



ROCKHOUND RAMBLINGS

DECEMBER 2022 • PASADENA LAPIDARY SOCIETY® EDITOR: ALYSON NISHIMURA



Photo by Nicholas Berlette on Unsplash

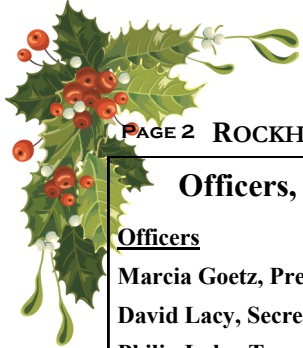
~PLS Gets Back on Track~

Baxter Wash: 5AM November 25, 2022

The nighttime rumble of the slow moving Union Pacific freight train awakened me from my post-Thanksgiving slumber. It was a big concern as we had parked next to some desolate tracks in Afton Canyon, deep in the Mojave Desert. How far away was the train? Where was it going? After a moment of confusion, I zeroed in on its location, several miles away, but the reverberation of 6 diesel tractors and the wail of its horn gave me a sense of urgency. Like the train, it was time for us to get moving on our next adventure, rockhunting in Baxter Wash.

Baxter Wash is only about 2 miles from Afton Canyon, but it has changed significantly since last year. Heavy monsoonal rains washed away roads, replacing them with ravines of rock and sand. The campsite was a mess of boulders and rocks in the wrong places. We would have our work cut out for us to make camp before our old, new, and future rockhound friends would arrive.

Continued on pg 2



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Editor: Alyson Nishimura pasadenalapeditor@gmail.com Send articles by the 15th of the previous month for publication in next month's issue. However, no article guaranteed to be published or make the next issue.

Christmas Party - December 10, 2022

The Christmas party will replace the general meeting for December and will occur at The Santa Anita Church, 226 Colorado Street, Arcadia, CA. Set up starts at 4pm and dinner will start at 6:30.
There will be a potluck, gift exchange and Officer Installation. The potluck is always wonderful and we have some of our members who have a dish they bring every year. It is always a fun time. The gift exchange is a \$10 gift minimum with an indication of girl, boy or either. It doesn't have to be rock related but as we are a rock related group we find that our members like rocks. The ROTY will be awarded for the year.

Meetings

Board Meetings – 1st Thursday of the month. Members welcome to join.

Program Meetings – No Program Meeting. See Party details above.

Contact Marcia Goetz at marcia.pls.emails@gmail.com

Pasadena Lapidary Society®

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PLS Gets Back on Track

There's little cell service out there, so after we set up the camp, we climbed a nearby hill searching for a signal. Here, 200 feet above camp, we got enough signal to send and receive texts and watch our friend drive into camp from several miles away. It's a testament to the skill of our drivers, that no one got lost driving 5 miles on dirt roads to the hidden base camp. People came and went during the weekend, but we averaged about 17 campers over the 3 days. A potpourri of vehicles made it to camp too, from full size pickups to a tiny SUV Subaru Outback. Some were trail ready, but less capable vehicles were left behind.

Though there are many trail ready and highly capable vehicles in this world, getting to productive gem fields requires extra effort. Knowledgeable, skilled, and diligent drivers are needed to negotiate the rocky canyons and sandy washes. Our first stop was the crystal agate seams about 10 miles away, in a narrow canyon pitted with sheer walls, boulders, and rocks. Editor and junior member Alyson volunteered to be the rock spotter. Her job was to keep the vehicles from getting high centered or scraping on sharp rocks.

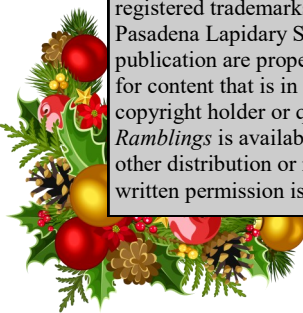


The crystal agate seam required hiking up a sandy hill for beautiful light blue, 2" seam agate with a clear quartz crystal center. It's beautiful material, but since it took 40 minutes to drive here, we only had about 30 minutes to collect before heading to our next location, the miner's cave and the nearby yellow fluorite mine. Years ago, some poor miner hewed a cave out of volcanic ash, stocking it with everything needed for a prospector's life. All that's left now is a rusty bed frame, a Coleman stove, shelves stocked with cans of food, a small library of books (including a Bible), and a few dollars sitting under a rock. I'm not sure I would eat from the old cans of food, but I could find a use for the bed frame, books, and Bible! Money is kind of useless out there too. I thought about adding a few dollars of my own, but I didn't want the camp to be plundered by off-road pirates. Maybe someday, I'll camp in the cave and see what prospecting was really like.



The yellow fluorite mine is peculiar only because of the color. White, purple, and green are common colors, but yellow is rare in the Cady Mountains. We picked up some yellow to add to our collections.

Back at camp that night, we had a slight problem with the potluck. Forks. Even though we were short on forks, rockhounds are a resourceful people.





In no time, we had split our mahogany firewood into strips and whittled them into mahogany chopsticks. No splinters either! We enjoyed a wonderful meal of spaghetti and meatballs with lots of pie and whipped cream! After supper, we discovered that Phil's car wouldn't start. We're not sure what the problem was, but by pooling our resources, we found someone with a battery charger and 3 hours later, Phil's car was working like normal. A family of motorcycle enthusiasts even dropped by our campsite to inquire about purchasing some fuel from us. We sold it to them at cost, even though at that particular moment, the motorcyclist's needs made the gas worth much more. Scarcity and value is key to any item's worth.

