



# Ore-Cutts

Volume XL, Issue XI

November, 2005

## Pseudomorphs - MEOW

By Ralph Bishop, Member, OMS

My history with Point Sal is long and varied. It has always been the wildest remote beach around Santa Maria. The steep, windy road kept many people at bay. The undertow of the surf cost several their lives. My first memories were shell collecting with my parents. Then at an older age, the huge bonfire beer bash (a high school graduation party) with impromptu jeep races up and down the beach. Then, with the circling of time, hunting shells with my youngest son.

With the onset of ecological concerns, the property found its way into the camp of the tree huggers who I occasionally agree with, and who also have found some of my opinions "interesting". At any rate, in their attempt to save Pt. Sal from humanity, they closed the last 7 miles of the road. This consisted of 3 miles uphill, 4 miles of really steep and real windy downhill, and then you reverse that getting out! It's especially difficult if you have a full pack of rocks! So, even though I'm an old guy now, I used to pack up my bike and go to the mine. The ecodudes call it "accelerated erosion". Yup, and I'm just the guy to assist Mother Nature.

Riding/walking up the road the first 3 miles was a series of oaths and curses, then the downhill, 4 mile slalom. This was similar to an Olympic slalom suicide run where dodging cottontail rabbits was normal (they loved the warmth of the road in the morning). So, in a matter of minutes you were at the beach. Phew!

The seaward side of Pt. Sal is extremely prone to slumpage, no doubt due to the spur faults. These slumps occur on relatively young

(Pliocene, 3 million years), sedimentary rock. One slump has moved hundreds of feet down slope, and is constantly eroded by high tide surges. This creates a constantly changing cross-section that contains sandstone, oil, sand, shale, marl (mudstone) that contains calcite, and selenite crystals. Some of these are quite nice.

I returned to an area along the eroded slump bank where I had found an otherwise insignificant marl mound (only 30 yards wide and 20 yards high) of eroded Pliocene marl. After all the years I had frequented the area, I had never noticed some really strange objects along the cut bank. They weren't pretty. Actually, they were rather ugly grey in color. But I recognized them as halite (salt) "Hopper" crystals. These were similar to the halite hoppers from Trona, CA except these were usually singles instead of groups, and some quite large (to 4" across).



Selenite pseudomorph hopper crystal after halite

By far the cutest ones were marble size. A big old lick of my tongue proved they were no longer salt. They were pseudomorphed to se-

lenite. Wow! I'd never seen this before. These rather odd, and very rare crystals were in clustered areas. Other areas of marl (rather extensive) are totally devoid of pseudos. I envision this marl zone as originally looking like the slimy muddy flats of Morro Bay. The crystal area being sump where concentrated salt water pooled and deposited.

I spent the better part of the day digging these odd crystals, and then set out my sleeping bag. The night was spent in reflection of my past life. One reflection was of an old crossing guard at Miller Street School when I was in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. He used to entertain us kids with "wild" stories. One story was of the Gold Mine at Pt. Sal. Gold! This memory came to me as the fog and mist moved in. I could see the long ridge to the northwest. I knew the mine was there, but where? Gold! Gold at Pt. Sal! The lost gold mine. I could see myself, like Mel Fisher and the shipwreck Atocha. He said for 15 years "today is the day". Well, for me tomorrow was going to be the day. Failure was not an option. Gold! At Pt. Sal.

After a nearly sleepless night, the sun seemed late coming over the ridge, but burned off the mist of fog. There in the distance was the ridge jutting from the sea. Gold! Pt. Sal GOLD! I always packed our family binoculars, used by my Great-grandfather in the war of the northern aggression. I positioned myself on the tailing pile, laid back, and started to scan the ridge, left to right from the top to the bottom. This ridge was very steep, very visible with scant brush and few major features. Boring! The scanning was slowly boring. An hour went by, another, and then a feature stood out. It was about 1/2 way down. There, in the first rays of morning sun, was a triangle of buff tan in a side wash. Was today the day?

