and become the active, vital community and hobby oriented club we deserve to be.

That's the infomercial; now for the information:

### **PRESIDENT**

#### **Norbert Bernhardt**

Norbert has been a very active member since sometime in the 1990's. He has led some wonderful field trips, participated in most, chaired many committees for the annual gem show such as Children's Jewelry, Wheel of Fortune, a rock dig one year (very successful) the silent auction, and in recent years has generously offered the club free storage of the vast volume of show related paraphernalia. This is just the tip of the volunteer mountain Norbert is building for our club! We are very lucky to have him as a member and will need to support his program enthusiastically.

### **FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT**

#### **TBD at this time**

This is a great job: supports the President, presides when the Pres. can't be there, plans the full year of interesting and fun programs for the club meetings. This can be done all at once in the beginning of the year. He/she also plans or delegates the planning of the annual Holiday Dinner and the installation of officers for the following year and recognition of members for outstanding contributions and any summer events we have. It's all about delegation, folks, and could just as easily be done by two people working together sharing one board vote. This has happened before very successfully, I might add.

So jump right in and let us know: get a partner and have a lot of fun. Have the kind of programs you think would be fun! Don't wait for someone to read your mind!

Reports of the programs in the bulletins should be in the RSN at least one month early if not two so the membership will be aware and be able to plan to attend and bring guests!

### **SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT**

#### **Steve Duncan**

Steve has chaired show committees for years, been active in the set-up and break down of the show and been on the board many times. He has helped the board find vendors for tee shirts and other logo items, even run a few general meetings.

This will be the eleventeenth time Steve has offered to do his usual brilliant job of coordinating monthly field trips for the club. And he does just that: he delegates and asks club members such as yours truly to volunteer for a month (Mine will be next Spring maybe March?) See, wasn't that easy? I know very little, and yet am happy to support the club and help us all have fun together.

The person who is leading field trip is asked to provide dates and times, maps, mileage, special activities and needs, remembering that we are planning the trip with the first-timer and novice in mind!

**SECRETARY****Kathy Clark**

Kathy has been in the club for a very long time and has done so many jobs that it would be difficult to list them all. She was co-chair of the annual show for two years, ran the kitchen, been membership committee chair and the wonderful editor of the ROCK SLAB NEWS, our monthly bulletin. She has been Secretary for the last few years and done a wonderful job. She has been a very active and energetic club member and has so generously offered to be the Secretary once again. Someone else will have to do the RSN! So jump in and volunteer, folks. Maybe two of you can do it together.

Kathy is a wonderful, funny, energetic person whom we are lucky to have.

**TREASURER****Pat Lynch**

Pat has been our treasurer for the last two years and has once again thrown her name into the hat. She has been a club member for quite a number of years and volunteered her time unstintingly at the annual show even before she joined! She even went on a field trip to Wileys Well one Thanksgiving in 1996 or 7! Welcome Pat back to the office and please support her in any way you are asked.

**CFMS DELEGATE****Clarke Benich**

Clarke has been President, among other board responsibilities, led field trips, chaired committees for the annual show and been a very active and energetic club member. He has committed to monthly reports for the RSN concerning CFMS activities as well as the public land access issues facing us all as rock hounds, off-road enthusiasts, even fishermen. "They" in the State and Federal legislatures would like to see all the public land closed, fenced off and "preserved" for...who or what? Soil, wind and water erosion occurs naturally so more and different material is always being uncovered. Clarke will help to keep us informed as to new legislation, the infamous fossil bill, the Clear Creek Rec Area closing and the Mojave off road regulation and closing being promulgated now. He will help us to send letters and make our positions known as individual members. He will help us get back into a personal one on one activist role ( Non-profit organizations are not allowed by law to take a political stance in legislative issues.). If we want the next generation to be able to go to Afton Canyon, Clear Creek and some of the fossil areas off I-40, we must write write. Clarke will help to guide us but will need each of us to participate.

**DIRECTOR****Keith Droste**

This is the only board position not elected. The immediate past President sits in this chair. Keith will be able to provide guidance and continuity to the incoming President: for this

slate, it's Norbert . He will also be able to lend expertise of the board's history and activities and provide help to the board when asked. Keith is a new member who agreed to be President last year when no one else offered. I think that speaks volumes for his sense of volunteerism and duty.