People often ask me how I know where to look for the gemstones. Well, I don't actually search for gemstones as they are too hard to find. I search for adventure which is ubiquitous. The next day we were in for an adventure. A grueling 3 mile hike for red and blue jasper agate. After scrambling up a hillside of loose gravel, we hiked along the ridge for jasper agate, plus red and white calcite crystals, agate nodules, and some pre-sagenite clusters. The sagenite was a bit of a stretch, but we found needle-like crystalline agate in a splayed pattern. I heard new member Curtis declare that the hike was an adventure which describes perfectly how I feel about prospecting for our club. Sunday's trip was to the Green Hills. Here the roads were in bad shape and we struggled to find and remain on previously marked paths. No one had visited this area for a long time, and there was plenty of high quality agate almost everywhere. Most of it was banded white or clear, but we also found green moss agate and a hillside of marble sized amygdules. The kids had fun playing knuckles down with the agate balls, but the amygdules were too numerous to bother collecting.



The rock collecting part of the trip was now over; all that remained was to break camp. I must give a shout out to all the drivers who graciously offered seats to rockhounds without vehicles. This was a tough drive and your generosity is much appreciated! I also must thank everyone for working together to make this trip possible. It's great to be on the same team and, of course, bringing home the gemstones makes it even better. What a great start to the holy season. Merry Christmas.

'til next time, Rex

Federation Report

I represented PLS (#58) at the November 12, 2022 CFMS meeting. I announced the memoriam honor of Michelle VandenBroeck (July 2022), a former PLS VP and Membership chair, and Charlotte Bane (March 2022), a long time member.

Jim Brace-Thompson's Junior Activities report, announced that the CFMS Junior Achievement Award was created in 2021 to acknowledge outstanding kids. The next AFMS meeting will be held on Aug 3-6, 2023 in Billings, Montana. The next CFMS meeting/show will be held on June 23-25, 2023 in Lodi, CA.
~Sue Pang, CFMS Director

Member-to-Member

The donation of a 6-inch trim saw and rotary flat lap was announced at the November meeting. They have been cleaned up/ tested since then and are both in need of work. If you are interested in taking on a small project, contact Phil at plkslahr@att.net or 818-926-3163 for details. If you have something to sell or are looking for something e-mail Phil by the 15th of the month to have it included in the next bulletin.

Workshop – Saturday, December 10, 2022

The workshop will be held on December 10 from 9 to 1. The early close is to reduce conflicts with the Christmas party that evening. Cost is \$3 for the half day.

Ed will do an encore presentation of his class "WIREWORK 101". Class will start between 9:30 and 10:00, after sign-ins and orientations are done.

The class will conclude with the option of participants making a simple wirework pendant. The following items are required to complete the project: A set of jewelry pliers. 1 large bead + 1 or 2 smaller beads, and about 6" of #20 wire. A limited selection of beads & wire will be provided.

We now have a marble making machine at the workshop. It is a miniature two-head sphere machine that makes spheres from about one quarter inch to one inch diameter. First timers need to rsvp a few days in advance to Marcia at (626) 260-7239 to get directions to the workshop and reserve a space in the orientation. Please arrive at 9:00 am because orientation starts shortly afterward. 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.

Welcome New Members!

We are delighted to have new rock hounds join our society. We welcome Janice Biferno, Michael Biferno, and Zachary Ibarra.



As a reminder: We are accepting your 2023 dues now.

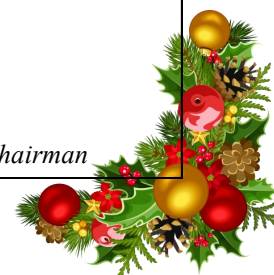
You can renew in person or via US postal service to PO Box 5025 Pasadena, CA 91117-0025.

\$25.00 for adult member.

\$15 for 2nd adult member.

\$10 for additional adult or Junior member.

~Sue Pang, Membership Chairman





Pasadena Lapidary Society, Inc.
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Merry Christmas

AND HAPPY NEW YEAR



Dear Members,

December is a busy month, many of us are pulled in different directions. However, we hope you will be able to join us at the Christmas party which will also include an installation and ROTY awards along with a potluck. Part of our tradition is to ask our members to bring non-perishables and we will donate them to be used by the church's food pantry. That evening we will also have a gift exchange (marked girl, boy or either) with a value of at least \$10. You will most likely receive a call asking if you will be able to attend and ask what dish you will bring so we can be sure we don't have only one type of dish (there was once a field trip where everyone brought spaghetti).

For those who haven't yet paid their dues, you will find a pre-addressed envelope enclosed with this bulletin to return your dues in, or, if you want to pay in person, Sue Pang, our Membership Chair, will also be at the party to accept your dues.

We will have a workshop in December and it will be on the same day as our party so the workshop will be only until 1 PM.

I want to thank you for letting me serve as president in 2022 and I know David will be great and he will have a great board to help him. Due to having been a past president I will continue on the board as a Trustee for awhile.

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

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