



# ROCKHOUND RAMBLINGS

NOVEMBER 2018 • PASADENA LAPIDARY SOCIETY™ • PASADENA, CA



## Thanksgiving at Owl Hole

by Sylvia Cliffe

This was one of my husband Vern's first field trips, around 1979. I had been collecting for 20 years or more.

It was a long drive to Death Valley, and another 40 miles of dirt road to the camp. That was Wednesday. We set up for a four-day Thanksgiving stay, and by then it was time for bed. In the morning, our field trip leader took the group to a hill where we could dig for sagenitic agate. The agate in that hill was small – 1/2 inch in seams in a conglomerate of calcite onyx. This was not a very encouraging start, considering past trips to Owl Hole.

Vern went back to camp to get more bottles of water, and when he returned he had a lovely, light blue piece of agate.

"Where did you find that?"

"If you want, I'll show you."

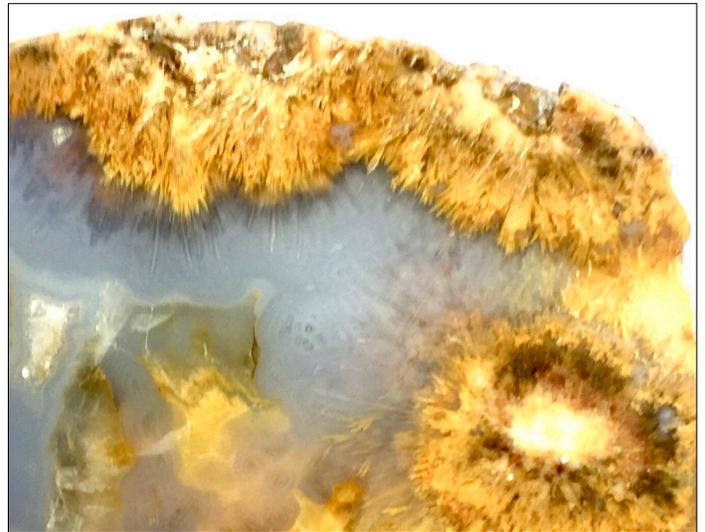
"We might as well. I don't like what we're getting here."

Grabbing our bags and tools, we went around the hill to a small ravine. Scrutinizing the lay of the land, I said, "Let's dig here."

With both of us digging diligently for about 15 minutes, we came up with a 4-inch by 3-inch nodule. To get a look inside, Vern tapped the nodule with his rock hammer. It was a beautiful golden sagenite spray in light blue agate. I said, "If we find any more, we should take it home and cut it on the saw."

We kept digging and found another nodule in about 15 minutes. We pulled eight or ten more before it was time to go to camp for our potluck Thanksgiving dinner – always very excellent.

At the fireside that evening, we showed our friends our finds,



*At left are Vern and Sylvia Cliffe on a trip to Burro Creek (AZ). Above, a close-up shows uncanny shadow effects and hair-like structures in Owl Hole sagenitic agate. Sylvia made the cameo by cutting a piece of agate with adjacent golden and translucent white areas for face and hair.*

and then everyone wanted to hunt where we had been. The next day, we took the group to the ravine.

All began digging, and for a while only one person was finding any nodules, and he was breaking open all that he found. When you know you're into good material, it's better not to waste it by hammering it to bits.

On Saturday, we returned to the ravine and went on digging, pulling out nodules of various sizes. Sunday we were back again, still digging, still working steadily. As it came up to noon, Vern suggested we call a halt and head home, because we both had to get to work early next morning. As we left, one of our cohorts asked if he could dig in the hole we were leaving. Just ten minutes later our friend returned to camp. We gave him a questioning look, and he said, "You got it all."

I told Vern, "No way did we get it all."

The next February, on the three-day Presidents Day weekend,

*Continued on page 4*

## President's Message



Dear Fellow Members,

October has passed, and we are into a new month with lots of wonderful things to do. Members Sale, Workshop, Membership Meeting, and two field trips. What more could you ask?