I gathered the pack, the pick, the water, and up the beach with great hope. The slope was steep, really steep with zigzag deer trails. It must have taken an hour or so to climb to the base of the "Golden Triangle". GOLD!

When I came up the gully with the golden color, the first rock I saw was copper! Azurite, brilliant-blue azurite. Wow, copper on the central coast! Gold, who cares? Azurite! Today was the day! The buff feature was a tailing pile covered with copper minerals. I scrambled up the tailing pile on all 4's. I was out of breath when I reached the overgrown flat bench. I may have been the first person on the tailing pile in 100 years. The view from the tailing pile was WOW!



Azurite and malachite from Pt Sal cave

A wild coast. Maybe the tree huggers are right? Everyone should be able to see what I was seeing. After absorbing the "moment", I searched the flat bench. In the collapsed cut bank was a small hole, the entrance to a mine tunnel. This was IT! Wow, I barely had room to crawl in on my belly. I slid down the internal slope until I could stand. There was little light as I stood up, dusted off, and could barely see a turn in the tunnel. Looking around I couldn't see any azurite on the tunnel walls, but I could see slither marks on the dirt of the tunnel floor. Snakes, darned it Ralph. You crawled into a snake den, you dummy!

Well, there I was 8 miles from the road, nobody knew where I was, and Pt. Sal's a big place. Maybe I should use my better judgment and withdraw? Hmmm, naw. So throw a rock around the corner I thought. If there's a rattle-

snake, it'll rattle and I'll know. Right? Yup! So, I threw the rock around the corner.

There was an immediate reaction. An EXTREMELY loud, RESONATING, low guttural YOOOOOOOWW!!! The mountain lion made her unhappiness known! (no doubt a female—I have been married, so I recognize the tone—probably with kittens—OH, POOP!). I turned and did the panicked scramble through the small opening, gasping dust, dirt and sticks in my shorts, and then fresh air. Out of the tunnel, I regained my composure enough to notice the huge deer hair filled cat scat behind the bush.

Well, folks, I'm living proof (again) that your number's not up till your number's up. So I returned to Santa Maria with no more excitement. I will bring some pseudomorphs and some azurite to the club meeting. But! But, the kitty, I'll leave her be!

*NEWS FLASH – Momma cat has been seen with kittens by the tree huggers. So my conjecture concerning the cat's femininity was correct!*

**Tumbling Local Rock**

By Dick Shields, Member, OMS

Our tumblers are working overtime these days, because we're taking advantage of the generosity of many friends who have given us great examples of their favorite rocks. As we polish them, the best ones will become candidates for silver mounts or wire-wrapping, and the less-than-best (there are no "bad" ones) become grab bag material for next year's show. To be certain that I'm not destroying the stock during tumbling, I decided to sort them into piles of good candidates that can be tumbled together (those whose hardness is approximately the same).

After searching the web for a good explanation of the Mohs' Scale, I've concluded that first, Friedrich Mohs was either French, German, or Austrian and his biographical dates vary a fair amount; second, he watched the local miners and based his "scale" on common sense; third, he numbered the list ordinally, unlike the Richter scale or hurricane rating scale (it's simply numbered 1, 2, 3 rather than depicting how much harder each item is versus a softer, lower numbered one), and finally, the association of hardness with specific local rocks is an art, not a science!

Here's a brief list of our local materials with a rough approximation of their relative hardness:

Mohs	Rock Variety
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• satin spar</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• travertine onyx</li> <li>• serpentine</li> <li>• druzy calcite</li> <li>• selenite</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• rhyolite</li> <li>• rhyolite portions of Deedeeite</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• calcite</li> <li>• fossil bone with calcite</li> <li>• opalized chert</li> </ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• agatized fossil bone</li> <li>• agatized chert</li> <li>• agate portions of Deedeeite</li> <li>• jaspers from Stone Canyon, San Simeon, Cayucos, Figueroa Mountain</li> </ul>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jade Cove jade</li> </ul>



Figueroa Mountain jasper with agate

When I come up with winning combinations of time and types of polish, I'll make another report. If you want to contribute your experiences with our local rock, please write me at [info@omsinc.org](mailto:info@omsinc.org).

