



Ore-Cutts

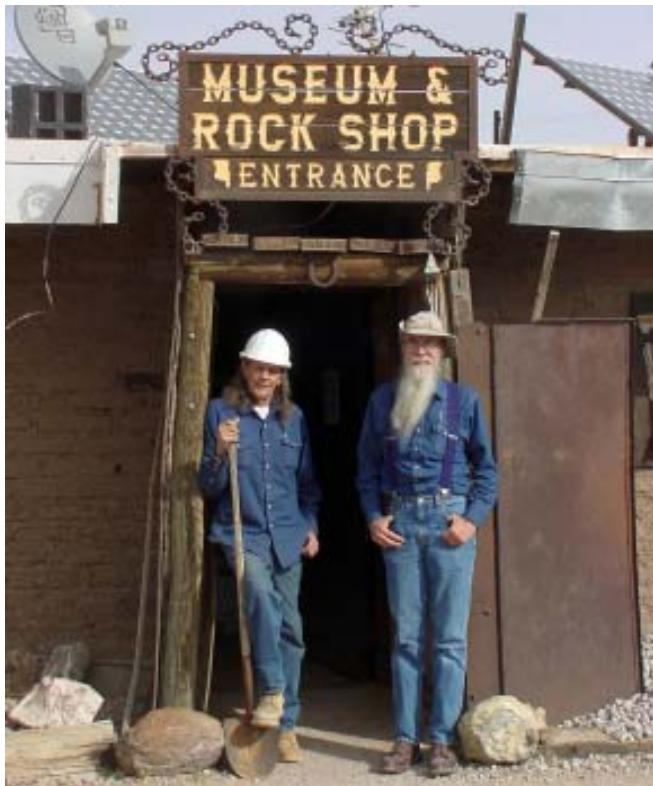
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Eggs New Mexico Style

By Dick and Bess Shields

We approached the mine as strangers. We had heard and read about the Geode Kid, but we were about to meet the legend. As the mine door slowly opened, Paul himself greeted us. Dick said, "We're friends of Ralph Bishop", and we were instantly welcomed in as new friends. This was the inner sanctum, shop, research site, and home of the Geode Kid, Robert Paul Colburn, and his partner Christopher Blackwell.



Paul and Chris at their shop near Deming, NM

Paul's unique shop and home are totally self-sufficient electrically, with solar panels dot-

ting the property. Paul runs the computer, microwave, lighting, and lapidary machines off of the passive solar system he designed.

Paul began by defining the meanings of geode and thunder egg. "Geode just means "hollow nodule". Thunder eggs are a species of nodule called lithophysae which is from the Greek meaning "stone bubble". You get the "LITHO-" part. Litho means rock. This species occur in perlite lava flows, and the popular name is thundereggs which comes from an Indian legend."

Paul stressed that "Probably the most solidly entrenched and unchangeable erroneous thought in the rockhound world is that THUNDEREGG means solid and GEODE means hollow. The latter is correct. The former is not."



Hollow nodule from Baker Egg Mine, a classic "geode"

Paul's early collecting experiences began in Oakland CA where he grew up. He joined the East Bay Mineral Society as a youngster, and one of his most memorable early collecting trips with the group was for Berkeley Hills iris agate. Paul had the rockhounding bug in a big way, and was soon planning a trip in his teens to dig at the Oregon Priddy Blue Bed.

These collecting trips were the foundation of a lifelong pursuit: the study of lithophysae, gathering scientific data, observing, and testing theories he developed from extensive field research. Paul even spent some time in the Templeton area researching biconoids, and includes the findings in his newly published research paper.

Surrounding the shop and home are huge piles of thundereggs from various collecting sites. Paul owns the famous Baker Egg Mine, located in Hermanas NM, about 35 miles from his shop and home. Many of the thundereggs are from this location. He also collects from Rockhound State Park, about two miles away, Priday Blue Bed, Potato Patch, and wherever thundereggs are found.



Dick's favorite Baker Egg Mine geode, with a rare fluorescing crystalline layer covered by iron-colored druzy crystals

What would a trip to the "Mine" be without Dick's famous fluorescent lamps? Paul, Chris, and Dick spent hours fluorescing the room full of thundereggs, commenting about special beauties, and occasionally turning on a flashlight to see what material was causing the dazzle. Paul remarked that uranium can cause activation in agates.

During the conversation, Paul discovered that Dick writes and speaks fluent German. After making a deal for Dick to "translate German lithophysae research papers in exchange for thunderegg specimens", the trade was agreed upon. Paul is anxious to receive the transla-

tions, and Dick is more than pleased to adopt some of the fluorescent eggs.

Even though much research has been done on lithophysae, there are still many unanswered questions. Paul has done extensive research on the shape of typical land formations where thundereggs were formed. He has mapped the deposit patterns of materials which were laid down in specific order. He has researched the angle of internal mineral deposits which were affected by land movement during formation of the thundereggs, and produced tipping of bands. Adsorption, or drawing of materials to the side, was another avenue to explore.

Paul's recent research on perlite (which is hydrated), and obsidian (which is not), has answered many of the old questions about thundereggs forming in one particular area, yet not forming a few feet away.