This has been a lengthy document and I hope all of you have read it closely. In it you will see that we ordinary members make the club what it is and give it the flavor it has each year. These folks who have offered their time and energy do not expect to have to do everything by themselves: they will call on members for help periodically. I hope you will raise your paws! [Oops, kitty on keys, I must have meant hands.]

Ladies and gentlemen, this is OUR club, not "their" club. If you want to see something happen, volunteer. There are lots of opportunities: committees, food, hospitality, parties, the Rock Slab News. Jump in the hole and start to dig for goodies with the rest of us.

See you in October at the meeting.

Your Nominating Committee for 2008:

Beth Pelfrey, Chair	(714) 774-2754. pelfrey@sbcglobal.net
Betty Nelson, Member	(714) 530-1365, betty@azteche.com
Lorri Renck, Member	(714) 397-3584, takme2rvr@sbcglobal.net

## PROPOSED DUES INCREASE

As time marches on and the cost of everything else from gasoline to groceries it is time for the club to raise the membership dues. The Searchers Board recommends that our annual membership dues be increased as follows:

Individuals	\$25.00 from \$20.00
Couples	\$35.00 from \$25.00
Children	\$10.00 from \$2.00 each

Our dues have not been increased for a long time. However, because of the very substantial increase in CFMS dues (\$9.75 per adult or child member) the Board has deemed this increase as necessary for the future of the Searchers. This means that for the past several years we actually lost money for every child member of the club.

Why must we pay CFMS dues? Primarily because the CFMS as a large group is able to offer the Searchers liability insurance which provides coverage for all meetings, workshops, shows and field trips. This type of insurance is not affordable and generally available elsewhere.

Every year the cost of the newsletter (printing and postage), monthly programs, and operating and maintaining the workshop has also increased. While we have encouraged members to take electronic delivery of the newsletter there are also costs associated with that such as Internet fees. We also are in the process of revamping the website to make it easier for members and potential members to get current information easier. The cost of our Annual Show has also increased. Some items that were once free now have a hefty price. The cost of professional security for the Annual Show has increased year after year as well as our fee for use of the Brookhurst Community Center, fire permits, plan checks, equipment rental, etc... Our Annual Show, and primary fundraiser for the year, generates

revenue mainly from selling space at our show to Dealers and the Silent Auction since we no longer have the big donation award drawing.

This notice is to let the membership know that there will be a vote on this at the November annual meeting.

## **The following is a write-up about losing access to public lands.**

One of the great things about our rockhounding hobby is that we are able to collect rocks ourselves. In many ways a rock which you have personally collected has much more meaning than a slab you may have purchased at a show. And if you then cut and polish that personally collected rock, and wrap or silversmith it into a piece of jewelry it becomes something very special.

The Searchers try to run a field trip monthly during the cooler months, and even creatively try some field trips during the heat of summer. These trips are an opportunity to get out of the hustle and bustle of the city and enjoy some of the peaceful beauty that surrounds us. It is important to be reminded of the beauty and serenity of OUR world.

There are plans in work to take many of the prime collecting areas away from us. Senator Barbara Boxer has sponsored several bills which propose to take away large parcels of land that are currently available for us to visit, camp, and collect on. These bills propose to turn these areas into wilderness areas. Congresswoman Diane Feinstein has supported these bills. On the surface the bills may sound like a good idea; that way no developer can tear up a beautiful site and put a strip mall there. But a wilderness area has other restrictions, most notable that one cannot drive motorized vehicles in them. The only way you can access that area is by foot or horseback. Rockhounding is a multi-generational family affair. I don't see rockhounds hiking for miles into a collecting site and then hauling out their small treasure trove of materials. And certainly there are rockhounds who are physically unable to do this. And families with young children would be unable to do this. In fact most people would not do this. Think about your circle of friends and acquaintances. How many people do you know who do long overnight hikes? In reality this seems to reserve this land for a very small percentage of our population.

I believe that conscientious rockhounding has little environmental impact. We tend to drive on existing dirt roads. We know to not bother the wildlife, especially the desert tortoise. We do not leave large holes that small wildlife can get trapped in. And we should be following the guideline of no more than one 5 gallon buckets per person from a site. I do not believe that we are a threat to the proposed wilderness areas.

