



ROCKHOUND RAMBLINGS

JUNE 2020 • PASADENA LAPIDARY SOCIETY® • PASADENA, CA

President's Message



Dear Fellow Members,

I hope everyone has abided by the stay at home orders and that all of you are safe and well. This has been a difficult time for all of us. We have suffered boredom, depression, anger, and most of all we have missed our rock-hounding friends. Hopefully this will end soon.

We will not have a board meeting in June, workshop has been canceled, and our membership program meeting will not happen. We cannot have a workshop until both the State and County lift the Stay at Home Order.

As for having a workshop, when the order is lifted, we will need to clean and sanitize the workshop before anyone can attend. This will be a good time to muck the saws. We will probably need ten or so members to help with the saws, cleaning, and sanitizing.

Now is a good time for all of us that are restricted to our homes to spend some time on some lapidary work or other projects to fill our time. We will have a display case at the annual show which will be held in March 2021, which will display items that members have created. There are many things that you can do without having lapidary equipment: string some beads, make a chain, wire wrap a cabochon you have on hand. Get your creativity juices flowing.

Think of what you can make to add to the display case. Maybe July will be the time that we will be able to get together again. I am looking forward to seeing everyone. I have talked to many members but would love to hear from everyone. Feel free to call, text or message me anytime.

Stay home and Stay Safe.

– Ellen Ferrell, President

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Pasadena Lapidary Society®

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“Rediscoveries”

By Joe Goetz

We are all sitting at home waiting for the go ahead and to come out of what I'll call hibernation. What to do? As rock hounds, we are lucky in that way; we have a hobby to keep our minds working – whether it is cutting cabs or making jewelry or other lapidary pursuits.

One way of exercising your brain is to sort through the rocks you collected whether in the field, at a show, or from a sale at a fellow rock hound's home. Sorting is a good way to grade your rock. The okay rock can be either given away or be used to build a rock wall. The best you keep and admire, sparking a memory. There is an indescribable joy of rediscovering the one special stone, recollecting the experience, and creating a beautiful gemstone out of it.

Sitting in the backyard rediscovering....

~Joe Goetz

“Pondering At Brown Butte”

By Rex Nishimura

As I drove through Mojave, CA last week, the morning sun peeked through the clouds and the temperature began to rise. In the distance, the rounded silhouette of Brown Butte loomed from the salt flats of Edwards Air Force Base. I made a quick right turn, and that put me on target to rendezvous with the old rock hunting site--Brown Butte, home of root beer colored agate and petrified wood. Since Brown Butte is less than 2 hours from LA, the pickings aren't always great and I readied myself by entering a self-pitying state of mind, expecting to garner nothing but futility.

This was not to be the case, however, as I quickly located a field of brown agates. Nothing to write home about of course, but nevertheless, it was collectible agate. I'm not a dealer, so I don't need tons of AAA quality material, and I selectively picked a few pieces of float agate.

As I walked, I pondered, “what would make a good field trip for the PLS.” Was it the location? Hmm... Maybe Brown Butte isn't the most popular place to collect rocks. Is the time of year critical to a good trip? If so, being in the heart of the Mojave Desert in late May was far from ideal.



Brown Agate from Brown Butte

Continued on page 2

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Committee Chairs

Annual Show	Ellen Ferrell	Michelle Vandembroeck (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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Facebook: Pasadena Lapidary Society **Twitter:** @pasalapidary

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.

"Pondering at Brown Butte" (Continued from page 1)

Perhaps it was the company -- the laughs and jokes of Jay Valle, or the subtle humor of Joe Goetz.

My musings were then interrupted by a red and brown speckled piece of agate which seemed to say, "Share me with the club" and instantly I knew the main ingredients of a good field trip. You see, rock hounding is all about sharing -- sharing campfires, sharing adventures, sharing stories, or sharing meals.

We share our passion with the public by volunteering at outreaches and rock shows. Sure, rocks are great, but it's the sharing that makes it memorable.

I hurriedly picked a few more overlooked treasures and looked in unbelief at my watch. Somehow 2 hours had disappeared from my day, but it was memorialized by the fist size agates that I found. Time passes quickly while rock hunting, but the trip to Brown Butte was worth it. Rather than rolling in self-pity during the lockdown, I found healing by doing SOMETHING rather than staring at the rocks in my garage. Brown Butte was the soothing potion that I needed to get moving, get working, and get back to living.

Program Meeting – Canceled



I hope you are doing well; staying safe and focused on well-being. Honestly, I thought this crisis would have been a memory by now and we'd be back at it – digging, scooping, and grinding. But, safety first and there is still much that is indefinite. The Library remains closed and consequently, the PLS general meetings are on hold. When it is safe to resume social contact, we will resume our meetings. I miss seeing the faces of fellow rock-lovers and sharing lapidary experiences.

