

A TRIP TO ROCK FANTASYLAND—THE RALPH BISHOP MUSEUM, NIPOMO, CA

Pictures and commentary by Wayne W. Mills, OMS



Ralph explaining his recently built demonstration of the Chumash Cosmology. Depicting the Spring and Winter Solstices and the Vernal Equinox. Ralph's recreation is based on an "arborlith" (tree etching found in Cayucos).

Folks queued up waiting for their chance to cruise through Ralph's Rock (Fantasy) Room. Three members from the kern County Club made the trip, and they were **not** disappointed!



This foot and a half long specimen from the Eocene-aged Green River Shale (45 million years before present) was sitting on the floor of Ralph's garage outside the rock museum...





Looking like a Bierstadt painting of sunrise over a tranquil western lake, this piece of Boron Petrified Wood is cut to reveal the amazing artistry of Mother Nature. Ralph has other pictures cut from Boron Wood in this same case.

Cases of Biggs (Oregon) and Bruneau (Idaho) Jasper—some rare, large and “picture” perfect pieces.





Nipomo "Weed Rock". Symmetry in sagenite. Ralph also has wonderful pieces of Nipomo Marcasite and an amazing piece of marcasite in DeeDeeite from Avila Beach. Ask to see THAT one!

Against the wall from the left—
Green and Red Mary Ellen
Jasper (jasperized algal
stromatolites from St. Louis Co.,
Minnesota)—about 2.2 to 2.4
billion years old. The first living
things. The big green and red
rock is Sonoran Sunset from
Sonora, Mexico. Third from the
left is a large piece of
Miramamba (silicified asbestos)
from Australia.





Some rare and colorful Laguna (Mexican) Agate slices. On the shelf below, one can see some of Ralph's pseudomorphs of Aragonite after Halite (hopper crystals) from Point Sal.

A large (1.7 foot-long) fish from the Miocene-age (15 million-year old) Lompoc Diatomite (Monterey Formation). Limb casts from Gaaviota and on the shelf below, iridescent and other ammonites from various locations.





Some of Ralph's primo Dryhead Agates. He used to own the mine. Ask him about THAT some time!



Each enclosure houses slices of rocks from one location showing the wide variety that can occur within a single rock "species". Oh, there are a couple of nice "little" (foot or so in diameter) petrified logs and Cycads too.



Ralph holding Court in front of some of his “petrified” wood rounds. He can tell rock-exciting, related (and non-related) stories for hours, and never tell the same story twice.

OMS is grateful for Ralph’s sharing of his amazing collection and knowledge of our wonderful hobby with all who are fortunate enough to meet him.

Note the boxes on top of the cases—full of wonderful material that Ralph does not have the room to display—yet. This is one of the two aisles in Ralph’s “Rock Room”. Several cases on both walls, and a double row of cases in the middle.