



ROCKHOUND RAMBLINGS

AUGUST 2018 • PASADENA LAPIDARY SOCIETY™ • PASADENA, CA



Ferdie's Trees

by Karl Stull

In nature, trees reach out for soil, water, and sunlight. Roots, trunks, and limbs tell the story of their struggle – over decades or centuries. In Ferdie's trees, you may notice that a young evergreen leans away from the shadow of its taller neighbor, or that a tree cascading down a rock has its thickest and most numerous roots on the side opposite, hanging on for dear life.

But before you notice such details, Ferdie's trees make a strong first impression. The reason is: trees created by Ferdie Sanchez of the Pasadena Lapidary Society are big. As a gem tree gets bigger, the number of leaves increases exponentially. More beads, more wire, more time. Bigger isn't always better, but it always means more decisions about where, which direction,

From top, left to right: Prize-winning case in 2014 CFMS show; amethyst tree, trunk to branches; Cascade style, clinging roots; apatite tree, branch to twigs; Ferdie at Culver City, 2018

how far, and so on. From the many decisions comes complexity, and the need for a vision, which is something you do not need for trees the size and shape of a lollipop.

Honestly, a natural reaction on first seeing Ferdie's trees is: "Oh my, who has time to attach so many beads?" Thinking about it draws you into the work. You notice how the leaves are attached, how branches of wire are wound to create thickness and a texture like bark. You become aware that *someone* made this for you to see, hoping you would notice and take joy in it. You have connected with an artist.

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President's Message



Dear Fellow Members,

We have had great participation in PLS meetings in July. Many members attended the Workshop, enjoying their lapidary experiences, learning stone carving from Sylvia Cliffe, developing other new skills, spending time with fellow rockhounds, and catching up on each other's lives.

Our General Membership meeting was a lively one. We had a big crowd. There were good presentations to hold everyone's attention. It was very interesting to learn about Mexican amber.

Also, it was our great pleasure to hold a proper send-off for Paolo Sanchez and Tanner SooHoo, who will be going off to college. These boys have been with us for years as junior members, and we can all remember Kodak moments from when they were young – perched in front of the Kingsley North grinders, laughing and talking as they worked on their cabs. Or scampering up a hillside in search of the perfect rock for their collections. Paolo and Tanner have both won awards over the years for their skills in lapidary, and we applaud them. We will miss these young men, and we wish them the best as they move on to college.

Our Show Committee members have all been working very hard, taking care of every little detail to make the 2019 CFMS

Annual Show & Convention the very best. Our next Show Committee meeting will be August 11, and I will notify everyone of the time and location. This meeting will give our volunteer chairmen an opportunity to report their progress and tell us where they need help. Our Show page on the Web should be up and running very shortly, even though parts of it will be under construction for the next two or three months. There will be lots of information for you and for visitors to our website.

August 2 will be our regular Board of Directors meeting. Any member is welcome to attend, and we welcome your visit. It is nice to sit in on a Board meeting and see how we conduct the Society's day to day business. Our goal is to serve the best interests of members. This month's Workshop is scheduled for August 12. The General Membership meeting is August 21.

This has been a hot summer, and we are looking forward to cooler temperatures soon. I noticed that someone posted that it is 17 weeks until winter. It probably will not make a dramatic difference to us in Pasadena and surrounding areas, but at least we will get some relief from these miserably hot days. Try to stay cool and drink lots of liquids.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone at the August meetings and events.

Cool Wishes!

– Ellen Ferrell, President

Leaders, Meetings, Membership Information

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Chris Kyte

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Marcia Goetz (cochair)

Bulletin Karl Stull

Display Table Ferdie Sanchez

Education Joan Harrison

Field Trips Joe Goetz

Historian Karl Stull

Hospitality Elizabeth Weston

Librarian Jennifer Jang

Membership Marcia Goetz

Publicity Mona Ross
Elizabeth Weston (social media)

Sunshine Ellen Ferrell

Ways & Means Phil Lahr

Workshop Carolyn Duncan

Webmaster Ben Shutman

Membership

Membership per calendar year is \$25; for a second adult at the same address, \$15; further adults, \$10. Junior members are \$10. Initiation fee is \$10 per person.

