



The Rockette

September/October 2015

A Publication of the Sequoia Gem and Mineral Society (SGMS)

CAROL'S CORNER

I want to thank all SGMS Members that worked so hard on our show. Darn, we need to do a group picture with everyone that worked. Come to our meeting in Oct. and we will take a picture!

It was a very successful show because of ALL of you. We got everything done and everybody did their portion and then some. I am very proud to be part of such a caring, passionate group of people. You represented SGMS in a very good light and all our visitors had a terrific time getting to know you. We have a ton of talent in our group. THANK YOU!

Carol Corden

P. O. Box 1245, Redwood City, CA 94064

<http://www.sequoiagemandmineralsociety.org>

General Meeting - October 19

We need Officer Nominations!

We need Chairpersons for 2016!

Let's make it an SGMS Spooktacular Meeting for October. Special decorations and treats are in store for you.

Bring your ugliest, creepiest rock with or without a spooky story. We can vote for most ugly/creepy and have a great prize!

NOMINATIONS NEEDED IMMEDIATELY

SGMS Mission Statement

The Sequoia Gem & Mineral Society serves the community by providing education in the Earth Sciences and training in the lapidary arts and, in doing so, promotes ethical behavior, sound resource stewardship, and good fellowship. The Society fulfills its mission through year-round offerings of field trips, lapidary workshops, outreach presentations, public mineral displays, and monthly informational meetings open to the public.

Member of:

California Federation of
Mineralogical Societies, Inc.
American Federation of
Mineralogical Societies
North Bay Field Trip
Association

Exchange bulletins are
welcome. You are free to
reprint if credit or citation is
noted.

Please be a part of SGMS and the new directions it will follow in 2016. Nominate yourself for one of the following Officer and/or Chairperson positions. Send Email to cordencarol@yahoo.com immediately. Please...we need you! Choose a couple of spots. Voting at November 16 Meeting.

President
Treasurer
CFMS/AFMS Reporter

Vice President
Secretary

Annual Show: Chairperson	Annual Show General Volunteers
Annual Show Dealers/Layout	Annual Show Kitchen/Shopping/Donations
Estate Acquisitions, Appraisals, Auctions	
Membership-Recruitment	Rockette Editor
Publicity/Website	Sunshine
Library	Refreshments
Ways & Means	Field Trips
Monthly Programs	Lapidary Instructor

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General Meeting - November 16

Vote in 2016 Officers!

RSVP attendance to Holiday Party

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These rocks and more will be sold at the Dec. 11th Christmas Party. Lots of petrified wood, limb casts, jades, assorted Jaspers and Agates.





2015 Rock Candy Holiday Party Members, Family and Friends are Invited

Friday, Dec. 11, 2015

6:30 pm to 8:30 pm (setup 5pm)

1400 Roosevelt Avenue, Redwood City

RSVP: cordencarol@yahoo.com

Please attend the Officer Installation and enjoy a Dinner at 7 pm. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share. Bring your appetite, cheer and good will.

In honor of Past President Connie Reno, we will continue accepting cash donations for St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room, 3500 Middlefield Road, Menlo Park, CA 94025

Make some holiday money or buy your last minute gifts! We will have tables out for you to sell a few items. Bag and label items with your name and price. Two Members per table (share the limited space) and handle your own deals.

Save your stamps by bringing your greeting cards to be distributed to members. See directory for member addresses.

Member Spotlight: Leslie Gordon

Once upon a time, a woman saw a bowl of cut sapphires and rubies at the famous Tucson Gem and Mineral show. She was simply enthralled with them all, purchased a few special pieces and became very serious in her lifelong hobby of jewelry making. That woman is Leslie Gordon. We are so lucky to have her involvement with SGMS. Leslie also works on the SGMS annual show and has been a speaker at several of our meetings.



