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JANUARY 2011

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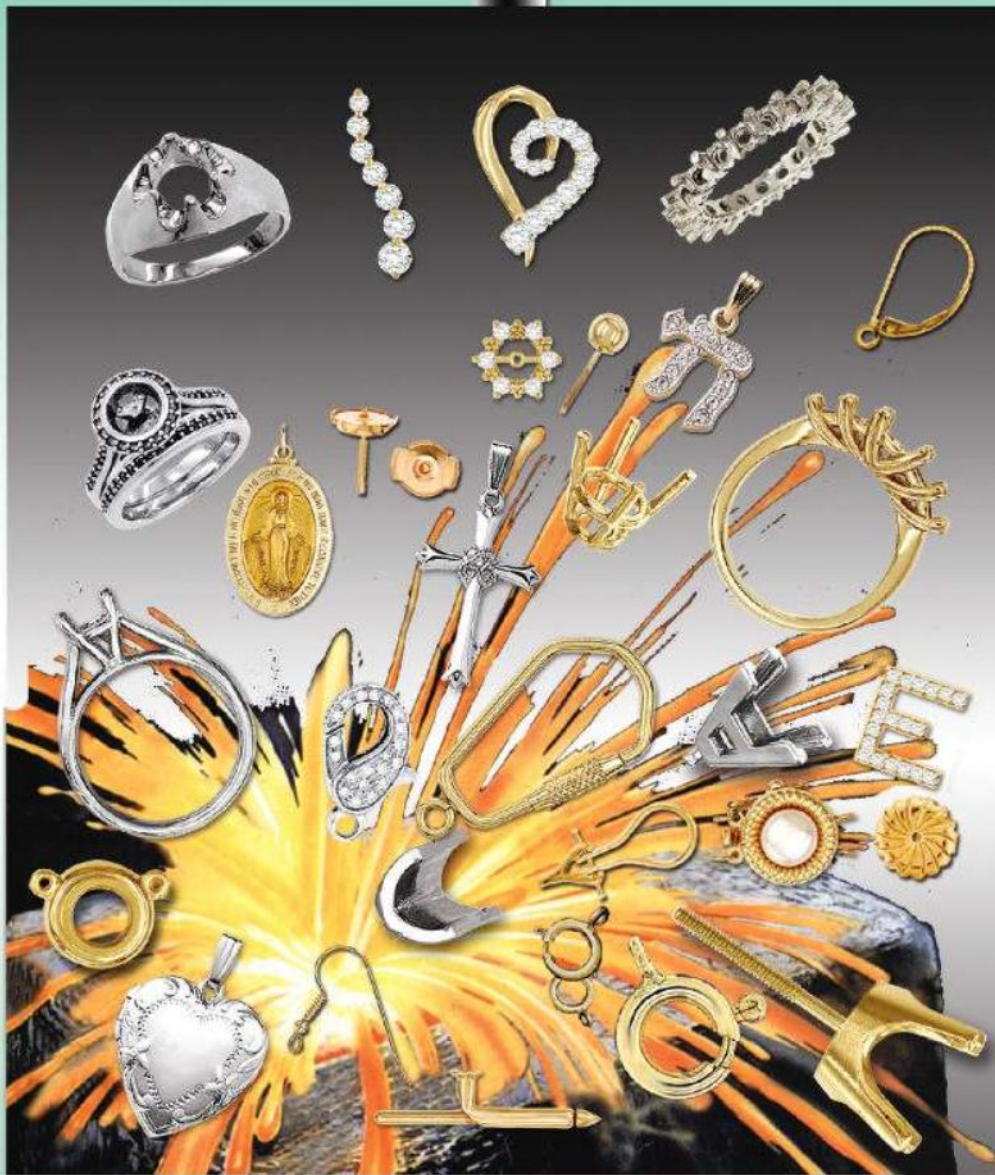
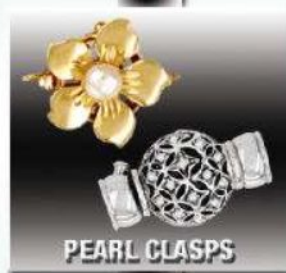
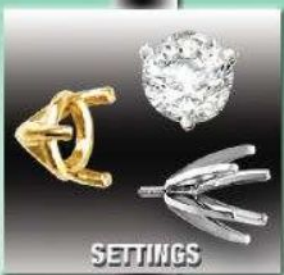
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The recently discovered 760-ounce Ausrox Nugget is the third-largest gold nugget in existence today. It will be exhibited at the 2011 Tucson Show. (Photo courtesy The Arkenstone, Richardson, Texas)

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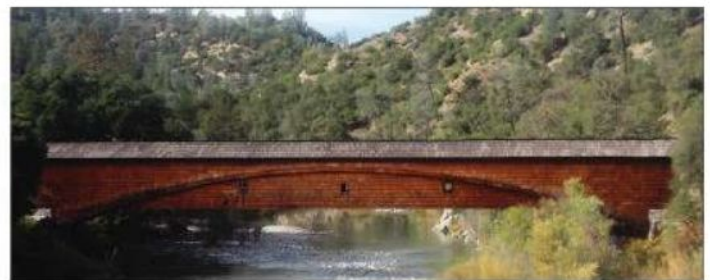
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Notice: On rare occasions, typographical errors occur in prices listed in magazine advertisements. For this reason, advertisements appearing in *Rock & Gem* should be considered as requests to inquire, rather than as unconditional offers to sell. All prices are subject to change without notice.

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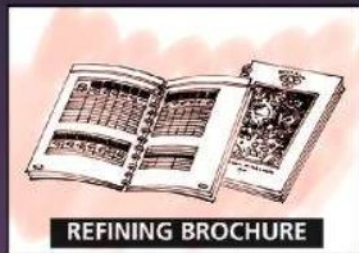
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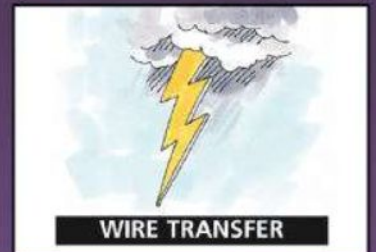
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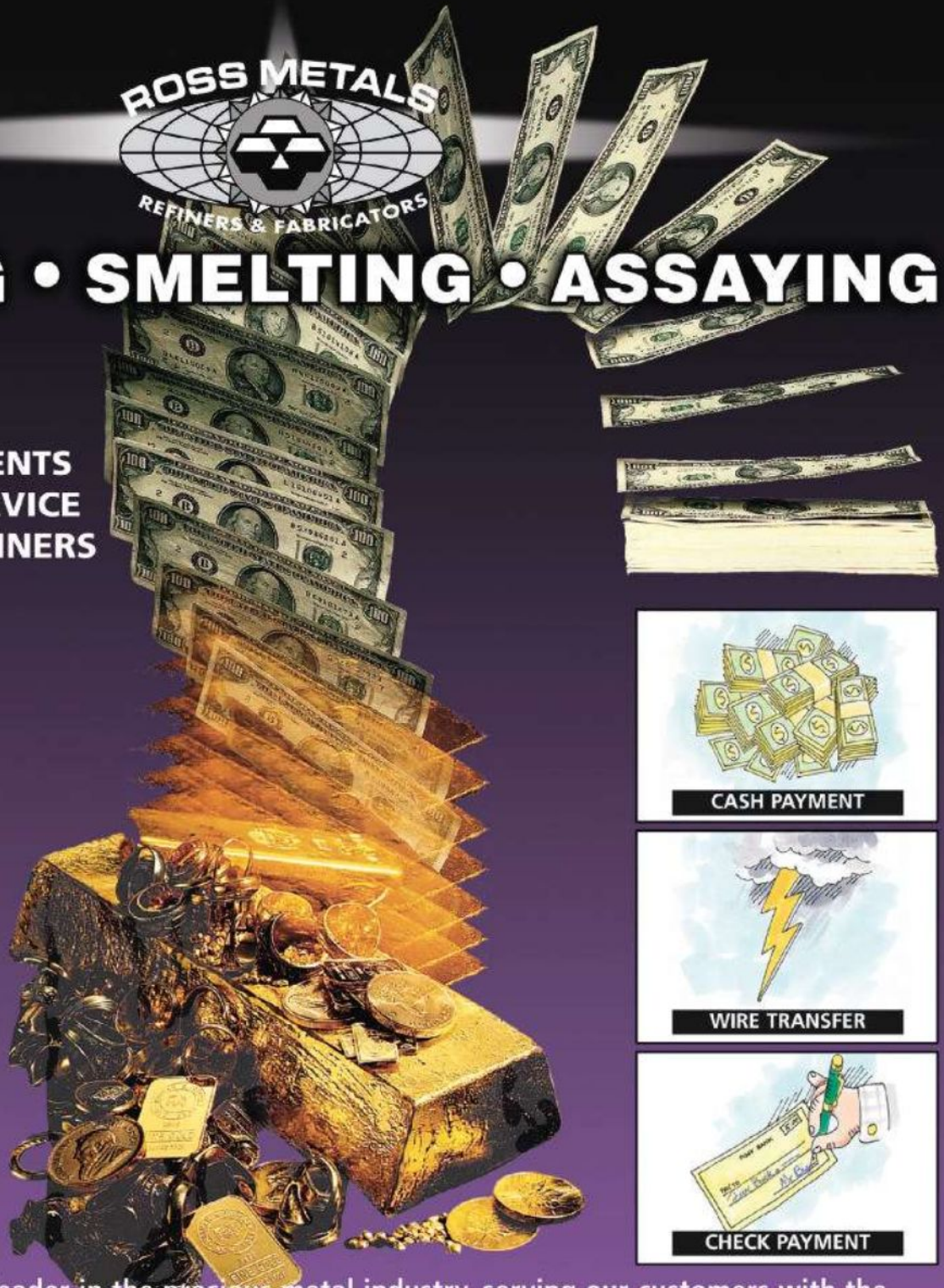
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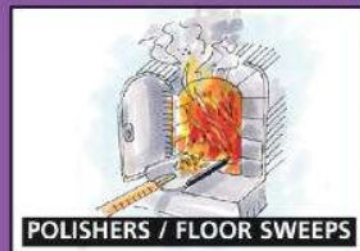
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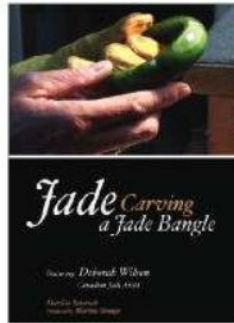
**Carving a Jade Bangle**  
**Featuring Deborah Wilson**  
**\$20.00**

MarZee Tutorials has definitely hit a home run with its DVD "Carving a Jade Bangle". The videography is top notch. There is no going in and out of focus on closeups. The lighting is correct, the closeups show clearly what they are intended to show, the colors are true, and there is no annoying camera shake. It is a pleasure to watch.

The narration and all of the steps are done by Canadian carver Deborah Wilson. Not only is she a very talented artist, she is perfect as the narrator for this DVD. Watching her presentation makes you feel as though you are in her shop and she is talking directly to you. She is completely natural and relaxed.

There is also one real plus for me: This DVD only shows what you need to see. I really hate real-time presentations of machine functions. Of course, it is important to see the start of the cut and, sometimes, the end of it, but in between, it is like watching paint dry.

There are seven chapters on the DVD: Materials, Tools, Design of the Bangle, Cutting, Grinding, Sanding and Polishing. The footage covers laying out the design, drilling the center cores, cutting the rough shape, and grinding, sanding and polishing the piece. At the end is a picture of the beautiful, completed bangle. If you are in the mood to try such a project, or if you would just like to see how it is done, I don't believe you can do better than to watch this tutorial DVD. **(2010)**



—William A. Kappel

Look for publisher contact information on the Links page of our  
 Web site, [www.rockngem.com](http://www.rockngem.com).

**Turquoise: The World Story of a Fascinating Gemstone**  
**by Joe Dan Lowry and Joe P. Lowry**  
**\$75.00**

In 1915, Rio Grande Press published *Turquoise: Memoirs of the National Academy of Sciences*, by Joseph Pogue. The Pogue book has been the bible of turquoise lovers ever since. It is still used by dealers, writers and collectors of fine turquoise. Now, thanks to Joe Dan Lowry, Joe P. Lowry, and Gibbs Smith, Publisher, we have an excellent in-depth text dealing with this fascinating and historically important blue gem that is up to date. *Turquoise* will become an instant classic and a much-used reference.

The Lowrys, leaders in the business of turquoise, have compiled a superb 256-page text that covers everything from the mystical qualities and historical use of turquoise right up to modern applications and the grading and care of turquoise.

The geology and mineralogy of turquoise is explained, along with the mining of the gem. Lapidary treatment of turquoise is described, and there is even a chapter that will help the reader identify imitations of this valuable stone. The book is illustrated with more than 400 color photographs, maps and charts. Anyone with even a passing interest in turquoise will find this reference invaluable. It brings the entire range of turquoise-related subjects under one cover. **(2010)**

—Bob Jones



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Water system mounts are on the back of the machine. Lid has three hold down screws for easy removal, the shaft is tapped for a 1/4"-20 spin-on polish head at both ends, the machine comes with only a right hand spin on head and features a front drain valve. Features two 6" x 1 1/2" metal bonded 80 and 220 grit diamond grinding wheels, plus four 6" x 1 1/2" resin bonded diamond wheels, 325, 600, 1200 & 3000 grits. A right hand 6" x 1/4" 20 spin - on polish head, polishing pad and 2 grams diamond compound is included along with complete instructions, and a 1 year warranty on machine and motor. Dimensions - 26" W x 17" L x 9" H. Ships in two boxes (motor ships separately) wt. 66 lbs.



**Reduced Price**

Stock No.	List	SALE**
1-0674 Stainless 6" Dia. Grinding/Polishing Unit	\$1550.00	<b>\$1,175.00</b>

\*\*Free shipping on Machines only - Continental 48 states.

## 6" Diamond Grinding/Polishing Unit

Machine made in USA for Kingsley North, has an all metal heavy welded -steel construction, ball bearing on a 3/4" diameter shaft. The right hand of the shaft is tapered to accept a 1/4"-20 thread spin disc, for easy On/Off polishing (included). Widely spaced wheels allow fast easy progression from grind to brilliant polish. Rear mounted motor plate houses a full 1/3 HP, 1725 RPM commercial duty motor, auto thermal protected, a belt guard for safety. Comes with a wheel wetter watering system (you add water to the bottom of the pan and the water pulsar pumps water to the wheel above). Features two 6" x 1 1/2" metal boned diamond grinding wheels 80 and 220 grit, plus four 6" x 1 1/2" resin bonded diamond wheels 325, 600, 1200 & 3000. A 6" x 1/4"-20 right hand spin on disc, a 6" polishing pad with felt, polish compound, optional 18 flexible lamp is available. Overall size: 31 L x 23 W x 14 H. Shipping in two boxes (motor is shipped separately) weight 66 lbs.



**Reduced Price**

Stock No.	List	SALE**
1-0646 6" Diamond Grinding/Polishing Unit	\$1,400.00	<b>\$950.00</b>

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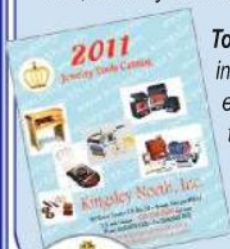
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# RAFTSMAN OF THE MONTH

by G.E. Sommerfeld

I made this collection of 45 sculptures for my wife, an avid lover of stones," writes January Craftsman of the Month G.E. Sommerfeld. "Each individual sculpture is made of a different type of stone. This collection will continue to grow as I find new and different stones to sculpt.

"My love of sculpting began at the age of 12 after viewing a TV program on the statues of Easter Island. I have worked with wood, bronze and stone. Stone is by far my favorite medium.

"These small sculptures are prototypes for the larger fine art pieces that I design and sculpt. I figure out when I do the small sculptures what kind of stone I wish to work with on larger sculptures. Each stone has a different hardness rating. Some, such as alabaster, are soft and easy to sculpt; others, like quartz, are so hard that the process takes much longer to finish.

"The process begins with viewing the stone in my living room until inspiration arrives. As I relax in the evening, I view the stone sitting next to me, looking for what's inside waiting to come out. When the stone finally reveals to me what is hidden inside, then I disappear into the studio to begin sculpting. I almost always begin with the nose; this tells me where to put the remaining features of



the face. I do not quest for realism, but wish to design a piece that will speak to others on an emotional level.

"My style includes elongated facial features with curves that explore the relationship between form and emotion. Each piece evokes a different feeling when you view it. When you hold it in your hand, you feel the stone's energy, combined with the energy the sculpture evokes. It is a magical moment.

"A grinding tool with diamond bits is used to sculpt

the stone. The rough sculpture takes between four and eight hours, depending on the hardness of the stone. The harder the stone, the longer it takes to sculpt. After the sculpting is done, the sanding process begins. Sanding takes between eight and 24 hours, depending on the hardness of the stone. I start with 60 grit sandpaper, then move to 80 and 100 grit. When I get to 120 grit sandpaper, I start sanding with water. After 120 grit, comes 220 and then I work my way up to 1500 grit.

"When the sanding is finished, the sculpture is coated with wax. The flaws in the sanding process cannot be seen until this first coat of wax is applied. Making the sculpture smooth as silk is a tedious process, but it brings out the beauty hidden in the stone." ♦



## Would you like to be named Craftsman of the Month?

To enter the contest:

- Write a 500-word step-by-step description of how you crafted your lapidary project from start to finish. Submit an electronic copy of the story, along with your printed manuscript, if you are able.
- Take at least one sharp, close-up, color photo of the finished project. Submit a photographic print or a high-resolution (300 dpi at 4 inches by 5 inches) digital photo as a .tif or .jpg file on a CD. (Contact the editor with questions.)
- Send your materials, along with your name and street address

(required for delivery), to Craftsman of the Month, *Rock & Gem* magazine, 290 Maple Ct., Ste. 232, Ventura, CA 93003. Submissions will not be returned, so do not send originals. Only winners will be notified.

Craftsman of the Month winners receive a two-speed Dremel Model 200 N/40 MultiPro kit and a wall plaque in recognition of their creativity and craftsmanship. Winning projects are also posted on our Web site, [www.rockngem.com](http://www.rockngem.com).





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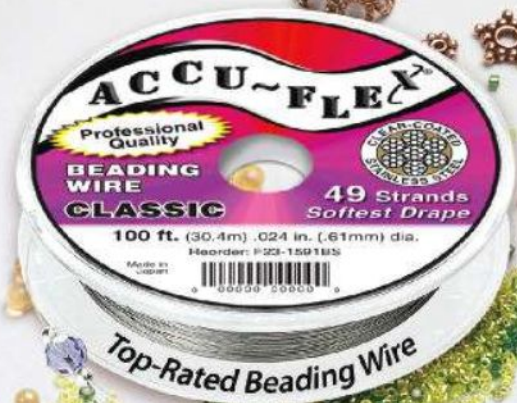
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Detroit, MI.....July 9-10-11  
Franklin, NC.....July 22-23-24-25  
Spruce Pine, NC....July 29-30-31-Aug. 1  
Tucson, AZ.....September 9-10-11-12  
Minneapolis, MN....September 26-27  
Detroit, MI.....October 1-2-3  
West Springfield, MA.....October 8-9  
Asheville, NC.....October 26-27  
Orlando, FL.....October 29-30-31

**2011**

Asheville, NC.....January 4-5  
Orlando, FL.....January 7-8-9  
Tucson, AZ...January 29-February 11

**TUCSON**

Gem Mall  
January 29- February 11

Holiday Inn-Palo Verde/Holidome  
February 3 - February 11

Grant Inn on Grant Road  
January 29 - February 11

Minneapolis, MN.....April 3-4  
Detroit, MI.....April 8-9-10  
West Springfield, MA....April 15-16  
Orlando, FL.....April 29-30-May 1  
Franklin, NC.....May 6-7-8  
Las Vegas, NV.....June 3-4-5

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## JANUARY 2011

**1-31—QUARTZSITE, ARIZONA:** Show, "Desert Gardens International Gem & Mineral Show"; Desert Gardens RV Park; 1064 Kuehn St. (I-10 Exit 17, south side); 9-6 daily; free admission; crystals, minerals, rough, polished, jewelry, lapidary equipment; contact Sharon or Sandy, 1064 Kuehn St., Quartzsite, AZ 85346, (928) 927-6361; e-mail: info@desertgardensrvpark.net; Web site: [www.desertgardensrvpark.net](http://www.desertgardensrvpark.net)

**7-9—DEL MAR, CALIFORNIA:** Show; Gem Faire Inc.; Del Mar Fairgrounds/Bing Crosby Hall, 2260 Jimmy Durante Blvd.; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$7 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: [www.gemfaire.com](http://www.gemfaire.com)

**7-9—FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA:** Show; ebeadshows.com; El Palacio Hotel, 4900 Powerline Rd.; Fri. 10-5, Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; free admission; contact Bob, 849 Sand Lake Rd., Orlando, FL 32809, (754) 581-6835; e-mail: info@eheadshows.com; Web site: [www.eheadshows.com](http://www.eheadshows.com)

**14-16—GLOBE, ARIZONA:** 54th annual show; Gila Co. Gem & Mineral Society; Gila County Fair Grounds, 3 mi. north of US 60-70 Junction; Fri. 9-5, Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-4; live demonstrations, door prizes, displays, minerals, jewelry; contact Val Lathem, (602) 466-3060; e-mail: val65@cox.net

**14-16—LARGO, FLORIDA:** 35th annual show and sale; Pinellas Geological Society; Largo Cultural Center, Parkside Room, 105 Central Park Dr., one block east of Seminole Blvd.; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 12-5; free admission; club displays and sales, cut gems, silver and gold jewelry, wire wrapping, beading, cabochons, mineral eggs, rocks, minerals; contact Hugh Sheffield, (727) 894-2440

**14-16—SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA:** Show; Gem Faire Inc.; Sonoma County Fairgrounds/Grace Pavilion, 1350 Bennett Valley Rd.; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$7 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: [www.gemfaire.com](http://www.gemfaire.com)

**14-16—SARASOTA, FLORIDA:** Show; Frank Cox Productions; Municipal Auditorium, 801 N. Tamiami Tr. (Hwy. 41); Fri. 10-5, Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; gems, jewelry, beads; contact Frank Cox Productions, 755 S. Palm Ave. #203, Sarasota, FL 34236, (941) 954-0202; e-mail: frankcox@comcast.net; Web site: [www.frankcoxproductions.com](http://www.frankcoxproductions.com)

**15-16—DELAND, FLORIDA:** 40th annual show and sale; Tomoka Gem & Mineral Society; Volusia County Fairgrounds, Tommy Lawrence Bldg., Rte. 44; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$4, children 12 and under free; lapidary, jewelry, demonstrations, supplies, fine jewelry, gems, minerals, fossils, drawings; contact Florence Nordquist, (386) 788-5702; e-mail: fndesign@aol.com

**15-16—FREDERICKSBURG, TEXAS:** 42nd annual show, "Hill Country Gem & Mineral Show"; Fredericksburg Rockhounds; Pioneer Pavilion, Lady Bird Johnson Municipal Park; Sat. 9-6, Sun. 10-5; free admission; contact Jeff Smith, 208 Castle Pines Dr., Kerrville, TX 78028, (830) 895-9630; e-mail: jeffbrenda@windstreram.net; Web site: [www.fredericksburgrockhounds.org](http://www.fredericksburgrockhounds.org)

**21-23—HILLSBORO, OREGON:** Show; Gem Faire Inc.; Washington County Fairgrounds, 873 NE 34th Ave.; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$7 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: [www.gemfaire.com](http://www.gemfaire.com)

**21-23—ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA:** Show; Frank Cox Productions; Coliseum Ballroom, 535 4th Ave. N; Fri. 10-5, Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; gems, jewelry, beads; contact Frank Cox Productions, 755 S. Palm Ave. #203, Sarasota, FL 34236, (941) 954-0202; e-mail: frankcox@comcast.net; Web site: [www.frankcoxproductions.com](http://www.frankcoxproductions.com)