The inside of a thunderegg can be a chaotic, undefined, erratic structure (9, 7, 13 cores like biconoids) or, at the other end of the spectrum, can be a perfect biconic core. Paul's collection has examples of the typical forms, as well as many extraordinary specimens.



Lithophysae tube with biconic center

For information about displays of lithophysae and Paul's collections, please consult our "Web Sites of Note" or contact the Deming-Luna Mimbres Museum, 301 South Silver Ave, Deming, NM. 88030, (505) 546-2382. There

are about one thousand of Paul's world-class agate nodules and crystal geodes in the Museum. The address for Paul and Chris's shop is Basin Range Volcanics Geolapidary Museum 6235 Stirrup Rd SE Deming, New Mexico 88030.

Three hours later Dick and I left with new insight into the lifelong task Paul has undertaken. We have a greater appreciation of his many years spent in the pursuit of researching and educating the public about lithophysae.

We thank Paul and Chris for being such gracious hosts. We dream of visiting again, and leaving more time for Bess to pick through the mounds of uncut thundereggs lying around their yard.

Collecting Eggs with the Kid

by Ralph Bishop

Over the past forty-something years, I've met thousands of rockhounds. Of all of them, the Geode Kid is one person that stands out. His wealth of intelligence is derived from unending inquisitiveness, hard work, and a strong moral compass. His only dangerous defect is a disease no one had a name for back in the 70's. The modern shrinks call it obsessive compulsive rockhound syndrome. This cranial illness is what brought us together years ago in Oregon.

One of my most memorable field trips was with the Kid. We went to hunt the extremely rare and beautiful Frieda green tube thundereggs found in only one small spot in the Deschutes River Canyon on the eastern mantle of Mt. Hood, Oregon.

Oregon is a state composed primarily of volcanic geology. Because of that, it is a treasure house of agates. The classic agates like Carey plume, Priday Plume, carnelian, and Holly Blue are widely known in our hobby. But very few rockhounds, even the experts, have ever heard of let alone seen a "Frieda". The egg is composed of a reddish brown shell. The cores are clear to bluish agate with brilliant green tubular moss. The habit or style of moss is exceptionally beautiful. The moss is bold in

structure and hangs like lace in a transparent background. It probably is Oregon's rarest classic agate.



Frieda nodule with colloform growths circumfused by translucent chalcedony, giving the moss a depth of view like a diver would see underwater

Paul had planned a dig there and asked me to help. He promised an interesting trip, but one that was somewhat difficult. It would require a full 5 days to dig and haul a "paying" quantity.

We left Cascadia on the west side and drove east over Tombstone Pass. In a matter of 45 minutes we were in the high desert, a starkly different environment from the western rain forest. The Cascade mountain range divides the state's climates. Volcanoes like Mt. Hood and the Three Sisters act as a "rain shadow", so Cascadia could receive 40+ inches per year while Bend might get 10".

The drive north from Bend was monotonous, a relatively flat sage and juniper desert. To look at this terrain you would not suspect what was to come. For 80 miles we drove parallel to, but never saw the Deschutes River. It is a wild, vibrant river fed by Cascade glacial melt through lava tubes. Vast quantities of water drop over 10,000 feet in underground tubes, and erupt like high pressure hoses. This odd arrangement gives the Deschutes presence very few rivers have. The presence is raw cold

power. It has caused a deep gorge with many cataracts, and flows at 25 knots.

We accessed the river at Maupin and drove up stream on an old railroad bed. Sam Hill, of Burlington Northern, attempted to drive a railroad line into Eastern Oregon up the Deschutes. He carved a roadway out of solid rock for 12 miles, but at the point known as Frieda he was stopped cold and had to abandon the project. This canyon and its river was rivetty, the river ran really fast, and the narrows created rolling waves. The walls of the gorge were amazing in what they revealed, a cross section of Mt. Hood lava flow. There was a great deal of contrast in the distinctive color and type of the different flows.

We pulled to a stop at a wide place and there was the first surprise. It was a 1" steel cable across the river, and attached to it on the bank was an aluminum boat of about 18'. This was our portage across the river. We had a week's supply and a Honda 3-wheeler, at that time brand new on the market. The Kid had bought it specifically for this dig.

We loaded up and pushed off the bank. The current of the river caught the boat, and we were whisked to the center of the river with the wire singing Zzah, Zzah, Zzah. Here the surface had one foot rollers and somehow due to the angle of the wire, with only a minor pause in the center, the current drew us to the opposite bank. After unloading, we settled in for the evening. The aura of this place was strong, from the wind driven odor of snow melt, to the rushing sound of the water amplified off the towering rock walls.

The egg bed was on a bench about half the way up the canyon wall. It appeared to have been carved as a bend in the river ages ago. It was only 300 or 400 feet deep and wide. It had a skiff of soil and some sage brush on it, and a very steep slope of rock and soil down to river level. Paul had been there not too long before this trip, and had hand dug a "road" for the 3-wheeler. There must have been 2 or 3 days already in this project. There were several

hairpin switchbacks. We had a little widening to do on both the straightaways and especially the switchbacks, but by noon we were on the bench overlooking the river a couple hundred feet below. The river narrowed below the bench, and the rushing sound was a dominating presence during the entire trip. So was the crisp odor of fresh cold water on the constant breeze.