The 2019 CFMS Show Committee has been working very hard on preparations for the show in March. Thank you to all the volunteers who have pitched in. Mona Ross has organized a sewing bee at Janie Duncan's home, and several ladies have pitched in to help with the grab bags. I think we have about 250 but we need 900. We have a couple of ladies that are sewing grab bags at their home. If anyone wants to do that to help, just let me know and I will send you the pattern and instructions. Or if you would like to join the sewing group, just give Mona Ross a call for date and time. Ferdie Sanchez is working on gem trees to be used as mementos at the awards banquet. Once he gets his system going, he will get other members involved to assist.

We had a good board meeting and we were able to approve three new members for our society. We are looking forward to getting to know them and getting them involved in lapidary at the workshop and other activities being planned. New members include Yvette Fitzgerald, Audrey Ford and her family, and Michelle Sandberg and her family. New members should call Carolyn Duncan for workshop orientation.

The Christmas Party committee is headed by Susan Carter. She reported at the October general membership meeting that a venue had been selected. That is the biggest hurdle. She will place sign-up sheets on the back table for everyone to tell her what they will be bringing to the potluck. She announced that we will do crafts in the afternoon and we will have a gift exchange. The date is December 15 from 2:30 until...

We have a trip to Jewel Tunnel coming up. We have been invited to their open house, which is by invitation only. You may call me or Marcia Goetz for details. There will be a sign-in sheet in the lobby for our society members when they arrive. You must be a member of Pasadena Lapidary Society or Whittier Gem & Mineral Society to attend.

Happy Thanksgiving to everyone and their families.

– Ellen Ferrell, President

## Officers and Committee Chairs

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**Trustees** Joe Goetz, Marcia Goetz, Chris Kyte

### Committee Chairs

<b>Annual Show</b>	Ellen Ferrell	Marcia Goetz (cochair)
<b>Bulletin</b>	Karl Stull	<b>Display Table</b> Ferdie Sanchez
<b>Education</b>	Joan Harrison	<b>Field Trips</b> Joe Goetz
<b>Historian</b>	Karl Stull	<b>Hospitality</b> Elizabeth Weston
<b>Librarian</b>	Jennifer Jang	<b>Membership</b> Marcia Goetz
<b>Publicity</b>	Mona Ross	Elizabeth Weston (social media)
<b>Sunshine</b>	Ellen Ferrell	<b>Ways &amp; Means</b> Phil Lahr
<b>Webmaster</b>	Ben Shutman	<b>Workshop</b> Carolyn Duncan

## 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 (nonrefundable).

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

## Meetings

### Board Meetings – 1st Thursday of the month

7 p.m. at Matt Denny's Ale House  
 145 E Huntington Dr, Arcadia  
 PLS members are welcome.

### Workshop – 2nd Sunday of the month

Fees are \$3 for half-day, \$5 for a full day. Equipment instruction is required; also liability waivers, eye protection, and closed-toe shoes. 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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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.

### Pasadena Lapidary Society™

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## Program Meeting – November 20



### Tourist's Guide to Boulder Opal & the Yowah Opal Field

Leslie Neff and Larry Hoskinson are veteran visitors to Australia, with nine trips amounting to almost three years under their belts. At our program meeting for November, they will talk about their trek from Coober Pedy – known as the opal capital of the world – through the outback to the Yowah opal field. Mining methods at Yowah are different in some ways than at other operations, and our presenters have lots of great slides to show how. There will be samples of rough and finished Boulder Opal for close-up examination afterward. As a bonus, Neff and Hoskinson will share stories from their time in Byron Bay (480 miles up the coast from Sydney), visiting friends at the Lismore Gem & Mineral Society.



The Rock of the Month is the “Benitoite Star,” presented by Eugene Kim and Ellen Kim. Benitoite is a blue barium titanium silicate, very rare – the California state gemstone. Even rarer are twinned occurrences that form stars. The Kims were the lucky finders of a 6-pointed Star of

David at the California State Gem Mine in July. – *Mona Ross*

## Education Outreach



### PLS Visits Schools in SGV

To schedule a classroom presentation by an experienced club member, contact (323) 640-4394 or [liveoak180@yahoo.com](mailto:liveoak180@yahoo.com).

**Display Table:** Ferdie Sanchez coordinates the Display Table at monthly meetings. Share items of rockhound interest, workshop projects, or rocks from field trips. If you have a rock you'd like to have identify, put it near the Display Table “What Is This?” note. Knocking a corner off the specimen may provide helpful clues. – *Joan Harrison*

## Page 2 Looks Different

Page 2 has switched to a two-column format, making life easier for your newsletter editor. The page design we had before was nice to look at but a bear to work with (like Leonardo DiCaprio in *The Revenant*).

