



ROCKHOUND RAMBLINGS

JULY 2020 • PASADENA LAPIDARY SOCIETY® • PASADENA, CA

President's Message



Dear Fellow Members,

It has been a long, long time since we have been able to enjoy the company of our friends and rockhounds. Let's hope it won't be that much longer until we can begin to move forward with life as near normal as possible. Although, I think normal will never be the same as we enjoyed in the past.

As I write this, I have a pair of mockingbirds on my patio just going nuts because I have two cats inside looking out at them. The cats are watching intently as the birds keep charging at them with threatening shrieks.

With the "Stay at Home" order still in place, we will not have a regular board meeting in July. I will try to set up a Zoom meeting so we can catch up on old business. Everyone will be notified when that is going to happen.

We cannot have a workshop until the "Stay at Home order" is lifted and we make a plan to clean and sanitize the workshop. Everyone will need to sign a new waiver of liability for the workshop that includes a statement that our liability insurance policy does not provide coverage for pandemic. This can be done when you attend the workshop.

Since the library is still closed to events, we will not be able to have a program/membership meeting. I have had suggestions from other clubs about having programs online from some great resources. I will try to make that happen soon. I have been unable to do much this year because of eye problems but I have had laser surgery on my eyes and I am getting better. I haven't heard of anyone being sick with Covid-19 and I hope this finds all of you well. Steve Cady took a bad fall while hiking at Echo Mountain with Sue Pang. He is recovering well and is in rehab. I wish him a speedy recovery.

Hoping to be together again soon.

– Ellen Ferrell, President

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Pasadena Lapidary Society®

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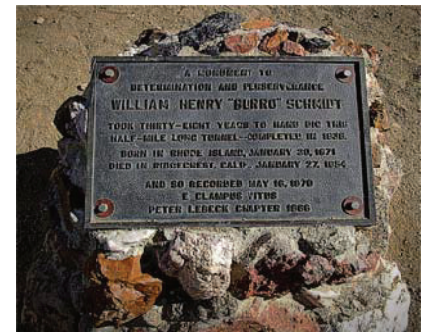
The Burro Schmidt Tunnel

By Tennyson Kwok

Summer days are stretching out before us. With the country re-opening, rockhounds are anxious to go out explore once more. However, unless you plan on hunting at night (PLS May 2020 Bulletin), it might be best to visit some historic desert locations during the hot summer days instead of walking through the heated desert.

One such destination, which is both historic and cool, is the Burro Schmidt Tunnel and visiting this historic monument and the areas surrounding it is a potential summertime rock hunting trip.

In 1900, William "Burro" H. Schmidt, began construction of a tunnel in the El Paso Mountains to make it easier for him to move gold ore from his mine to Mojave. Considering that this tunnel was made entirely by hand tools and dynamite, it is



The Plaque at the Front of the Tunnel

amazing that the entire length of it is over ½ mile long, and Schmidt removed around an estimated 5,800 tons of rock. This passageway is now owned and maintained by the BLM and despite it being a century old, it was drilled through solid granite rock and is quite safe to walk through.

When you get to the south end of the tunnel, you are rewarded with a picturesque and panoramic view of Koehn Dry Lake and the surrounding area.

Nearby is a small settlement, Bickel Camp, which still has some part time residents and an interesting artifact museum. There are many abandoned mines and cabins nearby, including an abandoned post office that once served the miners who lived in the area.

You can get to the Burro Schmidt Tunnel Road from either Hwy 14 to the west, or off 395 to the east. 4 Wheel drive vehicles are recommended, especially when you get close to the tunnel.

The Burro Schmidt tunnel offers a scenic view, an amazing tunnel, and a museum. Additionally, this tunnel is located in the midst of many abandoned mines and tailings. It is possible to carefully explore the old tailings that these gold miners left behind. While the chance of finding a nugget is small, there is a large quantity of other material, such as quartz, that can be found in the tailings. The Burro Schmidt Tunnel is a potential rockhunting site, visiting tailings in the cool mornings or evenings, and exploring the tunnel and museum during the afternoon desert heat.

