



ROCKHOUND RAMBLINGS

JUNE 2023 • PASADENA LAPIDARY SOCIETY® EDITOR: ALYSON NISHIMURA



Two Russian alexandrites, combined gem weight 9.8 carats. Photo by Salexmccoy. Licensed under CC By-SA 3.0

Emerald by Day, Ruby by Night

Alexandrite is June's birthstone and is known for its color changing properties. This gemstone will appear green in sunlight but red in incandescent light. A quality piece of alexandrite is determined by how close the colors are to pure green and red as well as how much the colors change. Some stones will have only a slight color change, but the most valuable gems will have a 100% color shift from pure green to pure red.

When Alexandrite was discovered by French mineralist Mils Gustaf Nordenskiöld in the Ural Mountains of Russia in 1834, Nordenskiöld initially believed the stone to be emerald. After learning of its color changing properties, the gem was named in honor of the then future Russian Czar, Alexander II. Imperial Russia was enamored by alexandrite, especially because the red and green color mirrored the country's military colors.

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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 is guaranteed to be published.

Welcome New Members!

We are delighted to have new rock hound (s) join our society in May. Douglas Wilson, Jenny Mock, and Karen Bishop.



Invite a friend to join PLS! There is a \$10.00 initiation fee. Please pay in person or send in via US postal service to our PO Box.

\$25.00+\$10.00 for adult member.
\$15.00+\$10.00 for 2nd adult member.
\$10.00+\$10.00 for additional adult or Junior member.

~Sue Pang, Membership Chairman

Meetings

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

General Meetings – Every 3rd Tuesday of the month.

Pasadena Lapidary Society®

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Emerald by Day, Ruby by Night

The dramatic color change under different illumination is attributed to the Cr³⁺ impurities in the atomic structure which have strong optical absorption centered at the wavelength of yellow light.



Photo by Salexmccoy. Licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.

Alexandrite is scarcer than diamonds and more expensive than emerald, ruby, and sapphire. Alexandrite requires both beryllium and chromium which rarely occur in the same rocks or in the same geological conditions. Consequently, the stash of alexandrite in the Ural Mountains was depleted within the first few decades and is now found only in a few select locations in Africa, Brazil, and Sri Lanka.

Since this gemstone is so rare, imitations and synthetic alexandrite has been sold since the early 1900s. In the 1920s, fake alexandrite was made from corundum (sapphire and ruby) and subsequently laced with chromium or vanadium to replicate the color-change effect. Although synthetics are much cheaper than natural alexandrite, they are still one of the most expensive synthetic gemstones available. Today, the main source of large, natural alexandrite is antique jewelry. Be sure to check out your jewelry! Who knows, maybe you'll stumble upon this rare gem!

~Editor

Information from:

<https://www.gemsociety.org/article/alexandrite-jewelry-and-gemstone-information/>
<https://www.thesprucecrafts.com/alexandrite-history-2042966>

Brad's Bench Tips



SMALL PARTS CONTAINERS

I'm always on the lookout for small containers to use for holding all those little parts and tools we deal with in making jewelry, especially since I'm always traveling to classes and workshops.

My latest find are some plastic vials about 15 mm in diameter and 75 mm long. Best part is they are free. The vials are used in the doctor's office to draw blood samples. They cannot be used after their expiration date and are thrown out. On my last doctors visit, I asked the nurse if they had any expired vials. She replied "How many do you want?" and tried to give me 400 of them. (We settled on 200).



The ones shown above are called "Vacutainers", but there are probably many other names. They're clear plastic with a rubber stopper and a paper label all ready to write on. I find them really handy for small parts like jump rings, prong settings, small drills, nuts & bolts, faceted stones, and precious metal filings.

Smart Solutions for Your Jewelry Making Problems:

[Amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith](https://www.amazon.com/author/bradfordsmith)

~Brad Smith



PLS Attends a Science Fest

PLS members participated in the Pasadena School District Science Fest, held at Muir High School on Saturday, April 22. The PLS booth included a box of fluorescent minerals; faceted gems; samples of lapidary work by members; crystal forms; fossils; stages of making a howlite sphere; a gem tree; and examples of igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic rocks. Nancy Robb, education chairperson, set up and organized the display, and was assisted by Nadine Ishizu, Barna Lazlo, Sahari Nuno, Sue Pang, Steve Cady, and Mona Ross. Participants in the science fest used ultraviolet flashlights to see inside the box of fluorescent minerals, touched different kinds of minerals, rocks, and fossils, learned a little about authentic faceted stones, and how stone spheres are made. Parents, teachers, and students took flyers about the club and left the event with tumbled stones in their pockets. Victor Gordo, Pasadena's mayor visited the booth and was surprised to learn that PLS is nearing its 75th anniversary. Mr. Gordo offered to provide a certificate from the city commemorating the event. Surrounded by booths from Space-X, Mt. Wilson Observatory, a meteorite display, NASA, Cal Tech, a bird rescue program, the Planetary Society and other scientific organizations, our club booth was in good company.