Check our OMS web site at <http://omsinc.org> or send email to [info@omsinc.org](mailto:info@omsinc.org).

The Wanderer**Seasonal Collecting**

Rockhounding on the central coast is pleasant all year around as we all know. However, this isn't the case in other parts of the country. Take the opportunity to do some desert collecting now that temperatures are moderate (Nov through May). It's not too early to plan your wintertime trips.

The Quartzsite Gem Shows begin in January. We spruce up the old trailer, and meander over to spend a little time with old friends, and make new ones. We plan our wish list for treasures before heading to Quartzsite in search of new additions to our collection. Vendors from all over the world offer affordable wares, and are knowledgeable about their minerals. After your first trek to Quartzsite, I bet you'll try to make it an annual must-do event (just like us)!



We look forward to the Tucson Show every February. Minerals from around the world are just waiting for you to take them home. Make sure you book your accommodations early, or plan to drive down every day from Phoenix. Almost every hotel room in Tucson has a vendor from somewhere exotic. We found one venue last year where prices were accomplished with written negotiations, and mineral identification tags were NOT in English.

We try to do "the Wickenburg experience" in the cooler months, too. Wickenburg is a quaint little town about one hour north of Phoenix. The town's main street hosts numerous shops that are reminiscent of the 1860's. Wickenburg is home to many artists, and the museums reflect a distinct southwestern flavor. Rockhounding for smoky quartz, copper minerals, gold, silver, fluorescent minerals, amethyst, geodes, and so many more beauties makes this a collector's heavenly place to visit. Best of all, Bill Gardner's mines are close-by!

We hope to see you in the desert this winter. Happy Hunting, Love, Bess

**Orcutt Mineral Society**

Board Meeting  
Mussell Senior Center, Santa Maria CA  
4 October 2005

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by President-elect Sharon Duncan. Board members present were: Sharon Duncan, Wes Lingerfelt, Bess Shields, Sylvia Nasholm, Geary Sheffer, Bob Bullock, Debbie Hood, and Wayne Mills. Guests were: Dick Shields, and Bill Hood.

**Minutes** of the previous General Meeting were approved as printed in the OreCutt newsletter.

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

**Committee Reports:**

**Abused Children:** Debbie Hood will contact Social Services to see what is needed this year for our Christmas donation.

**Adopt-a-Highway:** We are still seeking a chairman for this committee. Wayne Mills will try to get the supplies from CalTrans this month, but does not volunteer to be the chairman.

**Annual Awards Banquet:** Bill Hood is sending a sign-up sheet around the table at this meeting, and will also circulate it at the General Meeting next week. He asks that people pay for their dinners before the event.

**Bulletin:** Dick Shields says that we need to begin thinking about next years' schedule, and lining up speakers, field trips, etc. Wayne Mills will send Dick information about the displays for 2006 meetings. The Board will provide donuts at the January meeting, and Dick Shields volunteered to show the Nova "Megaflood" video, followed by a short discussion.

**CFMS Director:** Wes Lingerfelt sent the check for officer insurance, and hasn't received a response from CFMS yet about their receipt of the payment.

**Education:** Wayne Mills will be giving a talk on fossil turtles on November 8th, and will turn in a synopsis of the talk to the *OreCutts* for publication in December.

**Field Trips/Safety:** Rob Bullock will lead the field trip to Clear Creek on 15 October. Members are asked to show up by 8:30 a.m. at the Mussell Sr. Center parking lot on Saturday.