Frieda nodule with a mixture of depositions

Eastern Oregon is always warm in mid-June, and made the cool smell of snow melt even more noticeable. The wall above the bench was a massive rhyolite flow, and by the look of things, the top of the perlite flow where the eggs were located was intact. We wondered how deep the flow was. Perlite is a dark, grey-black, glassy lava with a high water content. It looks like a funky obsidian with white frothy spots. This type of rock, however, oxidizes at a very rapid rate when exposed to weathering processes near the surface. When oxidized, it becomes a white ash-like substance. In fact, it looks so much like volcanic ash, it was confused for ash for many years.

Evidence of previous digging was noticeable, but seemed very limited. The eggs started at plant root level, and were usually a matter of inches apart, but sometimes coming in swarms that all touched one another. In these areas we found doubles and triple golden where eggs had been fused together before they hardened. The eggs seemed to have huge agate cores, and most with the vibrant green tubes we desired. The reddish brown rhyolite caps sometimes popped off to expose the cores. Most were completely agate filled, but some were filled with the moss tubes covered by only one or two thin layers of agate. These were interesting as they looked like a mass of green worms.

To get the eggs down the steep bank Paul would load up a 35 gallon drum to the 3-wheeler, and down he'd go. Most people have seen these little RV's. They look like a tricycle with big balloon tires. They were fun, but had a bad tendency to roll over when turning corners. You would have to "lean" into a corner, not turn the front tire-period. OR! Over she's go throwing the rider over the front, and then landing on the rider. Unfortunately, no owner's manual would mention that, so a new rider, such as the Kid, found out the hard way. There was no way a person could "lean" one of these 3-wheelers around a hairpin. On several occasions, over he went, and the 3-wheeler could be found at the bottom of the hill in need of duct tape and hay wire. By the end of 5 days, that new RV wasn't much good except for parts, and very few of those. It did the trick to the end though, and hauled about 3,000 pounds total.

Over the week's period we finally reached the solid lava "floor". The perlite flow was right at 6' thick, eggs from top to bottom. I was enthralled by the eggs at the basement level. The cores were all perfect biconoids, shaped like 2 Chinese hats joined at the brim. I was raised in Santa Maria, and nearby were the rare Templeton biconoids, derived from another perlite flow. These Frieda biconoids were ex-

tremely symmetrical with a green frosting. They were just beautiful. At the end of the dig we were tired, dirty, and the Kid was bunged up from corners he and the 3-wheeler had missed.



Frieda Biconoids from this collecting trip

Now our load had to be transported by the cable boat, so we loaded up what seemed to be a reasonable load, and shoved off the bank. The trip to the center of the current went Zzzzz in a heartbeat. Then, seemingly caught forever, the boat lurched sideways in the rolling waves. I was sure we were going to swamp. This was an OH S--- situation. But, just as the terror became extreme, Someone above caused the boat to swing its way to the opposite shore in half a zzzz heartbeat. The boat hammered into the bank, and the Kid and I looked at each other. We decided we were not natural born sailors. Also, it seemed prudent to make smaller - as in real small - loads. To drown in the Deschutes would be counterproductive, but the loss of the green tube eggs would be unbearable. This decision cost us the rest of the day, but in the end, the truck and its tired, happy, sore, heavy load headed home. Those were the days, my friends. We thought they'd never end!

Check our OMS web site at <http://omsinc.org>
or send email to oms@ix.netcom.com.

AFMS: AN INSURANCE UPDATE**"Are Guests Covered?"**

One of the most frequently-asked questions about the Federation's insurance policy is whether guests at club functions (dinners, shows, field trips, etc.) are "covered".

The answer to this question is both "NO" and "YES" depending upon what you mean by the word "covered". Here is a quick explanation:

If, by "covered", you mean to ask: "Are guests at these functions protected against claims or lawsuits under the Federation policy if they accidentally injure someone or damage someone's property? The answer is "no" they're not.

It's just as if a friend of yours came to visit you at your home with their pet dog and their dog attacked a neighbor: "They" wouldn't be covered ("protected") under "Your" homeowners insurance policy; only "you" would be protected against claims and lawsuits in this example; "they" would have to file a claim under 'their' own homeowners policy to provide protection for themselves.

If, however, by 'covered' you mean to ask: "Are guests who get injured while participating in club activities covered for the payment of their medical bills", the answer is "yes", but only to the extent of your or your club's legal liability.

As an example, if you failed to clean up a spill on the floor of the dining room and a guest tripped and fell, their medical bills would undoubtedly be "covered" under the Federation policy. If, however, a guest is injured through no fault or negligence of your club or its members, no medical payment should be expected. ...As an example, consider a guest who gets stung by a bee; it's unlikely that you or your club would be held liable for their "injury" so no payment would be made. If you "were" liable, payment would be made up to \$1 million.

Hope this helps.