Apr 22, 2023 PLS members and mayor of Pasadena at Science Fest

~Mona Ross

General Meeting - June 20, 2023

The June General meeting will occur at 7pm in The Fellowship Hall of The Santa Anita Church, 226 W. Colorado Blvd, Arcadia.

The June speaker will be Paolo Sanchez, who will speak on the Rocks and Minerals of Ancient Rome. Paolo is a Pasadena Lapidary Society member who is also a graduate student at Cal Tech's Division of Geological and Planetary Sciences.

The Roman Empire lasted for about 500 years, from its founding in 27 BC to the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476 AD. This talk will combine history, geology and lore as the mineral world greatly impacted the Roman world as it does our world today.

Additionally, on June 23-25, 2023 the CFMS Show and Convention will be held at Lodi Grape Festival Grounds, 413 E. Lockeford St, Lodi, CA 95240. Driving distance is about 450 miles (7 hours driving time) from Pasadena. For more info, visit <https://cfmsinc.org> and select Shows.

~Sue Pang

Member-to-Member

Diamond Pacific Genie Gem Maker for sale. Asking price is \$1500. The Genie has three new Nova wheels and comes with a trim saw attachment and a new blade. Call Armando at (909) 455-6800.

The Lyman 600, approx. five-pound capacity, vibratory tumbler advertised last month is still available. Asking \$50. Contact Phil at 818-926-3163 or plkslahr@att.net

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.

~Phil Lahr

PLS Annual Gem Show– August 26-27, 2023

Hello everyone, the show will go on! August 26th and 27th are the show dates and the show committee is starting to get busy to make it a successful show. Set up will be early Friday, August 25. There will be a few changes in who does what - Sue Dekany is taking over the Dealers. Chuie Nishimura will be in gathering the names of members who want to put in a Display Case, Michelle and Curtis Schurer will be doing the Raffle at the show, and Ellen Ferrell will be making the Case Momentos.

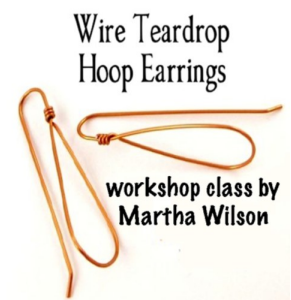
We will start having the volunteer sign-up sheets available, and it is always fun to volunteer! More news next month!!

~Marcia Goetz

Workshop – Sunday June 11, 2023

The June workshop will be held on Sunday, June 11, from 9 am to 3 pm. Cost is \$5 for the full day or \$3 for a half day.

Martha Wilson will teach a workshop class starting about 10:00. You will learn to make long teardrop hoop earrings made from a single piece of wire. The technique is easy to master and can be used in a variety of other designs. They can be worn plain or with beads and dangles added. She will also demonstrate several other designs. All supplies and tools will be provided but feel free to bring your own beads and any supplies you wish to use. A supplies and tools list is available upon request.



First timers and anyone who needs an orientation or help with learning to make cabachons needs to rsvp a few days in advance to Marcia at (626) 260-7239 to get directions to the workshop and allow us to schedule an instructor. Orientation will start about 9:30 am but come a little early.

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.

~Phil Lahr



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PLS trip - May 6, 2023



Thanks to Sue Pang and Chuie Nishimura for the pictures!

President's Message



Hi Rockhounds! It has been a busy time since I wrote last. In April, for example, PLS held a Field Trip to collect Dead Camels – Jasper that is. If you got the May issue of “Rockhound Ramblings”, you got the word on what happened. Let’s just say that Rex Nishimura had a “Serpentine Encounter” along with getting a very good piece of rough to play with.

In May, PLS went on a field trip to Brown Butte and collected the aptly named “Root Beer Agate”. Some nice pieces of this stuff are in my tumbler and will be interesting to examine when the grinding is done. The Workshop session for May was well attended and kept the saws and grinders busy all day. If you haven’t attended one of our workshops, now is as good a time as any! There are plenty of rocks to cut and cab available at the workshop if you don’t have one of your own to cut. The best thing about the cutting a slab is looking at a beautiful slice of a rock that no one has seen in the last several million years.

The May General meeting included a great talk on Dendritic Agates from India was given by Tarun Adlakah. The speaker showed many pictorial scenes that seemingly depicted critters in the agate! Let’s keep the flow of interesting presentations coming, so if you know something related to Lapidary/Rocks/Minerals/Geology/etc. and can do an interesting presentation, let myself or Sue Pang or Marcia Goetz or Sue Dekany know and we can schedule you. It Doesn’t Hurt A Bit!

Sincerely,

~ David Lacy, President

Editor's Note

Hello fellow PLS Members,

It has been an honor to serve as your bulletin editor. As I will be starting college courses next month, this will be my last edition as the editor of Rockhound Ramblings. Thank you for your support and for all the articles and pictures submitted. I have really enjoyed being the editor and look forward to continuing to rockhunt together in the future! Reverend Gina Milligan has volunteered to take over this position and I am confident that she will do an excellent job.

Thank you again, it’s been a pleasure!

~Alyson Nishimura, Bulletin Editor

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

PASADENALAPIDARY.ORG