Officers, Trustees, and Committee Chairs

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Trustees

Marcia Goetz, Chris Kyte, Joe Goetz

Committee Chairs

Annual Show	Ellen Ferrell	Michelle Vandebroek (Co-Chair)
Bulletin	Jared Nishimura	Education Joan Harrison
Display Table	Ferdie Sanchez	Historian TBA
Field Trips	Rex Nishimura	Librarian Jennifer Jang
Hospitality	Mona Ross	Publicity TBA
Membership	Yvette Fitzgerald	Sunshine Ellen Ferrell
Social Media	Elizabeth Weston	Ways & Means Philip Lahr
Technology	Ben Shutman	Workshop Carolyn Duncan
Webmaster	Elizabeth Weston	

Membership

Membership per calendar year is \$25; for additional adults at the same address, \$15. Junior members are \$10. There is an initiation fee of \$10 per person to cover costs of name badges, etc.

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

Meetings

**** Editor's Note: All meetings are canceled for June.****

Board Meetings – 1st Thursday of the month

7 p.m. at Matt Denny's Ale House

145 E Huntington Dr, Arcadia

Dinner at 6 p.m. PLS members are welcome.

Workshop – 2nd Sunday of the month

9 a.m.–5 p.m. \$3 for half-day, \$5 for a full day. Equipment instruction, liability waivers, eye protection, and closed-toe shoes are required. For directions, please call (909) 455-4360 (cell) or (909) 593-2781, or email gem.quest38@gmail.com. Bring lunch!

Junior members 9 and older are welcome with adult supervision.

Program Meetings – 3rd Tuesday of the month

Doors open at 6 p.m. Meeting is 6:30–8:45 p.m.

Pasadena Central Library, 285 E Walnut St.

Contact Us

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Pasadena Lapidary Society

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Editor: Jared Nishimura pasadenalapeditor@gmail.com

Send articles by the 15th for publication in next month's issue. Very short items can get in as late as the 22nd but are not guaranteed to make the next issue.

Program Meeting – Canceled



While the Pasadena Public Library remains closed, there are promising indications that the COVID-19 restrictions might be loosening up a bit. This means we might soon be able to resume our monthly meetings. On that note, it has been a while since I reached out to members for “Rock of the Month” (ROTM) and “Featured Presentation” opportunities. Let's restart those conversations. If you have ideas for topics or are interested in presenting at an upcoming PLS General Meeting, please send me an email at lapidary908@aol.com. The ROTM presentation is a brief 5-8 minute overview of something that has inspired you – a rock, a lapidary technique, etc. The Featured Presentation is a 40-45 minute discussion on a select lapidary-related topic. While we do bring in external speakers from time to time – we welcome and encourage members to share their passion.

– Michelle Vandebroek, Vice-President

Amazonite: The Forgiving Rock

By Michelle Vandebroek

I like to believe there are rocks for all moods. This past weekend, I closed my work computer, turned off the tv news, and wandered into my “rock room” for a little rock therapy to shake off a rather stressful week. Countless cut, half worked, broken, and miscellaneous slabs that I can no longer identify greeted me as I entered the room; followed by a silent chorus of “finish me!” ringing through my ears as I met their glance.

But this day was different. Not just any rock would do. I needed something different; something, well... easy. Something that would not demand that I sit at the 280 grit wheel for several maddening hours trying to remove stubborn hard-wheel scratches. There are days I am up for that challenge. But not this time. No, I was in the mood for gentle, easy-going success. So, I turned to one of my “tried and true,” favorite stones – Amazonite. At about a 6 on the Mohs scale, Amazonite is quick to shape while still taking a lovely polish.

We sat together at the grinder and let the world drift away for about an hour; the hum of the motor calming the busy whirl of my thoughts. And, finally, as the wheels took their final bow and the geysers stopped sputtering, I held in my hand two shiny green cabs to appreciate. Joy. Happiness. Thank you, Amazonite.



Member-to-Member

We have a Rociprolap, about 20-inches. This is an old style heavy duty unit. Motor works.

There is also a 6-inch trim saw that needs a new motor as well as a three-inch faceting trim saw.

Additionally, if you are interested in purchasing a small saw, a combination unit, a tumbler, or a glass display case (see pictures to the right), please call Philip Lahr at (818) 926 - 3163 or at plkslahr@att.net.



Workshop – Canceled for July

Unfortunately, the July workshop is canceled due to government's order. Hope to see you in August!

For directions, call (909) 455-4360 (cell) or (909) 593-2781 or email gem.quest38@gmail.com. Park on the street or in the lot on the east side of the building. Do not enter by the ramp in the parking lot. – Carolyn Duncan

Educational Corner

I hope you are all well and finding ways to connect to our hobby as we continue to navigate Covid -19. Here are a couple of tips that I have found over the last month.