Fred Ott, Insurance Chairperson

VICTOR M. JONAS

Victor M. Jonas, 90, passed away Saturday, Dec. 13th, 2003, at his niece and nephew's home in Cambria where he had been in their care since August.

Victor was the eldest of ten children, and helped his father on their family farm in Acton, Iowa. Victor joined the U.S. Army and served two years in Tewkesbury, England as a mechanic before returning to America. After the war, Victor became a Master Mechanic working at Chevrolet for 34 years.

Victor married his beloved Thelma Kapp in 1947, and they lived happily together until she passed away in 1996. Both were very creative in painting, jewelry-making, and gardening. Their home reflected these hobbies. Victor was President of the Orcutt Mineral Society in 1986.

After Victor's health declined, he moved to be with his niece Dorothy Loud and her husband Craig in Cambria, CA in August. Funeral services were held in Cambria, and a memorial Mass was held at his beloved St. Louis de Montfort Church in Orcutt.

GARY JOHN MOCK

Gary John "Big John" Mock, 57, well-known Central Coast sport fishing captain passed away Friday, Jan. 16, 2004, due to complications of a bacterial infection following a battle with cancer and diabetes. Cremation will take place with burial at sea to follow at a later date.

While working as skipper of the "Bonanza," Big John received a U.S. Coast Guard letter of commendation for his involvement in the successful rescue of passengers from the "San Mateo," which capsized during rough seas at the Morro Bay harbor entrance Feb. 16, 1983. He was a well-liked skipper, known for his ability to locate the best catch for his passengers.

Creative and good with his hands, Big John always put 110 percent into whatever hobby he was interested in at the time. Always looking for the unique or unusual, he designed custom

fishing accessories, stone jewelry and spheres. John was President of OMS in 1991, and remained an active member.

Truthfully, after all was said and done, Big John's proudest moments came when he talked of his son, John Thomas "J.T." Passing on his love of the sea, he taught J.T. to fish. He also taught him to play chess, which came naturally. Big John was proud to accompany his son to many local tournaments.

Big John is survived by his wife of 35 years, Karen Mock, 14-year-old son J.T. Mock, and brother-in-law, Truman Burgess. He will be deeply missed by his many fishing and "rock hounding" friends.

Memorial donations may be made to the American Cancer Society, 1428 Phillips Lane, San Luis Obispo, CA, 93405.

Maintaining Super Abrasive (CBN or Diamond) Wheels

By Wes Lingerfelt

Super abrasive wheels require little maintenance. These wheels are available in both electroplated and resin bonded (solid) varieties. Electroplated wheels will require occasional cleaning. With the machine turned off, saturate the grinding wheels with any type of oil-less solvent, using a brass bristle brush, lightly brush the saturated wheel to loosen the debris. Re-spray the wheel to flush out any remaining particles. Automotive brake cleaner is an inexpensive but effective option.

Unlike the electroplated wheels, resin bonded wheels (Not rubber backed belts) should be trued with a diamond dresser or a truing device. Resin bonded wheels must be dressed with an aluminum oxide stick after truing. This process enables the crystals to protrude above the surface of resin bond.

COOLANT

Coolant must be applied in the proper place or it will not cool the wheel or material being ground properly. Coolant should always be directed so that the full flow is at the point of contact between the diamond wheel and the work piece, and in the same direction as the rotation of the wheel. Soluble oil may be mixed with water to prevent corrosion of machine parts. Weak solutions are recommended however, because strong alkaline solutions will reduce normal life of resin wheels.

CAUTION

When ordering Resin Bonded Wheels, specify for wet or dry grinding. Some Resin Bonded Wheels are made for dry grinding only, and a coolant will only prove detrimental to the life of these wheels. All Metal Bonded Wheels must be operated with a coolant.

GRINDING SPEEDS AND FEEDS

Speed: Diamond Wheels should not be run at speeds of more than 6,000 or less than 5,000 surface feet per minute (SFPM). The higher speeds are recommended for interrupted cuts and small areas of contact between wheel and work piece.

Feeds: Avoid excessive feed rate as this can damage the diamonds in the wheel. The following down feeds are recommended for most satisfactory finish and longer wheel life: .001" per pass through 120 grit, .0005" per pass through 220 grit, .00025" per pass on finer than 220 grit.

WHEEL DRESSING AND TRUING

Due to the exceptionally free cutting properties of Diamond Wheels, frequent dressing is not necessary. They may be dressed with a soft bonded aluminum oxide or silicon carbide dressing stick. When a beveled or gouged condition has occurred in a face type wheel, it should be taken off the grinder and the diamond section lapped on cast iron plate using 120 grit silicon carbide and water. Straight type wheels may be trued on the grinder by using a brake type truing device or, for Resin Bonded Wheels only, by dry grinding a piece of low carbon steel until running truth is achieved.

DON'T do these:

1. DON'T use a wheel that has been dropped or damaged.
2. DON'T force a wheel onto the grinder/saw, or alter the size of the mounting hole. If it doesn't fit get one that will.
3. DON'T ever exceed maximum operating speed marked on the wheel.
4. DON'T use mounting flanges on which the contact surfaces are not clean.
5. DON'T tighten the mounting nut or bolt excessively.
6. DON'T start the grinder/saw until the wheel guard is in place.
7. DON'T abuse, misuse or jam the wheel into the work.
8. DON'T use a grinder/saw that vibrates excessively.