Imagine building a three-story house of cards using agate slabs, and then having to change out one of the slabs. That's why page 2 has a new look. – *Karl Stull*

*Eight strands emerge from the bail of this elegant wrap by Corinne Imlay, like streams from a fountain. But there is a quiet sense of humor at play in these formal curves and twirls. Only six of the wires come to a traceable end. The stone is gabbro, old as the hills around Mariposa (30 miles southwest of Yosemite).*



## Artisans Boutique IN THE PARKING LOT

Some PLS members have joined together to hold a sale of things that are lovely and lapidary and that they made themselves – or at least sawed into slabs, including old stock you may never see again. Come early, bring cash, and be prepared to ooh and aah, because you're going to see these people at future meetings, field trips, and workshops. Our parking lot artisans are nothing if not proud of the beautiful items on offer.

Just in time for holiday shopping!

### Rocks • Gems • Crystals One-of-a-Kind Jewelry

123 E Montecito Ave, in Sierra Madre  
(Near Baldwin Ave and Sierra Madre Blvd)

# Sunday, Nov 11

10am – 4pm

### Thanksgiving at Owl Hole *Continued from page 1*

Vern and I went back to Owl Hole by ourselves (not a very good idea, as we were 40 miles from Nowhere). Back at our same ravine, we continued digging in a methodical way – moving up one side of the ravine and then down the other. We were pulling out good-sized nodules the whole time. Again we had to leave before we wanted. Vern vowed we would return.

And we did return. The next Thanksgiving, we took the club back to Owl Hole. We showed the group where we last found agate, and soon everyone started to come up with sagenitic agate nodules. We said, “Don’t break them. Take them home to cut.”

Vern and I went back to Owl Hole several times with the club, digging in various locations. We collected good sagenitic agate in shades of blue/golden, pink in white, some green moss agate, and plume agate in small pieces with pastel colors.

The area is now closed. I know there are still beautiful stones there. Looking back on many times, many days at Owl Hole, it was one of my very favorite places to rock hunt.

Well, on to a new location. ❖



*In the top photo (1953), titled “Turtles,” a man’s head emerges from his sleeping bag. The bottom photo shows a PLS caravan to Chuckawalla Springs in 1976. The VW at the end belonged to George Snyder, a mentor to senior members in today’s PLS.*

## The Future of Field Trips

*Sylvia Cliffe is convinced beautiful stones are still out there to be found. But times have changed. Pickings are not as plentiful as when Jeeps had skinny tires (see top photo). We use the term “old stock” nowadays to describe specimens that can’t be found anywhere but in an estate sale. The turquoise is all but gone.*

*We have an active field trip program at PLS. In the excerpts that follow, by representatives from other clubs, we see challenges that face the rockhounding hobby in general. The time has come to start thinking about field trips for the next generation.*

### Conditions in the Desert

*Jim Barton, CFMS Field Trip Coordinator (North), describes a CFMS field trip to Hawthorne, NV, October 2018:*

This should be a lot of fun, especially for folks just getting into the rockhound game... We will stop at a few sites to better understand the geology of the area. Most importantly, we are out to commune with the rocks where they live, get to know their feeding habits, their hiding places, and identify the clues they leave behind! We hope to help folks understand the lay of the land and learn how the desert mining districts work.

**TRIP DIFFICULTY RATING:** Trip will require a High Clearance Vehicle – at the least, a 4x4 would be desirable for access on poorly maintained and rutted roads.

This is NOT a dude ranch. This not a casual day-in-the-park trip. This is some serious travel into remote desert locations, with long drives from site to site... I would caution folks to make any arrangements for ride sharing prior to the trip. It is rare that other participants have any room in their vehicles.

**SAFETY CONCERNS:** This is tough and dirty rock hounding! Bugs, snakes, ticks, holes, mine shafts, nails, barbed wire, and heaven knows what else is out there! This one is for the tough guys and gals, but it will be a great adventure. For safety and convoy coordination, we recommend you invest in the Family Radio Service radios (FRS). We will operate on channel 10, with no tone code (O).