**28-30—REDLANDS, CALIFORNIA:** Annual symposium; Mineralogical Society of Southern California Micromounters;

San Bernardino County Museum, 2024 Orange Tree; give-away tables, mineral sales, silent and live auctions, speakers, field trip; contact Eugene Reynolds, (714) 697-4435, or Dr. Robert Housley; e-mail: rhousley@its.caltech.edu; or Gene Reynolds; e-mail: garquartzman@hotmail.com

**28-30—SAN RAFAEL, CALIFORNIA:** Show; Gem Faire Inc.; Marin Center/Exhibit Hall, 10 Avenue of the Flags; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$7 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: [www.gemfaire.com](http://www.gemfaire.com)

**29-30—PANAMA CITY, FLORIDA:** 20th annual show, "Panama City Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show"; Panama City Gem & Mineral Society; Bay County Fairgrounds, American Legion Bldg., US Hwy. 98 (15th St.) and Sherman Ave.; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-4; free admission; door prizes, gems, minerals, fossils, beads, jewelry, lapidary arts, wire wrapping, exhibits; contact Joseph Schings, 224 Collinfurst Square, Panama City, FL 32404, (850) 871-1846; e-mail: mojo3002@comcast.net

## JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2011

**27-12—TUCSON, ARIZONA:** Show; Eons Expositions LLC; 600 22nd St., northeast corner of I-10 and 22nd St.; 9-7 daily; free admission; minerals, fossils, rough, gems, jewelry, amber, meteorites; contact Lowell Carhart, 7514 Antelope Meadows Circle, Peyton, CO 80831, (516) 818-1228; e-mail: lowellcarhart@yahoo.com; Web site: [www.22ndStreetShow.com](http://www.22ndStreetShow.com)

**28-13—TUCSON, ARIZONA:** Show; ColorWright; ColorWright Warehouse, 1201 N. Main Ave.; 10-6 daily; free admission; cutting and carving rough, slabs, cabochons, gemology equipment, fossils, fossil preparation equipment, Covington lapidary equipment, new Highland Park slab saws, books, jewelry; contact Rob Kulakofsky, 1201 N. Main Ave., Tucson, AZ 85705, (520) 792-1439; e-mail: rk3@color-wright.com; Web site: [www.rglshow.com](http://www.rglshow.com)

**29-12—TUCSON, ARIZONA:** Show, "Arizona Mineral & Fossil Show"; Martin Zinn Expositions; The Hotel Tucson City Center (formerly InnSuites), 475 N. Granada; 10-6 daily, final day 10-5; free admission; more than 400 dealers, Artists' Gallery, four locations, free shuttle; contact Martin Zinn Expositions, P.O. Box 665, Bernalillo, NM 87004-0665; e-mail: mzexpos@aol.com; Web site: [www.mzexpos.com](http://www.mzexpos.com)

**29-12—TUCSON, ARIZONA:** Show, "Arizona Mineral & Fossil Show"; Martin Zinn Expositions; The Mineral & Fossil Marketplace, 1333 N. Oracle Rd.; 10-6 daily, final day 10-5; free admission; more than 400 dealers, four locations, free shuttle; contact Martin Zinn Expositions, P.O. Box 665, Bernalillo, NM 87004-0665; e-mail: mzexpos@aol.com; Web site: [www.mzexpos.com](http://www.mzexpos.com)

**29-12—TUCSON, ARIZONA:** Show, "Arizona Mineral & Fossil Show"; Martin Zinn Expositions; Quality Inn-Benson Hwy., 1025 E. Benson Hwy.; 10-6 daily, final day 10-5; free admission; more than 400 dealers, four locations, free shuttle; contact Martin Zinn Expositions, P.O. Box 665, Bernalillo, NM 87004-0665; e-mail: mzexpos@aol.com; Web site: [www.mzexpos.com](http://www.mzexpos.com)

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**31-6—TUCSON, ARIZONA:** Wholesale show; Arizona Global Gem & Jewelry; The Hotel Arizona, 181 W. Broadway; Mon. 10-6, Tue. 10-6, Wed. 10-6, Thu. 10-6, Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-6; contact Ron Swanson, (520) 396-4469; e-mail: ron@aggjs.com; Web site: [www.aggjs.com](http://www.aggjs.com)

*continued on page 22*



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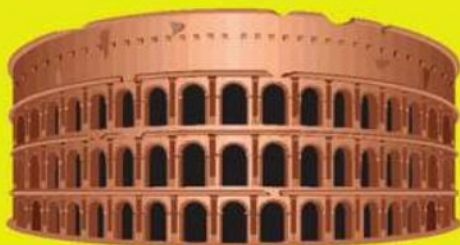
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# AUSTRALIA'S AUSROX GOLD



ROSIE GLOW PHOTO/JAMES ROGERS PHOTOGRAPHY

The Ausrox gold nugget is the third largest specimen that is still in existence. Other large nuggets have been found, but have not survived intact.

## The World's Largest Privately Owned Gold Nugget

Story by Bob Jones

If you plan on going to the Tucson Gem & Mineral Show™ in February 2011, you'll be able to see an amazing 23.26-kilogram gold nugget from Australia. In the avoirdupois system of weights, that's 51.279 pounds. It would be a challenge just to lift the piece! It ranks as the third largest nugget in existence and the largest in private hands!

The story of this amazing gold nugget, a true cloak-and-dagger tale, comes to us courtesy of three fellows who were directly involved in buying and preserving this unique Australian gold nugget: Rob Sielecki and Andy Comas of the Australian firm Ausrox Gold and Rob Lavinsky of The Arkenstone in Richardson, Texas! The current owners of the gold nugget, the Pinnacle Collection, also gave permission to introduce this amazing gold specimen to our readers. All these folks were directly involved

in buying and preserving this unique Australian gold nugget from being melted down for bullion. They all deserve a huge "thank you" for their efforts in saving this natural prize from the smelter!

The story begins in April 2010, when a small group of part-time prospectors working with metal detectors in the Eastern Goldfields near Kalgoorlie, Western Australia, got the thrill of a lifetime: strong signals from something that was buried beneath their feet! A fren-





**Rob Sielecki and Andy Comas, of the Australian firm Ausrox Gold, were instrumental in saving the 51-pound Ausrox gold nugget from being melted down for bullion.**

zied 2-foot dig brought to light this amazing nugget, the third largest nugget to be found in recent history.

That's when the real cloak-and-dagger story began. What would you do if you suddenly came into possession of a gold nugget weighing 748 troy ounces? I know what I would do: I'd keep my mouth shut! Seriously, what would you do? You'd have to find some trustworthy party to help you market the nugget. The prospectors did just that, but it took some time!

Naturally, a gold find that big didn't stay unknown for long. Rumors began to circulate and finally reached the ears of Sielecki and his partner, Comas. Sielecki has a branch office of his Melbourne business, Crystal Universe, in Perth, Western Australia. Perth is about 400 miles from Kalgoorlie and Crystal Universe is the largest museum and natural history gallery in Australia. That made Sielecki a logical person for the prospectors to contact.

In late June 2010, he received a phone call from one of the lucky prospectors. Negotiations began, and Sielecki and Comas did their best to convince the owners not to melt the nugget down. Gradually, the gold owners came to trust the partners enough to make a secret nighttime drive the 400 miles from Kalgoorlie, a lovely Victoria-age gold mining town, to Perth, bringing the nugget with them in a bag. When they took the bag out of the car, the weight of the gold caused the handles on the bag to break! The bag was opened for Sielecki and Comas to see what they had been seeking. This event is best described in Sielecki's own words:

"We went to a back room and he unpacked the nugget—and we were truly blown away. The field photos we had received earlier really couldn't prepare you for the impact the nugget makes. Also, the nugget was far more three dimensional than could be seen in photographs."

---

### **The largest gold nuggets still in existence are:**

❶ **The Hand of Faith** 874 troy ounces, found in Victoria, Australia, in 1950; now resides in the Golden Nugget Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada

❷ **The Normandy, King of the West** 819 troy ounces, 1995, near Kalgoorlie, Western Australia; a gift of the Newmont Mining Corp. to the Australian government, displayed at the Perth Mint

❸ **The Ausrox** 748 troy ounces, 2010, in the private Pinnacle Collection

---

Sielecki adds, "Actually picking the piece up is quite amazing and surprisingly difficult given gold's dense dead weight. Even [though I am] experienced in handling gold, it is still startling!"

After negotiations, a deal was struck for Sielecki and Comas to buy the nugget. The bargain was sealed with a "handshake and a word of honor", as Sielecki said, and he was given possession of the nugget. Sielecki describes what happened after the deal was made:

"After we agreed to the purchase, my partner, Andy, and I then packed the nugget in a strong, large briefcase with wheels and



**TOP:** Western Australia is home to some of the richest gold mines in the world, including the Kalgoorlie Super Pit.

**CENTER:** The Ausrox nugget came from the remains of an ancient alluvial deposition of nugget gold located in the Pinnacles Desert in Western Australia.

**BOTTOM:** A typical metal detector like this one was used to find the deposit that yielded the nugget.

went to one of our favorite restaurants to celebrate. ... We had to wheel the nugget up some stairs and the strain was evident to the maitre d', who actually said the classic line, 'That looks heavy. What have you got in there, gold?'

Later, Sielecki and Comas took the gold to a bank where they had reserved a safety deposit box. But the gold was so big the box wasn't big enough to hold it, so another hour was spent finding a larger safety deposit box. You would think all the serious problems were now solved. Wrong! According to the terms of the negotiation, the miners would melt the nugget down if it didn't sell soon, so a buyer had to be found without delay.

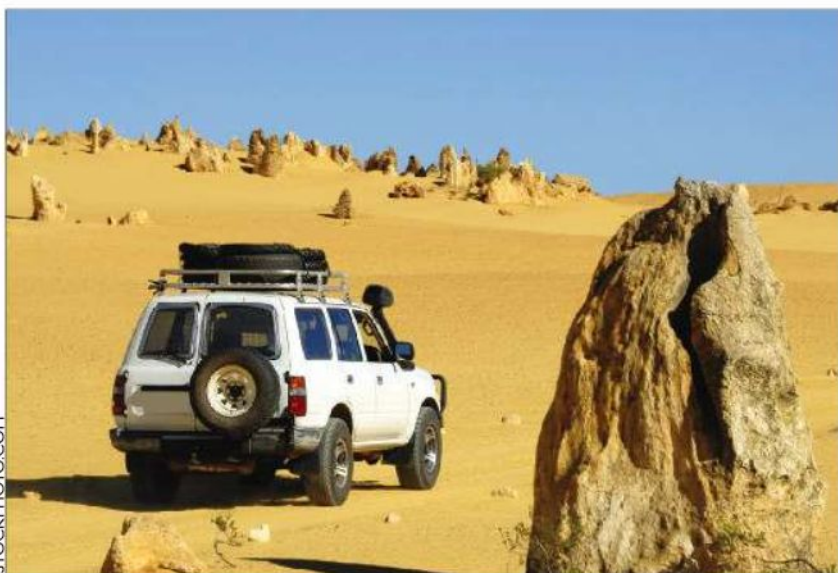
Luckily, Lavinsky, a major mineral dealer from Texas and a friend of Sielecki, was visiting in Australia. He had a customer who he thought would buy the nugget. Conversations ensued and funds were quickly arranged so that this amazing gold nugget could pass into private—and, at this point, anonymous—hands.

Sielecki had one final comment on how this whole transaction went down: "[W]e were proud to say that this deal was actually initiated and carried through the old-fashioned way, with a handshake and word of honor. All parties are proud of the fact that we pulled it off!"

The Ausrox Nugget went on display beginning Oct. 21, 2010 at the Museum of Victoria in Melbourne, Australia. It will be temporarily taken off display to be shown at the Tucson Gem & Mineral Show Feb. 10-13, 2011, then returned to the Museum of Victoria.

Plans are also in the works for the nugget to be displayed at the 2011 Munich, Germany, show in late October and early November. After that, it is scheduled to go on display at the Houston Museum of Natural Science in Texas.

**Editor's Note:** *Rock & Gem* is grateful to Rob Lavinsky, Rob Sielecki, Andy Comas, and the owners of the Ausrox Nugget, known as the Pinnacle Collection, for permission to bring this exclusive article to our readers. Be sure to see this golden marvel at the Tucson Show or when it goes on display in Houston. ♦





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# SHOP TALK

by William A. Kappeler

## Leaverlets

One of the first mineral names I learned when I started collecting rocks was "leaverite". If you have ever done any rock collecting, you have walked over tons of this material and may even have brought some home, because much of it is very pretty. Of course, we all know that leaverite is simply rock that is not suitable for lapidary purposes. It may not take a polish or it may crumble when it is sawn. If we had realized what it was, we would have done what the name asks us to do: "leave 'er right" where you found 'er.

Well, I brought a lot of it home then, and I still do. I'll bet a lot of you do, too. I said it is considered by most as unsuitable for lapidary use, and in many cases it is, but since I hate to throw away anything that is pretty, I set out to find a way to use it. I wanted to make cabochons, and this is hard to do with a rock that is full of fractures, soft spots, and holes. Fortunately, I had one of those *Eureka!* moments. I realized that opal cutters had been doing what I needed to do for ages. They cemented a clear quartz cap to a thin slice of opal—not because the opal was leaverite, but because the color or fire in that piece of opal only existed in a thin layer and would disappear if the stone was cut into a dome. They called the resulting two-layer cabochon a "doublet". At times, when the opal slice was too transparent or translucent, they would cement on an opaque backing piece and called the result a "triplet". Shazam! I was ready to make "leaverlets".

If you would like to try some, here are a few tips to make your life easier. As you cut your thin slice, small pieces may fall off at fracture lines or soft areas may crumble. This can usually be avoided by applying a liberal amount of cyanoacrylate to the face of the rock. This will hold everything together until the cap is cemented on. If you are planning on making a triplet, the backing piece can be cemented onto the face before you begin the cut.

The cap can be cut into the cabochon shape either before or after you cement it to the slice. I have always cut my caps separately, but I can't see how it could make much difference. My biggest problem, when I started doing this, was what to use to cement the caps on. I tried epoxy, cyanoacrylate, Duco lacquer, and several other things. All of them glued the cap on



all right, but the bubbles between the pieces drove me crazy. I finally came across an ultraviolet setting cement that was designed for fixing broken drinking glasses, putting the handles back on cups, etc. It worked like a charm.

The beauty of this stuff is that it does not set until it is exposed to UV light, either from a handheld UV lamp or just good old sunlight. This allows you to move the cap around and even remove it until it is placed right and the bubbles have all been squeezed out. I didn't use a UV lamp, but just took the cab out into the sun for a few seconds. I have cabs around that I made 10 to 15 years ago, and they are still crystal clear and stuck tight. This cement can be found at places like Ace Hardware and is found under the name of Loctite or Duro Clear Glass Adhesive. It comes in a small syringe, which holds enough for a mess of 30 millimeter by 40 millimeter cabs and only costs a couple of dollars.

One final tip: If you are just trying this for fun, you might want to use plain window glass for your dome instead of the much more expensive clear or optical quartz. If you don't have any around, a local glass company will probably give you a ton of cast-off pieces to play with. ❄️

Please feel free to send your questions and comments about any of my columns to Shop Talk, 25231 Pericia Dr., Mission Viejo, CA 92691 or [quappelle@cox.net](mailto:quappelle@cox.net).





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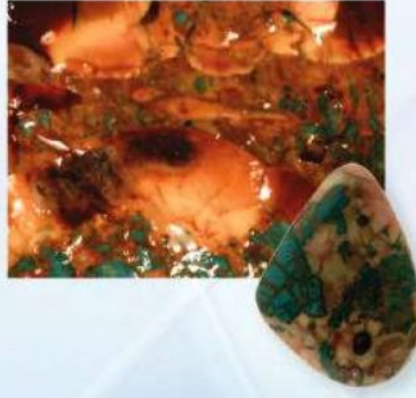
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### ROUGH MATERIAL & CABOCHONS

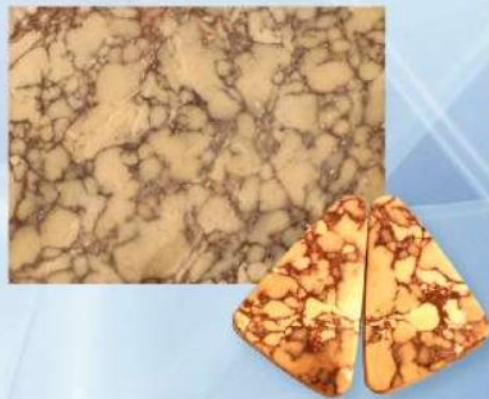
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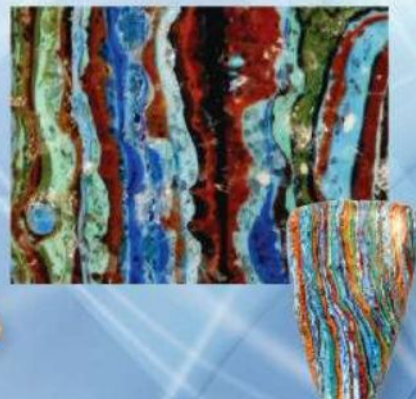
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2. Tucson Gem & Mineral Society, 260 S. Church Street, Tucson AZ Convention Center, Space 16W, Feb 10-13, 2011

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# The ERA of “Four-Figure” Gold

## What It Means for Jewelry, Mining and Specimens

Story and Photos by Steve Voynick

Just 18 months ago, when gold was selling for \$800 per troy ounce, metal-market analysts were debating whether its price would ever top \$1,000. As of late September 2010, gold has topped \$1,300 per ounce and those same analysts are wondering whether the price will ever again drop *below* \$1,000.

Today's four-figure gold prices make me think back to 1972 when I spent a summer sluicing gold out of an Alaskan creek. At the end of the season, I kept an ounce of nuggets and sold 11 ounces of grains and flakes. Although gold had not yet formally become a free-market commodity at that time, speculation had already driven its price to \$120 per troy ounce. Accustomed to the former fixed price of \$35 per ounce, I was quite elated to sell 11 ounces of raw placer gold for \$1,000. But gold prices have since increased more than tenfold and, looking back, I wish that I still had that gold today.

Gold prices of \$1,300 per troy ounce are a record high, but only in terms of numerical-dollar value. The economic high price actually came in 1980, when gold surged above \$800. Adjusting for inflation, that \$800 of 1980 has the purchasing power of \$2,300 today.

But the 1980 gold market has little comparison with today's market. The record price of 1980 was a “spike” driven only by speculation, rather than by supply and demand. And because that spike lasted only a matter of days, it had virtually no effect on the mining and jewelry industries.



**Most of the supply of new gold specimens today comes from specimen mines, which are encouraged by high gold prices. They are financially risky, specialized operations, however, and are few and far between.**

Today, however, gold has remained above \$1,000 for an entire year. Because these four-figure gold prices reflect true market supply and demand, they are having a big impact on everything from the mining and jewelry industries to the market for gold mineral specimens.

While gold-mining companies and gold investors are obviously pleased by high gold prices, that's not the case with jewelers and gold-jewelry manufacturers. Sales of new gold jewelry, which account for 70 percent of total annual gold demand, have declined by one-third during the past 18 months. One reason is that the global economic recession has substantially reduced disposable personal income. Another reason that is of particular concern to the jewelry industry is that gold may be beginning to price itself out of the mainstream jewelry market.

Although consumers have not been buying much new gold jewelry lately, they certainly have been selling their old jewelry. Gold buyers run full-page newspaper ads that offer “top prices” for old, broken, or

out-of-style gold jewelry. And the gold-buying business has been booming, thanks to recession-ravaged customers eager to convert their old gold jewelry into cash.

High gold prices are also calling attention to the precious metal relationship between gold and platinum. Since the 1920s, platinum has almost always been valued substantially higher than gold. When the price of gold was fixed at \$35 per troy ounce, the same amount of platinum was selling for about \$100. When gold prices soared during the 1970s, so did platinum prices, thanks to booming industrial demand for automotive catalyst, those tiny grains of platinum or palladium in automotive catalytic converters that reduce exhaust pollution.

But since the 1970s, gold prices have been slowly catching up to those of platinum. Gold actually overtook platinum briefly in 1994 and again in 2008. And at \$1,300 per troy ounce, gold is once again close to platinum's \$1,520 per troy ounce. Many metal-market analysts believe that gold prices have the potential to surpass



those of platinum within the next few years and to remain higher over a prolonged period, a scenario that could change the public's perception of precious-metal jewelry. Jewelers are already wondering how consumers might react should platinum jewelry become more affordable than gold jewelry. Some believe that the distinctive appeal of yellow gold would endure, even at higher prices; others, however, suggest that the relative affordability of platinum could lure many jewelry buyers away from gold.

Today's four-figure gold prices reflect significant shifts in market supply and demand. Despite lagging jewelry sales, short-term gold demand remains strong as low interest rates continue to turn investors away from paper securities and toward gold coins and bars. Meanwhile, long-term demand is also projected to remain strong because eventual economic recovery promises to boost jewelry sales. Continued global population growth and the rapid emergence in China and India of large consumer middle classes with hearty appetites for gold jewelry are also expected sustain high demand.

But the future *supply* of gold is not nearly as bright. About 40 percent of our annual gold supply comes from central-bank bullion sales and recycled scrap (old jewelry, dental gold, and reclaimed industrial forms). Both of these supply sectors are expected to remain fairly steady. The bulk of our annual gold supply, however, amounting to 60 percent, comes from mine production, and that is falling sharply.

Historic gold-mine production peaked in 2000, when the world's mines turned out 100 million troy ounces (3,110 tonnes) of gold. But global annual mine production has since plummeted to only 75 million troy ounces (2,400 tonnes), a decline of 25 percent in the last 10 years.

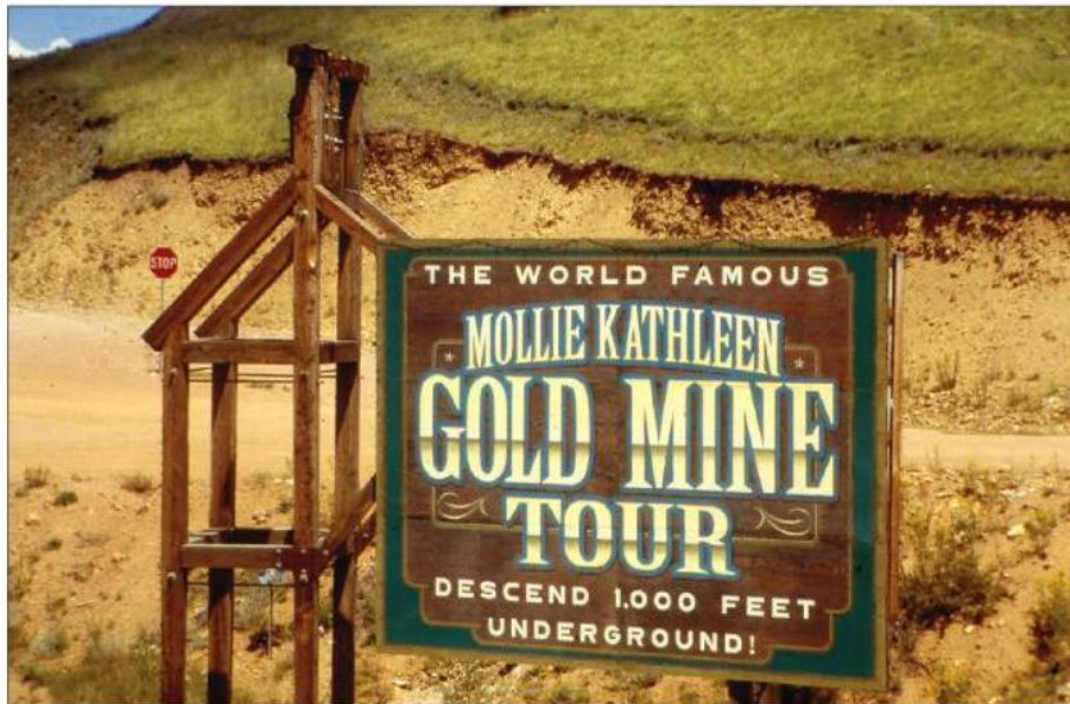
During this time, the output of every major gold-mining nation has declined, with one exception: China. Chinese production has more than doubled from 4 million troy ounces (124 tonnes) to 9 million troy ounces (280 tonnes). But even though China, which is now the world's leading gold producer, will further increase its production over the next decade, it cannot make up for the sharp production declines in other nations.