If you've ever known about the SGMS table at the Maker Faire every year, you have seen the hard work involved to organize the displays, the dopped stones, the flat laps and the volunteers. Behind all of that you'll find Leslie Gordon. Due to the hard work of everyone involved, the club won an award 2 years in a row for both the Editors' and the Educators' Pick. "This is a great way to show off what geology is," said Leslie. "It IS a lot of work to pull this together, but so worthwhile."

Leslie really enjoys the social aspect of hanging out with other rock nerds in our club. She's been a member since 2008 and loves to collect rocks, do lapidary, educate others and make jewelry. A favorite trip was visiting the Royston Turquoise mine and going to Broken Arrow to search for Variscite in Tonopah, NV. "We stayed in the creepy Clown Motel, then camped the next time. It was hot, dry and dusty, but a lot of fun, she laughed; "I simply enjoy digging in the dirt!"

One of her favorite pieces is a bracelet she made. It is silver inlaid in the Navajo style with a variety of stones—all found in the shop's scrap bin! Another is her pyritized ammonite necklace. The workmanship is exquisite. (pictured)

If you want to know more information or the identification of a certain mineral or specimen, Leslie is a great resource. She's also been very generous in donating specimens to the club.

Born in California but raised in Phoenix, AZ., Leslie then became a student at Stanford, majoring in Geology. For a short while, she was employed by mining companies exploring for metallic ore deposits. Now Leslie works for the United States Geological Survey (USGS) in Public Affairs. She's also had a role teaching others about earth sciences. In her USGS career she's been able to travel to some great areas, such as Hawaii to see the lava flow and work with the news media there. After local earthquakes you might have spotted Leslie on the news.

In her personal life she has been married for 25 years to Peter Whidden, a rare book specialist at Stanford. Leslie loves to travel, but, like most people, she doesn't get to do it as much as she'd like to. A trip was to Madagascar with a group of mineral collectors was certainly the highlight of the year. The couple have two cats, who sadly are left home when a trip is going on but most certainly greet them enthusiastically upon their return.

MINERALS – MANAGING THE FEAR

By Mark Nelson, EMT–Safety Chair (From the CFMS Newsletter-Sept. 2015)

At 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 Department 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), semiconductors (Silicon Valley) are very useful in our lives. Should we ban the use of the beautiful blue Apatite gem stone 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 issue.

Back to Serpentine. First, “serpentine” refers to a group of minerals, not a rock. The term “serpentinite” 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 describes 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 Romans, puts it - “walking on, being near, handling, or even eating a piece of serpentinite rock is NOT harmful. The only way 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, SB 624, was introduced to address issues involving "Solid waste: garbage and refuse disposal districts: 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 hijacked by special interest groups (probably deep-pocket litigation advocates) to remove Serpentine as The State Rock of California because 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 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 iSv 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 machinists 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 blind fear of a particular insulation, mineral or chemical keep us from touring or working on a naval vessel? 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 stick your fingers in your mouth before washing them; 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); Professor Gordon Brown of Stanford University (emsi.stanford.edu/doc/MostDangerous-Minerals.doc); The Vug (www.the-vug.com/vug/article284).

Membership

A little uptick in the Membership Fees for the first time in MANY years. They will be: \$25 individual, \$40/couple in same household, kids free.

What's Going on with our Lapidary Shop at Little House?

The lapidary shop has now been shut down after more than 20 years at Little House. The last class was on September 3rd. Since then the equipment has been moved and we are merging our lapidary shop with Peninsula Gem and Mineral at the Garden House, Shoup Park, 400 University Avenue, Los Altos. Schedule to be determined. Drop in Fee for Members is \$7. Non-Members \$10. Instruction fee to be agreed upon. SGMS will pay \$100/month for the work space. Huge THANK YOU To CATHY PHALEN And BOB SIMMS for handling this move.

DISPLAY CASES

We have many display cases available for sale at \$40. If you would like to have one, please contact us

PENNIES TO HAMMER MAKES CHARMS, PENDANTS & MORE!

A Lincoln Memorial penny dated before 1982, is made of 95% copper. If the date is 1983 or later, it is made of 97.5% zinc and plated with a thin copper coating.

