



ROCKHOUND RAMBLINGS

FEBRUARY 2025 • PASADENA LAPIDARY SOCIETY® EDITOR: MARCIA GOETZ

Ship + Desert = Pearls

Everyone likes a lost treasure story and Rockhounds are not exempt from a good story and the lure of finding goodies.

The story tells of an old ship stuck in the sands somewhere around the Salton Sea. King Philip of Spain ordered three ships built to harvest the pearls (considered more valuable than gold at that time) found along the Pacific coast of Mexico. Some think it was a Spanish Galleon but others say it was a Caravel type of ship like Christopher Columbus sailed. The Caravel ships were smaller and had a shallow draft, sails, and 13 rows of oars which would give the ship an easier maneuverability. The three ships sailed along the Pacific and then traveled up the Sea of Cortez or what is now called the Gulf of California.

During the cruise two other ships weren't able to finish the journey. When they sailed in 1610, the topography of the Sea of Cortez was different—in fact California was thought to be an island and you could travel up the Sea of Cortez and eventually arrive at the Northwest Passage. Some of the very early maps of California show this concept. Since most of the interior of the United States hadn't been explored, this concept existed until the mid 1750's. There



Photo of Caravel from Wikipedia

were three Captains, but the one in this story is Juan de Iturbe. It seems that, at that time, you could travel up the sea in certain conditions to Lake Cahuilla, a large area which would now correspond closely with the Coachella Valley. If it had been a very wet year and the water was deep in the lake and the Colorado River was overflowing, a small vessel could sail into the lake or

some say a tidal surge would get a ship over the land bridge area.

While sailing the lake, the waters started to evaporate and

the crew found themselves stranded somewhere near the sand hills of El Centro. Speculation is that the water started to recede or there was an earthquake that changed the topography of the land at the north end of the Gulf of California and the ship was trapped. After many years, some people have said the ship has been seen in the drifting sands. A few other reports say a couple saw a ship up a canyon partially embedded in the canyon walls, but after seeing the ship there was an earthquake that evening and it was buried.



Pearls from Gulf of California
Photo from Wikipedia

However, what remains true is a mule driver who was traveling with the De Anza expeditions through Alta California is said to have gotten the pearls—that would have been in 1774.

Several versions of the story exist...: one is that a Spanish galleon was lost in the area of a saline lake west of old Las Palmas, California; another version thought was a pirate ship. And, still another version thinks it might be a Viking ship that came down from the Northwest Passage.

There have been several people who have tried to locate the ship but it seems to be elusive. Then again some say



they see the ship in the moonlight sailing in among the sand dunes. I guess it is still trying to find a way out of the desert.

There is lots to read and even some videos on this subject found by searching 'Lost Ship in the Desert.'



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Editor: Marcia Goetz marcia.pls.emails@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.

Membership!

New member correction from last month. We apologize for misspelling of Verity Freebern.

Invite a friend to join PLS! There is a \$10.00 initiation fee for new members. Please pay in person or send in via US postal service to our PO Box. Extra membership donation is always welcome.

\$25 for Adult member, \$15 for 2nd Adult member, \$10 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 at the Santa Anita Church, 226 W. Colorado Blvd., Arcadia, CA 91007

Pasadena Lapidary Society®

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February General Meeting Program

Richard Edley will be our guest speaker at the February 2025 meeting. He has been prospecting and mining in the Southern California desert for twenty years. His talk will be on his current project 'The Beautiful Paige Mine'. Richard is negotiating with the Bureau of Land Management for a permit to begin mineral exploration. He owns a 20 acre lode and 40 acre placer claim outside of Barstow. He has published articles with the Gold Prospectors magazine, International Gem Society, and the Geological Institute of America.

Right: Richard Edley

Below: The first emerald that Richard and his son found in the Julian mining district.

Below Right: The first turquoise vein that Richard found in California.



New Members and Other Members Announcement

We did not have a board meeting in January 2025, therefore new members will receive board approval in February 2025.

Reminder! Your membership expired in December. Please submit your membership dues asap. Those who let their membership lag will have their name dropped from the membership roll and will not be able to receive an April issue of the newsletter.

On the evening of January 7, 2025, the wind was howling. Trees which



Continued from previous page

were unable to withstand the wind had branches broken off, however the most devastating parts of the evening was seeing the fire glowing intensely bright from my street and I heard the fire explosion booms. My tree damage is no comparison to several PLS members who lost their homes from the Eaton Fire. After talking to some of my neighbors, I watered my plants and roof around midnight. I was awake and alert until about 3 AM. In the next few days, I reached out to many PLS members who reside in the Altadena and Upper Pasadena areas to make sure they were okay. I'm grateful to hear that they are physically fine. Shirley Wong and I were able to deliver some needed items to members who lost their homes. Sandie and Tony Fender offered to share some of their rocks to those members affected by the fire as well. Phil Lahr and Rex Nishimura offered their tools to help a fellow member sift through her rocks and cabs. If you are able to donate items to or host fellow PLS member(s) in your home, please contact a PLS board member.

If you have lost your home and there is something you need, please let a PLS board member know. We will volunteer and try to help you during this difficult period. Most importantly, please provide your temporary mailing address.