Here is an interesting fact. This conservation idea is a tricky one. All rockhounds, I believe, would be unhappy to have a collecting site turned into a condominium site. So legislation to stop development on public lands is attractive to most if not all rockhounds. The problem is the wilderness designation and its associated ban on motorized access. Wilderness designations are out of touch with modern day realities. Public lands are now important recreation venues for rockhounds, mountain bikers, snowmobilers and Off-Highway Vehicle users, all of which are banned in Wilderness areas. Unfortunately the Wilderness lobby refuses to acknowledge the fact that there are other alternatives, such as National Recreation Areas (NRA), which provide the exact same level of protection from development that Wilderness carries.

There are however strong political forces at work here. The California Wilderness Coalition is the driving force behind most of these bills. They are a large well-funded organization. The key word here is "organization." They are organized. Most rockhounds when approached on a one-to-one basis can be shown the facts about the wilderness bills and decide: "This is not in my best interests. I should try to do something about this". But it is important that we all do something about this. The rockhound community as a group is strong.

The best thing that can be done is to write the politicians. There can be real impact from your communi-

cations: politicians will see you as a potential vote. The following bills are directly trying to take public land and turn them into wilderness areas:

H.R. 3682 / S. 2109

H.R. 860 / S.493

HR 6156 /S 3069

All of these have been sponsored by or supported by Barbara Boxer and lobbied for by the California Wilderness Coalition. Some of the key people that will be determining the outcome of these bills are U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer and Senator Dianne Feinstein. I suggest that if you are concerned about some of the current developments, and I think you should be, that you **write to Senator Boxer and Senator Feinstein**. Keep your letters short and polite. **You may wish to include the following statement:**

***“I am asking you to OPPOSE the following bills: H.R. 3682 / S. 2109, H.R. 860 / S.493, HR 6156 /S 3069. As someone who values recreational access, I am asking you to SUPPORT alternatives including National Recreation Areas (NRA) that do not restrict the public's ability to view and enjoy our nation's public lands.”***

The local office of Senator Feinstein suggested writing to her in Washington (Senator Diane Feinstein at 331 Hart Senate Building, Washington DC 20510).

The local office of Senator Boxer suggested writing to her at her local address in LA (Senator Barbara Boxer at 312 N. Spring St. LA, 90012).

I do not suggest that you contact the California Wilderness Coalition. They have not been receptive to constructive dialog and appear focused purely on their goal which is to deny you and me access to public land that we currently utilize and enjoy.

I cannot stress how important these issues are. It is scary that things have been progressing so quietly. Some of these bills will be voted on soon. You may turn around one day soon and find out something you love is gone forever.

One side note: Clear Creek Recreation area has recently been closed due to the presence of naturally occurring asbestos which has been present there forever. It is not clear whether this area will ever reopen. In the ongoing war between the people that want to ensure access to public lands and the people that seem hell-bent on denying access to public lands, who do you think would consider this a great victory? No one ever said you had to fight fair in a war.

Steve Duncan  
V.P Field Trips  
Searchers Gem and Mineral Society  
714 724 7102 (cell)  
wsd@iteris.com



**SEPTEMBER FIELD TRIP REPORT**

September 27 &amp; 28, 2008

By Robert and Sharon Burson

Saturday morning while gazing out window of Ludlow Café just shortly after sunrise, an inspirational view of the Cady Mountains loomed to the west. As the early light embraced the front range I finally found the answer to why the main peak is called Sleeping Beauty. A dark shadow was cast over the large peak making it appear as if it was dozing off.

We had approximately 14 people participate in this field trip. Hoping the temperature would be moderate we traveled to the heart of classic Lavic collecting area. The rock was clean and vibrant. Summer thunderstorms revealed a bounty of treasure. Since the two weeks this area was scouted, the pipeline road accessing the area had been graded. This was an incredible lucky answer to my prayer. The second half of the day we reached one of the better collecting areas. The old 96 revealed plenty of material. Unfortunately, it was too hot to spend too much time out in the sun.

We returned to camp for one of our famous feasts. The warm summerish night excluded the need for a warm campfire. We were treated to the Milky Way and a sky of a billion bright stars. Jimmy and Ester, prepared for anything, brought a black light that surprisingly showed fluorescent mineral around our feet. Particularly fluorescent was the orange calcite.