**Sunshine:** Debbie Hood reported that Lucky Virgin has a staph infection on his knee, and is having a rough time. The Board voted to send flowers and best wishes from OMS. Elaine VonAchen had an abscessed tooth while on vacation (that put a damper on having fun...)

**Correspondence:**

The following newsletters were received: *Lapidarian*, *Dinny's Doin's*. Also, *Gems Galore* in Mountain Vies sent a going-out-of-business announcement.

**Old Business:**

1. Nominating Committee announced the following slate of officers for 2006:

President-elect	Bob Bullock
Secretary	Bess Shields
Treasurer	Wes Lingerfelt
Board (5)	Sylvia Nasholm
	Gearly Sheffer
	DeeDee Magri
	Debbie Hood
	Wayne Mills

The slate of candidates will be presented at the General Meeting next Tuesday night. Nominations will be taken from the floor.

#### **New Business:**

1. Wes Lingerfelt read an announcement from the SLO Jewelry and Art Studio.

2. Wes announced that OMS is the recipient of a vast library consisting of Lapidary Journals (1947 – 1975), Australian Mineralogist, Gem & Mineral, Science of Man, CA Bureau of Mines memos, and a nice collection of thumbnail mineral specimens. They were donated by Sue Campbell, the daughter of the late Mary Lunsdal.

The Program for next week's General Meeting is a talk by Sherm and Bea Griselle on "Some of Our Favorite Specimens".

Displays will be rocks collected on 2005 field trips. Refreshments will be pies.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:56 p.m. by President-elect Duncan.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bess Shields, Secretary, OMS

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### **Orcutt Mineral Society**

General Meeting  
Mussell Senior Center, Santa Maria CA  
11 October 2005

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m. by President-elect Sharon Duncan.

Flag salute was led by Bill Hood. Invocation was given by Bess Shields.

**Minutes** of the previous Board Meeting were approved as read.

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

We had 30 members and 6 guests present. Guests were Keith McKay, George Carpenter, Laurie Duplancich, Erica Erskine, Keith McKay, and Dick Bazzell.

#### **Committee Reports:**

**Annual Awards Banquet:** Bill Hood has passed around the sign-up list, and would prefer that members pay for their dinners prior to the dinner.

**CFMS:** Wes Lingerfelt announced that the November Business Meeting will be held in Visalia this year. Dick and Bess Shields also sit on CFMS committees, and will attend the meeting.

**Field Trips:** The October field trip to Clear Creek is a GO! We will stop at Wild Horse Café in King City to pick up stragglers at 9:30 a.m., then proceed to Clear Creek.

**Refreshments:** DeeDee Magri thanked Jeannie Lingerfelt, DeeDee, Sandy Berthelot, Elaine VonAchen, and Wayne Mills for supplying refreshments this month.

**Sunshine:** Debbie Hood reported that Lucky Virgin is still recovering from knee surgery.

#### **Correspondence:**

- *Dinny's Doin's* newsletter.
- **Lapidarian** newsletter.
- Gem & Mineral request for club information.

#### **Unfinished Business:**

1. Wes Lingerfelt spoke about the importance of club participation in submitting articles to the Ore-Cutts, and the importance of the CFMS Newsletter Competition.
2. Nominating Committee: Wes Lingerfelt announced the slate of officers, then asked for additional nominations from the membership. Hearing none, the nominations were closed. Members will have one more opportunity at next month's General Meeting to nominate additional candidates (if there are any), then will vote on the 2006 OMS Board. Swearing-in will take place at the Annual Awards Banquet in December.

#### **New Business:**

1. The Harrs donate a beautiful gift each year as a thank you to the Kitchen Crew who generously agreed to serve at the August OMS Gem Show. This year the gift was a Chinese manmade opal. The names of each kitchen crew member was put in a hat, and Jeannie Lingerfelt came out as the winner!

2. Elaine VonAchen made a great trip to Central Point, Oregon, and will show her picture-report during the refreshment break.