The G.I.A. (Gemological Institute of America) offers a wide array of YouTube videos on many topics. Gemology, mine tours, demonstrations, and a virtual tour of the Natural History Museum's collection of California minerals are just a few. These videos are a productive and informative way to spend an afternoon.

If you've been working with rocks at home, a quick search of "beginning lapidary" or "lapidary tips" turns up an array of demonstrations as well.

It will be so good when life returns to 'normal' and we can safely get together again. Meanwhile, Happy Virtual Travels!

All the Best,

~Joan Harrison



Before and after view of bezels in progress. Photo Credit: Ellen Limeres



I want to buy a used trim saw. Any pointers on how to tell the good from the bad and the ugly?

– SAWLESS IN SILVER LAKE

Dear Sawless,

You're going to love having your own saw. Rock dealers are going to love it too, when they see all your new slab orders coming in.

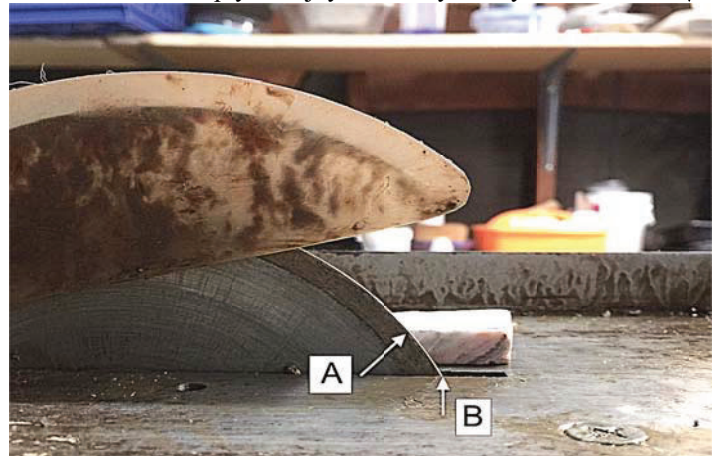
For good advice on this topic, I talked with Phil Lahr, our PLS chair for Ways and Means. He sees a lot of donated equipment and offers these helpful guidelines:

Blade diameter. Keep in mind that 40% of the blade diameter is the maximum height it will cut. So a 4-inch blade will be good for cutting shapes from slabs, but you'll need a bigger saw for cutting slabs from rough rocks. #

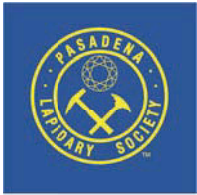
Clean or rough condition. If a machine is grimy or looks like it has been stored outdoors for years, it may need a lot of work – fun for tinkerers but not for beginners. Check the condition of the power cord and look for broken or missing parts (blade guard, belt guard, adjustable guide for straight cutting).

Motor test. Listen for a smooth sound and confirm there is no wobble or "out of round" motion of the blade (or shaft). This tells you the motor and bearings are good. Look for leaks, and take note of where spray flies off the saw – you may want a splash guard. If the machine is dry when tested, ask about leaks.

In addition, you may find it helpful to take the PLS Workshop orientation again. You can ask our experts about types of blades, oil/water, maintenance, and so on. We have lovable gearheads who are here to help you enjoy our rocky hobby. – Cabby



TRIM SAW TIP Because the blade is curved, point B cuts ahead of A. This is no problem when cutting an oval or rectangle, but keep B in mind with indented shapes like a crescent moon or oak leaf. To avoid cutting too far on the underside, stop a little short and lift the end of the slab up to a 45° angle. The raised angle advances the cut at A without affecting B.



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Blooming Prickly Pear
Photo Credit: Anton Foltin



Above: While washing some slabs during the stay-at-home time, I found a dirty, drab, slab. Plunging it into the soapy water, followed by a scrubbing, I brought it up to look at the slab and was delighted when I saw a little blue bird sitting on a branch. Photo Credit: Joe and Marcia Goetz.

Left: Zia sun pendant: hammered silver and "Olive Loaf Rhyolite" with turquoise accented leather lace. Photo Credit: Ellen Limeres

****Editor's Note: Submit your quarantine projects to the PLS Bulletin at pasadenalapeditor@gmail.com****