### Recruiting Field Trip Leaders

*Margaret Hogarth, Searchers Gem & Mineral Society, Annual Show Chair, posted on LA Rocks, August 13:*

Our club’s financial priorities are to maintain our standing with CFMS, maintain the club workshop, help the Veterans Hospital workshop, and participate in opportunities such as scholarships.

We also notice changes in membership, including different trends in volunteering rates and field trip leadership. Field trips bring in new members and support, but many of our field trip leaders are aging, have health issues, or new priorities in their lives. Some of us don’t feel we have the expertise to safely lead a productive field trip.

Yes, our society is changing. I would be interested in learning how other clubs build membership and increase interest in volunteering for the club.

## Ups and Downs in Participation

*Dennis Gibbs, Yucaipa Valley Gem & Mineral Society, Field Trip Coordinator, commented in an email, September 3:*

Our club membership has remained around 130 for many years, but with a decrease of children and young adults.

In the last two or three years, response to our field trips has been unpredictable. Some of our trips draw a group of 15–25 one year and the next year five. Lavic Siding is usually a very popular field trip, looking for jaspers. I usually draw 25–30 people, but this year I had two show up.

The most popular trip we have is our annual trip to Wiley's Well looking for geodes. On those trips, we will pull 50–75 people and from many different clubs. Jim Bowden, a paleontologist, flintknapper, and producer of fine jewelry, which he makes from what he finds, helps me on the field trips.

The interesting thing happening now is: if I offer a long-distance trip (Davis Creek in Modoc County for obsidian or Holbrook, AZ for petrified wood or Delta, UT for fossils, geodes, and topaz), I get a large group of 30 people, along with visitors from other clubs. Our club officers and myself are trying to figure out why this is happening.

We are lucky to live in Southern California. We have the Mojave Desert at our fingertips, and Nevada and Arizona nearby. Every time I return to previous locations, I find new material -- which is surprising at Lavic Siding. I asked our geologist why there is always new material to collect, and he responded that our earth is always belching up new material.

I don't think anyone in a lifetime could exhaust all the sites that are available.

## Field Trips: Beginning, Middle, or End?

by Joe Goetz

When someone is thinking about joining a club, what is the motivation for joining? Is it the educational meetings and programs? Perhaps it is the workshop or maybe the field trips.

At the member meetings you learn about rocks and the various things going on within the club. Once you become a member, the workshop is available to learn about how to make a cab, designing jewelry, making gem trees. You may wonder where does the material come from? Some is purchased at shows. But where does it really come from? Go on a field trip the club arranges via the field trip chairman. So if you think about it, the field trip is the beginning of many projects.

Field trips are a time to build memories with your family and your new friends in the hobby. Soon you'll be able to recognize the formations that a particular agate from a particular area comes from. Who knows, you might discover a unique type of agate, jasper, or other type of special rock.

So there are many facets of the hobby within any club or society that come together for a successful outcome. So where do field trips come in the mix: the beginning, the middle, or the end? Only you can answer that for yourself. ❖

## November Field Trips



### Afton Canyon: November 22–25

The trip over Thanksgiving is to Afton Canyon, also known as the Grand Canyon of the Mohave Desert. It is a fascinating place to explore; there are virtually a thousand places to look for cutting material throughout the region. It is not often you get a chance to drive up and down the Mojave River.

If the weather is dry, the sand in the riverbed will support vehicle traffic, and by stopping here and there you may find agates and jaspers in a multitude of colors. If it has rained, it's best not to drive on the riverbed. There are alternate routes to the quarry at the east end of the canyon. At the quarry, there is what appears to be dolomite and hematite amongst other things – even a geocache (a marker in GPS-driven hiking games).

Our camping area is the group/overflow camping area – on the right, just before going down to the main camping area. Go to the end of the curve. There should be a sign on the fence.

This is a great field trip and is interesting to both novice and seasoned rockhound: the views will surprise and amaze.

Going Somewhere in Calif. – Joe Goetz

**Directions to Afton Canyon** Head toward Las Vegas on I-15. Go past Field Road and past the rest stop. Get off at Afton Road, turn right, and stay on the road (do not turn on the road that goes off to the right, 20882 county road). It's a 3.5 mile drive on the dirt road, and once you're in the hills, slow down a bit. When you can see the main campground below, you are close to the group campground. If you get to the campground by the river, you've gone too far. Go back up the road and turn left where you can through the fence, and you are there!