The United States is among those nations whose gold production is falling. After setting a record 11.7 million troy ounces (364 tonnes) of gold in 2000, U.S. gold-mine output has since fallen to less than 7 million troy ounces (218 tonnes), a drop of 40 percent. But this does not mean that domestic gold-mining companies are hurting. Thanks to soaring gold prices, the value of the U.S. gold production, despite its recent decline in volume, is now at an all-time high—more than \$9 billion per year.



MICHAEL BONDANZA, JEWELRY

High gold prices are not pleasing jewelers, who are uncertain how consumer tastes in precious-metal jewelry might change if gold prices should overtake those of platinum.



As gold prices have risen, public interest in the yellow metal has renewed. This interest is reflected in the record number of tickets that were sold at U.S. gold-mine tour sites in 2010.



In this era of four-figure gold, this 25-troy-ounce nugget from the Klondike River in the historic Klondike Mining District in Canada's Yukon Territory could easily sell for \$60,000.



To capitalize on today's high gold prices, virtually all mines worldwide are working at capacity levels. Nevertheless, production continues to fall because of the inverse, cyclical relationship that exists between gold prices and gold exploration. When high gold prices generate big profits, mining companies spend millions exploring for new deposits. And when low gold prices limit or negate profits, exploration is the first expense to be cut.

Many of today's gold mines are exploiting deposits that were discovered during the late 1970s and '80s, when profits from relatively high gold prices underwrote an exploration rush. But because flat gold prices throughout the 1990s discouraged exploration, older mines are continuing to close and few new mines are coming online.

Backed by today's record profits, mining companies are once again funding exploration activities and have already discovered several new deposits. But mine development takes at least 10 years. Also, most future mines will exploit increasingly low-grade ores, some containing just 0.005 troy ounces of gold per ton, meaning that more than 500 tons of ore will have to be mined and processed to recover a single ounce of gold. Considering declining future ore grades, along with additional mine closures, world gold production will probably never again approach the record levels of 2000, at least not with conventional mining methods.

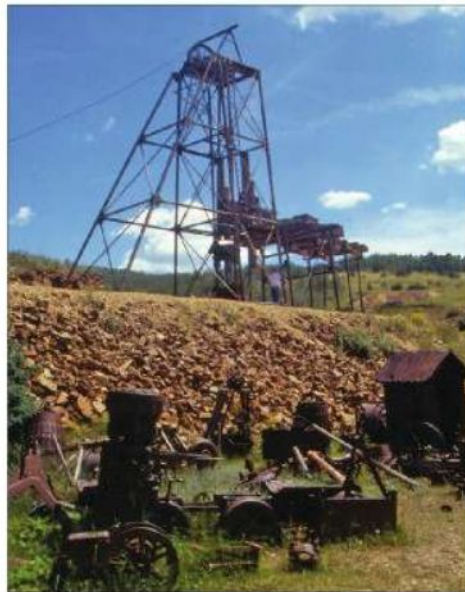
Thanks to today's four-figure gold prices, small-scale and recreational gold mining are booming. Gold claims, small mines, and properties in historic gold-mining districts are selling for record prices, and with good reason: the profit potential in small-scale gold mining has never been higher. High gold prices have also revived some of the intrigue and romance of the yellow metal, as reflected in the record number of tickets sold during 2010 at gold-mine tour sites across the West.

And high gold prices have already impacted the market for gold mineral specimens. With gold-specimen prices at all-time highs, many collectors are thinking twice about acquiring gold specimens, while more dealers are promoting specimens as "good investments".

Four-figure gold prices clearly impart a new relevance to the financial aspect of collecting gold specimens, which must not be confused with such conventional gold-investment forms as coins and bars. Gold mineral specimens are unique items with values based primarily on mineralogical interest, rarity, and aesthetic appeal, and only secondarily on gold content. That means that gold mineral specimens are really an investment in one's ability to assess a specimen's overall collector appeal. Acquiring gold specimens as financial investments de-



**The direction of modern gold mining is toward fewer, large, open-pit mines exploiting very low-grade ores that yield relatively few collectible gold specimens.**



**Today's high gold prices make even previously neglected, low-grade ores profitable, so historic gold-mining districts are receiving new exploration attention.**

mands a thorough knowledge of specimens and the intricacies of the specimen market.

Gold mineral specimens can be appealing from the investment standpoint because their value always exceeds that of their contained gold, a factor that some collector-investors equate with financial leverage. Small nuggets, as an example, are generally worth twice the value of their contained gold, while larger nuggets—especially those with unusual origins, histories or shapes—are worth even more. And fine lode specimens of crystallized gold-in-quartz can easily sell for five or even 10 times the value of their contained gold.

Another investment appeal of gold mineral specimens is the unusual relationship of their value to gold prices. While specimen prices tend to rise quickly with rising bullion prices, they remain more or less stable when bullion prices decline, thus providing

some degree of protection from a weak bullion market.

The downside to acquiring gold mineral specimens as a financial investment is poor liquidity. Gold coins and bars are readily convertible to cash, but gold mineral specimens can be sold for full value only to a limited number of other collectors.

The literal "golden age" for the production of fine gold specimens occurred more than a century ago when a host of small underground mines worked vein-type, high-grade gold deposits. But not many high-grade gold mines operate today, and relatively few fine lode-gold specimens are recovered from modern, low-grade, open pit mines. The direction of the gold-mining industry toward fewer large mines that exploit lower-grade ores does not offer great promise for the future supply of gold mineral specimens.

Most new gold specimens today come from specimen mines. While today's high gold and gold-specimen prices certainly encourage specimen mining, the mines themselves are financially risky, specialized operations that are few and far between.

Although today's high prices are discouraging some low-end buyers, high-end collectors continue to acquire fine gold specimens. Anticipating a tight future supply, some collectors believe that the time to acquire gold specimens is now, as they may never again be this affordable. If so, then gold mineral specimens, when wisely selected, will indeed amount to a solid financial investment.

Like the metal itself, the statistics of gold are intriguing. Through 2010, an estimated 5.3 billion troy ounces (165,000 tonnes) of gold have been mined throughout history. About 85 percent of this gold, or 4.5 billion troy ounces (144,000 tonnes), is still in existence. According to the World Gold Council, 52 percent exists as jewelry, 17 percent as publicly held investment coins and bars, 18 percent as central-bank bullion reserves, and 13 percent as fabricated industrial forms. This is enough for everyone alive on earth today to have just over 0.6 troy ounce.

When discussing gold in terms of millions of troy ounces and thousands of tonnes, a visual perspective can be both interesting and helpful. One tonne (metric ton) of gold, which contains exactly 32,150.72 troy ounces, will occupy a cube measuring just 15 inches on a side. Yet its value, based on the current market price of \$1,300 per troy ounce, amounts to \$41.8 million.

Looking to the future, most—but not all—analysts agree that four-figure gold prices are here to stay and could even rise substantially during 2011, perhaps surpassing the \$1,600 level. This might be a good time to take another look at those gold mineral specimens you've been interested in before their prices *really* go up. ♦



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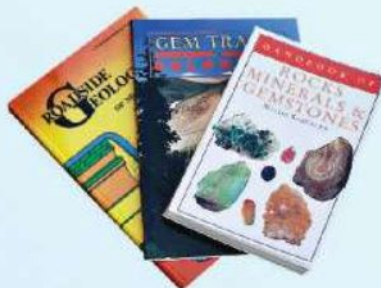
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**1-28—QUARTZSITE, ARIZONA:** Show, "Desert Gardens International Gem & Mineral Show"; Desert Gardens RV Park; 1064 Kuehn St. (I-10 Exit 17, south side); 9-6 daily; free admission; crystals, minerals, rough, polished, jewelry, lapidary equipment; contact Sharon or Sandy, 1064 Kuehn St., Quartzsite, AZ 85346, (928) 927-6361; e-mail: info@desertgardensrvpark.net; Web site: www.desertgardensrvpark.net

**4-6—ROSEVILLE, CALIFORNIA:** Show; Gem Faire Inc.; Placer County Fairgrounds, 800 All America City Blvd.; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$7 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

**10-13—TUCSON, ARIZONA:** Show; Tucson Gem & Mineral Society; Tucson Convention Center, 260 S. Church St.; Thu. 10-6, Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$10, seniors and active military \$2 off Fri. admission, children under 14 free with adult; contact TGMS, P.O. Box 42588, Tucson, AZ 85733, (520) 322-5773; e-mail: tgms@tgms.org; Web site: www.tgms.org

**11-13—SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA:** Show; Gem Faire Inc.; Santa Monica Civic Auditorium, 1855 Main St.; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$7 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

**12-13—MERRITT ISLAND, FLORIDA:** 34th annual show, "Symphony of Gemstones"; Central Brevard Rock & Gem Club; Kiwanis Island, Merritt Island Causeway; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; adults \$3, children 12 and under free with adult; demonstrations, silent auction, exhibits, grand prize, lapidary supplies and equipment, gemstones, jewelry, beads, rocks, minerals, hourly door prizes; contact Ray Huntington, (321) 799-8536; e-mail: bdewey@cfl.rr.com

**12-13—OAK HARBOR, WASHINGTON:** 46th annual show, "Sweetheart of Gems"; Whidbey Island Gem Club; Oak Harbor Senior Center, 51 SE Jerome St.; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-4; contact Keith Ludemann, (360) 675-1837; e-mail: rock9@whidbey.net

**18-20—SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA:** Show; Gem Faire Inc.; Earl Warren Showgrounds/Exhibit Hall, 3400 Calle Real; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$7 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

**18-20—SARASOTA, FLORIDA:** Show; Frank Cox Productions; Municipal Auditorium, 801 N. Tamiami Tr. (Hwy. 41); Fri. 10-5, Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; gems, jewelry, beads; contact Frank Cox Productions, 755 S. Palm Ave. #203, Sarasota, FL 34236, (941) 954-0202; e-mail: frankcox@comcast.net; Web site: www.frankcoxproductions.com

**18-27—INDIO, CALIFORNIA:** Show, "Riverside County Fair & National Date Festival"; San Geronio Mineral & Gem Society; Riverside County Fair & National Date Festival, Gem & Mineral Bldg., 46-350 Arabia St.; 10-10 daily; adults \$8, seniors \$7, students \$6, children free; 16 dealers, 108 lapidary display cases, lapidary demonstrations, geode cutting and sales; contact Bert Grisham, 1029 N. 8th St., Banning, CA 92220, (951) 849-1674; e-mail: bert67@verizon.net

**19—UPPER MARLBORO, MARYLAND:** 21st annual show; Southern Maryland Rock & Mineral Club; The Show Place Arena, 14900 Pennsylvania Ave.; Sat. 10-5; admission \$3, children 6 and under free; vendors, minerals, fossils, gems, original jewelry designs, exhibitors, demonstrations, faceting, bead stringing, wire wrapping, gold panning, children's crafts, door prizes; contact Michael Patterson, 11000 Thrift Rd., Clinton, MD 20735, (301) 297-4575; e-mail: michael.patterson@pgparks.com; Web site: www.smmrc.org/index.html

**19-20—ANTIOCH, CALIFORNIA:** Show; Antioch Lapidary Club; Contra Costa Fairgrounds, 1201 W. 10th St.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; adults \$3, children 12 and under, active military with ID, and Scouts in uniform free; jewelry, gems, findings, supplies, tools, auction, grab bags, exhibits, demonstrations, kids' projects; contact Brenda Miguel, 800 Bluerock Dr., Antioch, CA 94509, (925) 301-6957; e-mail: brenda.miguel@yahoo.com; Web site: www.antiochlapidaryclub.tripod.com

**19-20—MESA, ARIZONA:** Show, "2011: Rocks From Heaven"; Apache Junction Rock & Gem Club; Skyline High School, 845 S. Crismon Rd.; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 10-4; adults \$3, students \$1, children under 12 free; vendors, jewelry, gemstones, cabochons, rocks, minerals, fossils, beads, findings, lapidary equipment, lapidary supplies, silent auction,

continued on page 32

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JAN. 21, 22, 23	HILLSBORO, OR
JAN. 28, 29, 30	SAN RAFAEL, CA
FEB. 4, 5, 6	ROSEVILLE, CA
FEB. 11, 12, 13	SANTA MONICA, CA
FEB. 12 & 13	SAN DIEGO, CA
FEB. 18, 19, 20	SANTA BARBARA, CA
FEB. 25, 26, 27	COSTA MESA, CA
MAR. 4, 5, 6	DEL MAR, CA
MAR. 11, 12, 13	PLEASANTON, CA
MAR. 18, 19, 20	HILLSBORO, OR

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# What Is a "Psammophile"?

## These Rock Collectors Delight in the Smallest Specimens

Story and Photos by Rich Huck



Sand collecting can be a fascinating aspect of the mineral collecting hobby.

Since my early childhood, rock collecting has been an important hobby to me. As a native of St. Louis, I have spent many hours searching for fossils in the dolomite and limestone

of eastern Missouri, as well as for Missouri Lace agate in the Ozark Mountains. However, there is another facet of rock collecting that is not well known: sand collecting!

According to the article "What Is Sand?", by Thomas J. Hopen ([www.sandcollectors.org/What\\_is\\_Sandx.html](http://www.sandcollectors.org/What_is_Sandx.html)) of the International Sand Collectors Society, "sedimentologists define sand as a loose, rounded to angular rock fragment of mineral grain. These grains are particles liberated by the mechanical disintegration of parental rock, shell or shell fragments (also coral or coral fragments), or chemical precipitates (evaporates or oolites) occurring in nature and distinguishable by the naked eye. A sand sample can be described in terms of grain size, color, composition, durability, severity of weather conditions, transport distance from its site of origin, and physical sorting by wind or water."

Hopen states that there are three main categories of sand: **mineral sands**, formed by the breakdown of rocks; **biogenic sands**, composed of the remnants of shells, corals, or other living organisms; and **precipitated sands**, formed from solutions.

Particles of sand range in size from 0.0025 inch to 0.079 inch. Larger grains than these are called "gravel", while smaller particles are called "silt". Sand is gritty when rubbed between the fingers, while silt feels like flour. There are five categories of sand according to the Wentworth Particle Size Classification System:

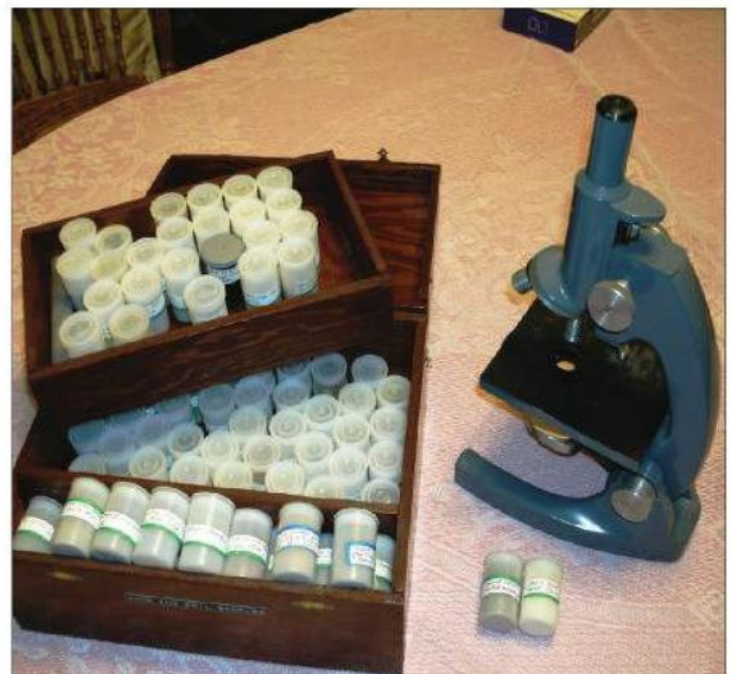
Very Fine (0.0025 inch–0.0049 inch in diameter)

Fine (0.0049 inch–0.010 inch)

Medium (0.010 inch–0.020 inch)

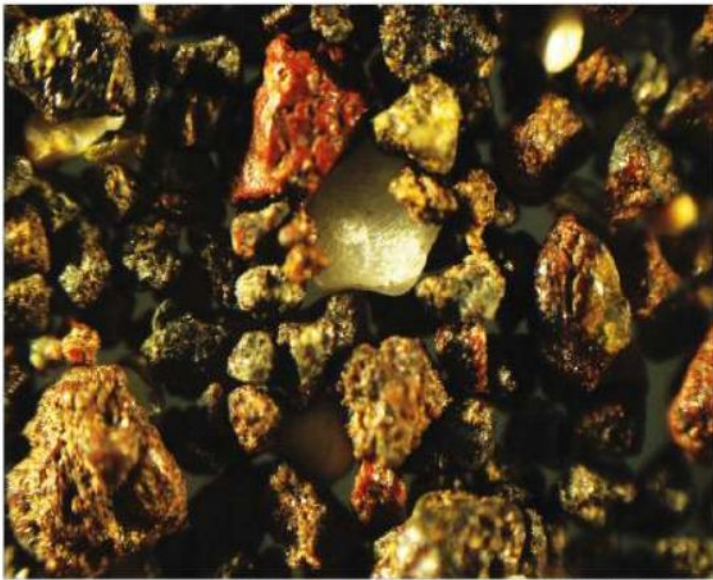
Coarse (0.020 inch–0.039 inch)

Very Coarse (0.039 inch–0.079 inch)



I like to keep my sand samples in old film canisters that are carefully labeled with the collection site.





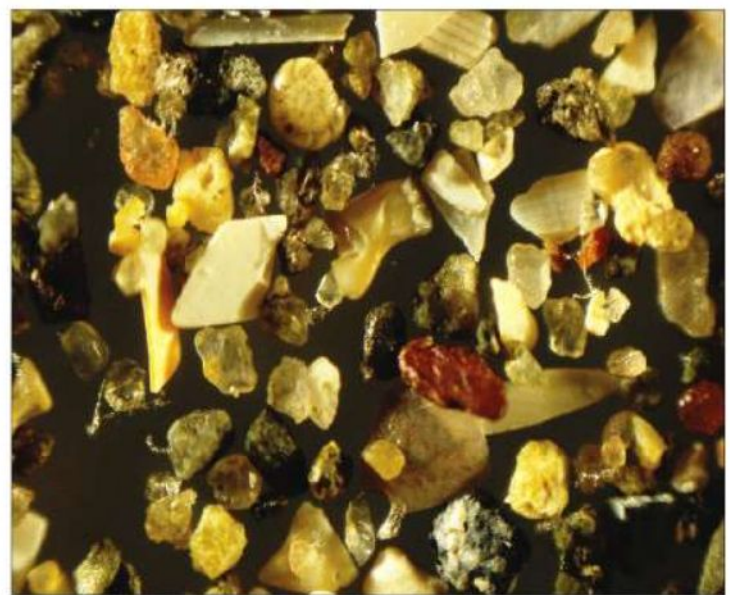
These angular igneous grains were found at a beach in Hawaii. Unfortunately, the friend who gave them to me did not record the name of the beach.



This sample from another unnamed beach in Hawaii contains rounded and angular olivine, quartz and igneous grains.



The beach sand I collected at Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, consists of polished, angular grains of clear, milky and rose quartz in a variety of sizes.



This mixture of mineral and biogenic sands from the Irish Sea north of Dublin, Eire, has grains of quartz, jasper, and igneous materials, and pieces of shells and corals.

Sand is available in infinite varieties in every county, state and country. Most often, sand is composed of quartz grains, with or without fragments of silt, pulverized shells and coral, or rock such as feldspar, obsidian, diorite, granite, glauconite, etc. Some sands are deposited by running water, while others are deposited by wind action. If the grains have been recently weathered from quartz crystals in granite or gneiss, they will be angular in shape; geologists call this type of sand "grus", while in the construction business it is called "sharp sand". These angular grains are the preferred type of sand for making concrete or for loosening clay soils in gardening. Other grains that have been transported long distances by water or wind will be rounded. Sand from some formations, such as the St. Peters Sandstone formation in eastern Missouri, contains a very high percentage of pure silica and has been used for many years for making glass. Crystal City, Missouri,

**Stones** are primordial matter. **Sand** is matter ground by the infinity of time. It makes one mindful of eternity. Sand is matter, which has been transferred and has almost become *liquid* and *spiritual*.

—Author Unknown

Source: [www.sandcollectors.org/What\\_is\\_Sandx.html](http://www.sandcollectors.org/What_is_Sandx.html)

got its name from the glass industry associated with the St. Peters formation. It is interesting to note that, in certain areas of St. Louis County and St. Charles County, this same formation lies underground. The Laclede Gas Co., of St. Louis, has drilled into the formation and pumped natural gas into it for storage.



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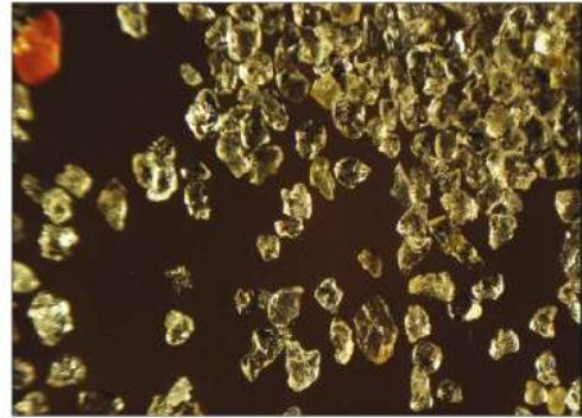
## "Psammophile"? from page 27

"Arenology" is the study of sand, and "arenophiles" (from the Latin word *arenosus*, meaning "sandy" or "gritty") or "psammophiles" (from the Greek word *psamos*, meaning "sand") are hobbyists and scientists who collect and study sand. Sand can be easily collected from streams, dunes, sand bars, spits and beaches. I like to use old film canisters for my collection, each labeled with the location where the sample was found. I have collected many samples myself, while others were given to me by friends. The samples are fascinating when viewed through a microscope.

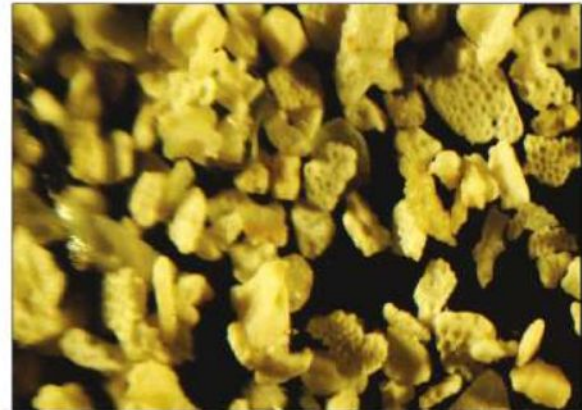
I particularly like collecting sand from sand dunes. Dunes are fascinating. It is interesting to just close your eyes and listen to the tinkling sands as they are blown by the winds. Dunes are never stationary, but always moving. They are referred to as "aeolian" deposits, which means "wind blown", and they can be found along shorelines, along stream courses in semiarid regions, where sandstones have deteriorated, and in areas of glacial outwash. They are found in the areas of the Great Lakes, marking both present and past shorelines. A stream in a semiarid region varies greatly in volume due to floods, and at dry times, great expanses of the stream bed are exposed to wind action. Thus, dunes are found along the leeward sides of the Platte, Arkansas and Missouri rivers.

The Sand Hills region of Nebraska covers almost 24,000 square miles. White Sands, New Mexico, is the world's largest gypsum sand dune field, covering approximately 275 square miles. Dunes are longer on the windward side, where the sand is pushed up the dune, while the "slip face" on the leeward side is shorter. A "slack" is the trough between dunes. An area covered by extensive dunes is called a "dune field", while a large dune field is called an "erg". Dry inland regions contain the largest complexes of dunes, which are associated with former lake or sea beds. The shapes of dunes vary and can be described as crescentic, linear, star, dome, parabolic, longitudinal or reversing. They provide homes for highly specialized plants and animals, some of which are endangered and/or rare.