9. DON'T grind or cut materials for which the wheel is not designed.
10. DON'T grind or cut without proper ventilation and personal protective equipment.

DO these:

1. DO always handle and store wheels in a careful manner.
2. DO visually inspect all wheels before mounting for possible damage.
3. DO make sure operating speed established for machine does not exceed the maximum R.P.M. printed on the wheel label.
4. DO check mounting flanges for equal and correct diameter.
5. DO always use a safety guard covering at least one-half of the wheels.
6. DO allow newly mounted wheels to run at operating speed, with guard in place, for at least one minute before using.
7. DO always wear safety glasses or some type of eye protection.
8. DO always wear some type of dust protective equipment to restrict inhalation of dust particle generated during the cutting or grinding operation.

Orcutt Mineral Society

Board Meeting

Mussel Senior Center, Santa Maria CA

6 January, 2004

Call to Order at 7:02 p.m. by President Deborah Hood. Board members present were Bill Hood, Wes Lingerfelt, Sylvia Nasholm, Marshall Reeves, Geary Sheffer, Bess Shields, Lucky Virgin, Wayne Mills, Immediate Past President, and Dick Shields.

Wes Lingerfelt swore Sylvia Nasholm and Geary Sheffer in as Board Members since they were unable to attend the Annual Meeting in December for the swearing-in ceremony.

Correspondence:

Sun Valley Indian School update.

Pick & Shovel from San Gorgonio Mineral & Gem Society.

A greeting card from Cuesta College.

Arizona Mineral & Fossil Show announcement.

Treasurer's Report was read by Wes Lingerfelt, and accepted as read.

The Annual Audit performed by the Audit Committee was read by Deborah Hood.

Minutes of the previous Board Meeting were approved as published.

Committee Reports:

Adopt-a-Highway: Marshall Reeves reminded us of the January 17th Highway Cleanup, followed by pastry & coffee at Aomelets & More®.

Bulletin (Ore-Cutts): Bess Shields reported that the bulletin was mailed and emailed yesterday. She is soliciting for short articles and contributions by members.

CFMS: Wes Lingerfelt attended the CFMS Directors meeting, and reported that there are new rules for competitive exhibits. The Mariposa Show will use the new rules. He reported that the CFMS newsletter contains additional information about club member and Gem Show insurance rates. Lone Pine has an additional session from 1-7 August. Contact Wes for further information.

Education: Wayne Mills will be giving a rock talk later this month to students from Hong Kong.

Library, Books, Videos: Bess Shields received a new article on lapidary equipment from Wes Lingerfelt, and it will be available to check out.

Refreshments: Debbie Hood asked Bess Shields to bring 4 dozen donuts to the January General Meeting since the Board is responsible for providing January refreshments.

Sunshine: Debbie Hood reported that Al & Becky Wilcox, Don & Sylvia Nasholm, and Bill & Debbie Hood attended Vic Jonas' funeral in December. Also, Bill Hood has recently been having heart problems.

Old / unfinished business:

1. Wes Lingerfelt reminded us that ADues are DUE®, and asks that a reminder be posted in the Ore-Cutts.
2. Wes Lingerfelt has a used Lortone saw and polisher machine that may suit the club needs. But, there is no CFMS insurance available. There was discussion about using individual homeowners insurance.
3. Wayne Mills is assembling an application for All American Club®, and asks members and chairmen to participate. More information will be provided by Wayne at the General Meeting next week.

New business:

1. Bill Hood has confirmed reservations for December 11th, 2004 at Maria del Sol for the Annual Meeting. He will call Sweet Adelines to see if they will perform. The menu will remain the same, but the price will now be \$7.25 for members, and \$14.50 for guests.
2. The Board passed a motion to donate \$100 to the CFMS Endowment Fund in memory of Vic Jonas.
3. Debbie Hood announced that Sharon Duncan and DeeDee Magri will be the new historians. They will be responsible for assembling materials from the past few years, and seek input from members to complete the task. Some of the early histories are stored in the OMS Locker, and various members have the remaining materials.
4. Debbie Hood is seeking volunteers for Breakfast Chairman, Membership Chairman, and callers for the Telephone Tree. She will solicit volunteers at the General Meeting next week. Debbie Hood announced that Wes Lingerfelt will present the January 2004 OMS General Meeting program. It will be on AHow to Use and Properly Maintain Equipment®, followed by a video presented by Marshall Reeves on ASafe Highway Cleanup®.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m. by President Hood.

Respectfully submitted,
Bess Shields, Secretary, OMS

Orcutt Mineral Society

General Meeting

Mussell Senior Center, Santa Maria CA
13 January, 2004

Call to Order at 7:05 p.m. by President Deborah Hood. Invocation was given by Bess Shields on *A*Hope and Anticipation[®]. Flag Salute was led by Wes Lingerfelt.