Renewals are due in October and delinquent after December 31. Mail checks to PO Box 5025, Pasadena, CA 91117-0025.

Board Meetings

1st Thursday every month.
7 p.m. at Matt Denny's Ale House,
145 E Huntington Dr, Arcadia.
All members are welcome.

Workshop

2nd Sunday every month.
Fees are \$3 for half-day, \$5 for a
full day. Bring lunch!

Safety: Equipment instruction is required; also liability waivers, eye protection, and closed-toe shoes.

Junior members 9 and older are welcome with adult supervision.

Program Meetings

3rd Tuesday every month.
Doors open at 6 p.m.
Meeting is 6:30–8:45 p.m.
Pasadena Central Library
285 E Walnut St

Online

www.pasadenalapidary.org

Email: info@pasadenalapidary.org

Facebook: Pasadena Lapidary Society

Instagram: /PasadenaLapidary

Twitter: @pasalapidary

Submit articles, corrections, ads, and your ideas to PO Box 5025, Pasadena, CA 91117-0025 or info@pasadenalapidary.org.

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RIDESHARE FOR FIELD TRIPS. If you don't mind having a passenger or two who will chip in for gas, PLS can send you names and contact info of members looking for a ride. You contact them if/when you want to offer a ride. No one will call you to ask for a ride. To receive rideshare names for future field trips, call Karl Stull at **(818) 205-7135** or send a "Might be interested" email to info@pasadenalapidary.org.



The saws went silent for 20 minutes at the July Workshop as Sylvia Cliffe introduced her Carving class to their next project. From left to right are Megan McHone, Joan Harrison, Valerie Stathatos, Stephanie Trat, Sylvia Cliffe, Christine Tureaud, Armando Pedroza, Irene Leung, and Akira Atobe.

Program Meeting – August 21



How Exotic Gems Are Changing the Jewelry Industry

Sharpen your eye for apatite, fluorite, kyanite, rhodochrosite, tanzanite, and others, as GIA-trained gemologist and author Renee Newman offers an introduction to the growing market for non-traditional gems. You'll learn about sources, pricing, value factors (color is not always the most important!), settings, and care tips. PLS members who want to sell their work will be interested to learn, as Renee has observed, the more information you can provide to customers, the more they are willing to pay.

Renee got started in gemstones as a tour director to Asia and South America in the early 1980s. Her passengers wanted details on how to evaluate gems and potential bargains in overseas shops, so she signed up for the GIA Colored Stone Grading course. She went on to a GIA diploma and was hired as a gemologist at a wholesale firm in downtown Los Angeles. In 1989, she published her first book, *Diamond Ring Buying Guide*. Since then, she has written 12 more books, including *Exotic Gems: Volumes 1, 2, 3, and 4* and *Rare Gemstones*.

Her books will be available for purchase at the program meeting for a discounted price of \$15 each, including sales tax. Cash or check only. For more information, visit her website:

www.reneenewman.com.

Our Rock of the Month will be Tiffany stone, presented by Michelle Vandembroeck.

Come Get Your Cab Snapped. Bring jewelry or any project you think will inspire fellow PLS members. Karl Stull will be on hand to take a picture of it for the newsletter. Stop by the Display Table for a look at rocks and related items brought in by PLS rockhounds. If you have a rock that needs identification, show it to our new Display Table facilitator – Ferdie Sanchez. Come to the program meeting for a good time with lapidary friends. – *Mona Ross*

PLS Members' Sale

Sign Up Now to

Make It Happen in November

– in time for holiday shopping

If 10 members sign up to be sellers, PLS will host a parking lot sale November 11 in Sierra Madre. The fee for a table will be \$20. The club will advertise the event to the general public.