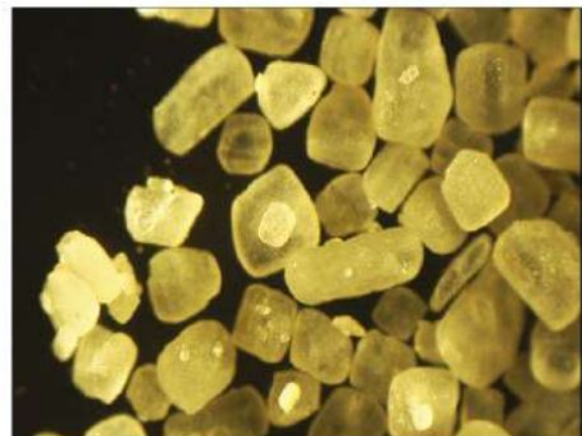
Beaches, too, are fun places to collect. Most people at the beach do their share of "beachcombing", which mostly consists of collecting shells. Beaches are defined as coastal deposits of debris that lie above the low-tide limit in the shore zone. They are transitory features. Though beaches are sandy, they may also consist of cobbles, pebbles, shells, mud, or a combination of these. The Pacific Ocean beaches in Oregon and Washington are well known for the ag-



The sands from Daytona Beach, Florida, consist of clear, angular quartz grains.



This sample from Cabo Rojo Beach, Puerto Rico, consists of ground-up coral and shell fragments and is an example of a "biogenic sand".

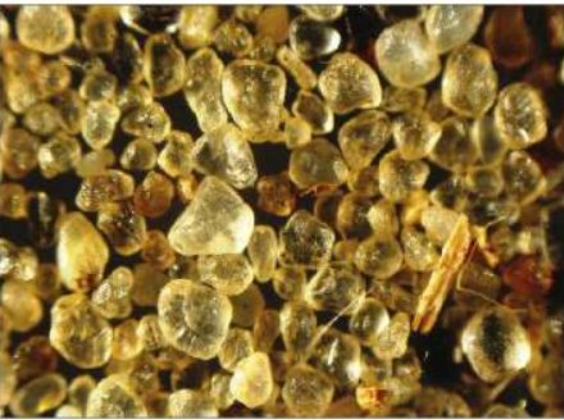


The dunes at White Sands, New Mexico, consist of tabular grains of gypsum that precipitated out of a solution and were blown there from a dry lakebed.

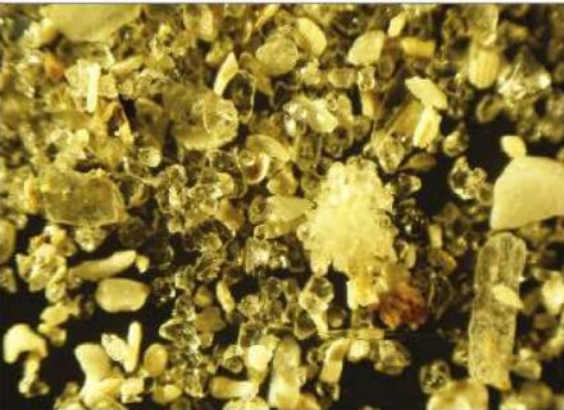


Beach sand from Nadi in the Fiji Islands contains well rounded and highly polished quartz grains.





Sand from Nebraska's Sand Hills shows mostly clear, rounded quartz grains, with some igneous materials.



From Blackpool, England, on the Irish Sea, came these angular grains of clear and milky quartz, with some "clusters" of quartz grains.



A friend collected these grains of angular and rounded quartz, along with angular pieces of limestone from the Valley of the Kings in Luxor, Egypt.



The sands at Waikiki Beach in Hawaii contain both angular and rounded grains of milky quartz.

ates found on them. Beaches are composed of different parts. The "beach berm" is the area located mostly above water, depending upon the tide, and is actively influenced by the waves of the tides. A "crest" exists at the top of the berm, while the "face" is the area leading from the crest down to the water. A "trough" often exists at the bottom of the face, and seaward of this you may find "longshore bars". Due to the waves caused by severe storms, there may be older crests, called the "storm beach", farther inland. Farther back still, there may be dunes, if there is enough wind.

Being a trout fisherman, I have always loved streams. I keep several old film canisters in my fishing vest for collecting sand while fishing. Whether they are small, intermittent creeks or large rivers like the Mississippi, the collecting can be great. A stream is defined as a flowing stretch of water confined within banks and a bed. The water for streams can come from springs, rain run-off, or melting snow and ice. At times of flood, the flood plain of a stream can expand greatly, and then be reduced significantly during dry times. A dry flood plain becomes a great location for wind-blown sands to accumulate and form dunes, as previously mentioned.

For viewing, I simply put a small sample of grains (perhaps 1/4 inch in radius) on a microscope slide and view it through the eyepiece. When viewing sand through a microscope, it is best to use lighting that shines onto the sand from above rather than from below. If it is illuminated from below, you will see the silhouettes of the grains, but miss the colors. Sometimes, depending on the composition of the sample, it might be better to use a black or white opaque card rather than a glass microscope slide, with lighting from above.

The photographs accompanying this article were taken at I.S.O. 200 through a microscope at 100X magnification. They are all samples of mineral sands, except where noted. Each of the samples shown is unique in its own way and each shows the diversity found in a common, natural substance few ever think about—unless you're a psammophile like me!

Sand collecting is a fascinating hobby. For more information, visit the Web site of the International Sand Collectors Society, [www.sandcollectors.org](http://www.sandcollectors.org). I would appreciate receiving any sand samples readers might wish to send me. A small film canister or a baggie full, marked with the location at which the sample was collected, would be greatly appreciated. Please mail it to Rich Huck, 16243 Fullerton Meadows Dr., Wildwood, MO 63011. ♡

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# ROCK SCIENCE

## Navajún Pyrite



Pyrite's affordability, availability, aesthetic appeal, and superb crystal development put it among the most collectible of all minerals. Pyrite (or iron disulfide), the most abundant sulfide mineral, occurs worldwide in countless localities. Fine specimens come from Peru, Bolivia, Australia, and the United States, but many collectors believe that those with the brightest luster, sharpest edges, and most perfect cubic form come from Navajún, a tiny village in northeastern Spain.

Archaeologists have recovered Navajún pyrite crystals as individual cubes and as decorative mosaics consisting of hundreds of inlaid crystals from 1,000-year-old cultural sites. Although Navajún pyrite was first described in detail in mineralogical literature in 1910, it remained little more than a mineralogical curiosity until commercial collectors and dealers began marketing specimens in the late 1960s.

Unlike most pyrite specimens, which crystallize directly from hydrothermal solutions in vein-type environments, Navajún pyrite formed through the low-grade metamorphism of sedimentary rock. During the late Jurassic Period—some 140 million years ago—the Navajún region was a warm, coastal floodplain that supported a profusion of life. Over millions of years, marine sediments accumulated into thick formations consisting of alternating strata of sandstone, limestone and marlstone, a type of calcareous clay rich in organic matter.

Eventual burial to a depth of 2,500 feet subjected these strata to elevated pressures and temperatures of about 400 degrees F, and subsequent low-grade metamorphism produced an altered marlstone consisting mainly of clay, calcite, and quartz-based sediments. This metamorphism also produced conditions that favored the growth of remarkable pyrite crystals.


With an abundant supply of iron from the inorganic sediments and sulfur from the organic remains, pyrite crystals grew in profusion. Their exceptional development and uniform dissemination throughout the marlstone matrix indicates that metamorphism was followed by a long, slow period of cooling that optimized crystal growth.

Much later, tectonic stresses uplifted this region and surface erosion eventually exposed the pyrite-rich strata of altered marlstone. The Navajún pyrite deposit consists of three steeply inclined marlstone strata, each measuring 6 to 10 feet thick and having different degrees of oxidation and pyrite-crystal morphology.

Navajún pyrite occurs as isolated, single crystals and groups of intergrown crystals, both with nearly perfect development. During the metamorphism of the marlstone strata, tiny, evenly disseminated pyrite particles apparently acted as seeds for the slow growth of larger crystals. Even in clusters, many individual crystals appear to have grown from common seed particles. These crystals range in size from 0.05 microns (a micron is one-millionth of a meter) to nearly 8 inches. The pyrite habit is almost exclusively cubic, with small octahedrons appearing only rarely on the corners of the cubes.

The extraordinary crystal development of Navajún pyrite is also partly due to unusual chemical purity—more than 99 percent iron and sulfur. The few impurities present, mainly trace amounts of nickel, cobalt, silver and gold, are not enough to significantly modify the basic cubic structure.

The smooth, mirrorlike crystal faces with few striations indicate nearly perfect internal crystal lattices. Because of the combination of high chemical purity and "textbook" crystal structure, Navajún pyrite has exceptional chemical stability and resists atmospheric oxidation much better than pyrite from other localities. Mineralogists prefer Navajún pyrite for studying the chemistry of pyrite oxidation.

Navajún will certainly remain a classic pyrite locality. Collectors will continue to acquire Navajún specimens not only for their aesthetic appeal and superb crystal development, but for purity and unusual metamorphic genesis. 

Steve Voynick is a science writer, mineral collector, former hardrock miner, and the author of books like *Colorado Rockhounding* and *New Mexico Rockhounding*.



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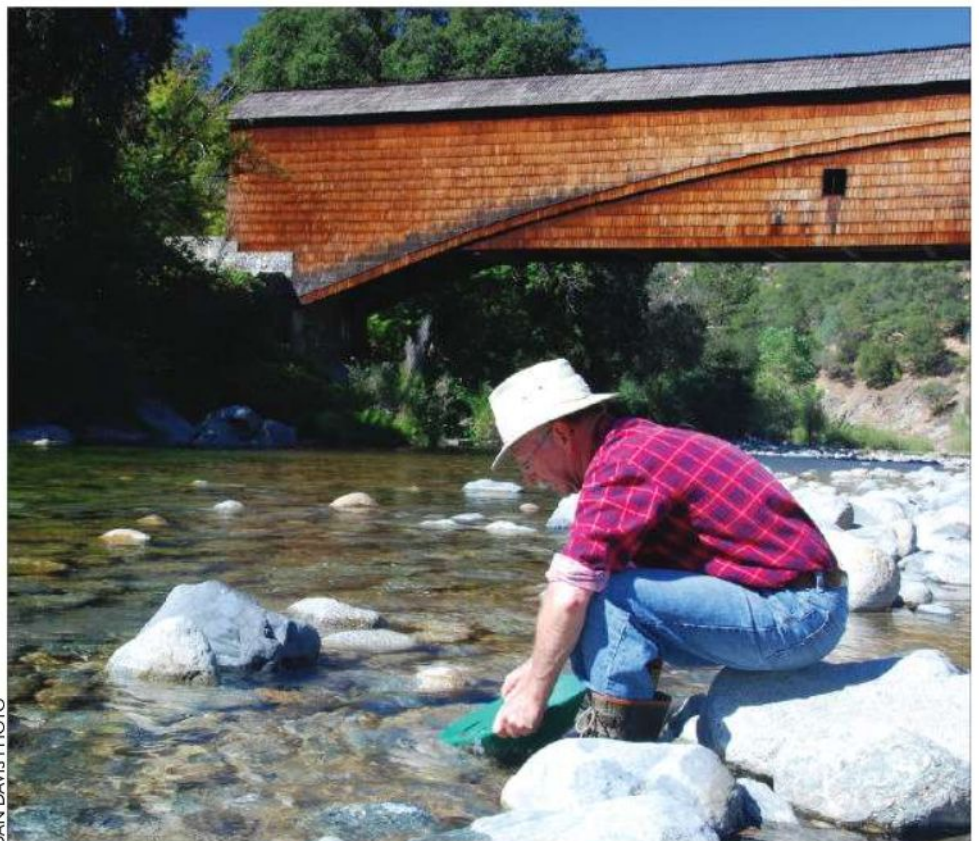
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# Bridgeport GOLD

## Panning Opportunities along the South Yuba River



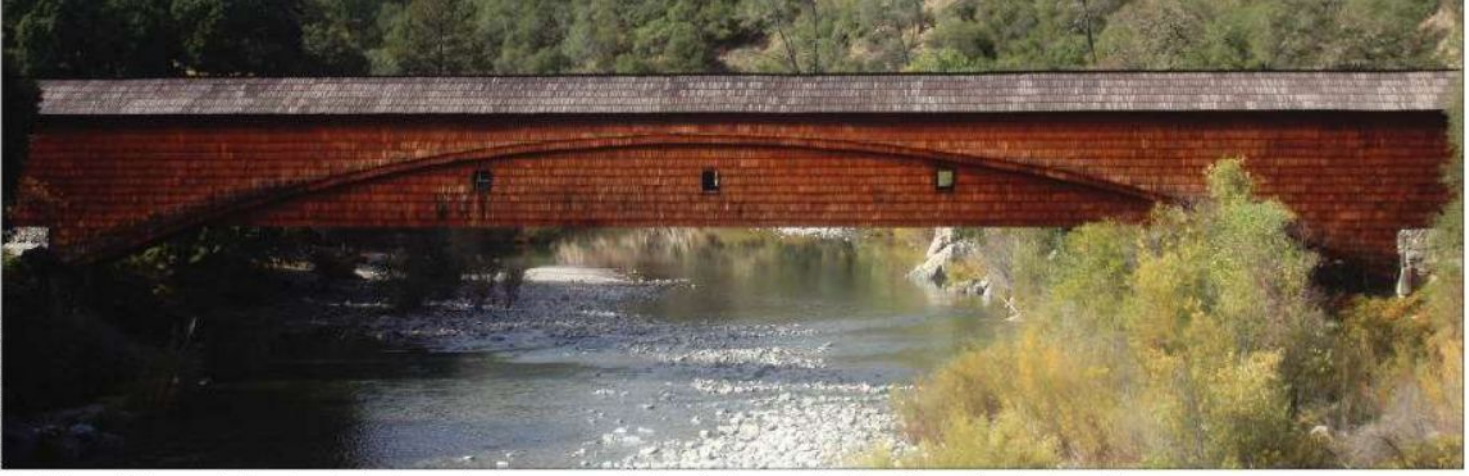
DAN DAVIS PHOTO

Gold panning is a popular activity at the Bridgeport section of South Yuba River State Park.

Story by Marc Davis

**J**onas Spect is credited with discovering gold at Rose's Bar on the Yuba River in California in 1848, just a few months after the historic gold discovery on the American River that same year. Spect's discovery was made on the main body of the Yuba, downstream from what is now Englebright Lake. By 1850, more than 2,000 miners were searching for gold at Rose's Bar.





The bridge at Bridgeport is thought to be the longest single span covered bridge of this type in the United States, if not in the world.

A few miles upstream, on the South Fork of the Yuba, gold was soon being mined at an area that is now known as Bridgeport. One of the early miners was Captain William Thompson. In 1849, Thompson and his wife, Mary Ann, found themselves stranded in San Francisco. Thompson's crew had abandoned their ship and headed for the newly discovered gold fields in hopes of getting rich quickly. With no crew to man his ship, Thompson and Mary Ann made their way to the Bridgeport area, where he was thought to be one of the first to engage in mining activities. They decided to stay and soon started a cattle ranch.

Records show that mining activities continued in and around this area for many years. In the 1880s and '90s, the Five Star Drift mine was operating just downstream from Bridgeport. Upstream were a number of rich hydraulic mines like the operations at French Corral, where a 7.5-carat diamond, reported to be the largest known to have come from California, was found in a sluice box.

In his 2008 self-published book *The River*, author Hank Meals informs the reader that a stacked-stone structure located about a mile upstream of the Bridgeport river crossing was used for cooking by a small company of Chinese placer miners back in the day. Meals also reports that, in the 1930s, a local land owner by the name of Alfred Kneebone would purchase gold from the "local snipers" and resell it in town for a small profit.

With all this mining history associated with the Bridgeport area, it's no wonder that panning for gold is still a popular activity here. Today, Bridgeport is part of the South Yuba River State Park. The park encompasses a number of separate areas on the river extending upstream from Englebright Lake for about 20 miles. A number of activities are available to park visitors, including gold panning.

Panning demonstrations are given free of charge at the Bridgeport visitor center, located on Pleasant Valley Road next to the covered



MARC DAVIS PHOTO

A few pans of river gravel from near the bridge yielded a small number of gold flakes.

bridge, on weekends from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Panning troughs have been constructed on site to let park visitors sharpen their panning skills. The troughs are filled with gravel that has been salted with gold, silver, and polished stones. Visitors are welcome to try their hand at recovering some of these treasures. Volunteer docents are on hand to provide the panning demonstrations, lend gold pans to those who need them, and to coach visitors who need help with their panning technique. Children are especially welcome. Lucky panners get to keep what they find.

In addition to the panning troughs, panning for gold in the river is permitted year round. Although high water may make this activity difficult in the winter, it is possible to pan for gold here most of the year. Gold panning kits are available for purchase at the park visitor center when it is open.

The South Yuba River State Park section at Bridgeport covers about two miles of river. Point Defiance is located about a mile downstream from the park's visitor center and is accessible via a loop trail that follows the South Fork of the Yuba River to its confluence with the main body of the Yuba at Englebright Lake.

Another trail that starts near the visitor center is the Buttermilk Bend Trail. This trail extends more than a mile upriver. This gives the panner plenty of territory to cover. However, there are some restrictions on panning that make things a bit tough. The State Park has a "pans and hands only" rule, meaning that sluice boxes, small shovels, and even hand trowels and crevicing tools are not allowed. "Pans and hands only" means exactly that.

These restrictions make finding nuggets difficult, even for experienced panners. Since gold is heavy, it generally sinks to the bedrock, where it is often trapped in nooks, crannies and crevices in the rock. Experienced panners know that these crevices are the most likely places to find gold nuggets. It becomes a real challenge



MARC DAVIS PHOTO

A gold pan with straight sides works well and can be used effectively as a digging tool in "pans and hands only" locations.





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MARC DAVIS PHOTO

Visitors can enjoy many activities at Bridgeport besides panning for gold. During the Ghosts of Bridgeport celebration visitors can hop on a wagon and experience a portion of the historic Virginia Turnpike.

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when a promising crevice is uncovered, but even something as nondestructive as a whisk broom or a 1/4-inch-wide scoop cannot be used to get into the bottom of the crack to clean out the gold. That being said, I have still spent many hours of enjoyable panning along this stretch of river. Bridgeport is a great spot to take new panners to enjoy a leisurely day by the river, pan for gold, and take in the other activities that the park has to offer, including a stroll across the elegant covered bridge for which the park is famous.

Just upstream from this bridge, gold can be found in the exposed river gravel, but I have never found more than just a few small flakes in this area. Generally, I hike farther upstream and look for locations in which natural eddies form in the river, since gold is more likely to be deposited there. Because crevicing is not practical without the use of small tools, I usually look for gravel deposits on the downstream sides of boulders or large rocks when I'm at Bridgeport. Sometimes, I will use a square pan for digging since its straight edges work better for this activity than the edges of my round pan. I confine my digging to areas below the normal high-water mark, I do not disturb any vegetation, and I fill in my holes before I leave the area. My efforts in the upstream areas of Bridgeport have resulted in finding numerous specks of gold along with varying amounts of small flakes and occasionally larger pieces.

I have noticed that some of the river pools far upstream look like ideal locations for underwater sniping. This activity entails



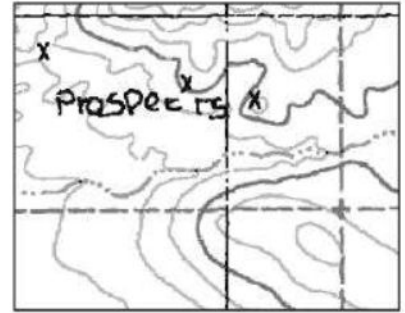
MARC DAVIS PHOTO

Docents like Ginny Brown helps young prospectors recover gold, silver, and polished stones from the pay dirt in the panning booths.

putting on a wetsuit, mask and snorkel, and then locating some shallow bedrock underwater. Then, simply fan away the overburden with your hands and look for nuggets! Again, do not use any tools when conducting this activity.



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South Yuba River State Park  
at Bridgeport

Another potential area for finding gold is the mile or so of river that is downstream from the bridge. I have hiked down to Point Defiance on numerous occasions, but I have yet to take along a pan. This area also could yield some gold to a lucky prospector.

The covered bridge itself is the focal point of the park. Constructed in 1862, it was an engineering marvel for its time. Utilizing Howe truss and Burr arch construction, it is thought to be the longest single-span covered bridge in the United States, if not the world. The bridge is 229 feet long overall and spans 208 feet from abutment to abutment. It is covered with approximately 27,000 sugar pine shingles. When originally constructed, the bridge served as a toll crossing and was part of a section of toll road owned by the Virginia Turnpike Company. The road and bridge became part of a heavily used route to transport supplies to the Comstock Lode in Virginia

City, Nevada, where rich silver deposits were discovered.

Bridgeport is located approximately 28 miles northeast of Yuba City, California. Take state Route 20 east to Penn Valley, then take Pleasant Valley Road north 7.8 miles to the park. The park can also be reached from state Route 49 north of Nevada City by turning onto Pleasant Valley Road at Sweetland. This intersection is known locally as Peterson's Corner. Pleasant Valley Road is paved, but it is narrow with many turns.

The town offers many activities other than gold panning, including hiking, wildflower and bird walks, history talks, swimming at the family beach or in remote river pools, and the Living History and Ghosts of Bridgeport celebrations. For current park hours, schedules of events, and other information, write to the South Yuba River Park Association, 17660 Pleasant Valley Road, Penn Valley, CA 95946, call (530) 432-2546, or visit [www.southyubariverstatepark.org](http://www.southyubariverstatepark.org).