Sunday we decided to have a review of some of the techniques in rock collecting. In the future I may offer our members a refresher class in the details of collecting rock in the field. I truly believe that this improved the overall quality of the rock that was collected. This precluded a venture to a thulite deposit rediscovered recently by CFMS. This metamorphic rock is composed of pink material surrounded by a green matrix. This can be excellent material for cabs and spheres.

At noon many of ranks left for home, but a few stoics revisited the Cadys for a trip into Sand Canyon. I am pleased to state that all hands are safe for it is a challenge to get there, but are usually rewarded with fine material. See Herb Beckman for more information.

Regards, Back Country Bob

# NOVEMBER FIELD TRIP

November 8 & 9, 2008  
 Hector Hills/Lavic Siding Areas  
 By Steve Duncan

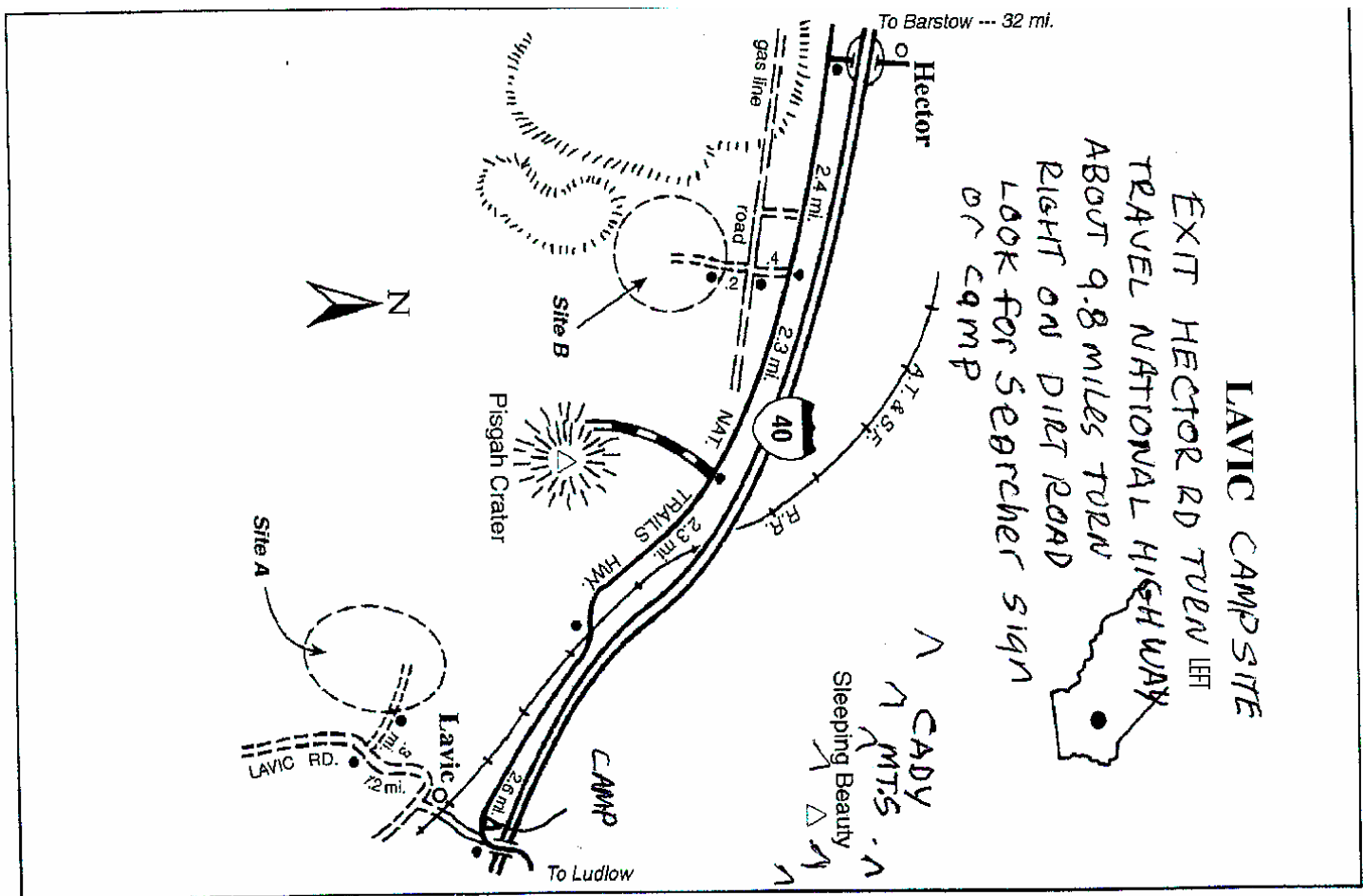
The November Field Trip on November 8 & 9, 2008, will be to the Hector Hills/Lavic Siding areas. Saturday we will explore the Hector Hills area looking for agates and jaspers. It is expected that we will have guest "guide" for Saturday who will try to show us some new locations. Sunday morning we will collect at the Lavic Siding Jasper site. The field trips will leave at 8:30am each day. Saturday we will be away from camp all day, so you will want to pack a lunch. It is expected that a high clearance vehicle will be sufficient for Saturday. If we find out otherwise we can carpool in with 4x4s. Sunday's site can be accessed in the family sedan if you take it easy.