Are you ready for retail? No special paperwork or licensing is required for occasional sales of craftwork. Bring a friend, bring an easy-up (optional). Give shoppers a chance to ooh, aah, and purchase beautiful things you have made.

For more information, contact Ellen Ferrell at (727) 512-0381 or Ellenbf2007@aol.com.

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Beauty in Bonsai

Art is always naturalistic to some degree: it has truth. But art also embodies human ideas about beauty. Ferdie's trees reflect ideas from bonsai, the ancient art of cultivating miniature trees in pots. In the Japanese tradition, the miniature trees are objects for contemplation, and may be classified according to various classical styles. All of the styles depart from nature to some extent – for example, the arrangement of branches and greenery allows for open spaces that viewers can see through.

Bonsai composition usually strives for an impression of balance. In an Informal composition (the style Ferdie works in most), when a trunk bends to one side, it may later turn back toward the center-line. There may be a major branch to the other side, providing a visual counterweight. Even in the very dramatic Windswept style, the sidelong shape of the gnarled trunk and pennant-like foliage are meant to convey a feeling of proven strength and hard-won stability.

Proportion and grouping are significant in bonsai. A Twin Trunk-style bonsai might express “mother and son.” Ferdie says he has at times used “heaven, earth, and man.” Another organizing theme, from Zen ink painting, might be “master, servant, and guest.”

The Road to Rock Art

Growing up in Manila, Ferdie inherited a love of gardening from his mother. One day at school, a presentation by bonsai practitioners got him interested in this highly specialized form



This amethyst tree with gold-colored copper wire was created for a friend who was getting married, as a gift for the bride. It has a geode base, as Ferdie continues to experiment with new materials and styles – recently, toward a landscape style. The “trunk to branches” detail on page 1 is from this tree.

of gardening. Years later, Ferdie came to the US, living at first in Wisconsin, where his efforts at bonsai were necessarily of the indoor kind. He was still a long way from making gem trees.

Ferdie's introduction to lapidary had to wait until 1) he and his family moved to California and 2) his younger son developed a passion for geology. Ferdie and family joined the Pasadena Lapidary Society – becoming pillars of our club – and then Ferdie found out about gem trees. The lightbulb went on.

Applying principles of bonsai to gem trees was a breakthrough, turning a handicraft into an art. It happened here at PLS, among us, and it didn't take long for others to get excited about the possibilities. PLS leaders encouraged Ferdie to put in a display case at the 2014 CFMS Show, where he won first place. First-place honors came again in 2017 at the national level, where Ferdie's trees won in AFMS competition in Ventura.

What's Next

With full-court support from his family – Debbie, Joshua, Paolo, and Danielle – Ferdie is making a go at sales of his lapidary bonsai trees. In their third year as dealers at the Culver City Rock and Mineral Club show, the Sanchezes had their best sales yet in 2018. One customer – who was just about to open a West Side meditation clinic – bought 18 of Ferdie's trees. She used a pair of metal dowsing rods to identify which trees she would purchase.

A tree doesn't get to choose where or when it comes into this world. And that may be why contemplation of a tree's life story – as recorded in its roots, trunk, and branches – has a calming effect on the soul. The dowsing rods prove it.

Further reading

Treasure, Martin. *Bonsai Life Histories*. Buffalo, NY: Firefly Books, 2002.

Some Bonsai Styles

Formal (*Chokkan*) Straight trunk, lowest branches about 1/3 of the way up, greenery forming an overall pyramidal shape.

Broom (*Hokidachi*) Greenery rounded at the top, park-like appearance. This style is often recommended for bonsai growers just starting out.

Informal (*Moyogi*) Trunk bends when the tree is young, seeking light; trunk returns toward vertical when it reaches maturity. Informal style gives latitude for individuality but still aims for unity.

Root over Rock (*Sekijoju*) Unable to spread underground, roots explore their rock and grip tightly all around.