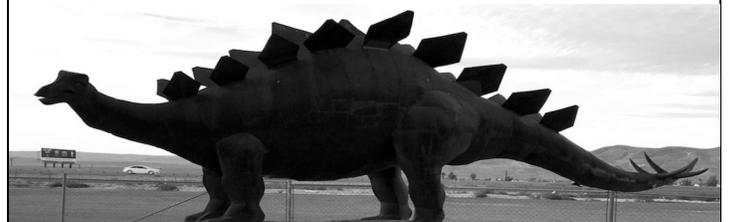
See map next page, Afton Cyn Overflow Campground

### Nov 3–4 Trip to Yermo/Calico Mtns

Take I-15 past Barstow to exit 189 (Fort Irwin Rd) and get onto Yermo Rd. We'll meet at 8:30 Saturday and Sunday morning in the parking lot of the hotel, now called the Baymont (760-254-1148). They allow pets: it's \$20 per night per pet. You'll need a **high-clearance vehicle for rough roads** on this field trip.

Call to let me know you're coming: (626) 260-7239.

All in all, we should have a great time collecting at various locations. We'll have dinner at Peggy Sue's on Saturday – lots of menu items you may remember from traveling with your folks as a kid and eating at the famous cafes that had blue plate specials and big signs in front that said EATS.



## 2019 CFMS Annual Show & Convention

Hosted by The Pasadena Lapidary Society  
Fairplex, Pomona March 8-10, 2019



### What Is the Awards Dinner?

It's an AWESOME, fun-loaded event. The Awards Dinner is a chance for a relaxing dinner, and for everyone to give accolades to the winners in various categories of display-case competition.

The evening starts out with a happy hour, and then dinner is served. After dinner, there are presentations for the Scholarship Honoree (Ed Imlay will receive one) and the Golden Bear Award. Sometimes the student who got the scholarship is able to attend the dinner.

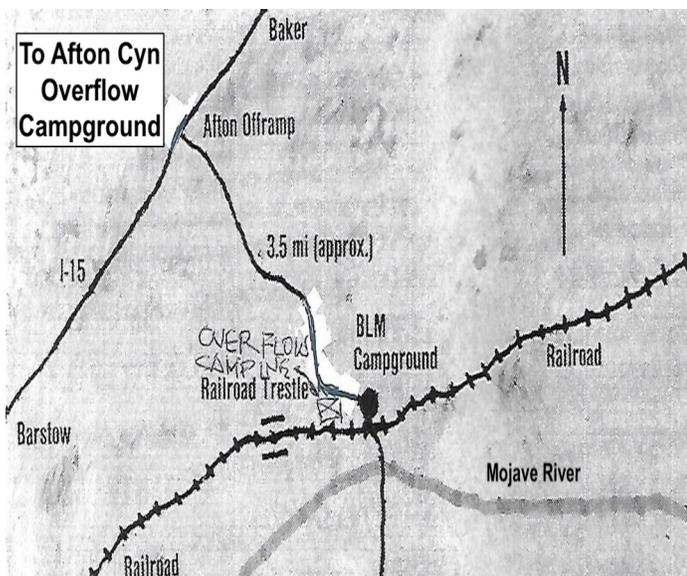
The Competition Awards are a lot of fun, and since there are many categories, there is plenty of clapping. If we (PLS Show Committee) do it right, we will have a slide show with the picture of the winning case when the winner comes to get their award. The planning for this is being worked on.

We are preparing for this event by making a gem tree for each paid dinner. It is tradition to give something to each person attending the dinner, and since we have been making gem trees the last several years, the committee thought it would be a nice memento of the event. Making gem trees will be on the agenda for several months to come at the workshop, and we will appreciate your help as we create a little forest.

Come help us celebrate at the Awards Dinner. The reservation form can be found on the [pasadenalapidary.org](http://pasadenalapidary.org) website and accessed by clicking the 2019 Show flyer icon. Scroll down to **More Information** and choose Registration/Tickets. Then download the Awards Banquet registration form.