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## Show Dates from page 32

### MARCH 2011

**5-6—ARCADIA, CALIFORNIA:** Show; Monrovia Rockhounds Inc.; LA County Arboretum, Ayres Hall, 301 N. Baldwin Ave., 1 block south of 210 Fwy.; Sat. 9-4:30, Sun. 9-4:30; adults \$8, seniors and students \$6, children \$3; more than 10 dealers, minerals, gems, jewelry, beads, findings, fossils, club geode cracking, Grab Bags, Treasure Wheel, Dino Dig, Fossil Find, prize drawings, grand prize raffle; contact Jo Anna Ritchey, 224 Oaks Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016, (626) 359-1624; e-mail: joannaritchey@gmail.com; Web site: [www.moroks.com](http://www.moroks.com)

**5-6—BIG SPRING, TEXAS:** 42nd annual show; Big Spring Prospectors Club; Howard County Fair Barn; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 10-5; free admission; gems, minerals, jewelry, dealers, demonstrations, displays, spinning wheel, hourly prizes, jewelry repair, stone setting; contact Jerald Wilson, 707 Tulane, Big Spring, TX 79720, (432) 263-4662, or Lola Lamb, (432) 263-3340

**5-6—CALDWELL, IDAHO:** 57th annual show; Owyhee Gem & Mineral Society; O'Conner Field House, 2200 Blaine; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$3, children under 11 free; dealers, jewelry, gems, minerals, beads, exhibits, fluorescent minerals, dinosaur fossils, educational displays, lapidary demonstrations, faceting, wire wrapping, silversmithing, cabling; contact Carolyn Roberts, 50 N. Robinson Rd., Nampa, ID 83687, (208) 466-6191; e-mail: [ncrobertsrp@msn.com](mailto:ncrobertsrp@msn.com); Web site: [www.owyheerocks.com](http://www.owyheerocks.com)

**5-6—ISSAQUAH, WASHINGTON:** Show; East Kingco Rock Club; Pickering Barn, 1730 10th Ave. NW, across from Costco; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; free admission; dealers, gems, jewelry, silent auction, games, raffle, door prizes, demonstrators, displays; contact Norma McDonald, P.O. Box 2203, Redmond, WA 98073, (206) 612-3113; e-mail: [eastkingco@gmail.com](mailto:eastkingco@gmail.com); Web site: [www.eastkingco.org](http://www.eastkingco.org)

**5-6—NEWARK (STANTON), DELAWARE:** 48th annual show; Delaware Mineralogical Society; Delaware Technical and Community College, Churchmans Rd. (Rte. 58), I-95 Exit 4B; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 11-5; adults \$6, seniors \$5, juniors \$4, children under 12 free with adult; mineral, lapidary and fossil exhibits, museum displays, dealers, minerals, fossils, gems, jewelry, lapidary supplies, door prizes, large specimen raffle, lapidary demonstrations, children's booth, club lapidary work and specimens for sale; contact Wayne Urion, (302) 998-0686; e-mail: [wurion@aol.com](mailto:wurion@aol.com); Web site: [www.delmineralsociety.net](http://www.delmineralsociety.net)

**5-6—VENTURA, CALIFORNIA:** 49th annual show; Ventura Gem & Mineral Society; Ventura County Fairgrounds, 10 W. Harbor Blvd.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; club member displays, gems, minerals, fossils, lapidary art, demonstrations, lapidary arts, jewelry making, door prizes, silent auctions, "Country Store"; dealers, children's activities; free admission; contact Andy Anderson, (805) 987-0043; e-mail: [lilliananderson@juno.com](mailto:lilliananderson@juno.com); Web site: [www.vgms.org](http://www.vgms.org)

**11-13—COTTONWOOD, ARIZONA:** Show, "Verde Valley Gem Mineral & Jewelry Show"; Mingsu Gem & Mineral Club; Verde Valley Fairgrounds, 800 E. Cherry St.; Fri. 9-5, Sat. 9-5, Sun. 10-4; adults \$2, children 13 and under free with paying adult; more than 30 vendors, door prize raffles, educational displays, extensive children's area; contact Sarah Knowles, P.O. Box 1284, Cottonwood, AZ 86326; e-mail: [Mingsugemandmineralclub@gmail.com](mailto:Mingsugemandmineralclub@gmail.com)

**11-13—FT. MYERS, FLORIDA:** Show; Frank Cox Productions; Harborside Convention Center, 1375 Monroe St. (downtown); Fri. 1-5, Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; gems, jewelry, beads; contact Frank Cox Productions, 755 S. Palm Ave. #203, Sarasota, FL 34236, (941) 954-0202; e-mail: [frankcox@comcast.net](mailto:frankcox@comcast.net); Web site: [www.frankcoxproductions.com](http://www.frankcoxproductions.com)

**11-13—HILLSBORO, OREGON:** 53rd annual show; Tualatin Valley Gem Club; Washington County Fairgrounds, 873 NE 34th Ave., on Cornell Road, across from Hillsboro Airport; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; contact Roy Woo, P.O. Box 641, Forest Grove, OR 97116; e-mail: [rwoo12648@gmail.com](mailto:rwoo12648@gmail.com)

**11-13—KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI:** 50th annual show, "Greater Kansas City Gem & Mineral Show"; Association of Earth Science Clubs of Greater Kansas City; MCC-BTC Exhibition Hall, 1775 Universal Ave. (I-435, Front Street Exit); Fri. 9-8, Sat. 10-7, Sun. 10-5; adults \$6, 5-12 years \$2; or Bruce Stinemetz, (816) 795-1641; e-mail: [brucestinemetz@att.net](mailto:brucestinemetz@att.net); Web site: [www.gemshowkc.org](http://www.gemshowkc.org)

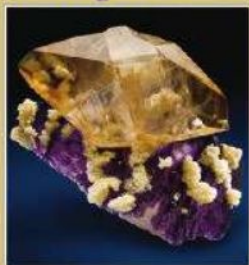
**11-13—LOGAN, UTAH:** Show and sale; Cache Geological & Archeological Society; Riverwoods Conference Center, 600 S. Main; Fri. 10-7, Sat. 10-7, Sun. 10-5; free admission; door prizes, club displays, demonstrations, dealers,

continued on page 40

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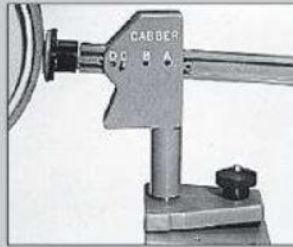
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Show Dates from page 38

**MARCH 2011**

handcrafted jewelry, silent auction, fossils, crystals, mineral specimens, rough rocks, slabs, grab bags, kids' activities, faceting rough, artifacts; contact Gary Warren, (435) 720-1775; e-mail: rock\_hunter1@hotmail.com

**11-13—PLEASANTON, CALIFORNIA:** Show; Gem Faire Inc.; Alameda County Fairgrounds, 4501 Pleasanton Ave.; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$7 weekend pass; contact Yooey Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

**11-13—VICTORVILLE, CALIFORNIA:** 35th annual tagate; Victor Valley Gem & Mineral Club; Stoddard Wells Rd., 12 miles east of I-15; Fri. 9-5, Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-5; rough materials, gems, jewelry, findings, equipment, Sat. field trip, silent auctions; contact VVGMC, (760) 243-2330, or Brett Ward, (760) 954-4323; Web site: www.vvgmc.org

**12—BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA:** 2nd show, "Rockin' at the Swamp"; Baton Rouge Recreation Commission; Bluebonnet Swamp Nature Center, 10503 N. Oak Hills Pkwy.; Sat. 9-4; adults \$5, children \$4; activities, displays, rocks, gemstones, minerals, fossils, vendors, exhibits, rough and polished mineral specimens, fossils, geode-busting station; contact Claire Coco, 10503 N. Oak Hills Pkwy., Baton Rouge, LA 70810, (225) 757-8905; e-mail: cocco@brec.org

**12—SKOKIE, ILLINOIS:** 62nd annual silent auction; Chicago Rocks & Minerals Society; St. Peter's United Church of Christ, 8013 Laramie Ave., across from the Skokie Public Library at Oakton; Sat. 6-9; free admission, children must be accompanied by an adult; rocks, minerals, crystals, fossils, handmade jewelry, lapidary treasures, books, magazines; contact Jeanine N. Mielecki, (773) 774-2054; e-mail: jaynine9@aol.com; Web site: www.chicagorocks.org

**12-13—FILER, IDAHO:** 60th annual show; Magic Valley Gem Club; Twin Falls County Fairgrounds, U.S. Hwy. 30, east side of Filer; Sat. 9-6, Sun. 9-5; contact Harold Waggoner, (208) 423-9668, or Shirley Metts, (208) 423-4827; e-mail: rmetts@cableone.net

**12-13—KLAMATH FALLS, OREGON:** Annual show; Rock and Arrowhead Club; Klamath County Fairgrounds, 3531 S. 6th St.; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 10-4; Petrified Wood; contact Jennifer Zimmerlee, (541) 545-6773; e-mail: jlazys@hotmail.com; or Marv Stump, (541) 882-8341

**12-13—SAN MARINO, CALIFORNIA:** Show, "Tournament of Gems, Rocks to Art"; Pasadena Lapidary Society; San Marino Masonic Center, 3130 Huntington Dr.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; free admission; demonstrations, display cases, dealers; contact Marcia Goetz, 755 W. Dike St., Glendora, CA 91740, (626) 260-7239; e-mail: joenmar1@verizon.net

**12-13—SPRECKELS, CALIFORNIA:** Show, "Parade of Gems"; Salinas Valley Rock & Gem Club; Spreckels Veteran's Hall, 5th St. and Llano St.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; free admission; demonstrators, cab making, bead enameling, youth beading and rock painting, fluorescent display, rock bags with prizes, "wheel of fortune" raffles, free drawings, auction, dealers, jewelry, beads, fossils, craft supplies, minerals, crystals; contact Karen Jones, P.O. Box 668, Soledad, CA 93960, (831) 678-0337; e-mail: kenkaren0337@att.net

**12-13—TURLOCK, CALIFORNIA:** 45th annual show; Mother Lode Mineral Society; Turlock Fairgrounds, 900 N. Broadway; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$5, children 12 and under free with adult; minerals, rocks, beads, jewelry, fossils, dinosaurs, fluorescents, tools, books, educational material, large children's area, 40 vendors, 80 exhibits, 20 demonstrations, jewelry making, lapidary arts, gold panning, rock sale, fluorescent tent, speakers (Bob Jones, Dr. Gregg Wilkerson), fossil display, life-size T-rex skull; contact Bud & Terry McMillin, (209) 524-3494; e-mail: terry.mcmillin@yahoo.com; Web site: www.turlockgemshow.com

**18-20—ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO:** 42nd annual show, "Treasures of the Earth"; Albuquerque Gem & Mineral Club; Creative Arts Center Bldg., State Fair Grounds, EXPO NM (San Pedro entrance); Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$1 Fri., \$3 Sat. and Sun., kids 12 and under free; more than 40 dealers, displays, door prizes, silent auctions, mineral and gem identification, juniors' booth, live wolf, geode cracking, faceting demonstration, gold panning and more; contact Paul Hlava, (505) 255-5478; e-mail: paulhlava@q.com

**18-20—HICKORY, NORTH CAROLINA:** 41st show, "Unifour Gem, Mineral, Bead, Fossil and Jewelry Show"; Catawba Valley Gem & Mineral Club; Hickory Metro Convention Center, I-40 Exit 125; Fri. 9-6, Sat. 9-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$4, children and school groups free; contact

continued on page 46

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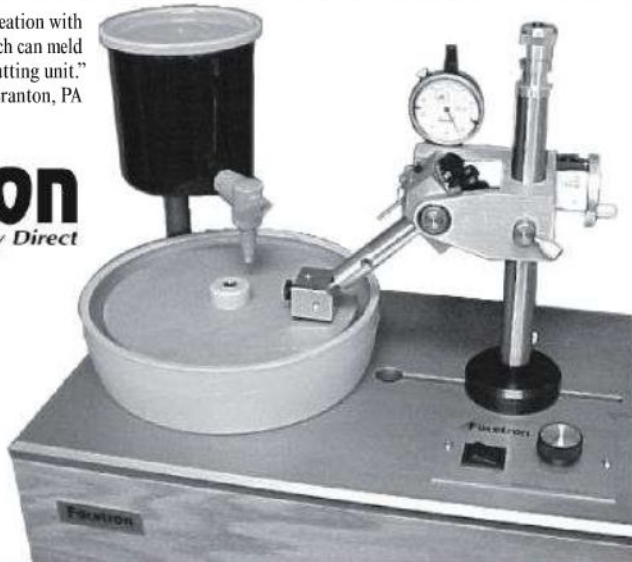
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Graphite usually forms as a result of metamorphism of rocks that are rich in carbon, and some graphite results from thermal metamorphism of coal. Famous U.S. deposits are in New York and Texas, but most mined graphite comes from China, India, Brazil, North Korea, and Canada.

Lustrous gray or silvery black graphite leaves a gray-black streak that should be familiar if you've ever used a pencil. The "lead" in that pencil is actually graphite that has been ground and mixed with kaolin, or clay. The more kaolin, the harder the pencil lead and the lighter the streak it leaves. Perhaps you've noticed numbers on your pencils (No. 1, No. 2, etc.). This is an indicator of the hardness of the pencil lead.

With its slippery nature, graphite is used as a lubricator in place of oil; when I was a Cub Scout, we lubricated wheels in Pinewood Derbies with it. A conductor of electricity, graphite is used for electrodes, and it's used in lightweight but high-strength carbon-fiber composites for aircraft.

—Jim Brace-Thompson



Graphite

## Junior Rockhound Spotlight

Hi, my name is Trevor Smith. I am 11 years old and in the 6th grade. I live in Golden, Colorado. I have been interested in minerals my entire life, but the real spark happened when I was 10 years old and my Aunt Ellen took me to the Georgetown Rock Shop in Georgetown, Colorado. She bought me my very first mineral (selenite), and right then and there the spark grew into a passionate fire.

Over the next year, the fire got larger as I visited rock shops across Colorado and started talking to rock experts who taught me more and more with each visit. I also got involved with the Colorado Mineral Society. I am very fortunate to be able to study and participate in discussions with expert geologists.

With the Colorado Mineral Society, I went on nine different field trips over the summer of 2010 in Colorado and collected numerous amazing minerals. I then gathered up my best specimens and entered them into the 43rd Annual Gem & Mineral Show at the Denver Merchandise Mart. I was very fortunate to be able to showcase my mineral collection in a noncompetitive case and enter my three best minerals in the Junior Prospector contest. I came in 1st on Sept. 19, 2010 and was named Junior Prospector of the Year for my entry of a standing-up barite crystal measuring 2½ inches long, which I found on Harvey's Claim in Hartsel, Colorado.

I am hoping the fire will continue to get larger in the future and that my passion will continue to grow. I have dreams of one day attending the Colorado School of Mines in Golden, Colorado, and becoming a professional geologist.





## Ohio's State Rockhound Symbols

Ohio designated flint its state gemstone in 1965. Flint is a cryptocrystalline variety of quartz. "Cryptocrystalline" means its crystal structure is so small it can't be seen by the naked eye. Flint is similar to chert and jasper, but tends to have a finer grain size and a greater Mohs hardness. If struck by steel, it will produce a spark, so it was used in flintlock muskets and pistols and to start fires.

Flint has a conchoidal fracture, which allows it to break with sharp edges. Native Americans crafted arrowheads and other stone tools from it. It's also occasionally cut and polished into cabochons for jewelry. While visiting rock shops in Maine, I ran across tumble-polished specimens of Ohio flint that ranged from gray-brown to cream-colored with attractive orange-red streaks.

The trilobite *Isotelus* is found in southwestern Ohio and was named state fossil in 1985. Trilobites were arthropods, related to crabs, lobsters, insects and spiders. Arthropods have a hard outer shell (exoskeleton), jointed legs, and segmented bodies. *Isotelus'* body had three segments: a head (cephalon), abdomen (thorax), and tail (pygidium). The name "trilobite" comes from the fact that they had three ("tri") lobes running lengthwise down their bodies.

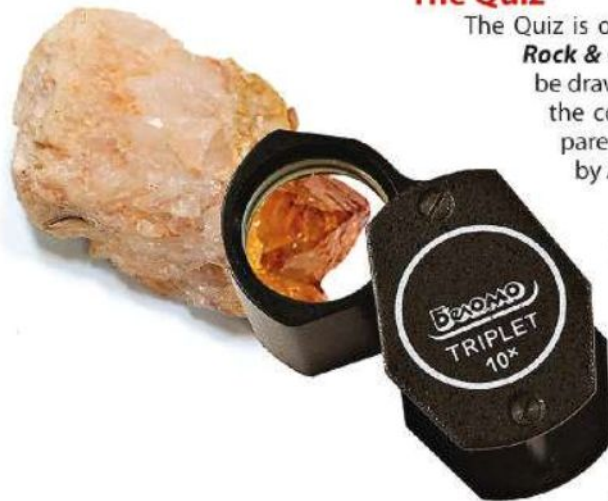
*Isotelus* lived during the Ordovician Period (510 million to 439 million years ago) and grew to lengths of 16 inches or more, making it a relative giant. Oftentimes, all a collector finds are pieces of these big critters. Big as they were, bigger critters were out to get them: healed bite marks are found on the tails of some. To protect their soft underside, *Isotelus* rolled itself up like a pillbug. Trilobites became extinct, along with 95 percent of all species on earth, during an unexplained mass extinction event that closed out the Paleozoic and ushered in the Mesozoic Era.

—Jim Brace-Thompson



## The Quiz

The Quiz is open to U.S. residents 17 and younger. Mail your answers to **January Quiz, Rock & Gem magazine, P.O. Box 6925, Ventura, CA 93006-9899**. Five winners will be drawn from the valid entries received by **Jan. 31, 2010**. Valid entries must include the correct answers, the entrant's name, age and address, and the signature of a parent or guardian. This month's prize is a Belomo 10X loupe, generously donated by Amateur Geologist ([www.amateurgeologist.com](http://www.amateurgeologist.com); see ads on pages 21 and 40).

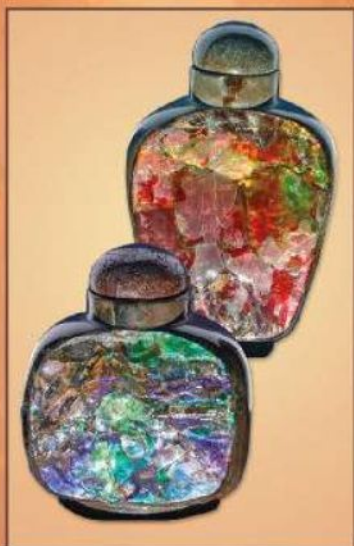


1. The polymorphs \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ have the same chemistry, but different properties.
2. "\_\_\_\_\_" describes a crystal structure so small it can't be seen by the naked eye.
3. The trilobite gets its name from the \_\_\_\_\_ that run down their bodies.
4. Flint's \_\_\_\_\_ allows it to break with sharp edges.
5. Trevor Smith's first mineral specimen was \_\_\_\_\_.

Check your answers at [www.rockngem.com](http://www.rockngem.com) beginning Feb. 1.



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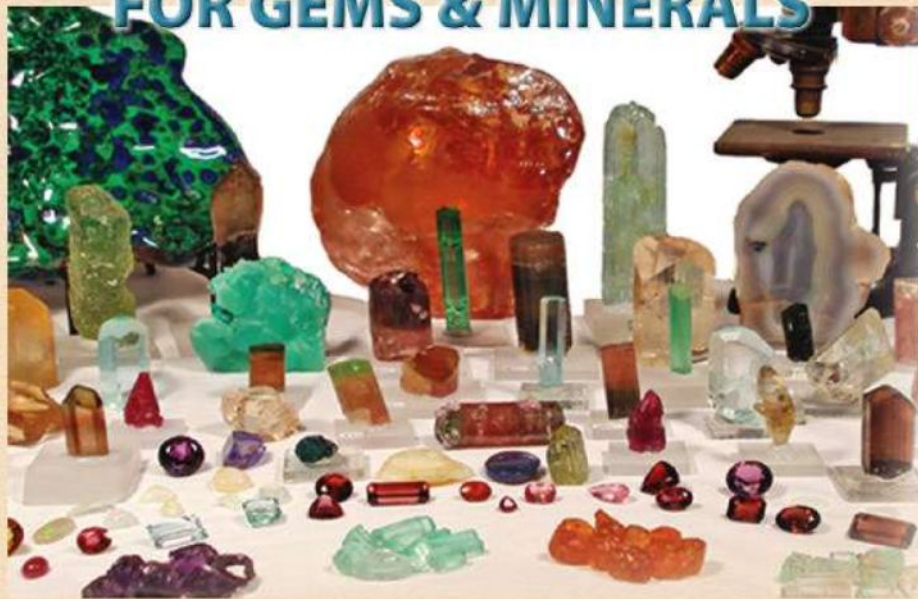
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**18-20—JACKSON, MICHIGAN:** 49th annual show;  
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647-4894, or Dan Hovater, (517) 518-1045

**18-20—SPANISH FORK, UTAH:** 52nd show, "Spring  
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Spanish Fork Fair Grounds, 475 S. Main St.; Fri. 10-7, Sat.  
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**19-20—LIVE OAK (SAN ANTONIO), TEXAS:** 50th annual  
show, "Fiesta of Gems"; San Antonio Gem & Mineral Society;  
Live Oak Civic Center, 8108 Pat Booker Rd.; Sat. 10-6, Sun.  
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**19-20—VALLEJO, CALIFORNIA:** Show, "Spring  
Bling"; Vallejo Gem & Mineral Society; Solano County  
Fairgrounds, 900 Fairgrounds Dr., County Bldg.; Sat.  
10-5, Sun. 10-5; adults \$5, children under 14 free with  
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**25-27—ADA, OKLAHOMA:** Show, "A Festival of Gems,  
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6431; e-mail: [okieed42@windstream.net](mailto:okieed42@windstream.net); Web site: [www.freewebs.com/agmfc/index.htm](http://www.freewebs.com/agmfc/index.htm)

**25-27—INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA:** 13th annual show,  
"Spring Indianapolis Gem, Mineral & Jewelry Show";  
Treasures Of The Earth Gem & Jewelry Shows; Indiana  
State Fairgrounds, Ag/Horticulture Bldg., 1202 E. 38th  
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*continued on page 48*

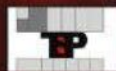




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**25-27—SANDY (SALT LAKE CITY), UTAH:** Show; Gem Faire Inc.; South Towne Exposition Center/Exhibit Hall 5, 9575 S. State St.; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$7 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

**25-27—SARASOTA, FLORIDA:** Show; Frank Cox Productions; Municipal Auditorium, 801 N. Tamiami Tr. (Hwy. 41); Fri. 10-5, Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; gems, jewelry, beads; contact Frank Cox Productions, 755 S. Palm Ave. #203, Sarasota, FL 34236, (941) 954-0202; e-mail: frankcox@comcast.net; Web site: www.frankcoxproductions.com

**26-27—ANGELS CAMP, CALIFORNIA:** Show, "Jump for the Gold"; Calaveras Gem & Mineral Society; Calaveras County Fairground, 101 Frogtown Rd.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; adults \$4, children 12 and under free with paying adult; exhibits, demonstrations, kids' activities, silent auction, sales, raffle, door prizes, dealers, fossils, jewelry, meteorites, books, lapidary supplies, slabs, gems, beads; contact Tak Iwata, 18310 Coyote Meadow Rd., Sonora, CA 95370, (209) 928-5579; e-mail: Tak2me@msn.com; Web site: www.calaverasgemandmineral.org

**26-27—HAMBURG, NEW YORK:** 43rd annual show, "Pre-Historic Mammals: Elephants in Our Back Yard"; Buffalo Geological Society; The Fairgrounds, Market and Grange Bldgs., 5600 McKinley Blvd., South Park Ave. entrance; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$5; demonstrations, minerals, fossils, beads, jewelry, private collections, unique gifts, drawings; contact Don Lapham, 6802 Erica Ln., Lockport, NY 14094, (716) 879-0457; e-mail: donald\_lapham@fmc.com; Web site: www.bgsny.org

**26-27—HOLYOKE, MASSACHUSETTS:** Show; Connecticut Valley Mineral Club; Holiday Inn at Ingleside, I-91 Exit 15; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; adults \$4, children 12 and under free with adult; minerals, gemstones, jewelry, crystals, beads, fossils, lapidary, demonstrations, exhibits; contact Lee Champigny, (413) 320-9741; e-mail: pullG4fun@verizon.net; Web site: www.cvmmineralclub.org

**26-27—PORT ANGELES, WASHINGTON:** 1st annual show; City of Port Angeles; Vern Burton Community Center, 308 E. 4th St.; Sat. 9-7, Sun. 10-5; contact Cindy Lou Kochanek, City of Port Angeles, Recreation Division, 308 E. 4th, P.O. Box 1150, Port Angeles, WA 98362, (360) 417-4550; e-mail: ckochane@cityofpa.us

**26-27—ROSEVILLE, CALIFORNIA:** 49th annual show; Roseville Rock Rollers; Roseville (Placer County) Fairgrounds, 800 All America City Blvd.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; adults \$6, seniors (60+) \$5, kids 12 and under free; more than 35 vendors, crystals, gold, geode cracking, beads, gemstones, fossils, polished stones, handcrafted jewelry, opal, world-class mineral specimens, tourmaline, sunstones, amber, mineral identification, "Kids' Junction", demonstrations, silent auctions, more than 40 exhibits, raffle, lapidary shop open house; contact Gloria Marie, (916) 216-1114; e-mail: gloriarosevillerockrollers@gmail.com; Web site: www.rockrollers.com

**26-27—SAYRE, PENNSYLVANIA:** 42nd annual show; Che-Hanna Rock & Mineral Club; Athens Twp. Volunteer Fire Hall, 211 Herrick Ave.; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 10-5; adults \$3, students \$1, children under 8 free; club demonstrations and displays, dealers, fossils, minerals, gems, junior activities, miniature, geode cutting, Carnegie Museum and Paleontological Research Institute displays; contact Bob McGuire, P.O. Box 224, Lopez, PA 18628, (570) 928-9238; e-mail: uvbob@epix.net; Web site: www.chehannarocks.com

**26-27—SWEET HOME, OREGON:** 63rd annual show; Sweet Home Rock & Mineral Society; Sweet Home High School Activity Gym, 1641 Long St.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; fossils, rocks, gems; contact Joe Cota, P.O. Box 2279, Lebanon, OR 97355, (541) 451-4027

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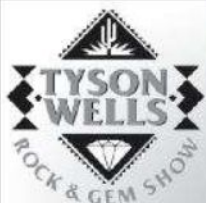
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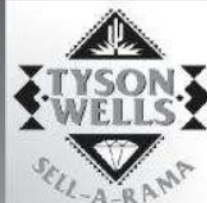
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# Classic QUARTZ CRYSTALS

They're Beautifully Attractive, Historically Important,  
and Scientifically Interesting

Story and Photos by Bob Jones

**N**ot only is quartz the most common mineral on earth, it is surely the most popular, thanks to a small selection of crystallized varieties collectors seek. Quartz is found in so many varieties, occurs in such varied rock types, and develops in such a panoply of forms and colors that every collector can find one or more quartz types to enjoy.