Cascade (*Kengai*) On a peak or cliff, the tree seeks shelter from the wind, putting tremendous strain on the roots.

Group (*Yose-Ue*) Heavier, older trees at center; outer trees grow branches mostly outward, toward the light. Must be an odd number.

Cleaning Rocks and Crystals

by Chris Kyte

If you're a rockhound, then you will come home with lots of specimens, clusters, and rocks with dirt and discolorations you don't want. To clean the schmutz, start with the least noxious cleaner and work up until the rock is as clean as it can be.

Start with air. If you have a compressor or canned air from cleaning your computer, you can try blowing out the offending particles. Wear eye protection – anytime bits of rock are flying.

If air doesn't work, next would be water. Try hot soapy water. Or a steam cleaner. An extended soak (several days) in soapy water might do the trick. Next, try white vinegar, soaking for several days to a week.

Cleaning with Stronger Acids

When cleaning rocks with acids, I end the treatment by soaking the rock in water mixed with lots of baking soda, which neutralizes the acid. From this point upward, you should keep a neutralizing bucket alongside your acid-soaking bucket. If you accidentally splash acid on anything you're very attached to, such as your arm, you can neutralize the acid before it eats a hole in you. It is prudent to wear heavy-duty rubber gloves and eye protection. Use tongs to lift the rocks in and out of the acid.

The acids described below are available at home improvement stores. They are safe when used as directed. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for handling and disposal.

Oxalic acid. Your first choice for a rock-cleaning acid might be oxalic acid, found in Super Iron Out and in wood-bleaching products for backyard decks. Oxalic acid is not as caustic as some of the others, but it is poisonous, even if you neutralize it.

Muriatic acid. This is the one I use most, swimming-pool acid. In chemistry, the name for it is hydrochloric acid, so you can think of it as bleach on steroids. As with any of the strong acids, you will at times have to watch helplessly as certain rocks get eaten up – calcite crystals, for example. You can still use muriatic acid to clean calcite crystals, by dunking them only for short periods, like 30 seconds or a minute. With experience, you will learn to judge by the fizz how long you can leave a rock in. With quartz crystals, I usually put them in overnight and then allow the same amount of time in the neutralizer.

After cleaning a number of rocks, the acid in your soaking bucket will eventually slow down and fizz less. When the acid stops working, you can mix the neutralizer in and render the acid harmless.

The harder stuff. From here, stronger acids are available, but I haven't used them. Agents like hydrofluoric acid and nitric acid belong in a lab, not around the house (even muriatic acid should be used in an open space with good ventilation). Aqua regia, a mixture of hydrochloric acid and nitric acid, was formulated by alchemists in the Middle Ages and has the power to dissolve gold. There's no telling what it would do to my orange buckets from Home Depot.

I use hard-plastic buckets from the paint department, and they hold up pretty well but eventually need to be replaced. For

soaking small specimens, I have a silverware holder from a dishwasher. Sometimes it is hard to sort out the stones that the acid will eat up. The reality is: you are going to ruin some of your smaller rocks, no matter what. Get over it.



*Dear Cabby,
I've heard some people finish cabs by hand rather than using the sixth wheel on a Genie. Does this produce a better shine? Enough to make it worth the extra time and effort?*

– IDLE HANDS IN IDYLLWILD

Dear Idle Hands,
Everybody says they're too busy nowadays – too busy to answer my calls or emails! But since you're asking, I sought the advice of Cab Master Ed Imlay, who teaches Cabbing 101 at the PLS Workshop. He points out that the wheels on a Genie range from 80 grit to 3,000 grit. Compare that to the set of leather patches he uses for hand-polishing cabochons. The leathers are dosed with diamond paste ranging from 14,000 grit to 100,000 grit.

The leathers are cut from hide (available at fabric stores) in rectangles of 2 to 3 inches – big enough to overlap the cab. Ed stores the leathers in zip-lock bags, labeled by grit level. The grit comes from tubes of diamond paste, available from lapidary suppliers online.