In early February, I made a trip to Tucson to attend the rock and mineral show. Unbeknownst to me at that time, we were about to go on lock down. In retrospect, I am very grateful to have made that trip. It was not only a fun excursion but it provided my quarantine time with some new material to explore: including a large piece of Ocean Jasper.

Because of the quarantine, I had an opportunity to slice some of this material and was blown away by the orbs, colors, crystals, and patterns inside. It took some time to polish given the hardness, but I ended up with some fair pieces.

Despite its name, Ocean (orbicular) Jasper is not a jasper at all but rather a *spherulitic* type of chalcedony. It is coined "Ocean" Jasper for the patterns of waves in the stone that resemble the ocean.

Let us know what you're working on! Submit an article for the PLS Newsletter! – Michelle Vandembroeck, Vice-President



Ocean Jasper

PLS Shirts Available!

To order PLS t-shirts (\$10), ball caps (\$11), and vests (\$15), contact Ellen Ferrell: (727) 512-0381 or Ellenbf2007@aol.com.

Member-to-Member

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



We also have a 6-inch trim saw that needs a new motor.

Finally, we have a three-inch faceting trim saw.

Past member Eugene Kim has an 18-inch slab saw to sell.

For more information on the price on any of these items, contact Phil Lahr at (818) 926-3163 or plkslahr@att.net

PLS Storage Unit Cleaning!

Looking for something to do? Our storage unit in Arcadia is overflowing with rock that we anticipated selling at the show. Help is needed to wash and bucket it both so we can make better use of the space and have the rock ready to go when needed. We will keep the group small, wear our masks and maintain distance as much as possible. Strong backs a plus for this fun endeavor. Date and time TBD. Contact Philip Lahr at (818) 926-3163 or plkslahr@att.net if you would like to join in a productive day of ogling the club gems.

Workshop – Canceled for June

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

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

Hello again, I hope everyone is healthy and doing well as we navigate from home. As I continue my tech adventures, from time to time I escape and go down wonderful Youtube rock and mineral rabbit holes. Typing keywords, such as “sea glass or “petrified wood” sets me on a virtual road trip without a map — you never know what will turn up! Hint: be sure to scroll down past all of the ads and promotions that usually take up the first screen.

If you've found any interesting rock and mineral online sites, please let me know and we'll post them in next month's newsletter.

Wishing everyone all the best,

~Joan Harrison



I picked up a sweet slab of plume agate at an estate sale in late February – and have been waiting ever since for a workshop to make a few cabochons. Any suggestions?

– GRINDING TO A HALT

Dear Grinding,

It's good to hear from you. It's good to hear from anybody! Now, if you're asking for a “hamster wheel and sandpaper” way to make cabs at home, you've been in lockdown too long.

But I have a good tip for cabbing plume agate, from our friend Sylvia Cliffe. She recommends a “low dome” shape for the front of the cab. A high dome, with a steeper angle, runs a greater risk of damage to the plume you want to show off.

For any cab that you plan to wire-wrap, low or high, Sylvia says give it straight sides. A squared-off face (or “girdle”) around the stone gives the wire a stable, secure hold.

For cabs that will go in a bezel setting, give the sides a slight angle. Then press the bezel inward to hold the stone, using a bezel pusher or bezel roller. Go gradually to avoid bunching, two or three times around the bezel. Finish the top edge of the bezel with a burnisher.

What exactly is a “slight” angle? Diamond Pacific recommends 12 degrees. For reference, a clock with hands shows a 15 degree angle at 12:03.

Hang in there. We lapidarists will one day gather again. – Cabby



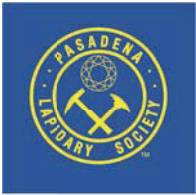
Left to right, a bezel pusher, bezel roller, and bent burnisher. The half-circle head of the bezel roller is wrapped in alligator tape to prevent scratches.

Photo Credit: Karl Stull



Fossil Coral on the Display Table at a PLS Membership meeting. Hope to see all the PLS members congregate again soon!

Photo Credit: Karl Stull



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*Saguaro Cactus during sunset.
Photo Credit: Christina E*



Cleaning during this Covid-19 Stay-at-home can have its rewards. Many of us are taking advantage of the time to clean the nooks and crannies of the yard, house, garage, piles, etc. Squirreled away in a small plastic Ziploc bag inside a lunch size bag I found this. Just waiting for me to clean up and make my day! My guess is that is a topaz but a very light one. It has some inclusions in it and when looked at in the outdoor light it has a dim shimmering chatoyance.

Photo Credit: Joe and Marcia Goetz

Editor's Note: Send your quarantine projects to pasadenalapeditor@gmail.com and have them posted in the PLS Bulletin!