The Meals Chair (Chris Kyte) and Meetings Chair (Tony Fender) and myself met with DoubleTree in mid-October to talk about table setups, color of table cloths and napkins, head table or no head table, podium or not, etc. Lots of details!

– Marcia Goetz, Show Co-Chairman



*On Oscar Night, you often hear the presenter say, "Accepting the award for ..." At the 2014 CFMS Awards Dinner, the go-to guy accepting the award for Junior competitors who could not attend was our own Tanner SooHoo.*

*Tanner is at the Oregon Institute of Technology now, lugging a pile of books like this – minus the eagle on top. Accomplishments of PLS Junior members stay with us as lasting, cherished memories.*

## Workshop – November 11

### Get Your Apron On



Workshop hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Half day is \$3, all day \$5. **Note:** We sometimes close early due to excessive heat, storms, or low attendance. If you plan to arrive late, please call ahead.

Park on the street or in the lot on the east side of the building. Entrance is on the west side of the building, down the walkway between buildings. Do not enter by the ramp in the parking lot.

For directions, please call me at (909) 455-4360 (cell) or (909) 593-2781, or email [gem.quest@verizon.net](mailto:gem.quest@verizon.net).

– Carolyn Duncan

## Welcome, New Members



**Audrey Ford** has been rockhounding for about three years now, since her son Emmett kept bringing home rocks he'd find on the playground. Audrey wanted to show him all the different types of "real" rocks and crystals out there in the world, so she invested in a few books. In April 2016, the family went on their first rock hunt – in Acton – and have been hooked ever since. They can't wait to go on their next "Nature Treasure Hunt," with PLS.



## FASANAROCK

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## Rock and Gem Shows

**November 3–4 ANAHEIM:** American Opal Society, Business Expo Center, 1960 S Anaheim Way. Hours: Sat 10–6, Sun 10–5. [www.opalsociety.org](http://www.opalsociety.org)

**November 3–4 RIDGECREST:** Indian Wells Gem & Mineral Society, Desert Empire Fairgrounds, 520 South Richmond Rd. Hours: 9–5 daily.

**November 17–18 LAKESIDE:** El Cajon Valley Gem & Mineral Society, Lakeside Rodeo Grounds, 12584 Mapleview St. Hours: Sat 10–5, Sun 10–4. [www.ecvgms.org](http://www.ecvgms.org)

**November 17–18 OXNARD:** Oxnard Gem & Mineral Society, Oxnard Performing Arts Center, 800 Hobson Way. Hours: Sat 9–5, Sun 10–4. <http://oxnardgem.com>

How many rockhounds does it take to photograph a beloved moss agate? Three. Angling the light is Sally Currie, a guest at the September meeting and owner of the pendant since 1987. Marcia Goetz holds the cord and Karl Stull snaps the photo.

I LIKE TO BE BACK ON PAVEMENT BY SUNDOWN.

– JAY VALLE  
FIELD TRIP LEADER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>November 2018</b>				<b>1</b> <b>Board mtg</b> PLS members always welcome	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> <b>Field trip</b> Yermo/Calico Mountains
<b>4</b> <b>Field trip</b> Yermo/Calico Mountains	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b> <b>Workshop</b> <i>Artisans Boutique</i> see page 3	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>  Gem shows
<b>18</b>  Gem shows	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> <b>Program mtg</b> "Yowah Opal"	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b> <b>Field trip</b> Afton Canyon	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>Thanksgiving field trip: Afton Canyon</b>	
					<b>30</b> Ann Hodges of Oak Grove, Alabama hit by meteorite, 1954	



Pasadena Lapidary Society, Inc.  
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*Brecciated pink opal from Australia,  
by Ellen Limeres*

## Family Field Trip – Nishimuras at Cerro Gordo



*Rex Nishimura and family went camping in September near Cerro Gordo, a mining ghost town in the mountains east of Owens Valley. At an elevation above 8,000 feet, there was plenty of grandeur to take in and an abundance of fossils (the photo shows mainly stems of crinoids, a.k.a. sea lilies). Alyson Nishimura turned this trip into a talk at our September meeting, presenting ammonites as the Rock of the Month. You may recall that Alyson was doing a favor for brother Jared, who filled in for Jennifer in August and made ROTM history by singing a gemmy adaptation of "Pennies from Heaven." You really cannot afford to miss PLS monthly meetings.*