Debbie Hood reminded us that *A*Dues are DUE[®]. Start planning for our August Gem Show now, and remember to volunteer, hand out flyers, and get those Treasure Chest donations started. Debbie recommends reading *A*Art Jewelry[®] magazine. Sharon Duncan reported that 29 members, and 1 guest are present. Guest is Leah Gundy.

Treasurer's Report was read by Wes Lingerfelt, and accepted as read.

Minutes of the previous Board Meeting were approved as corrected.

Committee Reports:

Adopt-a-Highway: Marshall Reeves reminded us about the January 17th cleanup at 8:00 a.m. followed by breakfast at Omelets & More. There will be another raffle for participants.

Breakfast: Ken Kreh has volunteered to chair this committee for 2004. The next breakfast is on January 24th, at 8:15 a.m. **Budget & Audit:** Debbie Hood read the audit of our 2003 books to the membership.

Bulletin (Ore-Cutts): Bess Shields asked members to turn in new or changed e-mail or mailing addresses at the break. We save \$.63 per member, per month by e-mailing the Ore-Cutt instead of hard copy mailing.

CFMS: Wes Lingerfelt enjoyed the Fresno meeting of CFMS. Many of the insurance questions were answered, and an insurance article from the CFMS Newsletter will be reprinted in the February Ore-Cutts. Lone Pine will occur at the same time as our OMS August Gem Show, but additional information or a reservation form for the event can be obtained from Wes.

Field Trips, Safety: Dick Shields reported on a field trip to Jalama Beach where the collecting was great. The next field trip will be to Jade Cove on 21 February. We leave Mussell Sr. Center at 8:30 a.m. promptly. Wayne Mills mentioned the LA Rocks newsgroup on internet, and the *die hard rockhounds*.

Library, Books, Videos: Bess Shields reported that Wes Lingerfelt donated a copy of *A*Helpful Shop Hints[®] to the OMS library for members to check out.

Membership: Wayne Mills volunteered for this position.

Property: Geary Sheffer reminded members that we will hold annual locker cleanup in April. More information will appear in the March Ore-Cutts.

Publicity: Wes Lingerfelt has made up handbills for the show, which are available at the sign in table or from Wes. Dick Shields suggests adding our web site information to the weekly newspaper meeting announcement.

Raffle: Marshall Reeves will have a dual top prize tonight. One is a large wulfenite crystal, and the other is a quartz crystal mass.

Red Book: Debbie reminded us that Wes is assembling the Red Book, but needs dues NOW from continuing members so the task can be completed.

Refreshments: Dee Dee Magri purchased 4 dozen assorted donuts for us to enjoy.

Sheriff: Bill Hood nabbed one suspect this month (Lucky Virgin).

Show: Wes Lingerfelt is already receiving money for the August Gem Show. Dealer space applications were sent out to those vendors who participated last year.

Sunshine: Vic Jonas died last month. OMS made a donation to the CFMS Endowment Fund in Vic's name. John Mock is in the hospital with a bacterial infection following chemotherapy.

Correspondence: (Show fliers, exchange bulletins, and notices announced under correspondence are at the front table following the business portion of the meeting, and during refreshment time, for members to view.)

- *Tule Smoke Signals* newsletter from Tule Gem & Mineral Club.
- *Dinny's Doings* newsletter.
- Sun Valley Indian School newsletter.
- *Lapidarian* newsletter from Santa Cruz Mineral & Gem Club.
- *The Agatizer* newsletter from South Bay (Torrance) Club.
- *Rocky Review* newsletter from Conejo Gem & Mineral Club.
- *Rockonteur* newsletter from Santa Lucia Rockhounds Club.
- *Pick & Shovel* newsletter from San Gorgonio Mineral & Gem Club.
- *Tumble Rumble* from Capistrano Valley Rock & Mineral Club.
- Pictograph newsletter from Peninsula Gem & Geology Society.
- *Breccia* newsletter from Santa Clara Valley Gem & Mineral Society.
- Cuesta College holiday greetings card.
- Arizona Mineral & Gem show announcement.
- Salvation Army Christmas donation thank you letter.
- Pasadena show invitation.

Old / unfinished business:

1. Wes Lingerfelt reported that there is no new information about lapidary equipment for the club since we were waiting on a CFMS reply to our insurance questions.
2. Wayne Mills announced that the All American Club application he is completing is due in mid-February.

New business:

1. Wayne Mills announced that the next 2 general meetings will be held at the Atkinson Center.
2. Debbie Hood is sending around sign-up sheets to see if there is interest in beading classes, wire-wrapping classes, and speakers bureau.
3. Debbie Hood needs volunteers for the Telephone Tree since this task has recently fallen on the shoulders of 2 or 3 members. Joanne Turnbull and Lucky Virgin volunteered to help.

Following the break for refreshments, Wes Lingerfelt presented a talk on *A*How to Use and Properly Maintain Equipment[®]. Since time was short, the video on safety will be shown at next month's General Meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:03 p.m. by President Hood.

