



# ROCKHOUND RAMBLINGS

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EDITOR: ALYSON NISHIMURA



## *~The Tunnels to Nowhere~*

High above the gold fields of the San Gabriel River, Shoemaker Canyon Road ends after 2 short miles. Here lie the infamous Tunnels to Nowhere. The Shoemaker project was supposed to be an escape route for Angeleños fleeing Soviet nuclear bombs during the cold war of the 50's and 60's. This necessitated 2 majestic tunnels being carved through solid granite, as tons of quartz bearing rock was dumped into the hills above the San Gabriel River.

That same quartz is what modern day gold seekers pan in the San Gabriel River, and I had the crazy idea that perhaps some of that gold might be found in bedrock along the steep hillsides above the river.

Of the 10 gold prospectors who went on this trip, only a handful dared to climb down the steep hills and dig into the bedrock. Abandoned mines were everywhere, and as I descended, I thought about all the men who went before me. Miners, road builders-- even grave diggers. I wished for climbing gear, but had to settle for an extra dose of caution and care.

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**Editor:** Alyson Nishimura [pasadenalapeditor@gmail.com](mailto:pasadenalapeditor@gmail.com) Send articles by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the previous month for publication in next month's issue. However, no article guaranteed to be published or make the next issue.

## Inspiration Unearthed Coming in 2022

The committee has had several planning meetings for PLS's upcoming 2022 show to be held at the Arcadia Masonic Center, 50 W. Duarte Rd., Arcadia. The date of the "Inspiration Unearthed" show will be announced at a later date. We still have much planning to do and several more meetings before the show. Look forward to more information and details.

## Meetings

**Board Meetings** – 1st Thursday of the month. Members welcome to join. Contact Marcia Goetz for more information.

**Program Meetings** – 3rd Tuesday of the month

Contact Marcia Goetz at [Joemar1@verizon.net](mailto:Joemar1@verizon.net)

## Pasadena Lapidary Society®

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## The Tunnels to Nowhere (continued from p. 1)

Once we reached the bottom, we dug until we hit bedrock and then carefully swept the pay dirt from each seam and into some heavy duty Trader Joe bags. We then carried it home to waiting rocker boxes and gold pans. As I walked back to the car, I thought about my heavy bag of pay dirt and what it would be like to find gold. No, that's crazy talk. I also thought how I would explain the bulging bag of dirt to any other hikers on the trail. Would I tell them that I was crazy? No, they already knew that only a fool would bring back dirt from the forest. I decided I would just say "good morning" and pretend the bag was full of trash. One man's trash is another man's gold. We ignored the raised eyebrows and funny stares.

Gold miners were a stout bunch, but most never saw a speck of gold and ended their lives as poor as when they started. We didn't find any gold either on this trip, but at least I got a chance to see my life flash before my eyes while descending those hills. Maybe I'll try it again someday. I need to recuperate for now, because somehow I managed to twist my neck negotiating my way through sticker bushes and spiny yucca plants. On top of that, the irresistible allure of gold evaporated when I fruitlessly panned the last bit of non-pay dirt.



I thought about how the road ended at the last tunnel and about how it coincided with my tenure as field trip chairman. My journey ends here. Maybe I'll catch gold fever again someday, but for now, we will bid Shoemaker Canyon a fond farewell, turn around and head for home.

the last time,

Rex

*Editor's Note: Rex has been the exclusive field trip chairman for PLS for the past 2 years. We thank him for his service and wish him well.*

## Adventures in Quartzsite

The first time I crested the hill on my way into Quartzsite, Arizona to visit the famous rock shows there, I was amazed to see the hillsides and valleys for miles around sprinkled with what appeared to be giant white flowers. As I got closer, I could see they had wheels and windows. My first stop was the Exit 17 truck stop on the right where I met up with a friend, grabbed lunch and was surprised to see gas prices nearly a dollar less per gallon than in Blythe. Lesson learned: enter Arizona on E, return to California on F.

Our first show stop that day was the Desert Gardens event on the west end of town just south of the freeway. We saw about half this show before heading to the desert to find a quiet place to camp for the night.



The next couple of days, we enjoyed most of the big shows – including Pow Wow, Desert Gardens, Tyson Wells, and Prospector's Panorama, but it wasn't until later years that I began exploring the many flea markets and local venues.



There was rough rock, slabs, beads, minerals, fossils, and finished pieces of many types, as well as lapidary equipment and supplies everywhere.

The Quartzite Improvement Association (QIA) is a local club that holds their show, the Pow Wow, over 5 days the third week of January. (The 2022 dates are January 19-23.)