You put a pea-sized dab of diamond paste on the smooth side of the leather. With the leather in the palm of one hand and a cab on a dop stick in the other hand, you work the cab diligently into the leather, moving it around and around. Once you are seeing no further improvement in the shine, it's time to move up to the next level of grit. Ed says he watches television while hand-polishing cabs to a mirror finish.

Now that's what I call multi-tasking! – Cabby

B. R. I. E. F.

The Best Rock I Ever Found was one I couldn't take home. It was a chunk of sandstone in the Santa Monica Mountains, on a stretch of the Backbone Trail called Fossil Ridge. The rock bore the imprint of a seashell, a big one, about the size of a dinner plate. The shell must have settled in sand on the seafloor, which later turned into sedimentary rock.

This was the first (and only) fossil I ever "discovered." It was like noticing a penny on the street, only it was \$100. From Fossil Ridge, I could see the Pacific Ocean in the distance, about 2,000 feet down. Looking from the water back to the shell, I saw 20 million years go by. – Anonymous

Welcome, New Members



Mai Le Trinh has been collecting rocks for some time, because they are beautiful. Her favorites are lapis lazuli and crystals, and she likes to place them beside favorite plants on the patio. Mai works in a law office. She has been to the shows in Quartzsite and Tucson. Finally, her daughter said Mai should join a rock club, so Mai went to the PLS Show in March and became a member in June, the month after May. Call her Mai (rhymes with “Hi”)!

Marianne Hutchins-Mejia heard about the Pasadena Lapidary Society in Martha Wilson’s jewelry-making class at Monrovia Adult School. She loved the idea of collecting “pretties” on field trips and turning them into beautiful things to wear. Her husband Ricardo and two daughters also joined the club, making the Mejias another of our PLS families. Marianne works with her sister and father in an air-sanding business that has been in the family more than 60 years. In jewelry-making, the only metal Marianne uses is titanium.



Workshop – August 12



Cab in a Cage

When wire-wrapping a cabochon, most people use an “around the perimeter” style that holds the stone like a picture frame. Instead of a frame, you could put your cab in a cage. Despite the name, a Wire Cage design offers a delicate, more open look – good for a pendant or for a necklace or bracelet with stones that dangle.

Learn how at the August Workshop, where Ed Imlay will present a Wire Cage class at about 10:30 (after a session of Cabbing 101). Here are tools and materials to bring:



- Ring mandrel and ring sizer
- Caliper or ruler
- Straight or bent-nose pliers
- Round-nose pliers
- Wire cutter
- Wire: #22 copper or other metal

Over the years, Ed has put a lot of thought into the ways of wire and polished rocks. This class will be a good one!

Workshop hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Half day is \$3, all day \$5. Park on the street or in the lot on the east side of the building.

For directions, please call me at (909) 593-2781 or email gem.quest@verizon.net. – Carolyn Duncan

Education Outreach



Full STEAM Ahead!

Many schools have annual STEAM events (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math). These celebrations are usually held on weekends or evenings. This year, we’ll be developing interactive presentations for STEAM events. Popular themes are “The Rock Cycle,” rocks that fluoresce, fossils, and meteorites. If you’d like to be involved, please contact me at **323 640-4394** or liveoak180@yahoo.com.

Display Table: Ferdie Sanchez will facilitate the I.D. table at our club meetings. If you’d like to know the name of a rock or mineral you’ve acquired, please bring it to the next meeting and set it on the table beneath the “What Is This?” sign. Polishing a small section or carefully “knocking off” a small corner of the specimen will provide more clues. Please feel free to share workshop projects and items you’ve collected on field trips. These add to our collective learning and enjoyment!