Sue Pang, PLS Membership Chair

Did you know?

A single ounce of Gold can be stretched to a gold thread 5 miles long.

An ounce of gold can be hammered into a thin 300 square feet sheet.

Bench Tips By Brad Smith

On Tool Organization: An easy way to keep all your files organized at the bench is to use a magnetic tool strip. They're not expensive and help keep a lot of small tools from cluttering the bench top. I got a couple of them from Harbor Freight for about \$5 each. See <http://www.harborfreight.com> and search on "magnetic-holder". My only regret was putting some of my small drills on the magnets. The drills got a little magnetized and now stick together when I carry them in a bottle in my tool box.

On Storing Metal Sheets: The more you work with jewelry, the more problems you have finding the piece of metal you need. My pieces of sheet were generally stored in various plastic bags, and the wire was in separate coils. Few were marked, so it often took me a while to locate that piece of 26 ga fine sheet I bought last year, especially since I usually take my supplies back and forth to classes. A tip from a friend helped me organize everything. I bought an expanding file folder from the office supplies store (the kind that has 13 slots and a folding cover) and marked the tabs for each gauge of metal I use. Then I marked all my pieces of sheet with their gauge, put them in plastic bags, marked the gauge on the bag, and popped them into the folder. I usually store coils of wire loose in the folder, but they can also be bagged if you prefer. I use one tab for bezel wire and one for the odd, miscellaneous items. The resulting folder is really convenient when I want to take my metal out to a class or workshop, and it's colorful enough for me to easily find in the clutter of the shop!

Brad Smith's [Bench Tips for Jewelry Making: 101 Useful Tips from Brad Smith](#) and his other book can be found on Amazon.

February Workshop—Cut and Cabbing

The next workshop will be held on Saturday, February 8. Door opens at 9 am and we need to be cleaned up and out by 3 pm. Cost is \$5 for the full day or \$3 for half day.

We are tentatively scheduled for a bola workshop in February and hope to show other stone setting methods later, so get yourself some cabochons ready to go.

Saws, grinders, and other equipment and help using them will be available as usual.

The workshop is open to members age 9 and above. Minors must be accompanied by a member parent/guardian. First timers and anyone who needs an orientation or help with learning to make cabochons 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, Workshop Chair

Member-to-Member

PLS has a few older grinders that would work well for someone handy, and even a sphere machine that could get you spinning with a little work. Also, a variety of tumblers ready to go, a PMC kiln, and a couple Foredoms. Contact Phil (plkslahr@att.net or 818 926-3163) if you want more information on these items or others that have been advertised recently.

Also, for sale is a Graves Mark V faceting machine. \$500

Cabbing machine in very good condition. Has five 6-inch wheels in good condition. Asking \$1,200. Contact Armando



Looking for a part time job? Christian Schultze is looking for a part-time/intern to help at his shop on weekends. Contact him at christian.w.schulze@gmail.com

Do you want to advertise your equipment here? Submittals for the next bulletin should be sent to Phil by the 15th of the month.



February's birthstone Amethyst will be on the show and tell table at the meeting

Notice! Education Chair Needs Help

Due to an ongoing illness of a family member, Nancy Robb needs help with educational outreach, community events, and the Children's area at the Gem Show. If you are able to help, please email her at nancyrobb@yahoo.com



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President's Message

Hi Rockhounds!

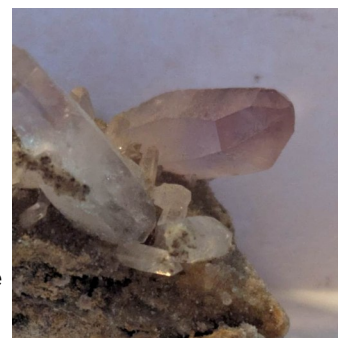
A bunch of thoughts concerning the past month, and what a month it was! First, the worst fires in California history with about 16,000 houses/buildings destroyed or damaged. Second, Way too many people displaced from their homes, who either evacuated or got burned out. Third, not much done regarding anything PLS-related due to the evacuations and fire damage. Talk to those who were displaced/burned out of house and home and give them your support. Also give a BIG thanks to all the First Responders who were up close and personal with the fires. Hot Stuff, that Work!!

We did have a "Field Trip" in potential, in that some members were planning to go to Quartzsite for one of their get-togethers/rock sales/swaps, but I haven't heard who, if anyone, went. Sometimes things just don't turn out the way we plan. Next time, we will have to have a trip that doesn't need external excitement!

There was a General Meeting in January, with good attendance by both members and guests. Ferdie's Display Table was a big hit with the Theme Rock being Garnets. All sorts of Garnets were displayed and "Ooh'ed" and "Ah'ed" over, so the next meeting I would like to urge you all to flood the table, with the next example of Birthstone being Amethyst.

Speaking of the next meeting, I would also urge anyone who has a favorite rock/mineral/stone to give a talk on said rock/mineral/stone. It needs to be a short talk, just five minutes (or thereabouts) and PhD-level descriptions need not apply. It doesn't hurt and you can tell us what makes that rock/mineral/stone special to you.

That's all for now, but Keep On Rockin'!
Sincerely, David Lacy, President



Amethyst on matrix