Mineral collectors love quartz in its several colorful crystal forms—smoky, amethyst, citrine, rose—as well as rock crystal, quartz with inclusions, and more! I suspect every collection has more than one quartz specimen in it. The forms of quartz are so varied and so interesting that this silicon dioxide species can constitute an entire collection. The mineral is beautifully attractive, historically important, and scientifically very interesting. It is even used in electronic equipment—your quartz watch, for example!

Quartz will often develop in one of three twin forms, two of which are not easily identified. Quartz can also occur as small, doubly terminated crystals, sometimes in clusters, that are often referred to as “diamonds”.

Which among the amazing variations and occurrences of quartz should be considered classic? How about Arkansas



Amethyst crystals from the classic source in Guerrero, Mexico, are very showy and can be exceptionally large.

quartz—so common, so ordinary, but so well crystallized and abundant? Or how about the “diamonds” from Herkimer, New York, a locality known for nearly three centuries? Surely, Swiss smoky quartz specimens and Japan Law twins from the type locality are classics.

To be categorized as classic, the quartz has to have something unusual about it. Often, it is the locality as much as the crystal itself. Quartz from Bourg d’Oisans, France, another source of gemmy, water-clear Japan Law twins, is classic. Other localities produce water-clear Japan Law twins, but the sheer beauty and perfection of the French twins makes them especially desirable and therefore classic.

Another factor in attributing classic status is timing. Sources that are now considered classic were the first known sources of that





**What could be more classic than the well-known combination of smoky quartz and amazonite from the Pikes Peak area of Colorado?**

type of quartz. For instance, the quartz twins known as “Japan Law” are so named because they were first found in that country. Even though they are exceeded in size by twins from Brazil and in quality by the French twins, the Japan Law twins are classics because they gave us the name of the form.

Another factor that determines classic status for quartz is quantity. A locality that is a long-term, consistent producer can be considered classic. The Hot Springs, Arkansas, area surely fits this description.

Alpine smoky quartz specimens are much prized and have been collected from number of sites in the Alps. Some groups are enormous, weighing several hundred pounds. Just how the Swiss collectors, known as *strahlers*, managed to bring such monster crystal clusters down from high in the mountains is a mystery to me.

These smoky quartz crystals are very often gemmy and range in color from light smoky to nearly black. They are often perfect six-sided prisms showing a variety of terminations that are worthy of study. These dark beauties occur in cavities, cracks, and open pockets in the metamorphic rocks of the Alps, where they grew unimpeded. They are not mined from a single locality, but are found scattered throughout the mountainous region. Some are revealed by glacial action; others are exposed during road and tunnel building. Some of the pockets produce huge quantities of crystals. One cavity near Grimsel, Switzerland, produced some 50 tons of crystals.

Certainly, the most desired smoky quartz specimens from Switzerland are what the locals call *gwindels*, or twisted crystals. These dark beauties form in stacks of crystals, one on top of the other, but shifted out of alignment. Just why such twisted crystals develop is not known, in spite of extensive study by scientists.

Quartz is made up of silicon-oxygen molecules, which have a tetrahedral (with four triangular faces) shape. Unlike cubes, which can stack on each other in perfect alignment, tetrahedra are offset when they stack. The result is a quartz crystal with an internal twist, which is expressed by the external prism faces as a very slight 1- to 5-degree curve that is often not easily seen with the unaided eye. Most quartz prism faces look perfectly straight, but they are not. Because most quartz crystals grow vertically from a point of nucleation, this slight curve is not often important.

However, when quartz crystals grow horizontally or stack, with side prisms attached, that curving offset affects the overall appearance of the crystal stack or group, and a *gwindel* is the result. As



**The Swiss Alps are the classic source for smoky quartz *gwindels*, which are so named because the crystals stack in a twisted form.**



**Herkimer “diamonds” are water-clear, gemmy quartz crystals from the classic quartz deposits around Herkimer, New York.**

crystals develop horizontally, the slight curvature of each crystal offsets the next crystal in the stack. This happens again and again until a curve or twist is visible in the crystal cluster. Terminations, instead of being atop each crystal, are along the sides of the *gwindel*. In some *gwindels*, you can distinguish individual crystals along the curving sides. In others, the gaps between crystals fill completely, so the twisted side surface of the *gwindel* is smooth.

The twisted smoky quartz crystals from the Swiss and French Alps are much prized, and rightly so. They have been known for centuries and have long been considered unique. Of late, however, a similar environment in Russia has yielded equally fine smoky *gwindel* quartz crystals in quantity and increased the supply of this classic type quartz. This new source of *gwindels*, many of which far exceeded the Swiss beauties in size and quality, has been developed near Saranpaul in the Polar Urals of Russia. There are eyewitness reports of *gwindels* that are 2 feet and 3 feet long, gemmy, and with more than one *gwindel* clustered on a specimen.

EVAN JONES COLLECTION



Of all the quartz localities in the world, perhaps the one area in the United States that has been collected most often by amateurs over a longer period of time than any other is Herkimer, New York, which has given its name to the small doubly terminated crystals found there by the millions. Better known as "Herkimer diamonds", these water-clear, doubly terminated, gemmy quartz crystals were known to Native Americans before they were "discovered" by European settlers.

This New York quartz occurs in small pockets scattered throughout the extremely hard dolostone host rock, a high-magnesium type of limestone. This means there can be no crystal-rich veins, only certain horizons within the dolostone that contain the majority of the randomly placed pockets.

The crystal pockets themselves are interesting. Some 500 million years ago, the Herkimer area was under the sea. Organized life was just evolving, and organic matter, including stromatolites, was trapped within the sediments that were destined to become hard rock. Stromatolites formed rounded, layered growths, which were eventually buried in the mud and eventually enclosed in rock. When they decayed, they left small cavities that were often enlarged by acids resulting from the decay of organic material. It was in these openings that quartz crystals began to develop.

The millions of single Herkimer crystals and small clusters are very much alike. Each crystal is bright and shiny, doubly terminated, water clear due to very slow growth, and found loose in a cavity. Matrix specimens are uncommon.

More exciting are the gemmy crystals that grew, not on matrix, but attached to each other to form graceful and very showy clusters. Many such clusters on the market today have been reassembled from a half-dozen or so loose crystals found in a pocket. Any quartz collection should have at least one of these clusters in it. Overall, the Herkimer-area "diamond" quartzes have had a greater impact on our hobby than quartz from any other locality, and is surely classic!

Among the more popular collector quartzes are those which are easily identified as twinned crystals. Dauphine and Brazil Law twins are not easily recognized, nor are they particularly unusual in appearance. To the casual eye, they look like ordinary single crystals with growth patterns on their prism faces. Their twinning is internal, and while crystallographers have little trouble identifying them, collectors are less skilled.

Japan Law twins are very showy, easily identified, and thought to be uncommon, which adds to their appeal. They often



Delicately colored amethysts come in fine clusters from Las Vigas de Ramirez (Veracruz), Mexico.

look like a pair of flat rabbit ears diverging from a base at nearly 90 degrees. They are very often flat, with two opposing prism faces forming a continuous "face". These crystals are attached at an 84.5-degree angle.

Just when the term Japan Law was applied to these showy quartz crystals is uncertain, but it stems from their occurrence at Otomezaka (Yamanashi Prefecture) and several other Japanese localities. When I started seriously collecting minerals after World War II, Japan Law twins were seldom available and were treated as quite rare. In fact, during the past 60-odd years, so many sources have produced fine Japan Law twins that this form of quartz is readily available at reasonable prices from China, Bolivia, Brazil,

Arizona, France, Germany, Peru, Alaska, Russia, and more locations.

Specimens of smoky quartz can be highly prized and some are true classics. The Pikes Peak area of Colorado is well known to collectors. Most of the smokies from here are not perfect prisms and most are too dark to transmit much light. But some of Colorado's smoky quartz prisms are not so dark, form nearly perfect hexagonal prisms, and are very attractive. The almost universal occurrence of these smoky quartz prisms with colorful amazonite makes them not only popular, but unique in the quartz world. Surely, such a pairing makes them classic! Where else can you find this combination of lovely, gemmy quartz with textbook-sharp blue-green amazonite crystals?



The quartz twins known as "Japan Law" are so named because they were first found in that country.





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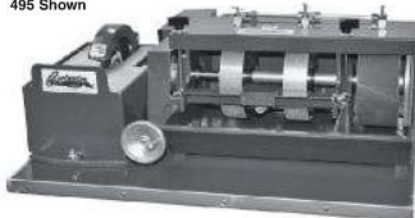


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Of all the crystallized quartzes, the most popular and most colorful variety is amethyst. From dark-violet, tightly packed crystals lining cavernous openings in southern Brazil to delicately hued, slender prisms in diverging clusters from Mexico, amethyst specimens have certainly caught the attention of the gem world and crystal collectors. Large, curving amethyst-lined “cathedral” specimens are now used as interior décor in offices and building lobbies. The finest gemmy amethyst is often faceted into richly hued gems worn by the rich and famous, as well as folks born in February. It is the common folks’ most popular colorful gem, yet it is blessed with a royal color that fits into any facet of society!

Two localities in Mexico have produced wonderful, colorful, and aesthetically beautiful amethysts that are extremely popular. Delicately colored amethysts come in fine clusters from Las Vigas de Ramirez, in the state of Veracruz. Crystals up to 6 inches long that are colorless at the base and lightly tipped with an almost ethereal violet color are common. These are among the finest display amethysts known from any locality! Today, amethyst from Las Vigas is seldom collected, as the political situation, coupled with increasing collecting difficulties, has restricted production.

Mexico’s second noteworthy source of classic amethyst is in the state of Guerrero. These crystals are very showy and can be exceptionally large, the largest reaching 10 inches in length. They are not at all slender; they’re often well over an inch at the base, look swollen in the middle, and taper to a narrow termination. What is remarkable about the better groups of these crystals is that they have a deep violet base and the color fades gradually toward the termination, ending with a snow-white tip! These are the finest such crystals ever found.

Kapnik, Romania, seems to be one of the first significant amethyst localities to be discovered in Europe. Specimens are not large, but the limpid violet color of these short, curving prisms is very much prized by collectors of historically important species.

There are many sources of gem amethysts that formed as broad “points” lacking prism length, with terminations that are packed tightly together. The amethyst from Brazil is of this type, but there are other fine sources, including Korea, Russia, and several of the United States. Amethyst is found in a host of deposits that run from Maine down to Georgia.

Most notable are the superb amethysts from Stony Point and nearby localities in western North Carolina. Superbly colored amethysts were found during farming as



America’s finest gem amethyst, being mined at Jackson’s Crossroads, Georgia, is sure to become a classic.

loose crystals in the soil. Later exploration revealed pegmatite deposits and other sources of fine crystals that can be as much as 3 inches across at the base, with extremely short prism faces and perfect and very lovely violet terminations. The best of North Carolina’s amethysts are certainly to be cherished as classic beauties.

More recently, astounding gem amethyst was discovered at Jackson’s Crossroads (Wilkes County), Georgia, in 1988. This remarkable find has produced some of the finest amethysts ever found in America—or the world, for that matter! These superb crystals are up to several inches long, with brilliant luster and eye-pleasing color. The crystals make breathtaking display pieces and can be faceted into gems with a vibrant red-violet color as good any ever found. Perhaps these

gemmy beauties are too recently found to be called “classic”, but their youth is the only deterrent to that title now!

Here in Arizona, high on the saddle between the southernmost pair of the Four Peaks in the Mazatzel Mountains, is an interesting gem amethyst mine. It is worked sporadically and produces some of the ugliest amethyst “points”. The tips of these crystals, however, are zoned from colorless to deep amethyst and produce cut gems that rival the best from Russia and Korea, which have long been considered the standard for amethyst gems. The Four Peaks mine, which I found extremely difficult to reach after a snowfall, doesn’t produce specimens in great enough volume to earn the classic rating. But as a source of superb gem rough, it ranks exceptionally high in the world of faceted gems.💎



When quartz crystals stack on their prism sides, the resulting cluster is a curving form called a gwindel.





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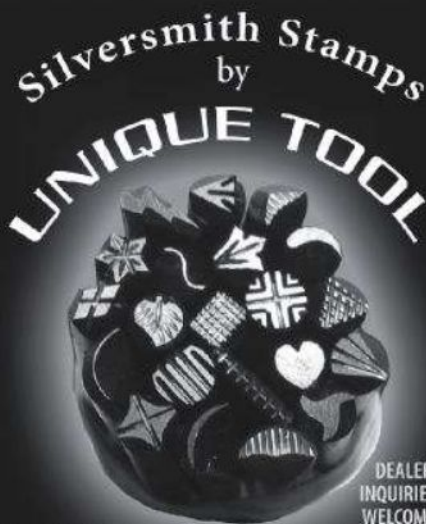
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**Show Dates** from page 48

**APRIL 2011**

**1-2—COLVILLE, WASHINGTON:** Annual spring show; Panorama Gem & Mineral Club; Fort Colville Grange Hall, Hwy. 20; Fri. 8:30-6, Sat. 9-5; contact Bill Allen, (509) 935-8779; e-mail: sago@theofficenet.com

**1-3—EUGENE, OREGON:** Show; Gem Faire Inc.; Lane County Events Center/Exhibit Hall, 796 W. 13th Ave.; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$7 weekend pass; contact Yoyo Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

**2-3—HELENA, MONTANA:** 64th annual show; Helena Mineral Society; Helena Civic Center, corner of Neill Ave. and Park Ave.; Sat. 9-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$1, children 12 and under free with adult; 25 dealers, jewelry, mineral specimens, rough and faceted gemstones, fossils, cutting rough, beads, equipment, children's activities (garnet hunt, ball toss, grab bags, silent auction), fluorescent mineral display, 20 show-cases; contact Gary Parisi, P.O. Box 736, Helena, MT 59624, (406) 442-1226; e-mail: gjparisi72@yahoo.com; Web site: www.helenamineralsociety.org

**2-3—PARIS, ONTARIO, CANADA:** 39th annual show; Brantford Lapidary & Mineral Society; Paris Fairgrounds, 139 Silver St.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; adults \$5, children 12 and under free; dealers, gems, minerals, fossils, stone, lapidary equipment, supplies, fine jewelry, supplies, beads, demonstrations, exhibits, silent auction, "Mine for Gems" display; contact Robert Parry, 138 Sugar Maple Rd., St. George, ON, N0E 1N0, (519) 448-1236; e-mail: robert@roberthalloriginals.com; Web site: www.brantfordlapidarymineral.ca

**2-3—PLYMOUTH MEETING, PENNSYLVANIA:** Show, "Mineral Treasures and Fossil Fair"; Philadelphia Mineralogical Society, Delaware Valley Paleontological Society; Lulu Temple, 5140 Butler Pike; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; adults \$5, children under 12 \$1, uniformed Scouts free; fossils, minerals, gems, speakers, exhibits, Fossil Dig, Kid's Corner, door prizes, Scouting merit badge information; contact Douglas Klieger, 26 Cabot Ct., Wayne, PA 19087, (610) 644-2492; e-mail: dklieger@verizon.net; Web site: http://pms.moonfruit.com

**2-3—POCATELLO, IDAHO:** 54th annual show; South East Idaho Gem & Mineral Society; Bannock County Fairgrounds, Commercial Bldg.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; contact Kevin B. Taylor, 246 Washington Ave., Pocatello, ID 83201, (208) 232-4269

**2-3—SILOAM SPRINGS, ARKANSAS:** Spring show; Northwest Arkansas Gem & Mineral Society; Community Bldg., Mt. Olive Rd.; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 10-4; adults \$3, students \$1, children free; contact Charlotte Leininger, (479) 721-3882; e-mail: TheSwankyStone@aol.com; Web site: www.nwarockhounds.org

**7-9—WYOMING, MICHIGAN:** Show, "Unburied Ancient Treasures"; Indian Mounds Rock & Mineral Club; Rogers Plaza Town Center, 972 28th St., 0.25 mile west of US 131; Thu. 9:30-9, Fri. 9:30-9, Sat. 9:30-8; free admission; Science Museum of Minnesota display, museum-quality exhibits, mineral and fossil identification, club sales, children's collectibles, demonstrations, dealers, micromounts, crystals, stone beads, carvings, meteorites, jewelry, specimens; contact Don Van Dyke, 4296 Oakview, Hudsonville, MI 49426, (616) 669-6932; e-mail: donvandyke@tm.net; Web site: http://indianmoundsrockclub.com/index.htm

**8-10—ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA:** Show; Frank Cox Productions; The Coliseum, 535 4th Ave. N; Fri. 10-5, Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; gems, jewelry, beads; contact Frank Cox Productions, 755 S. Palm Ave. #203, Sarasota, FL 34236, (941) 954-0202; e-mail: frankcox@comcast.net; Web site: www.frankcoxproductions.com

**8-10—TACOMA, WASHINGTON:** Show; Gem Faire Inc.; Tacoma Dome/Exhibition Hall, 2727 E. "D" St.; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$7 weekend pass; contact Yoyo Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

**8-10—SPOKANE, WASHINGTON:** 52nd annual show; Rock Rollers Club; Spokane County Fair & Expo Center, North 604 Havana at Broadway; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$6, seniors \$5, children 12 and under free; more than 40 dealers, 60 display cases, fossils, gemstones, mineral specimens, handcrafted jewelry, lapidary supplies and demonstrations, hourly door prizes, youth activities, grand prize; contact Gerry Pfeiffer, (509) 294-1927; e-mail: pfeiffer@webband.com

**9-10—BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON:** 50th anniversary show, "A Golden Family Affair"; Mt. Baker Rock & Gem Club; Bloedel Donovan Park, 2214 Electric Ave.; Sat. 10-6, Sun.

10-5; free admission; raffle, exhibits, rocks, fossils, gems, jewelry, dealers, door prizes, silent auction, lapidary, gold panning, black light, gem cutting, demonstrations, kids' activities; contact Wes Gannaway, (360) 384-4209; e-mail: debnws@comcast.net

**9-10—DES PLAINES, ILLINOIS:** 46th annual show; Des Plaines Valley Geological Society; Des Plaines Park District Leisure Center, 2222 Birch St.; Sat. 9:30-5, Sun. 10-4; adults \$3, seniors \$2, students \$1, children under 12 free; dealers, gems, jewelry, fossils, minerals, Kids' Room, demonstrations, exhibits, door prizes, raffles, silent auction; contact Frank Lavin, 9942 Montrose Ave., Schiller Park, IL 60176, (815) 298-9178; e-mail: nival42@hotmail.com; Web site: www.desplainesgeologyclub.org

**9-10—CANTON, ILLINOIS:** 51st annual show; Fulton County Rockhounds; Wallace Park; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; free admission; contact Steven Holley, (309) 231-8861; e-mail: ilfossil@hotmail.com; or Deb Coursey, (309) 368-8451; e-mail: courseyfarm@gmail.com

**9-10—JOHNSON CITY, NEW YORK:** 42nd annual show; New York Southern Tier Geology Club; Johnson City Senior Center, 30 Brocton Ave.; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 10-4; adults \$3, children under 12 free; dealers, minerals, fossils, beads, jewelry, exhibits, door prizes, ultraviolet display; contact Al Conklin, 187 Forest Hill Rd., Apalachin, NY 13732, (607) 625-4140; e-mail: allanconklin@aol.com

**9-10—MARION, ILLINOIS:** Show; Southern Illinois Earth Science Club; Williamson County Pavilion, 1602 Sioux Dr.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$2, ages 18 and under free; gems, minerals, fossils, lapidary, shells, silent auctions, door prizes, fluorescent demonstrations; contact Mike Chontofalsky, 1019 E. Broadway, Centralia, IL 62801, (618) 532-0455; e-mail: chontofalsky@att.net

**15-17—ALPINE, TEXAS:** Show, "Alpine Agate Festival"; Chihuahuan Desert Gem & Mineral Club; Alpine Civic Center, Hwy. 90W and 13th St. N; Fri. 9-6, Sat. 9-6, Sun. 11-5; free admission; South Central Federation convention, grand prize, door prizes, silent auctions, field trips, kids' corner, demo dealers; contact Mary Brogan, P.O. Box 1111, Alpine, TX 79831, (432) 386-2340; e-mail: marybrogan@rocketmail.com; Web site: www.cdgmc.org

**15-17—RICKREALL, OREGON:** 56th annual show; Willamette Agate Mineral Society; Polk County Fairgrounds, 520 S. Pacific Hwy. W; Fri. 9-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4-30; contact Kristi Edwards, (541) 738-6811; e-mail: edwardskk@gmail.com

**15-17—SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA:** Gem Faire—Scottish Rite Event Center, 1895 Camino del Rio S. Gem Faire hours: Fri. 12pm-6pm, Sat. 10am-6pm, Sun. 10am-5pm. Admission \$7 weekend pass; contact Yoyo Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

**15-17—SARASOTA, FLORIDA:** Show; Frank Cox Productions; Municipal Auditorium, 801 N. Tamiara Tr. (Hwy. 41); Fri. 10-5, Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; gems, jewelry, beads; contact Frank Cox Productions, 755 S. Palm Ave. #203, Sarasota, FL 34236, (941) 954-0202; e-mail: frankcox@comcast.net; Web site: www.frankcoxproductions.com

**15-17—WICHITA, KANSAS:** Show and sale, "World of Wonders"; Cessna Activity Center, 2744 George Washington Blvd.; adults \$5, ages 12-17 \$1, children under 12 free with adult; gemstone jewelry, gems, crystals, beads, agates, polished stones, fossils, rocks, minerals, children's programs; contact Gene Maggard, (316) 742-3746; e-mail: gandpmaggard@wildblue.net

**16-17—WACO, TEXAS:** Annual show; Waco Gem & Mineral Club; Texas State Technical College, Industrial Tech. Bldg., Crest Dr., off I-35, north of Waco; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 11-5; adults \$5 (both days); contact Karen Wood, 2315 Colcord, Waco, TX 76707, (254) 755-7274; e-mail: kwood@hot.rr.com; Web site: www.wacogemandmineral.org

**16-17—WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA:** Show, "Contra Costa Crystal Fair"; Pacific Crystal Guild; Civic Park Community Center, 1375 Civic Dr.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4; adults \$6, ages 12 and under free; 30 dealers, minerals, gems, crystals, beads, metaphysical healing tools; contact Jerry Tomlinson, P.O. Box 1371, Sausalito, CA 94966, (415) 383-7837; e-mail: jerry@crystalfair.com; Web site: www.crystalfair.com

**22-24—DENVER, COLORADO:** 2011 spring wholesale/retail show, "Colorado Mineral & Fossil Show"; Martin Zinn Expositions; Holiday Inn - Denver Central, 4849 Bannock St.; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; free admission; 80 wholesale and retail dealers, minerals, fossils, gems, jewelry; contact Martin Zinn Expositions, P.O. Box 665, Bernalillo, NM 87004-0665; e-mail: mzexpos@aol.com; Web site: www.mzexpos.com

continued on page 58



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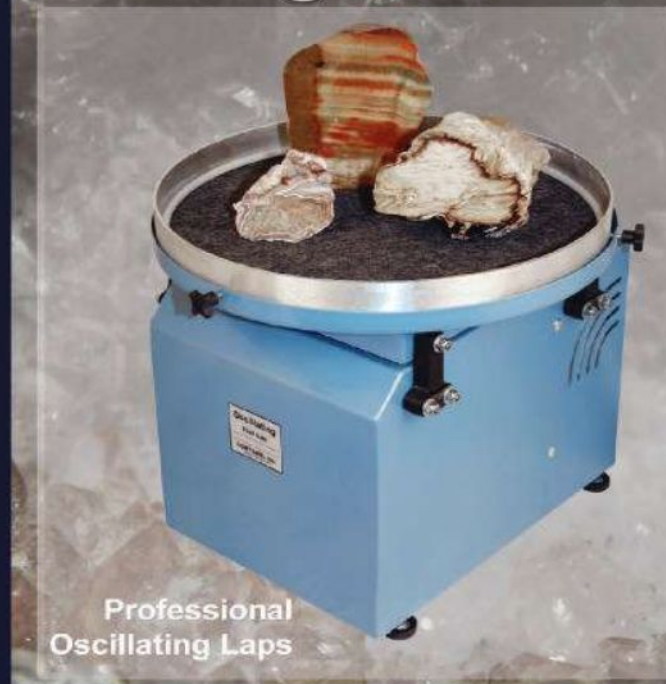
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## Show Dates from page 56