– Joan Harrison

Your Cans Can – Pay for Volunteer Parking

Our success in hosting next year’s CFMS annual show will rely on the efforts of many volunteers. We’re going to take the pain out of parking for these valued PLS members by recycling cans and plastic. We’ve already passed the \$100 mark toward a goal of \$1,800 (Fairplex parking ain’t cheap!). To donate recyclable cans or plastic, contact:

Ellen Ferrell (727) 512-0381 / Ellenbf2007@aol.com

Marcia Goetz (626) 260-7239 / joenmarl@verizon.net

Is It Too Soon to Pay Dues?

Yep, too soon. Unless you are the kind of person who likes to be sure everything is nailed down, buttoned up, and squared away. Pasadena Lapidary Society dues for your 2019 membership are not due until October 1. So, please, do not send your check for annual dues to **Membership, Pasadena Lapidary Society, PO Box 5025, Pasadena, CA 91117** – unless it would make you feel better to have this item on your to-do list checked off.



FASANAROCK


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Member to Member

BRIDGESTONE DUELER TIRES, P265/70R17.

They've been off-road but are still like new. \$185 for all four, or best offer. Will consider trade for lapidary equipment or something that would make a good Raffle prize in the 2019 PLS/CFMS Show. Email and I'll call you back: gem.quest@verizon.net.



Members are invited to post here about goods or services wanted, items for sale or trade, or questions you believe fellow PLS members have answers to – such as, “Where do you put rocks when all the buckets are full?” To post on Member to Member, call newsletter editor Karl Stull at (818) 205-7135 or email (with photo, if helpful) to: info@pasadnalapidary.org.

Rock and Gem Shows

August 3–5 NIPOMO, CA: Orcutt Mineral Society, Nipomo High School, 525 Thompson Ave. Hours: Fri–Sat 10–5, Sun 10–4. www.omsinc.org

August 4–5 SAN FRANCISCO: San Francisco Gem & Mineral Society, San Francisco County Fair Building (Hall of Flowers), 9th Ave & Lincoln Way, Golden Gate Park. Hours: Sat 10–6, Sun 10–5. www.sfgemshow.org

August 18–19 TEHACHAPI: Tehachapi Valley Gem & Mineral Society, Tehachapi Senior Citizen Center, 500 East F St. Hours: 9–4 daily (tentative). www.tvgms.org

From the Merriam-Webster Unabridged Dictionary

gem·my *adjective* \ˈjɛmə\

1: having the characteristics (as hardness, brilliance, color) desired in a gemstone <gemmy rock crystal>

2: glittering, bright <a gemmy spring day>

First Known Use: 15th century (sense 1)

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
August 2018	Monthly meetings at Library begin at 6:30.		1	2 Board mtg PLS members always welcome	3 Gem show	4 Gem shows
5 Gem shows	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 Workshop Slab, cab, & blab	13	14	15	16 Gold discovered in the Klondike, 1896	17	18 Gem show
19 Gem show	20	21 Program mtg “Exotic Gems”	22	23	24 Mt Vesuvius erupts, AD 79	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	



Pasadena Lapidary Society, Inc.
PO Box 5025
Pasadena, CA 91117-0025



Freestyle fluorite pendant by Janie Duncan, with wandering wire, climbing beads, and sundry spacers – a bouquet of blues and greens

Family Field Trip – In Search of Benitoite (state gem of California)



Eugene Kim and daughter Ellen visited the California State Gem Mine (privately owned) in July. They went prepared for heat, with a shade tent and ice chest full of water, and came home with a handful of specimens – including one shaped like a Star of David. As explained by mine owner Dave Schreiner, this shape is a rare intersection of triangular benitoite crystals. There are only 24 known specimens, which will make the Kims' find #25 if confirmed.

The specimen measures 6 millimeters across and 2.8 millimeters deep. It has well-defined crystal structure on its vee-shaped faces, which you can see clearly in a video on Eugene's Instagram page, socialminerals.

The Kims got into rockhounding two years ago, just wondering on long drives through Owens Valley (on the way to Mammoth): "What's out there?" One time, they stopped at Fossil Falls, and have been exploring ever since.

The California State Gem Mine is in San Benito County – about 200 miles up I-5, near Coalinga.