It is a mostly outdoor show with over a hundred quality vendors, display cases, and food. To park for free in the lot east of the show and avoid a long walk, you will probably want to take the free "hay ride" shuttles. Bathrooms with running water are available. Visit the club booth to get a copy of their field trip schedule and maybe buy some raffle tickets. Desert Gardens is what I consider the other must-see show in town. It also has over a hundred vendors and is outdoors. Desert Gardens is open most of January. The evening auction can be a lot of fun and a chance to pick up some bargains.



There is food and ample nearby parking, but the bathroom situation is often a problem so plan accordingly. Tyson Wells and Prospectors Panorama shows are just down the road and have more indoor space and sometimes have pleasant surprises like giant amethyst cathedrals. There are also a number of smaller venues around town that can be worth a visit. If a rainstorm blows in, the outdoor venues may close. Use the opportunity to take a look at the many rock art oriented stores in town. If you are interested in rocks, you should visit the Quartzsite shows in January. Tucson may well be the "Mecca" of rock show events, but Quartzsite has enough vendors and collecting opportunities to keep you busy for several days and is much closer to home. Lapidary rock is shipped in from all over the world for this show and craftsmen from all over the country bring their goods to sell while they escape the frigid winters at home for a few weeks.



Quartzsite has very limited lodging nearby. If you want to stay in a hotel, your best bet is Blythe. On the other hand, there are virtually unlimited places to camp nearby whether in a motor home or tent, at a trailer park, campground, or out in the desert. Most of the camping is dry camping with no facilities. Showers are available at the truck stops. If you can get away during the week, come then. Crowds are lighter and you will avoid the heavy weekend traffic on the overpasses and streets around the shows. On weekends, be patient and minimize driving mid-day.

The QIA leads collecting trips daily during the Pow Wow. If you can't find the schedule on the internet, ask at the club booth as soon as you arrive. There is a good variety of rock to be collected in the area. Expect to leave Quartzsite with bags of exciting treasures, and be sure to save enough cash to buy gas and a meal on the way home. Join the adventure, bring some folding money and a sense of wonder. Once you visit, be forewarned:

You'll be back!

Thanks to Chuie N photos!

Phil Lahr

### Member-to-Member

The PLS equipment-for-sale cupboard is now essentially bare. We are down to a few pieces of odd equipment and boxes of parts. Why not take advantage of the opening to advertise something cluttering up your garage or notify fellow members of something you are in the market for? Email Phil at [plkslahr@att.net](mailto:plkslahr@att.net) by the 15th of January for inclusion in the February newsletter.

### Workshop January 9, 2022

The January workshop will be held on the second Sunday of the month, January 9 from 9 am to 1 pm.

Come join us in our well equipped workshop to have some fun slicing, grinding and polishing the stones Santa left for you.

If you don't have your own rock, work on something you find in the bin. Slab saws, trim saws, and grinding/ polishing units are available for members' use, and experienced members are happy to provide instruction and advice. Cost is \$3 for half the day.

Access the workshop by walking up the alley on the west side of the building and use the sliding door there. Please do not use the door at the loading dock.

If you need the required workshop orientation or directions, call Marcia at (626) 260-7239.

### Field Trip to Quartzsite

January's field trip will be to Quartzsite AZ for the annual Pow Wow. Although PLS will not be leading our own field trip, the Quartzsite Roadrunner Gem & Mineral Show will be leading several trips to nearby locations. A full schedule can be found online at [qiaarizona.org](http://qiaarizona.org). Click on "Shows," "Pow Wow Show," and "Pow Wow Field Trips."





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Thanks to Chuie Nishimura and Kevin Koppers  
for the pictures from our field trip!



Gentle members,

It's a new year and renewed hope that this year allows us to get together for our meetings and our show. We plan on meeting in person for the general meeting at the Santa Anita Church in the Fireside room. The meeting day will be the third Tuesday of the month at 7 PM. I hope the meeting is not chaotic since it's been a while since we met in person and there's several unknowns about meeting there. The PA and programs set up is going to be different; it's going to be a learning experience.

I want to thank Ellen for her many years of service as president and the others on the Board also. I kind of have a goal and that is to try to pass on as much knowledge as I can about being president and show chair. When trying to find a new president the nomination committee came up very short and we don't know if it's because people are intimidated about serving or if coming out of the covid-19 doldrums is the issue. But, finding someone to take positions (all Board positions) in the future is important, especially President. The by-laws state we can't have a club without a President.

This year we will have a new Membership Chair - Sue Pang, and a new Ways and Means Chair to run the meeting drawing - Michelle Schurer. Michelle and her family joined PLS during the COVID-19 stay-at-home time frame and have been coming to the workshop since we restarted that. Rex has let us know he will not be Field Trip Leader anymore, so I will be working on a solution to that. Thanks to Rex for volunteering for the last few years. If you want to volunteer for something let me know.

Sincerely, Marcia Goetz, *President*

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

PASADENALAPIDARY.ORG