Respectfully submitted,
Bess Shields, Secretary, OMS

The Wanderer

Balmorhea Blue Agate

Lake Balmorhea is located between Van Horn and Fort Stockton TX. It is a bit off the beaten path, but well worth the effort to find it. This is a volcanic area that has been active during the last one million years. Balmorhea is world famous for its deep blue agate, banded agates in shades of white, light blue, and grey, some black plume agate, and chalcedony.

We drove through craggy hills with steep, ragged escarpments which reminded us of moon-scape photos with contrasting black, then red soils. Once we reached Balmorhea Lake, the private campground store sold only a few fishing necessities, sodas, rockhunting permits (required!), and ice. The attendant pointed us toward the hunting area, but no map or published literature was available at the store. A lot of the surrounding area is private land, so check before you collect! Bring your own rockhounding locations book for information on the area's geology.



Balmorhea agate in andesite (built into the dam)

We walked in washes and found agates in a matrix of dacite and andesite, thumb-sized pieces of blue agate, banded agate, and lots of chalcedony. Walk well off the road for the best specimens since Balmorhea has been a popular collecting site for many years, and is picked over. Dick found a big blue piece, but unfortunately it was part of a large boulder in the dam wall...

Five miles to the south is Balmorhea State Park. The staff gave us a cheery welcome with, "Y'all come back when you can bring your trailer, and stay a while". The park is newly renovated, extremely clean, and uncrowded. It has a spring-fed swimming pool built by the CCC in the 1930's. We

can hardly wait to take them up on the offer to return!

Happy Hunting,
Love, Bess



Ralph Bishop's latest prize: Freshly cut Aragonite Sagenite from Nipomo

VENTURA GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY SHOW

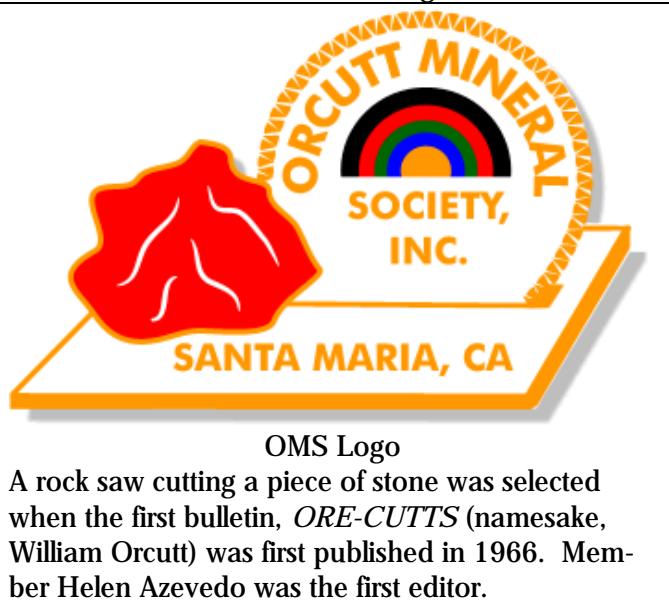
The Ventura Gem & Mineral Society, Inc., is holding their 42nd annual show March 6-7, 2004 (10:00 AM-5:00 PM, Sat.; 10:00 AM-4:00 PM, Sun.) at the Ventura County Fairgrounds in Ventura, CA (10 W. Harbor Blvd). The show is free. Kids will enjoy a "petting zoo" of dinosaur bones and casts, grab bags, and a variety of kids' activities. There will be demonstrations of lapidary arts and exhibits from wonderful private collections of rocks, minerals, fossils and lapidary work. Donation award prizes and a silent rock auction will be held continuously throughout the show. Approximately 15 dealers in fossils, minerals, lapidary equipment, slabs, etc., will be on hand, along with a country store featuring flea market items, used books and magazines, and plants. For further information (or to enter a display), contact Jim Brace-Thompson, show chair, at (805) 659-3577, email jbraceth@adelphia.net. See our web site at www.vgms.org.

Official Stuff

OMS Purpose

Founded in 1958, and is named after William Orcutt, a geologist and civil engineer who worked in the Santa Maria Valley as a district manager for Union Oil Company in 1888. In 1889, Orcutt discov-

ered the fossil wealth of the La Brea Tar Pits, one of the most significant fossil finds in paleontological history. The Society is a non-profit club, dedicated to stimulating an interest in rocks and minerals. The club offers educational programs, field trips, youth activities, and other opportunities for families and individuals to pursue an interest in collecting and lapidary treatment of rocks, fossils, gems, minerals, and other facets of Earth Sciences. In addition, a goal of this Society is to promote good fellowship and proper ethics in pursuit of the society's endeavors. Operating rules have been set forth to guide the Officers and members of the Society in accomplishing these purposes. Affiliations: California Federation of Mineralogical Societies and American Federation of Mineralogical Societies.



OMS Logo
A rock saw cutting a piece of stone was selected when the first bulletin, *ORE-CUTTS* (namesake, William Orcutt) was first published in 1966. Member Helen Azevedo was the first editor.