Following refreshments of homemade pies, Sherm and Bea Griselle, members of the Paso Robles Rock Club, presented an informative program called "Our Favorite Specimens". Many thanks to our friends for the wonderful and entertaining program!

Displays this month were "Rocks from 2005 Field Trips". The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 p.m. by President-elect Duncan.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bess Shields, Secretary, OMS

OMS Membership dues are \$18 per year. Junior Membership is \$9.00. New membership dues are pro-rated from January 1<sup>st</sup> of the first year.

## Favorite Finds of Sherm Griselle

By Sharon Duncan, President-elect, OMS

At our October OMS meeting, we had the privilege of hearing Sherm Griselle, from the Santa Lucia Rockhounds, speak on his favorite rocks. We really appreciate the time and effort Sherm put in, and we all enjoyed his enthusiasm and sharing his interesting specimens. Some of the items included:

Palygorskite – another name is “Mountain Leather”, and is associated with calcite. The crystal system is monoclinic, has asbestos qualities and comes from the Second Mine, Popovka River, Russia. Visually it appears to be heavy, but in fact is very light weight.



Sherm in the Griselle's "Museum"

Benitoite crystal also associated with neptunite, joachinite, and natrolite. It is primarily found at Clear Creek, San Benito County, California. It is deep blue in color, found in a white natrolite on blue schist matrix, and fluoresces a powder blue under shortwave UV light.

Biconoids are found west of the Salinas River in the Paso Robles, and Templeton, California regions. One theory was that agate replaced the shell of a bivalve and filled the interior. Another theory was that they were a concretion that developed when agate formed around a small object. For more information regarding biconoids, see the June 2001, Rock

and Gem magazine for the article written by Sherm Griselle.

Some of the other rocks and minerals that Sherm shared with us were an emerald from the Muzio Mine in Africa; lava from Hawaiian volcanoes; Carrera marble from Italy (such as was used in the famous sculptures); muscovite mica from Ohio which is found in sheets and is used in old pot belly stove windows; and vulcan jade from Jade Cove, California. For a great book, read Don Wrobber's "Jade Beneath the Sea". Other rocks and minerals were flint from Flint Ridge in Ohio, an area that was neutral ground for the American Indians to gather flint for making arrowheads; granite from the Yosemite area; Columbian amber; fossil stone; septarian nodules from Utah; and petrified wood from Blue Forest, Wyoming.

One of the most interesting specimens was the Gastrolith which means a solid substance in the stomach that has been formed by several smaller parts. In this particular case this large rock was used by dinosaurs to enable them to aid in grinding up their food. Another interesting specimen was the Desmostylus which are ancient sea cow molars.

This is just a brief description of some of the items that Sherm spoke about and we certainly want to thank Sherm for sharing these with us. We also want to thank Bea, his wife, for being with us!

### 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 discovered 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.

2005 OMS Officers

President	Lucky Virgin	(805) 929-4525
President Elect	Sharon Duncan	(805) 478-9359
Secretary	Bess Shields	(805) 937-0357
Treasurer	Wes Lingerfelt	(805) 929-3788
Immediate Past President	Debbie Hood	(805) 481-6860
CFMS Representative	Wes Lingerfelt	(805) 929-3788

2005 OMS Board Members

Geary Sheffer	(805) 925-8009
Sylvia Nasholm	(805) 481-0923
Robert Bullock	(805) 928-6372
DeeDee Magri	(805) 595-2755
Wayne Mills	(805) 481-3495

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

Ore-Cutts Photo Credits: all photos this month are by Dick Shields.