### APRIL 2011

**23-24—MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE:** 32nd show; Memphis Archaeological & Geological Society; Memphis International Agricenter, 7777 Walnut Grove Rd.; Sat. 9-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$5, children 12 and under \$2, Scouts free; dealers, exhibits, kids' area, speakers; contact W.C. McDaniel, (901) 274-7706; e-mail: [info@theearthwideopen.com](mailto:info@theearthwideopen.com); Web site: [www.TheEarthWideOpen.com](http://www.TheEarthWideOpen.com)

**23-24—TROY, OHIO:** Show; Brukner Center Gem & Mineral Club; Miami County Fairgrounds, North End Activity Bldg., County Road 25-A; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4; adults \$1, children free; dealers, specimens, gems, jewelry, demonstrations, displays, silent auction, door prizes, free rock for children, mineral identification, children's activities; contact Gene Davis, (937) 667-4160

### APRIL-MAY 2011

**29-1—SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA:** Show; Gem Faire Inc.; Sonoma County Fairgrounds/Grace Pavilion, 1350 Bennett Valley Rd.; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$7 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: [info@gemfaire.com](mailto:info@gemfaire.com); Web site: [www.gemfaire.com](http://www.gemfaire.com)

**30-1—MARSHFIELD, WISCONSIN:** 38th annual show; Heart of Wisconsin Gem & Mineral Society; Marshfield High School Fieldhouse, 1401 Becker Rd.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; free admission; displays, dealers, demonstrations, kids' activities, silent auctions; contact Cynthia Kelman, 1403 N. Broadway Ave., Marshfield, WI 54449, (715) 387-8782; e-mail: [kelman@tzn.net](mailto:kelman@tzn.net); Web site: [www.fromtherockroom.com](http://www.fromtherockroom.com)

**30-1—MEDFORD, OREGON:** 56th annual show, "Diamonds Are Forever"; Roxy Ann Gem & Mineral Society; Medford Armory, 1701 S. Pacific Hwy.; Sat. 9-5:30, Sun. 10-4:30; exhibits, dealers, demonstrations, gold panning, silent auction, children's activities, door prizes; contact Janet Fields, 378 Dexter Way, Grants Pass, OR 97527, (541) 476-8937, or Sandy Roney, 1431 Elaine Way, Medford, OR 97501, (541) 734-0838; e-mail: [mronney@prodial.us](mailto:mronney@prodial.us)

**30-1—SEATTLE, WASHINGTON:** Show; West Seattle Rock Club; Alki Masonic Temple, 4736 40th Ave. SW; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; contact Audrey Vogelpohl, (206) 932-3292; e-mail: [avogelpohl@comcast.net](mailto:avogelpohl@comcast.net); Web site: [www.westseattlerockclub.org](http://www.westseattlerockclub.org)

### MAY 2011

**6-8—BISHOP, CALIFORNIA:** 10th annual show, "Eastern Sierra Gem & Mineral Show"; Lone Pine Gem & Mineral Society; Tri-County Fairgrounds, Robinson Bldg., Sierra St. and Fair Dr.; Fri. 6-9, Sat. 9:30-5, Sun. 10-3; free admission; field trips, lapidary demonstrations, lampwork beads, flint knapping, sphere making, displays, world's largest fulgurite, local minerals and fossils, spinning wheel, geodes, vendors, door prizes, children's activities; contact Franee Graham, P.O. Box 667, Lone Pine, CA 93545, (760) 876-4319; e-mail: [franceem@qunet.com](mailto:franceem@qunet.com)

**6-8—COSTA MESA, CALIFORNIA:** Show; Gem Faire Inc.; OC Fair & Event Center/Bldg. 10, 88 Fair Dr.; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$7 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: [info@gemfaire.com](mailto:info@gemfaire.com); Web site: [www.gemfaire.com](http://www.gemfaire.com)

**6-8—McPHERSON, KANSAS:** 19th annual sale and swap; McPherson Gem & Mineral Club; McPherson 4-H Bldg., 710 W. Woodside; Fri. 9-7, Sat. 9-6, Sun. 10:30-3; free admission; buy or swap, rocks, gems, minerals, fossils, jewelry, door prizes, displays, collections, free rock identification, fluorescent mineral exhibit, kid's spin-and-win; contact Jim Nutter, 1611 Jody Ln., McPherson, KS 67460, (620) 241-2433; e-mail: [mcpherson-gemmineral@hotmail.com](mailto:mcpherson-gemmineral@hotmail.com)

**7-8—WASHINGTON, PENNSYLVANIA:** Show, "Greater Pittsburg Area Jewelry, Gem, Mineral, Bead & Gift Show; FM Minerals; Washington County Fairgrounds, 2151 N. Main St.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$4, children 12 and under free with an adult; invited dealers, beads, minerals, fossils, metaphysical items, jewelry, gemstones, hand-made jewelry, wire wrapping; contact FM Minerals, P.O. Box 252, Farmington, WV 26571, (304) 825-6845; e-mail: [frankoz@juno.com](mailto:frankoz@juno.com)

**13-15—JOPLIN, MISSOURI:** 5th annual Outdoor Rock Swap; Tri-State Gem & Mineral Society; Schifferdecker Park, 7th and Schifferdecker Ave.; Fri. 8-6, Sat. 8-6, Sun. 9-4; free admission; contact Joplin Museum Complex, 504 Schifferdecker Ave., Joplin, MO 64801, (417) 623-1180; e-mail: [jmc-cwiseman@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jmc-cwiseman@sbcglobal.net)

*continued on page 62*



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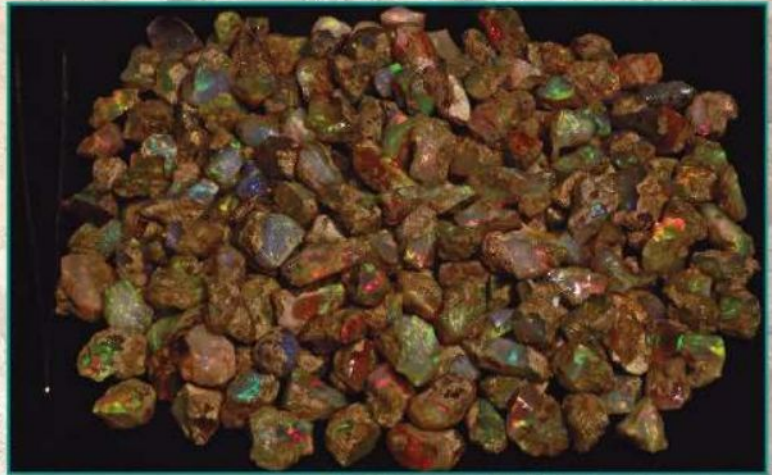
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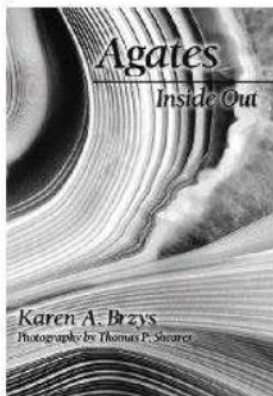
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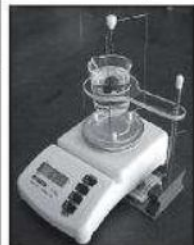
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## Show Dates from page 58

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**13-15—SARASOTA, FLORIDA:** Show; Frank Cox Productions; Municipal Auditorium, 801 N. Tamiami Tr. (Hwy. 41); Fri. 10-5, Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; gems, jewelry, beads; contact Frank Cox Productions, 755 S. Palm Ave. #203, Sarasota, FL 34236, (941) 954-0202; e-mail: [frankcox@comcast.net](mailto:frankcox@comcast.net); Web site: [www.frankcoxproductions.com](http://www.frankcoxproductions.com)

**14-15—HAMILTON, MONTANA:** Annual show; Bitterroot Gem & Mineral Society; First Interstate Events Center, Ravalli County Fair Grounds, 100 Old Corvallis Rd.; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-4; contact Steve Vieth, (406) 369-5489; e-mail: [viethsteve88@gmail.com](mailto:viethsteve88@gmail.com); or Mike McConnell, (406) 360-4944; e-mail: [micker1949@yahoo.com](mailto:micker1949@yahoo.com)

**14-15—WAUWATOSA, WISCONSIN:** 54th annual show; Wisconsin Geological Society; Mueller Bldg., Hart Park, 72nd and W. State St.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; adults \$3 (2 for \$5), children under 16 free with adult; 22 Midwest dealers, lapidary supplies, tools, books, rough material, slabs, finished specimens, cabochons, jewelry, carvings, fossils, children's activities, exhibits, displays, presentations; contact Paul Schmidt, 8213 Red Arrow Ct., Wauwatosa, WI 53213, (414) 771-8668; e-mail: [pvs@wi.rr.com](mailto:pvs@wi.rr.com)

**20-22—MARTINSVILLE, VIRGINIA:** 21st annual show; Treasures Of The Earth Gem & Jewelry Shows; National Guard Armory, 315 Commonwealth Blvd W. (across from Liberty Fair Mall); Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 11-5; free admission; jewelry makers, goldsmiths and silversmiths, gem trees, wire wrap, wire sculpture, pearls, stone beads, stone setting, amber, opal, mineral and fossil dealers, door prizes, grand prize, classes, sluce; contact Van Wimmer Sr., 5273 Bradshaw Rd., Salem, VA 24153, (540) 384-6047; e-mail: [van@toteshows.com](mailto:van@toteshows.com); Web site: [www.toteshows.com](http://www.toteshows.com)

**20-22—SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA:** Wholesale/retail show, "Spring West Coast Gem & Mineral Show"; Martin Zinn Expositions; Holiday Inn-Orange County Airport, 2726 S. Grand Ave.; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; free admission; open to the public, more than 80 wholesale and retail dealers, minerals, fossils, gems, jewelry, lapidary supplies; contact Martin Zinn Expositions LLC, P.O. Box 665, Bernalillo, NM 87004-0665, (505) 867-0425

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**20-22—SOUTHGATE, MICHIGAN:** Show, "Southeastern Michigan Gem & Mineral Show"; Midwest Mineralogical & Lapidary Society of Michigan; Southgate Arena, 14700 Reaume Pkwy.; Fri. 2-7, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 11-5; contact Rich Williams, 15816 DuPage, Taylor, MI 48180, (734) 374-2279; e-mail: [Richinmich53@aol.com](mailto:Richinmich53@aol.com)

**27-29—SALEM, VIRGINIA:** 20th annual show, "Roanoke Valley Spring Gem & Mineral Show"; Treasures Of The Earth Gem & Jewelry Shows; Salem Civic Center, 1001 Boulevard; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 11-6; adults \$4 (3-day ticket), children under 16 free; jewelry makers, goldsmiths and silversmiths size, reconstruct, repair, design or make original jewelry from customer-selected gems, stones, opals and crystals, wire wrap, wire sculpture, stone beads, pearls, stone setting, dealers, amber, opal, fossils, minerals, door prizes, grand prize, children's gift; contact Van Wimmer Sr., 5273 Bradshaw Rd., Salem, VA 24153, (540) 384-6047; e-mail: [van@toteshows.com](mailto:van@toteshows.com); Web site: [www.toteshows.com](http://www.toteshows.com)

**28-29—WHEATON, ILLINOIS:** 35th annual show and sale; Chicagoland Gems & Minerals Association; Dupage County Fairgrounds, 2015 W Manchester Rd.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$5, seniors and students \$3, service personnel with ID and children under 13 free; dealers, beads, books, equipment, fossils, gemstones, handcrafted jewelry, minerals, supplies, tools, demonstrations, cabochon cutting, faceting, fossil preparation, gem trees, glass fusing, glass marble making, intarsia, jewelry making, micro mounts, scrimshaw, silver smithing, opal cutting, wire wrapping, exhibits, minerals, fossils, lapidary, gems, silent auctions, door prizes, Kids' Corner; contact Rich Dillon, P.O. Box 360, Wasco, IL 60183-0360, (630) 377-0197; e-mail: [cgma@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cgma@sbcglobal.net); Web site: [www.chicagolandgemshow.org](http://www.chicagolandgemshow.org)

continued on page 64

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Show Dates from page 62

**JUNE 2011**

**3-5—TULSA, OKLAHOMA:** Show; Gem Faire Inc.; Expo Square/Central Park Hall, 4145 E. 21st St.; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$7 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

**4-5—SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA:** Show, "San Francisco Crystal Fair"; Pacific Crystal Guild; Fort Mason Center, 99 Marina Blvd.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4; adults \$6, ages 12 and under free; 30 dealers, minerals, gems, crystals, beads, metaphysical healing tools; contact Jerry Tomlinson, P.O. Box 1371, Sausalito, CA 94966, (415) 383-7837; e-mail: jerry@crystalfair.com; Web site: www.crystalfair.com

**10-12—ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO:** Show; Gem Faire Inc.; New Mexico State Fairgrounds, 300 San Pedro NE; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$7 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

**10-12—RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA:** Show; Frank Cox Productions; State Fairgrounds, 1025 Blue Ridge Rd.; Fri. 10-5, Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; gems, jewelry, beads; contact Frank Cox Productions, 755 S. Palm Ave. #203, Sarasota, FL 34236, (941) 954-0202; e-mail: frankcox@comcast.net; Web site: www.frankcoxproductions.com

**11-12—BUTTE, MONTANA:** Show; Butte Mineral & Gem Club; Butte Civic Center Annex, 1340 Harrison Ave., exit 127 North; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-6; 15 dealers, minerals, gems, fossils, jewelry, silent auction, door prizes, kids' games; contact Pete Knudsen, P.O. Box 4492, Butte, MT 59702, (406) 496-4395

**17-19—SANDY (SALT LAKE CITY), UTAH:** Show; Gem Faire Inc.; South Towne Exposition Center/Exhibit Hall 5, 9575 S. State St.; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$7 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300 or e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

**18-19—RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA:** 31st annual show; Western Dakota Gem & Mineral Society; Central States Fairgrounds Event Center, 800 San Francisco St.; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-4; adults \$3, children under 12 free with adult; dealers, Fairburn agates, door prizes, silent auction, demonstrations, tailgate sales, kids' activities; contact Mike, (605) 391-1518; e-mail: mjbchc@hotmail.com; Web site: www.WDGMS.org

**24-26—SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA:** Show; Gem Faire Inc.; Scottish Rite Event Center, 1895 Camino del Rio S; Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$7 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

**JULY 2011**

**1-3—FISHERSVILLE, VIRGINIA:** 24th annual show, "Fishersville/Waynesboro Area Gem, Mineral & Jewelry Show"; Treasures Of The Earth Gem & Jewelry Shows; Augusta Expoland, 277 Expo Rd., 164 Exit 91; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 11-5; adults \$3 (3-day ticket), children under 16 free; jewelry makers, goldsmiths, silversmiths, gem trees, wire wrap, wire sculpture, pearls, stone beads, stone setting, dealers, amber, opal, minerals, fossils, door prizes, classes; contact Van Wimmer Sr., 5273 Bradshaw Rd., Salem, VA 24153, (540) 384-6047; e-mail: van@toteshows.com; Web site: www.toteshows.com

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**8-10—MARIETTA (ATLANTA), GEORGIA:** Show; Frank Cox Productions; Cobb County Civic Center, 548 S. Marietta Pkwy.; Fri. 1-5, Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; gems, jewelry, beads; contact Frank Cox Productions, 755 S. Palm Ave. #203, Sarasota, FL 34236, (941) 954-0202; e-mail: frankcox@comcast.net; Web site: www.frankcoxproductions.com

**9-10—SYRACUSE, NEW YORK:** 45th annual show, "Gems Along the Erie Canal: A Diamond Celebration"; Gem & Mineral Society of Syracuse; New York State Fairgrounds, Center of Progress Bldg., I-690; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4; competitive exhibits, lectures, workshops, demonstrations, kids' activities, minerals, fossils, beads, metaphysical stones, AMFS and EFMLS Convention meetings July 6-8; contact Cathy Patterson, (315) 638-8817; e-mail: cathypatterson@verizon.net; Web site: www.gmss.us

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## OFF THE DOP

by Jim Perkins

### Wax Dopping

When I'm preparing to dop a stone for faceting, I find where the culet and table will be and grind a flat spot for the table. Then I clean the stone with alcohol and place it on my Teflon®-coated cookie sheet. Using a Blazer torch with a low-temperature flame (lots of yellow color), I warm the stone so wax will stick to it easily. I'm careful not to overheat the stone, as stones will crack if they are heated too much, too quickly. Then I dribble a little wax onto the stone.

I use a dop handle to keep from burning my fingers on hot dop wax. I made one from an X-Acto brand miter saw handle by reaming out the collet with a drill so that it will hold a dop stick. I heat the dop stick so wax will stick to it easily, then dribble wax around the side and on the end of the stick. I join the dop stick wax and the wax on the stone by heating it gently until it is in a plastic state, but not too liquid.

Once the two pieces are joined, I hold the stone up and—with my fingers wet so they won't burn as easily—I form the wax and center the stone by eye. Then I look to see if the edges of the wax are feathered out to a fine edge. If not, the joint is weak and must be reheated. When it is critical to center the rough exactly, I place the stick with the dopped stone in the quill and set the angle of inclination to 90 degrees. I lower the stone to the master lap and, using the dial indicator, check the opposite sides of the rough to find the high side. Then I heat the wax just enough to make the stone moveable and split the difference of the indicator reading so both sides read the same +/- .001 inch. I repeat this procedure for the ends so that the dop axis and stone are centered in both directions.

Wax transferring is usually intimidating for the beginner. Simply melt some wax in a cone dop and place it in the fixed end of the transfer fixture. Place the completed pavilion in the moveable side. Carefully heat the cone dop so the wax is in a near-liquid state, then move the stone into the wax and let it cool. If the wax edge is rolled, heat it again briefly until the edge feathers out. Allow the wax to cool for five or 10 minutes, using this time to clean up your work bench.

Cut a strip of paper towel, fold it and wet it, then wrap it around the stone. Move the dops out of the transfer fixture and hold the cone dop in one end of the transfer fixture so that the flat dop hangs out in midair. Carefully heat the flat dop, not the stone. The metal dop will absorb the heat



and, when the dop is hot enough to melt it, the wax will fall off the stone. The wet paper towel will protect the stone from the majority of the heat.

If you can remove excess wax from the stone without damaging the stone, do so. If not, grind it off and clean the wax off the wheel with denatured alcohol. Before you grind the crown, be sure to align the girdle facets parallel to the master lap so that you cut a straight crown girdle line. (I'll discuss this another month.)

Once the crown is cut and polished, wrap a wet strip of paper towel around the stone again and place the dop in one end of the transfer fixture. Heat the dop, not the stone, until the wax releases the stone. Do not pull and force the stone out of the dop, as you can break it. When the stone is off the dop and cooled to room temperature, soak it in an old jelly jar filled with denatured alcohol or acetone. Make sure the jar has a lid that seals so the liquid doesn't spill and the fumes don't overwhelm you.

Today, many faceters use superglue or epoxy as part of the dopping process. I do so on occasion, but I find that superglue fails often and I don't like using it other than on heat-sensitive stones. Epoxy can be good for the transfer dopping, but it slows you down and requires acetone soaking overnight to remove the epoxy. Dop pots are great for dopping cabochons, but I find them of little use in faceting. Wax dopping is the traditional, time-tested method, and has been proved effective. In my opinion, it is a mandatory step in learning to facet.

Send your comments and questions about any of my columns to Off the Dop, P.O. Box 1041, Medina, OH 44258, or e-mail me at jimperkins@zoominternet.net.





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# In Memory of **HARRISON YOCUM:** 1923-2010

Story by Kitty Williams Fisher

## A Student's Memories Are His Legacy

**F**or many years, Harrison Yocum led a merry band of rockhounds in Tucson. He was quite a character, to say the least. I'm sure that everyone who knew him had a favorite story or stories about Harrison and how he touched their lives. This is ours.

Is there a parent out there who can't relate to the morning struggle of trying to get the kids clean, fed, dressed, and out the door in time for school? At our house, we're late more often than not, but on this particular morning, we had a shot at being on time. We just might have made it, too, but on the way out I heard my daughter Mariah calling for me.

"Hurry up, Honey," I told her, "whatever it is, we can talk about it in the car."

But she was adamant. "No, Mom," she insisted, "You need to come here now."

It was quicker and easier to comply than to argue. I found her standing in the living room and she directed my attention to a glass display case that holds the prize specimens from her rock collection. Rays of sun streaming through our east window were landing right on them, and their facets shone and glowed brightly.

"Just look," she sighed. "Aren't they pretty?" I had to agree, they were beautiful.

Now, there are all sorts of acceptable excuses for a tardy—a doctor's appointment,



**Harrison Yocum was known far and wide for his love of ice cream!**

a car that won't start, etc.—but I'm pretty sure that "stopping to admire crystals on a sunny morning" does not fall into one of the approved categories. Oh well, it was worth it.

You see, my daughter and I are rockhounds. I don't know exactly what I was looking for when I signed the two of us up for the class at our local community college several years ago. Certainly, I was not expecting the instructor. Harrison Yocum, 82

years young at the time, was a classical pianist, the founder of the Tucson Botanical Gardens, and a rockhound extraordinaire.

Inconspicuous he was not. Wearing a coonskin cap, sturdy leather gaiters (he'd never been bitten by a rattlesnake and did not intend to be), and occasionally a six-shooter in a holster, the weight of which threatened to pull his pants right off his slight frame, he rounded up his disciples with a few toots of what sounded suspiciously like a train whistle. In addition to passing on a wealth of geologic knowledge, he taught us that every worthwhile endeavor should begin with a hearty breakfast—and conclude, ideally, with ice cream.

I can't explain how we got so hooked on this; I'm not sure I understand it myself. Finding really cool rocks was part of it, of course, but there was more. Not long before we started rockhounding, I'd

gotten a camper van, which we put to good use. I found I loved the road trips. I loved the fiery Arizona sunrises, the backlit cacti with their golden halos, spring wildflowers, and fall colors. En route to the next rockhounding destination, with steaming coffee in my travel mug, classic rock coming through the speakers, and my child fast asleep in the backseat, everyday worries would fade away and I was filled with a deep sense of contentment.



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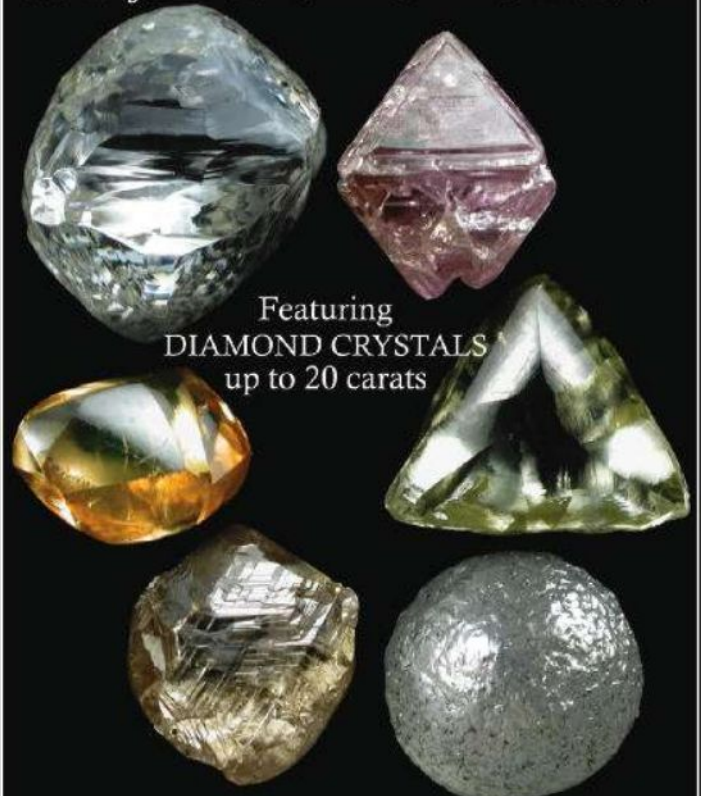
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Mariah and I made it through the class, graduating from "pebble pups" to official "rockhounds" and we have the certificates, duly signed by Harrison, to prove it. After that, we simply tagged along, as did many other former students, on whatever excursions looked interesting. And most did. It was fascinating to learn about the minerals that were worth collecting, as well as those that weren't.