We will be camping at our old standby Lavic Rd. campsite. This is between Hector Rd. and Ludlow off of old Route 66. A map is attached. The campsite is easy to access, RVs no problem. It is a dry campsite, so bring whatever you will need. Don't forget water and sunscreen. A hat is a good idea. Weather could vary from hot to cold, so come prepared for both; layers are always a good idea.

On Saturday evening we will have our traditional potluck (hopefully while it is still light), and then probably sit around the campfire telling lies.

The closest motel is in Ludlow, an interesting place. The last time I was there you checked in at the gas station across the street. There is also a café and a Dairy Queen in Ludlow.

Any questions email me, Steve Duncan, at [wsd@iteris.com](mailto:wsd@iteris.com), or call me on my cell 714-724-7102.



## **MYSTERIOUS MONTANA AGATE SCENES**

Seen by Microscope as Flaws

It has always been a mystery how the peculiar little scenes got inside a rock as hard as an agate. It is the claim of geologists that the spots were caused by infinitely minute seams of fissures in the softer parts of the rock being filled with metallic oxides when the world was young.

These oxides made four different colors that form various combinations of color when blended together, or appear in single colors in each rock. The red color is oxide of iron. The black color is oxide of manganese. The green is oxide of copper. The blue is oxide of nickel.

The theory has been elaborated by the help of high powered microscopes which show the tracings of little canals so close the naked eye could not detect it, but the oxides remained, staining the rocks in wonderful designs. The fern-like and branch effects of the trees, grass and shrubbery, smaller canals from a common center and in addition to these canals, the rock became flawed through shrinkage while passing through a period of evaporation which, according to scientists, has taken more than 3 million years to reduce the stone to the hardness of 7 points on the Mohs scale.

These canals and flaws have been perfectly healed by soft silicate formations of which the stone is part, and the evaporation has caused the oxides to take on such forms as are seen on the window after a frosty night.

Technically, Montana Agate is known as "Dendrite" agate and the moss spots are called Dendrites. It is the third hardest stone in the world, and is cut only with a diamond saw. There can never be two pieces alike even though cut from the same stone. (Calgary Lapidary Journal Mar/Apr 07 –via MOROKS 7/08 via Delvings

**Little Orphan Annie says,**

**"BE SURE AND READ YOUR NEWSLETTER"**

# The Rock Slab News

OCTOBER 2008

Volume 45 ISSUE 10



## OCTOBER BIRTHSTONE OPAL

The modern listing for birthstones was created in 1912 and cites the Opal as being the October birthstone. This beautiful, iridescent gem changes color depending on the lighting, which is one of its defining characteristics. Australia produces about 95% of the world's opal supply. The aborigines of that country say that the opal was created where a rainbow touched the earth. This certainly explains the cascade of color in fine opal specimens. Black opal rivals the price of diamonds for very fine specimens. While the black opal isn't really black, it does have a dark base color. Opal is a relatively soft gem so it can easily be scratched or scraped. Care should be taken not to knock it around. Wearing opal jewelry while rockhounding is probably not a good idea! Probably the best way to clean opal jewelry is with water and a little white vinegar. Rinse carefully and dry with a soft cloth.



Kathy Clark, *Editor*  
18661 Silver Maple Way  
North Tustin, CA 92705-2144