November 2005 Calendar

Tuesday November 1, 2005 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM	OMS Board Meeting -- Mussell Senior Center. All members are welcome at this business meeting.
Tuesday November 8, 2005 7:00PM - 9:00 PM	OMS General Meeting -- Mussell Senior Center. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program: CFMS Video on "Tourmaline"</li> <li>• Display: Crystals</li> <li>• Refreshment: Cookies</li> </ul>
Saturday November 12, 2005 8:30AM - 5:00 PM	Field Trip to Avila, Cayucos, and Morro Bay -- Meet at Mussell Senior Center Parking Lot Observational trip to a classic location. Bring a lunch and bottled water. Some hiking required. Contact Bob Bullock at 928-6372 for details.
Saturday November 19, 2005 8:00 AM -10:00 AM	OMS Highway Cleanup -- Intersection of Highway 101 and 166 After the cleanup we have coffee and pastry at "Francisco's Country Kitchen" in Santa Maria. Contact Lucky Virgin at 929-4525 for details.
Saturday November 26, 2005 8:15 AM - 9:15 AM	OMS Monthly Breakfast - "Francisco's Country Kitchen" in Santa Maria. Call Ken Kreh at 343-7749 for details.

December 2005 Calendar

Tuesday December 6, 2005 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM	OMS Board Meeting -- Mussell Senior Center. All members are welcome at this business meeting
Saturday December 10, 2005 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM	Annual Meeting -- Maria Del Sol, 1405 East Main Street, Santa Maria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buffet Luncheon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Members \$7.25</li> <li>o Guests \$14.50</li> </ul> </li> <li>• President's Annual Report</li> <li>• Awards</li> <li>• Installation of Officers</li> <li>• "Sweet Adelines" Christmas Performance</li> </ul> Bring canned goods for Goodwill and monetary donations for the Abused Children Fund Call Bill and Debbie Hood at 481-6860 for details.
Saturday December 17, 2005 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM	Field Trip to Refugio and Gaviota Beaches - Meet at Mussell Senior Center. Entrance fee required for an all-day pass covering both parks. Bring a lunch - the beach concessions only operate in the Summer. Contact Bob Bullock at 928-6372 for details.



Saturday December 24, 2005 8:15 AM - 9:15 AM	OMS Monthly Breakfast – “Francisco’s Country Kitchen” in Santa Maria is cancelled. This happens too close to Christmas! Call Ken Kreh at 343-7749 for details.
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	for details.
Saturday January 28, 2006 8:15 AM - 9:15 AM	OMS Monthly Breakfast – “Francisco’s Country Kitchen” in Santa Maria. Call Ken Kreh at 343-7749 for details.

**Web Sites of Note:**  
November 2005

<b>January 2006 Calendar</b>	
Tuesday January 03, 2006 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM	OMS Board Meeting -- Mussell Senior Center. All members are welcome at this business meeting.
Tuesday January 10, 2006 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM	OMS General Meeting -- Mussell Senior Center. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program: “Mega-Floods” by Dick Shields</li> <li>• Display: Mystery Rocks – stump the experts</li> <li>• Refreshment: Donuts (care of the OMS Board of Directors).</li> </ul>
Saturday January 14, 2006 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM	Field Trip to Jalama Beach -- We will depart Mussell Senior Center Parking Lot at 0830. A county park entrance fee is charged for each vehicle so carpooling is encouraged. Walk over beach sand and rock to a travertine outcropping. There is oil on the beach so bring old shoes for the walk. Bring a lunch or eat in the Jalama Café on the beach. Contact Bob Bullock at 928-6372

- Hardness of Rocks and Minerals:  
<http://www.rockhounds.com/rockshop/hardness1.html>
- What is Important about Hardness?:  
<http://mineral.galleries.com/minerals/hardness.htm>
- Mohs Hardness Test:  
<http://www.rocksandminerals.com/hardness/mohs.html>
- Desmostylus:  
<http://www.sdnhm.org/exhibits/review/section6.html>
- California Federation of Mineralogical Societies:  
<http://www.cfmsinc.org/>
- American Federation of Mineralogical Societies:  
<http://www.amfed.org/>

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