"That's a leaverite," Harrison told me, when I asked about a particular specimen. "Yeah," he continued in response to my questioning look, "leave 'er right there."

But it wasn't only rocks that we were collecting. Just as the specimens we gathered had been formed and transformed by the forces of the earth, we, too, grew and were changed through our interactions and experiences. This was brought home to us very clearly when one of the interns at my office needed to interview a family for her consumer behavior class and asked if we'd help her out. I agreed, and one evening she and her group came to talk to Mariah and me. They asked lots of questions about what items we purchased and why. Then they asked Mariah what her favorite possession was. She thought for only a moment and ran to get it. And what did she bring back? Not a video game (which she didn't even own) or a Barbie (which she did). No, Mariah's prized possession was her rock collection. She got out a favorite specimen to show our visitors.

I imagine what those college kids saw was a rock with some pretty (okay, to be honest, really quite spectacular) crystals. But when Mariah and I look at it, we see more. For us, every specimen has a story—a shared story.

When we look at this one, we see high desert chaparral and the ranch on which we found the rock, and remember the dust we had to eat to get there. We feel the warmth of the sun on our backs and the ache in our muscles. To us, that rock conjures up the memory of the campsite where we stayed the night before we found it, and how we woke snug in our down bags to the chill of a desert dawn. Reflected in the facets of its crystals are visions of a tailgate feast of ham and cheese shared with Harrison and fellow rockhounds after a couple hours of serious collecting and the warm apple crisp with cinnamon ice cream we enjoyed at Stout's Cider Mill on the way home. In these and other strata of accumulated experiences, my daughter's childhood is being formed and preserved.

The last rockhounding trip that season was a weekend excursion to western New Mexico. It was not yet 6 o'clock on Saturday morning, but I had the van all



RICHARD D. FISHER PHOTO

Harrison always had a special way with kids.

packed and ready to go. The only thing that remained was to carry my sleeping, but already dressed, child to the van. (She would sleep in her clothes the night before, a neat little trick we picked up along the way.)

Mariah stirred and lifted her head from my shoulder just long enough to ask, "What are we looking for?"

"Geodes," I told her.

Curiosity satisfied, she let her head fall back heavily. It didn't matter anyway. Our collection is always growing. With every outing, we add a new layer to the geologic record of our lives, and what we find is another facet of ourselves. Harrison taught us that, too.

Thank you, Harrison, for all the good times and the lessons learned. You shared so much with so many. You will be missed. 💎



HARRISON YOCUM PHOTO

Mariah and I made it through the class, graduating from "pebble pups" to official "rockhounds", and have signed certificates to prove it.



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# MANY FACETS

by Guest Faceters

Faceters are welcome to submit their original designs for publication. Mail materials to Many Facets Submissions, *Rock & Gem* magazine, 290 Maple Ct., Ste. 232, Ventura, CA 93003.

**R**obusto Brilliant is one of those designs that doesn't follow the tradition of even symmetry in gem design; however, it has such outstanding optical performance that many people like it. While even-symmetry gems look balanced, I learned that an odd number of mains and rotational angles produces a livelier and brighter-looking gem, which I attribute to light ray splitting.

My original odd-symmetry designs were good but, based on more experience and knowledge, I recently decided to revisit Robusto and make some improvements I had found in later years. The revised design incorporates a deeper pavilion, so it has better tilt angle performance, and the crown angles are matched to work in conjunction with the pavilion angles, so it has better proportions, brightness and contrast and limited extinction.

I cut the revised Robusto Brilliant from a piece of citrine with a beautiful golden color from a long-closed mine in Brazil. Most citrine has been treated to create the color. Since I don't know whether this old material was treated or not, I assume that it was. There are beautiful colors of citrine available today that you can use to create a similar-looking stone.

—Jim Perkins



## ROBUSTO BRILLIANT REVISED

C.A.D. by Jim Perkins, jimperkins@zoominternet.net

© October 2010

Original design July 4, 2004, J.Perkins

Angles for R.I. = 1.550

64 + 18 girdles = 82 facets

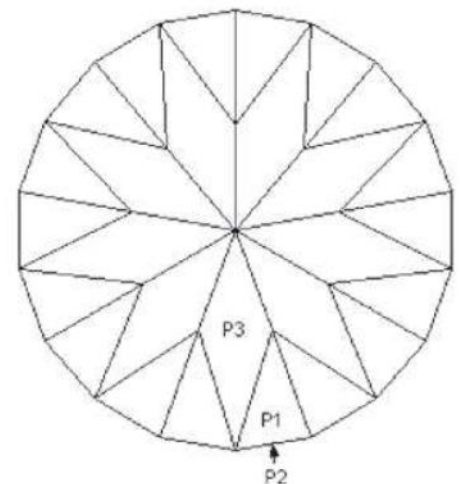
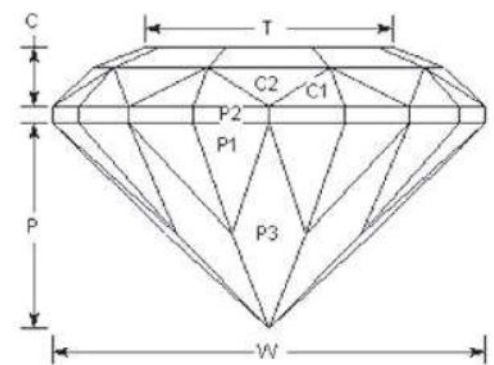
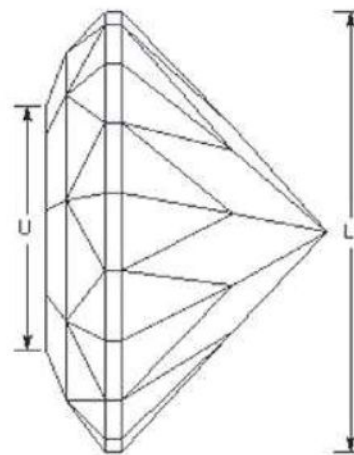
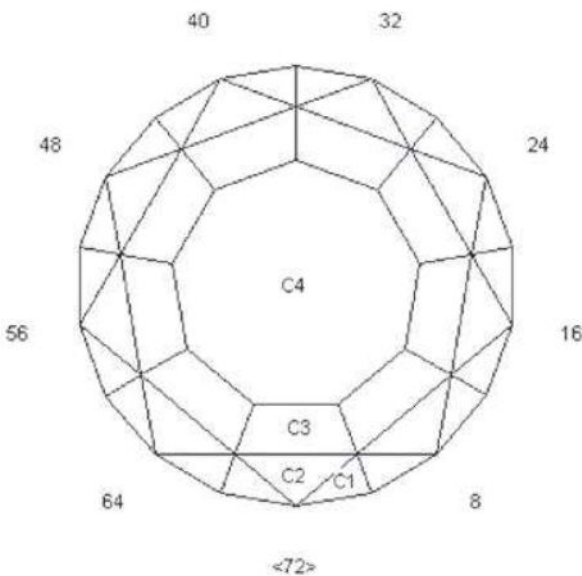
9-fold, mirror-image symmetry

72 index

L/W = 1.015 T/W = 0.571 U/W = 0.563

P/W = 0.473 C/W = 0.137

Vol./W<sup>3</sup> = 0.233



### PAVILION

P1	45.00°	02-06-10-14-18-22-26-30-34-38-42-46-50-54-58-62-66-70	Create a center point
P2	90.00°	02-06-10-14-18-22-26-30-34-38-42-46-50-54-58-62-66-70	Set size; polish girdle facets
P3	43.00°	72-08-16-24-32-40-48-56-64	PCP; GMP
<b>CROWN</b>			
C1	44.00°	02-06-10-14-18-22-26-30-34-38-42-46-50-54-58-62-66-70	Set girdle height
C2	37.00°	72-08-16-24-32-40-48-56-64	GMP
C3	22.00°	72-08-16-24-32-40-48-56-64	MP @ C1 - C1
C4	0.00°	Table	Cut to size, polish table and crown



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- Lapidary Equipment
- Lapidary Supplies
- Minerals
- Miscellaneous
- Nuggets
- Opals
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April	February 15
May	March 15
June	April 15
July	May 15
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Rock & Gem Classifieds

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Company Name \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Category Heading \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Words \_\_\_\_\_ Cents per Word \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Issues \_\_\_\_\_ Beginning with the \_\_\_\_\_ issue. **Bold:**  Yes  NO

Total Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_  Check (payable to Rock & Gem)  MC  Visa **Color Highlight:**  Yes  NO  
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Account Number \_\_\_\_\_ CW# \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(last 3 digits of code on back of card)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_



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Advertising Pays

# Rock & Gem

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Indiana Archimedes.....	Apr.
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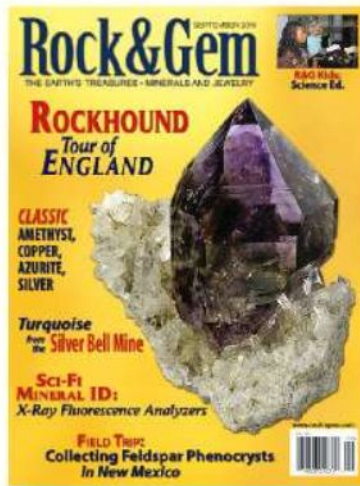
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# O N THE ROCKS

## Tucson Shows Approach

The great annual mineral event in Tucson, Arizona, will soon be upon us. To whet our appetites for the 2011 show season, let's take a look back at the shows that were held there in 2010.

The many shows of 2010 in Tucson started off a bit wet, thanks to an uncommon rain. The weather soon turned superb, as it is wont to do during Arizona's winter. After all, that was one important reason Tucson developed into the greatest of all mineral events. Folks were eager to escape the harsh northern winter and bask in the glory of Arizona's sun. The delightful specimens that could be seen and purchased at the famous Tucson Gem & Mineral Show™, better known as the Main Show, as well as the numerous small shows scattered around town, were just one more reason for snowbirds and visitors from other countries to visit our great state.

It is impossible to visit each one of the 40-plus shows that are held in Tucson beginning in late January and culminating with the Main Show in mid-February. So as a mineral aficionado who was under time constraints, I stuck to those shows that touted mineral specimens, giving the general rock and lapidary shows just a quick look.

Keep in mind that, of the many shows going on in this two-month period, only a handful are strong retail mineral shows. Leading the pack is the Inn Suites Hotel show, followed by the Westward Look Hotel show and the Main Show, which is held in the Tucson Convention Center. These three are the most significant mineral shows.

A trip to the Westward Look, with its relaxed setting, is well worth the time and effort to drive there. It is situated some 10 miles north of the City Center. This is where I started my mineral immersion. There were 50 or so of the top mineral dealers in the business featuring some of the finest specimens you'll want to see. The setting is lovely, with finely kept grounds, impressive Western-style buildings, and a nice restaurant.

The Zambian emeralds featured on the cover of the February 2010 issue of *Rock & Gem* were there in The Collector's Edge's dealer room. That same room also held choice, new, pink Afghanistan elbaïtes with quartz. These lovely specimens suggest that



Zambian emeralds, which were featured in the February 2010 issue of *Rock & Gem*, were available in Tucson.

the war-torn country is still producing superb specimens, though I have to wonder what dealer is brave enough to risk a trip into that mountainous realm.

Morocco is well known for superb red vanadinite and bright blue azurite. It has also come on strong as a major source of fossils, as evidenced by remarkable slabs of grayish limestone replete with ammonites, nautiloids, and the like. Now we can add another dimension to Morocco's mineral heritage: rare silver minerals featured by The Collector's Edge.

A large number of fine acanthites have now come from Morocco. They are a brilliantly lustrous blackish gray and consist of small clusters of sharp crystals that tend to be under ¼ inch, but occur in groups that are impressive. Now that same locality, the Bouismas mine, is producing silver rarities. The specimens I saw have three intergrown silver species on them: dyscrasite, a silver antimony; allargentum, an amalgam of silver and antimony; and schachnerite, an even rarer silver mercury amalgam. This last has yet to be completely verified in the specimens I saw, but final studies will probably prove the earlier ones to be accurate.

While at the Westward Look, I participated in a video shoot. BlueCap Productions, run by Bryan Swoboda, produces a fine DVD called "What's Hot in Tucson" that gives an insider's look at the newest and

best specimens for sale at the shows. Each year's DVD gives an excellent overview of new and classic minerals in Tucson and are a ready reference of years past.

The "What's Hot" DVDs have always been hosted by Dave Wilber. He has vast experience in selling, collecting and exhibiting some of the finest and better-known specimens. Dave's health has become uncertain, so Bryan invited me to co-host in case Dave had to take a break. One of the scenes we shot involved a recently found kunzite from the Oceanview mine in San Diego County, California.

Dave also spent time interviewing my son Evan and his associate, Mark Miterman. These fellows had caused a huge stir among collectors when they brought spectacular azurites from the Milpillas mine in Sonora, Mexico, to the Main Show. The guys followed these winners with even more spectacular malachite pseudomorphs from the same mine. These specimens are certainly the best ever to come from Mexico and may well be the world's finest malachite pseudomorphs after azurite. You probably read about these amazing malachites in the April 2010 *Rock & Gem*.

The Inn Suites seems to be the anchor show in Tucson until the Main Show opens. This motel event opens in late January and holds well over 100 dealers, who offer just about everything related to rocks and minerals. Displayed for sale in an open-air setting are huge, amethyst-lined geodes from southern Brazil and Uruguay. Monster Moroccan fossil slabs are there in abundance. There are so many tents, motel rooms, and ballrooms stuffed with fossils and minerals the place seems more like a mineral bazaar than a mineral show! For mineral collectors, it is a great place to ferret out fine minerals in a full range of values. I like to search here for "sleepers", specimens that are either mislabeled or priced well below their actual value.

One of the specimens I saw at the Inn Suites was in the booth run by my friend Benny Fenn. I have written about several of Benny's major finds in past years, including the superb, very colorful Sierra Madre Occidental jasper and brilliant canary-yellow mimetite from San Pedro Corralitos, Chihuahua, Mexico. The one specimen Benny had at the 2010 show that surprised me is



also from Mexico: a glass-clear selenite crystal full of water bubbles that measures 3 feet long!

Clear selenite crystals with water bubbles are very common in Mexico. Cave after cave, vug after vug, yields such crystals simply because the mineral is one of the more common species formed from mineral-rich solutions in Mexican silver mines. What made Benny's selenite crystal significant were neither the water bubbles nor its size, but its famous source, one this magazine has revealed twice in special articles. The selenite is from the Nacima mine, where a cavern of giant selenite crystals was found. We featured a photo of the cavern on the cover of our September 2007 issue. The cave was later written up in *National Geographic* (November 2008). I was actually inside that 149-degree F. cave twice, albeit briefly. I could only stay in it for six to eight minutes before bailing out to the relatively cool 95-degree F. tunnel!

One minor problem with all the shows in Tucson is parking. Every collector wants to be the first to get started hunting for those special rocks, so opening day at all the shows is really something. Some visitors use the available shuttle system, but parking is still a perennial problem. With construction seeming to be an ongoing event at the Convention Center, even the Main Show is suffering a parking problem. Use the shuttle if possible!

Of course, everyone waits in anticipation for the great Main Show to open. They want to see the amazing special exhibits that make this show a cut above all the other Tucson shows. Some visitors, especially buyers from overseas, stay in Tucson only long enough to visit the Main Show on opening day, the second Thursday of February. By then, they have often been in Tucson for a week or more, so they visit the Main Show for one day, then leave for home.

In my opinion, the main reason this amazing show is still the best in the world is the dozens of special exhibits! The Main Show actually turns Tucson's Convention Center into a four-day mineral museum with its special exhibits, many of which are brought to the show by museums from the world over. The museum exhibits are supplemented by privately owned exhibits that contain of many of the world's finest minerals. Together, these exhibits form the vital core of the Main Show.

In 2010, one important exhibit consisted of a crown that had belonged to Queen Antoinette of France and is now part of the gem collection of the Smithsonian Institution. The crown, now rich in turquoise



**Bryan Swoboda handles the camera while Dave Wilber interviews a miner about new finds at California's Oceanview mine for "What's Hot in Tucson: 2010".**

cabochons, was once encrusted with emeralds! As singularly beautiful as the crown is, it almost paled in comparison to the exhibits of gem crystals and their faceted companions. These brilliant and colorful exhibits reflected the show theme, Gems and Gem Crystals.

Speaking of spectacular faceted gems, the exhibit placed by the Gemological Institute of America (GIA) was a stunner. Several dozen superbly colored faceted gems—including amethyst, aquamarine, peridot, and rare species—were eye-catching indeed.

Not surprisingly, the privately owned special exhibits tended to exceed those from the museums. Many museums these days are virtually penniless and can't compete with private investors for the treasures that are currently coming from the earth.



**The Inn Suites parking area was well stocked with Moroccan fossils and quartz crystals.**

Museums tend more often to display choice, classic species, which are always a delight to see and study.

A few collectors eschewed the show theme and simply showed their best specimens, sometimes from one locality. A case in point was the colorful display of classic and rare Tiger mine minerals by my son Evan. This breathtaking display reflected the show theme of 2008, "America's Finest Minerals, Revisited".

For the first time, the Tucson Show Committee chose to feature the superb mineral artwork of several talented folks. While shooting for "What's Hot in Tucson: 2010", I interviewed Eberhardt Equit, a very talent-

ed German artist whose mineral artwork is now available in book form. Each drawing is accurate and stunningly beautiful. Equit's style hearkens back to famous European artists of yesteryear by employing similar techniques. He often uses powdered minerals to enhance the colors of his paints. I was particularly taken by a superb rendition of a crystallized gold because Equit actually used powdered gold in his paint. He told me that, once the gold-acrylic painting was finished, he used an agate to polish it. This highlighted the yellow metal suspended in the paint.

The Main Show as it exists today is a far cry from the show that was held in the old Quonset hut on the county fairgrounds back in the 1960s. In those early days, dealers simply lined up flats of minerals on tables. Now, the major dealers actually create a jewelry store atmosphere with carpeting, specially lighted cases, and lovely art and photographic works decorating their booths. Each of these major booths should really be thought of as a mineral gallery, in my opinion!

Joining the mineral dealers at the Main Show is an even greater number of jewelry, gem and general retail dealers. These hard-working folks offer just about everything you can imagine that is related to gems, jewelry and minerals. There is something for everyone, even low-cost mineral items for the more than 5,000 students who come to the show on Friday for school field trips.

All in all, the Main Show is still the place to visit and shop. The spectacular exhibits and the minerals, jewelry, and related goods that are offered for sale by well over 150 dealers keep this show the premier event that the City of Tucson calls its Mineral, Gem and Fossil Showcase!

Those who are interested in obtaining a "What's Hot in Tucson" DVD for 2010 or any other year, turn to your computer and dial in [www.whatshotintucson.com](http://www.whatshotintucson.com). Another "hot" item we hope will be available is my new book, *The Frugal Collector*, Vol. I. Come by the *Rock & Gem* booth and pick up a copy, and I'll be happy to sign it for you. 💎

Bob Jones holds the Carnegie Mineralogical Award, is a member of the Rockhound Hall of Fame, and has been writing for *Rock & Gem* since its inception. He lectures about minerals, and has written several books and video scripts.





Field Notes submissions are subject to editing. Address questions to "Editor" for a private response or to "Readers" and provide the contact information you'd like published. Send to Field Notes, *Rock & Gem* magazine, 290 Maple Ct., Ste. 232, Ventura, CA 93003.

## Lapidary Article Contest Winner

Congratulations to Lucy Groenke, the winner of *Rock & Gem's* 2010 Lapidary Article of the Year contest. Lucy's project, "Cast a Hollow Filigree Bead" (February 2010), took the reader through the steps of carving water-soluble wax into a pattern for a mold. Clear, close-up photos illustrate the steps to finishing this attractive project. Lucy wins the faceting lap and saw blade package donated by Lapcraft Inc (www.lapcraft.com).



LUCY GROENKE PHOTO

## The Bucket's Half Full

Shimmering micaceous inclusions beckon: another rock for the collection, I reckon. Along with twenty thousand more—all unique finds, personal scores. Long miles stretch past me leaving cities behind  
I'm searching the log roads for a mineral find!  
Elevation gained, clouds now at my feet even with chill winds carrying rain and sleet  
I'm looking for more, none may be missed! My bucket's half-empty; I'm a rock pessimist.  
What's this? An old quarry strewn with tumbled boulder?  
A treasure trove indeed to the eye of the beholder!  
Pockets with calcites and crystals with twins  
tempt my rock hammer and chisel within. As light starts to wane and the heater now calls—  
the bucket is full! I'm an optimist after all.

—Aaron Wiltsey  
Willamette Agate & Mineral Society  
Salem, OR

## Garnet Grime

I have been looking at the *Rock & Gem* Web site and others, but cannot find what I need to know. My wife and I have returned home with a load of dodecahedral almandine garnets. Most are 1/8 inch to 3/16 inch, with some larger and some smaller. Many are in matrix and many are loose crystals. Many seem of possible gem quality and are very dark.

I have separated the loose ones into two types, those that show mostly clean surfaces with only a little matrix and mica attached and the others, which seem to have a rind or brown coating on them. These ones are much more weathered.

I have tried to remove the coating with oxalic acid without luck, and have even put a few in muriatic acid to soak with no change. I do have a tumbler, but I would like to retain the crystal shape, if possible. What would be the normal method for cleaning these? I would like to determine their color and clarity. (The coated garnets are in the left of the photo below.) Any advice your readers can give would be appreciated.

—Jim and Mary Oswald  
West Newton, PA  
twotravln@yahoo.com



## Club Subscriptions

I have some forms for *Rock & Gem's* club subscription program, but I don't know how old they are. Is the club subscription program still going and are these forms still valid?

—J.M. Barry  
Los Angeles, CA

Yes, *Rock & Gem* is still running its club subscription program. Club members can get their subscriptions at a discount and their club's treasury gets money back from Miller Magazines. Older subscription offers, however, have expired. For our current club subscription offer, mail your request to Club Subscription Program, *Rock & Gem* magazine, 290 Maple Ct., Ste. 232, Ventura, CA 93003 or e-mail editor@rockngem.com.

—Editor

## Fluorescent Fix

As a "glowhound", I was excited to see Bob Jones' article on collecting fluorescent minerals in the November issue of *Rock & Gem*. Savoring the colorful photos over my morning coffee, I was intrigued to see that the first photo featured a display case attributed to Greg Anderson, a friend and fellow collector, with rocks that looked amazingly like mine. It was only after my brain fully responded to that first cup of coffee that I realized it really was my case, probably photographed by Bob Jones during his annual trip to the Motherload Mineral Society's show in Turlock, California, where he is an honored speaker each year. Mike Whittier deserves credit for organizing the fluorescent display at this show, in which I am only one of several contributors.

Should Mr. Jones or any readers have an interest in seeing another superb display of fluorescent rocks and minerals, I would recommend a visit to the Mineral & Gem Society of Castro Valley's show in Newark, California, in late February (www.mgscv.org). In cooperation with the club, the Northern California chapter of the Fluorescent Mineral Society puts on a display of fluorescent minerals that I believe to be the largest on the West Coast, featuring rare and world class specimens from all over the planet. Unlike most club shows, this "West Coast Glow" also features dealers dedicated to fluorescent minerals.

Lastly, the Fluorescent Mineral Society (www.uvminerals.org) is an excellent resource for readers interested in learning more about this fascinating niche within the world of rock collecting.

—Mark N. Isaacs  
Regional VP, Northern California Chapter  
Fluorescent Mineral Society



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