For pennies minted in 1982, when both copper and zinc cents were made, the safest and best way to tell their composition is to weigh them. Copper pennies weigh 3.11 grams, whereas the zinc pennies weigh only 2.5 grams.



“Make New Friends, But Keep the Old. One is Silver and the Other Gold”.

My experience at camp.

By Catherine Fraser

For the first time ever I was fortunate to be selected to attend Camp Paradise for a week, a little birthday present to myself. Located in the Plumas National Forest near Clipper Mills, CA,

it was sure to be fun and I looked forward to learning whatever lay in store. I met up with fellow club members Peggy Lew, Duncan and Shirley Penman and Donna Gomola, who was gracious enough to share a room with me. The California Federation of Mineralogical Societies (CFMS) puts these “Earth Science Study Camps” together every year.

The food was pretty good and far too plentiful...a lot more than I’m used to eating, anyway. Of course I could have chosen to NOT eat three meals a day, but I kept on talking myself into vacation mode, consoling my guilt with only one helping of dessert. I didn’t gain that much weight after all, but don’t you always wonder why it takes longer to take off weight than to put on?

Camp Paradise—the name is truly misleading. To call it rustic was an accurate description. Wifi connection was ¼ mile down the highway in front of the lumber yard. Every afternoon you’d find me sitting on a stump across the street, taking care of business. I wasn’t the only one and I’m sure the people in that office were amused to see us. Then there were the dorms....well, I don’t have a lot of nice things to say about them, but there was at least a working shower...Donna was smart enough to put an extra mattress on each of our beds so that our bottoms wouldn’t sag to the floor. I understand it was much different in the RV area, as long as you could deal with the thick dust that clouded the entire area with every step one took. Admirably, every person there took all the challenges with a grain of salt and got along fine. I was amused by some of the women putting on makeup and curling their hair every day...far too much work, in my opinion. Strangely enough, the pool was lovely. It wasn’t heated, but the water was great.

Activities included a silent auction with a lot of materials to purchase. There was instruction on using a wax pen. Another night was an opportunity to show off what you made followed by the

issuing of certificates and pins. It was great to see and admire everything!

The classes were taught by people who truly had a passion for the craft. You could choose beading, lampwork beads, ming trees, PMC molding, Lost wax casting, faceting, Wire wrap art, enameling, silver smithing, chain making, dichroic glass fusion, soft stone carving, lapidary and more.

I chose to expand my lapidary skills and was not disappointed by the instruction. Duncan was also at hand to give advice. They had a lot of slabs to choose from and everyone had the time to make a perfect cabochon or two. Even though I already had an idea of what to do, I learned there is more than one way to polish a stone.

Another skill I wanted to try was silver smithing. I absolutely adored my instructor, Al, who had the patience of a saint. First we had to master the jewelers' saw and were provided a piece of copper all marked up for us to work on. Then we learned about solder and how to use it in 2 different ways. Note: if you heard a big bang coming from the soldering area, that was probably me. Soldering torches are not my friends.

Now for the assignment: Cut the silver from one of two designs available, file, create a bezel, sanding, solder the bezel together, solder said bezel to the backing, more filing, punching a hole, setting the stone and then polishing the whole thing. Sound easy? For some, perhaps. For me, it was a very big learning curve. I'm not even going to tell you that it took me a day and a half to finish it...yet I finally completed the project and was able to make 2 more. Al was very encouraging and helpful. I really enjoyed it and now have a great appreciation for what a jewelry creator does. Of course when I got home I placed a critical eye on the jewelry I have at home...sigh. Some was not well crafted. Just an excuse for me to start working on a new hobby! Who has the space to put all of their hobbies? Maybe that was the reason the husband had to go...now I have a LOT more room in the garage to set up a bench...

Another camp is at Zzyzx in the Spring of 2016 and Camp Paradise will be in August/Sept. 2016. I look forward to applying to attend and to keep in touch with the people I met. Right now though, I'm looking for some used equipment to get started on a new hobby.

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