2004 OMS Elected Officers

President	Debbie Hood	(805) 481-6860
President Elect	Lucky Virgin	(805) 929-9525
Secretary	Bess Shields	(805) 937-0357
Treasurer	Wes Lingerfelt	(805) 929-3788
Immediate Past President	Wayne Mills	(805) 481-3495
CFMS Representative	Wes Lingerfelt	(805) 929-3788

2004 OMS Board Members

Geary Sheffer	(805) 925-8009
Sylvia Nasholm	(805) 481-0923
Bill Hood	(805) 481-6860
Sharon Duncan	(805) 929-2209
Marshall Reeves	(805) 588-8932

Ore-Cutts Editors

Dick and Bess Shields	(805) 937-0357
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Webmasters

Dick Shields	(805) 937-0357
Wes Lingerfelt	(805) 929-3788

Web Sites of Note:

February 2004

Collection of the Geode Kid:

<http://www.zianet.com/geodekid/collecti.htm>

Ventura Gem and Mineral Society Show

<http://www.vgms.org>

California Federation of Mineralogical Societies:

<http://www.cfmsinc.org/>

American Federation of Mineralogical Societies:

<http://www.amfed.org/>

February 2004 Calendar

Tuesday February 3, 2004 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM	OMS Board Meeting -- Mussell Senior Center. All members are welcome at this business meeting.
Tuesday February 10, 2004 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM	<p>OMS General Meeting -- Atkinson Community Center, 1000 N. Railroad.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program: Ralph Bishop on "Fascinating Fossils" • Display: Heart-shaped Stones and Fossils • Refreshment: Cake and Cup Cakes
Saturday February 21, 2004 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM	<p>Field Trip Jade Cove -- Meet at Mussell Senior Center Parking Lot or points further north by arrangement. Pray for surf (to stir the beach rock well). Call Dick Shields at 937-0357 for details.</p>
Saturday February 28, 2004 8:30 AM - 9:30 AM	<p>Monthly OMS Breakfast -- Baker's Square, Santa Maria Restaurant, Breakfast location alternates between Baker's Square in Santa Maria and The Girl's in Arroyo Grande. Call Ken Kreh at 343-7749 for details.</p>

March 2004 Calendar

Tuesday March 2, 2004 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM	OMS Board Meeting -- Atkinson Community Center, 1000 N. Railroad All members are welcome at this business meeting
Tuesday March 9, 2004 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM	<p>OMS General Meeting -- Atkinson Community Center, 1000 N. Railroad.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program: Dick Shields on "Fluorescence Made Easy" • Display: Agates and Calcites • Refreshment: Pie
Saturday March 20, 2004 8:00 AM - 10:00	OMS Highway Cleanup -- Intersection of Hwy 101 and Hwy 166.

AM	After the cleanup we have coffee and pastry at "Omelets and More" in Nipomo. Contact Marshall Reeves at 588-8932 for details.
Saturday March 27, 2004 8:15 AM - 9:15 AM	Monthly OMS Breakfast – Girl's Restaurant, Arroyo Grande. Breakfast location alternates between Baker's Square in Santa Maria and The Girl's in Arroyo Grande. Call Ken Kreh at 343-7749 for details.

April 2004 Calendar

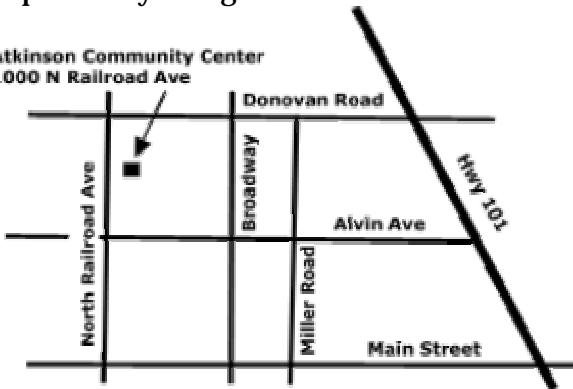
Saturday April 3, 2004 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Field Trip to Figueroa Mountain -- Meet at Mussell Senior Center Parking Lot Explore old jasper trails, serpentine outcroppings, and wildflowers in full bloom. Fill your gas tank (no services on the mountain) and bring a lunch. Wilderness Pass required.
Tuesday April 6, 2004 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM	OMS Board Meeting -- Mussell Senior Center. All members are welcome at this business meeting.
Tuesday April 13, 2004 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM	OMS General Meeting --- Mussell Senior Center. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program: Rock ID Seminar. Bring your mystery rocks. • Display: Mystery Rocks • Refreshment: Cookies
Saturday April 24, 2004 8:15 AM - 9:15 AM	OMS Monthly Breakfast -- Baker's Square, Santa Maria Breakfast location alternates between Baker's Square in Santa Maria and The Girl's in Arroyo Grande. Call Ken Kreh at 343-7749 for details.

DUES ARE DUE

If you have not already paid your 2004 Orcutt Mineral Society dues, please mail them to Wes Lingerfelt, OMS Treasurer, PO Box 106, Santa Maria CA 93454, or give him a check in exchange for your new membership card at the February General Meeting.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The February 10th and March 9th General Meetings have been changed to Atkinson Community Center, 1000 North Railroad. Here's a map for easy navigation:



Orcutt Mineral Society
P.O. Box 106
Santa Maria, CA 93456

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED