

NEEDLES GEM & MINERAL CLUB



**P.O. Box 234
Needles, CA 92363**

Editor:
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NEXT CLUB MEETING

Oct 20 at 6:00 p.m. PDT

**First Baptist Church
1421 Commercial St.
Mohave Valley, AZ**

**Usually 3rd Monday of each
month, Oct-May**

BOARD MEETING

**30 minutes before Club
meeting each month**

Blue Agate News

Volume 3, Issue 6

October 2008

WELCOME

BACK!

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NGMC INFORMATION YOU NEED TO KNOW

THE OBJECTIVES OF NGMC

To promote public interest in collecting and studying rocks and minerals.

To preserve and perpetuate the lapidary arts.

To provide field trips to obtain lapidary material and minerals for preservation and display.

To provide an opportunity for the purchase, exchange and exhibition of specimens and materials.

The **NGMC meets** the third Monday of each month from October through May at **6:00 p.m. Pacific Time** unless otherwise notified.

NGMC - 2008

President: Barb Ballard	928-768-6335
Vice President: Pat New	928-768-5640
Treasurer: Ann Ferguson	928-768-7150
Secretary: Sally Hayward	928-768-7437
Past President: Corinne More	760-326-5005
Past President: Knox McCloy	928-768-9064
Auditor: Gisela New	928-768-5640
Facilities Chair: Faith Reed	928-763-3511
Field Trip Chair: Bob Ferguson	928-768-7150
Membership Chair: Lori Clary	928-234-3391
Newsletter Editor: Barbara Wiggins	928-453-0948
Raffle Chair:	
Refreshment Chair: Lori Clary	928-234-3391
Sgt at Arms: Knox McCloy	928-768-9064

HONORARY LIFETIME MEMBERS

George Truitt
Norma Truitt
Myrna Givens
Corinne More
Tom More

Membership dues are payable at the November meeting and delinquent after January 1. Please send dues to the official Club address on the first page of this Newsletter, attention: Treasurer.

This Club is a member of the California Federation of Mineralogical Societies (**CFMS**) <http://www.cfmsinc.org/>.

Membership per person:	\$15.00 year
Name Badge:	\$ 3.75
Field Trip Fee:	\$ 1.00
"No Badge" fine:	25¢

FIELD TRIP GUIDELINES - NGMC

- Leader will state approximately how far, road conditions, and if 4WD is required when each field tripper signs in.
- Each car is to keep the car behind in sight and STOP if the car is not in sight (unless otherwise stated by the leader).
- Field trippers will notify the leader if they are hiking or driving to another site and their approximate return time.
- Field trippers will notify the leader if they are leaving the group and sign out (with time).
- Members wear name badges.
- Handheld radios: stay on Channel 6

The **Blue Agate News** is published monthly except June, July, August and September. Articles are requested to be to the editor by the **15th** of each month, preferably by email at bartobra@hotmail.com or call (928) 453-0948. The Blue Agate News is also published via email - if you have internet, please share your address with the Editor. This saves the club money and you will have the newsletter immediately. The Newsletter is in PDF format so it will be necessary to download Adobe Reader (free program) in order to view the newsletter. You can also view the newsletter on line at <http://needlesgemmineralclub.blogspot.com/>. Please e-mail Barbara with information at bartobra@hotmail.com.

The Blog (Web Log) – **Blue Agate News Online** is free and can be updated frequently October through May. If you have information you want posted, please email it to Sally at rockhound.ngmc@gmail.com or sign up to contribute directly to the Blog. You may access the Blog at: <http://needlesgemmineralclub.blogspot.com/>

Refreshments Schedule

October 2008 – Barb Ballard
 November 2008 – Sandy, Paula
 December 2008 – Christmas Pot Luck

UPCOMING SHOWS

Oct 10-12--SANTA ROSA, CA: Show, "Gem Faire"; Gem Faire Inc.; Sonoma County Fairgrounds/Grace Pavilion, 1350 Bennett Valley Rd.; Fri. 12-7, Sat. 10-7, Sun. 10-5; \$5 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

Oct 11-12--PAYSON, AZ: Annual show; Payson Rimstones Rock Club; Tonto Apache Res. Recreation Center, BIA 101/Hwy. 87N, south end of town, behind Sonic; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 10-4; admission \$3, children under 12 free; dealers, gems, minerals, fossils, rough material, lapidary equipment, jewelry findings, silent auctions, Spinning Wheel, Education Corner, fluorescent light display; contact Barry Jones, (928) 476-3513; e-mail: froggie1048@msn.com

Oct 11-12--SIERRA VISTA, AZ: 34th annual show, "Rock Rustlers Dream"; Huachuca Mineral & Gem Club; Elks Lodge, 1 Elks Ln., on Wilcox Ave., 1 block east of Buffalo Soldier Trail; Sat. 9-6, Sun. 9-4; free admission; live demonstrations, educational displays, gems, jewelry, fossils, equipment, lapidary supplies; contact Ingrid Baillie, P.O. Box 1596, Sierra Vista, AZ 85636, (520) 459-3718; e-mail: ibaillie@cox.net

Oct 11-12--TRONA, CA: 67th annual show, "Gem-O-Rama"; Searles Lake Gem & Mineral Society; SLG&MS Lapidary and Show Bldg., 13337 Main St., at Trona Rd.; Sat. 7:30-5, Sun. 7:30-4; free admission; 20 dealers, wholesale pink halite, 50 exhibits, geode cutting and sales, demonstrations, gem dig, door prizes, field trips to Searles Dry Lake; contact Jim or Bonnie Fairchild, (760) 372-5356; Web site: www1.iwvisp.com/tronagemclub/

Oct 11-12--VISTA, CA: Show; Vista Gem & Mineral Society; Antique Gas and Steam Engine

Museum, 2040 N. Santa Fe Ave.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; free admission; 13 dealers, faceting and silversmithing supplies, minerals, gems, fossils, slabs, rough material, books, specimens, handmade beads, equipment, gold and silver jewelry, gem identification, country store, displays, wheel of fortune, raffle, five demonstrators; contact Cherie Wilson, (760) 726-6961, or Lois M. Harr, (760) 724-0395

Oct 17-19--DEL MAR, CA: Show, "Gem Faire"; Gem Faire Inc.; Del Mar Fairgrounds/Exhibit Hall, 2260 Jimmy Durante Blvd.; Fri. 12-7, Sat. 10-7, Sun. 10-5; \$5 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

Oct 18-19--SEDONA, AZ: 7th annual show; Sedona Gem & Mineral Club; Sedona Red Rock High School, Hwy. 89A and Upper Red Rock Loop Rd.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; free admission; 35 dealers, exhibits, demonstrators, Arizona State University meteorite display, rock identification, raffles, Kids' Korner (rock painting, games, free specimens); contact Linda Yee, 320 Canyon Dr., Sedona, AZ 86336, (928) 203-9476; e-mail: LindaFYee@hotmail.com; Web site: www.sedonagemandmineral.org

Oct 18-19--WHITTIER, CA: Show, "The Beauty Within"; Whittier Gem & Mineral Society; Whittier Community Center, 7630 Washington Ave.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; free admission; dealers, displays, silent auction, sand scoop, club sales table; contact Jay Valle, 1421 Latchford Ave., Hacienda Heights, CA 91745, (626) 934-9764; e-mail: res19pnb@verizon.net

Oct 31 – Nov 2--BLACK CANYON CITY, AZ: Show, "Rock-A-Rama"; Braggin' Rock Club; Albins Civic Center, 19055 E. K Mine Rd.; Fri. 9-4, Sat. 9-4, Sun. 9-4; free admission; mineral displays, dealers, raffles; contact Don Ingalls, P.O. Box 308, Black Canyon City, AZ 85324, (623) 374-0202

Nov 1--TUCSON, AZ: 7th annual silent auction; Old Pueblo Lapidary Club; 3118 N. Dale; Sat. 9-2; free admission; contact Danny Harmsen, (520) 323-9154

Nov 1-2--RIDGECREST, CA: 53rd annual show; Indian Wells Gem & Mineral Society; Desert

Empire Fairgrounds, 520 S. Richmond Rd.; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-5; free admission; contact John DeRosa, (760) 375-7905

Nov 8-9—LAKE HAVASU CITY, AZ: "39th Annual Gem & Mineral Roundup" 100 Park Ave., City Community/Aquatic Center. 9-4.

Nov 8-9--LANCASTER, CA: Show, "Rock'N'Gem Roundup"; Palmdale Gem & Mineral Club; Antelope Valley Fair Grounds, 2551 W. Ave. H, Hwy. 14 and Ave. H; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-5; free admission; lapidary displays, kids' activities, lapidary demonstrations, more than 25 vendors; contact Susan Chaisson-Walblom, 42122 52nd St. W, Quartz Hill, CA 93536, (661) 943-1861; e-mail: slchaisson@yahoo.com

Nov 20-23--POMONA, CA: Show, "The New Jewelry, Gem, Bead, Mineral & Coin Show"; High Sierra Investment Group Inc.; LA Fairgrounds Fairplex - Bldg. 8, 1101 W. McKinley Ave.; Thu. 2-6, Fri. 12-6, Sat. 10-7, Sun. 10-5; adults \$6, seniors and students \$3, children free; seminar on finding and panning for gold; certified gemologist and appraiser on hand; contact High Sierra Investment Group Inc., 20385 Pahute Rd., Apple Valley, CA 92308, (760) 961-2728; e-mail: Gefisher39@aol.com; Web site: www.HighSierraInvestments.net

Nov 22-23--OXNARD, CA: Show, "Garnets: A Gem For Everyone"; Oxnard Gem & Mineral Society; Oxnard Performing Arts Center, 800 Hobson Way; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 10-4; free admission; displays, demonstrations, kids' activities, door prizes, raffle, silent auction, vendors, gems, minerals, beads, fossils, opals, petrified wood, precious stones; contact Miriam Tetreault, 1134 Sunnycrest Ave., Ventura, CA 93003, (805) 642-5779; e-mail: show@oxnardgem.com; Web site: www.oxnardgem.com

Nov 29-30--WICKENBURG, AZ: 8th annual Wickenburg Gem & Art Fair; Wickenburg Gem & Mineral Society; Wickenburg Community Center, 160 N. Valentine St.; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-4; free admission; more than 30 vendors, gems, minerals, jewelry, local artists, photo exhibit, door prizes, grab bags, Spinning Wheel; contact Lucille Burroughs, P.O. Box 20375, Wickenburg, AZ 85358, (928) 684-0099; e-mail: gnlu@q.com

BOILING WATER MAKES ROCKS

By Peter C. Keller

Water is a solvent if it is hot enough or acidic enough. In the acid scenario, rainwater meets carbon dioxide, seeps down, encounters sulfides and bingo, sulfuric acid.

This liquid foams and dissolves minerals and puts in motion mineral substances to travel and interact with other substances. Malachite is formed this way. The bumps on turquoise indicate dissolved minerals flowing in cool water.

In the hot water scenario, rainwater seeps into the ground and goes deep enough to be heated by magma or already boiling water. Now heated, this water moves back up by a process of steam and condensation - dissolving minerals and re-depositing their constituents along the way. Cooled, the water sinks, encounters again the heat source, moves upward, (and) repeats the dissolving and depositing. This repetition gives agate its layered look. Amethyst crystals can form once the silica content of the water thins out sufficiently. Perhaps the oldest, certainly for jewelers the most fortuitous, case of raindrop to rock is the formation of opal, in yet another scenario.

In a dry desert area, the rainwater goes down through permeable rocks rich in silica. The down going water carries silica to the underground water table, raising it. Being raised, it spreads out to fill fissures and such. The rain stops, the dry desert eventually drops the water table down by evaporation, but the ledges and fissures are richer by evaporation. When the silica-to-water ratio is just right, spheres form (bubbles). These spheres are what make opal (...)opal. With further evaporation, the spheres become gelatinous, eventually harden, and like adding ball bearings to a cup, they layer the cavity in an orderly fashion. Water is trapped between the spheres.

The orderly arrangement of the spheres diffracts light (segments and moves it around). This light movement, in combination with the varying amount of water inclusions, gives the light play of precious opal. Water here acts as a sort of music to the spheres.

Yes, water is a solvent. Find enough opal and many of your financial problems will be solved.

Source: The Opal Express, 2/2000, via Fire and Ice, 4/2003

CARVING FIRE AGATE TRY IT— YOU'LL LIKE IT

by Lou Thorpe

It's fun! It's excitement! It's a challenge! If it's excitement you want, try carving a fire agate.



Several years ago I read an article in Lapidary Journal on the art of carving fire agate. Being involved in a serious love affair with this magnificent stone, I said, "I can do that." The only problem was that the author neglected to give the reader explicit instructions. He managed to write a long narrative describing the joys and sorrows of carving that mysterious stone, but NO details. It was frustrating.

Being a true rockhound, I launched an extensive search for the answers. This involved calling every rockhound I have ever met, haunting Rock Shops and Gem and Mineral shows throughout Texas -- a pretty sizeable chunk of real estate. I drove hundreds of miles to attend shows, hoping to find someone who could give me some answers. It finally dawned on me that no one was going to divulge any of his or her secrets concerning the carving of fire agate. This made me more determined.

Using plain common sense, I purchased a Foredom flex tool, some diamond points, and a few other items that might come in handy. My workshop was stocked with about everything else. I had been accumulating lapidary equipment for many years. With the new acquisitions, the only thing left to do was to back my ears, grit my teeth, say a prayer, and get with it.

Knowing the frustrations I had experienced in trying to break into this aspect of the lapidary field, I made a vow. If ever I became knowledgeable enough, I would go to Gem and Mineral Shows and demonstrate the art of carving fire agate. I would give advice freely, and teach others what to do and what not to do.

Two extremely happy years were spent doing just that before leaving Texas behind and settling in Port Angeles. The locale is different, but the intention is the same. Rock hounding and the lapidary are universal. I am still demonstrating and spreading the word.

Part 1

We are finally getting into the nitty-gritty of carving that mystical stone known as Fire Agate. The most important thing to remember before you even start is to select a good piece to work with. Carving is a very demanding aspect of the lapidary field. It requires patience, patience, patience. It is a time-consuming venture into the unknown. You do not want to waste days or weeks working on an inferior piece of material. True, there is a chance you may destroy a beautiful layer of fire, but if this happens, then go deeper and you may uncover another layer that is just as sensational. Keep this in mind, and don't be afraid to dive in.

The first step is to remove the layer of chalcedony that usually adorns the top of the fire layer. Remove this carefully. If the layer is thick, you may wish to use a trim saw to partially remove some of the excess. Be very careful about trying to remove too much in this manner as you may be removing some fire also. I always leave some chalcedony -- for two reasons. Number one is because you may wish to incorporate a portion of the chalcedony in the design. Number two is that fire agate is botryoidal, and part of the fire "bubbles" could extend up into the chalcedony. After removing as much as possible or as advisable, be sure to clean the stone thoroughly. Just as in any other cutting process, all oil or coolant should be removed.

The next step is to go to the hand tools. I use a Foredom Flex Shaft with a flexible hand piece: #8AD. There are several very good motors and hand pieces on the market, but in this article I am giving you the machines, tools, and equipment that I work with. Always keep in mind that I am not endorsing any particular product.

Before starting the actual grinding with your hand piece, you must have a bowl or container of

water beside your work space. The stone must be worked wet at all times. I automatically dip my stone every few seconds. That may seem like a lot of extra work but my bowl is low and I use a block of Styrofoam approximately 5"x5"x3" high as a support and steadying device. By resting my hands at the "heel" area above the wrist (on the block) it is a very simple matter to swing my hand over to the bowl of water and back to the business of grinding. This is my way of doing it, but if you come up with another solution, then do it -- anything that feels right for you is the way to go. Just keep that stone wet!

You must get down to the brown material that encompasses the fire layers. This is accomplished by using a heavy-duty diamond sintered wheel. My preference is a 1/2" wheel. Through experience I have found the sintered wheels do an excellent job and do not have to be replaced as often as other types.

I would also like to note at this point that another reason I use diamond sintered wheels is because they work much faster than the silicon carbide or aluminum oxide points. As a beginner you can use the above mentioned points and turn out a beautifully finished product, but it will just take longer. If you see that carving is for you, something you really enjoy doing, invest in the diamond points. It is an excellent investment.

You do not need a wide variety of points to begin with. I started with a 1/2" Heavy Duty Wheel; 1-Diamond Thin Disc; 2-Tapered Cylinders-Round Head (1 small, 1 larger); 1-Round Edge Wheel; 2-Knife Edge Wheels (1 small, 1 larger); 1-Cone; 1- Barrel; 2-Flames (1 small, 1 larger). Your inventory can be added to as you progress, but the above will give you a good start.

Once you get to the brown material, remove the heavy duty wheel and insert a barrel point in your hand piece.

The barrel point is a versatile point -- it clears larger areas in a hurry, but can be used to perform other jobs also. At this point, let me suggest that you take just any piece of agate and experiment with the various points and wheels. This way you can familiarize yourself with each one and learn its capabilities. Never force your

points -- use an easy stroke-let the point or wheel do the work.

This is where the fun begins! You have now reached the first real stage of wonderful things to come. You should be able to see the contour of the fire lines. Study the piece carefully and try to "see" what the stone contains. It will tell you what you are going to carve from it. There is something waiting to be born, and you can give it life.

Get that piece of fire agate that has been pushed aside for so long and start cleaning it up. You should be able to decide just what you will do with it. We will then take you step by step to a beautifully finished carving.

Now Get Going And Have Fun!!

Part 2



Are you ready? Do you see the design or object you are going to create? Are your creative juices flowing? Let us begin!

Take a fine-tipped felt point pen or an aluminum point or whatever you use to outline a cabochon and outline what you see. In other words, make a drawing on the stone of what you are going to carve. When you have outlined all of the main features, study it again. If there are any corrections to be made, now is the time to do it. Using your thin disc or separating disc, follow your "drawing" lines. You will be cutting into the stone, so keep that stone wet. As you cut these initial grooves, you will find it easy to keep your cutting area wet as the water will follow the groove. It may be necessary to go back over this cutting procedure again in order to get the grooves as deep as you want them. It is much better to cut thin grooves to start with. Remember, you have a great deal of grinding and sanding to do to actually shape your carving, so you must allow for this.

Once the initial outline has been cut, you can go on to the business of rounding or detailing your carving. If you will recall, I suggested earlier that you take a rough piece of agate of any kind and practice using each point to familiarize yourself with its capabilities. You now want to make your carving as three-dimensional as possible, giving it a life-like appearance. This will not happen overnight. You will have to work and rework areas until you have achieved the right look for your particular piece. Use caution at all times. You do not want to grind or sand too close to the fire, or you will end up erasing the fire. Fire layers are so thin that they will just disappear before your eyes, so leave enough of the brown layer above the fire to allow for the six to seven polishing stages you will be using.

Work your carving with your various points until you achieve a fairly smooth surface. Now you are ready for the polishing stage.

I use diamond compound in a syringe dispenser -- usually 2 grams each, with Mesh equivalent (grit size) of 325; 600; 1,200; 8,000; 14,000; and 50,000. Diamond compound will go a long way if used properly. I mix a small amount of compound, about the size of a wooden match head, with one drop of Crystalube and make a paste of this. I then take a round tooth pick and apply this paste over the surface of the carving.

Before going any further, let me explain the type point I use in my flex tool to achieve a brilliant polish. I turn my own wooden points in various sizes. They are turned to fit the collet of my hand piece. I go to the lumber yard and buy a 3-foot length of 1/4" doweling (in the hardest wood available), then cut it into 2" lengths. 1" for the shaft and 1" for the point. The shaft is turned to 1/8" diameter, the point being 1/4" (or less) at the base and shaped to a rounded point or cone shaped point. I also use the rounded tooth picks for areas the larger points can't reach. Wooden points are marvelous tools for polishing. They absorb the diamond compound and do not heat the stone as other agents do.

Contamination is one thing that is to be avoided when using diamond compound. Just a minute grain of a courser compound can cause scratches on the surface that are not readily visible until you reach the final polishing stage. It

may well be necessary for you to go back and start from scratch, which is something you want to avoid. After each stage of polishing, your carving must be completely cleaned of all the compound just used. This is the same precaution you use when tumbling stones, and for the same reason.

Start the polishing process with the 325 Mesh and proceed with each of the next five Mesh compounds, following the above instructions. Remember, a fresh point must be used with each grade of compound. In order to avoid confusion on which point I had used for which compound, I mark the shaft with a #1 through #6 and store my used points by sticking the shaft end into a large block of styrofoam, point up. This ensures that they do not rub together or contaminate each other.

The polishing process must not be hurried. Take plenty of time with each compound in order to ensure a good polish. There are times when I am not completely satisfied with the final polish, so to give it a higher luster, I will go to a cerium oxide or tin oxide. I soak the wooden point for a few seconds before applying the oxide. Remember, your stone will heat rapidly with oxides, so keep the stone wet during this operation. If you overheat the stone, it will "scorch" the surface, and you really have a problem. There again, caution and patience apply.

After reading these two articles, you may think "it's not worth it." I have purposely stressed caution and patience because I want you to achieve good results on your first effort. Believe me, it will all become "second nature" after a few experiments and will become an exciting and rewarding experience. It's like riding a bicycle--once you have learned, it becomes automatic. The joy of seeing a carving come to life far outweighs the time and effort put into a piece.

Trying to write an article like this, without illustrations, is very difficult. I have tried to draw a mental picture for you. Good Luck and Happy Carving!!!

Source: Backbender's Gazette, 1/08, via The RockCollector, 3/08

TUMBLING TIPS

by Dan Imel

How do you know when to change grit size?

In a vibratory tumbler you start out with medium (220) grit, not course (100), and then go to 600 grit then polish. If you ever buy a grit kit, make sure it's for vibratory, no 100 grit. You can add a step and go to 320 or 400 before 600. It saves a little time, not much.

The way you know when to change is when you've gotten them as smooth as you want them to be. That means removing pockets, chips, etc. If most of the pieces you are tumbling look good but there are just a few that need more work, go ahead and switch to the next grit. Run the ones that need more work through the next batch to finish them. You want the stones to be pretty good before switching from the 220 grit or they'll take forever in the 600. This is the long step.

My two vibratory tumblers usually take about 3 - 4 days on 220, 12 hours on 400, 1 to 1-1/2 days on 600 & 1 day (change polish at 12 hours) for the polish. I change the grit/polish every 12 hours, washing the muck out into a 5 gallon bucket to settle/evaporate. You can pour off the clear water on top after it sets several days. You don't want to dump the muck down the drain unless you like plumbers. The rest will evaporate and can be put in the trash.

Can you save the grit and use it again for the next batch of rock?

If you are doing it right, there won't be much grit left to save. The grit should break down as you tumble the material. I always had a little grit left on the 220 run that just didn't go away until I paid a little extra for a graded 220 from Ebersole's in Wichita, KS. It's about 50 cent a pound more than upgraded and worth it for me.

Other vibratory tumblers may not have this same problem. You'll find out. I buy 5 pound boxes which do quite a few loads and only pay about \$3/pound. Not worth saving any that doesn't break down. If you try to use course (100 grit), it will sink to the bottom and stay there in just about every vibratory I've seen.

Why do they recommend that a separate barrel be used for polishing?

Contamination from the grit. Somehow you almost never get it all, no matter how hard you try washing it out. Contamination between grit size changes isn't as crucial but try to wash your stones & barrel well anyway.

Do you put polyethylene pellets in the final polishing stage with a vibratory tumbler?

You can. Always change the pellets between different grit sizes. Re-use the pellets only with the same grit size. The grit becomes imbedded in the pellets and, again, you get contamination. I bought a bag of pellets several years ago. Before I started to use it, I mentioned to a dealer friend that I'd bought them. He went out in his garage & came back with a gallon milk jug full of 1/4 to 1/2 in pieces of agate screened from the 'good stuff'.

I have yet to open the bag of pellets. You want small stuff to help the tumbling, as long as you have that, you don't need pellets. I've added to the gallon jug and my wife sifts through & takes out stuff to make things like gem trees if I let her near it. It gives you a reason not to throw away the small pieces when you are out hunting. You may never need the pellets. The chips don't have to be changes between grits. One caution, you should always tumble stuff of like hardness. Don't tumble obsidian with agate, etc. The most common thing people tumble are quartz-based agate, jasper, quartz, etc., which are all pretty much the same hardness.



LAPIDARY HAZARDS

Why must we always wash up after doing any lapidary work? It may seem to those of us who snack or smoke while working that there couldn't be much harm in a little rock dust. But, many substances we use can be hazardous.

For example, emerald, aquamarine, and other varieties of beryl, plus chrysoberyl, all contain beryllium. The federal minimum exposure guideline for this material is set at less than one millionth of an ounce of airborne material per cubic foot of air in a work area.

Many other minerals, such as asbestos and those containing mercury (cinnabar), arsenic (realgar, orpiment), selenium, copper (chaloanthite), uranium (uraninite), autunite, pitchblends, carnotite, and boron are hazardous if you get dust or mineral fragments from them into your mouth and lungs. Also, many polishing compounds contain oxalic acid, the same poison found in rhubarb leaves. Finally, the dust from dry polishing quartz or any silicate can cause silicosis if one incautiously inhales enough.

Source: C.F.M.S. Newsletter, 1/93, via Brookside Pebble, 2/08

THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH US

Did you ever stop and think and perhaps analyze
How ridiculous our hobby looks through other
peoples eyes?
A group of grown-up people in a field on hands
and knees,
With noses nearly to the ground, raised rumps is
all one sees.
Or this same group of people lugging sacks filled
up with rocks.
It's a wonder that the uninformed think we have
"Rock-Pox".
And when they see us fairly drool over someone
else's find,
It's hard for them to comprehend the joy we all
derive
From fellowship and the great outdoors, and just
to be alive!
The unknowing ones may scoff and jeer, they just
don't understand

That each of us is rich, indeed, with prizes from
our land.

So if you think we're slightly daft, or perhaps one
rock short,

They are the losers, because we know, our hobby
is great sport!

Source: AFMS Newsletter, 11/89, via Brookside
Pebble, 2/08

AN IDEAL CLUB MEMBER'S ALPHABET

Always : attend meetings

Bring: someone with you

Communicate: with others

Develop: mutual understanding and respect

Enjoy: the hobby and have fun

Friendship: cherish and nurture the valuable
commodity

Generosity, Goals, Gentleness: use when
needed

Honesty: use it regularly

Ideas: Share with other members

Jealousy: avoid like the plague

Knowledge: help promote it

Labor: donate when and where needed

Mistakes: correct yours and overlook others

Nonsense: use frequently -- breaks monotony

Order: help maintain at all meetings

Patience: develop as much as possible

Quarrels: never indulge. They serve no good
purpose

Rocks: study, hunt, collect, work, polish, build
with them

Share: your talents, energy and knowledge with
others

Talent: use and improve as much as possible

United: help the club stay that way

Value: friends, members, yourself and the
organization

Work: an important ingredient, be willing to help
carry the load

X-rate: all gossip, malice, petty peeves &
negative attitude

Yesterday: leave it where it belongs -- in the past

Zeal: be generous with it, encourage other to do
likewise

Source: Quarry Quips, 4/03, via The Calgary
Lapidary Journal, 5/05

Hints 'n Such

These hints were gathered primarily from the bulletins of other clubs. They have not been evaluated for safety or reliability and could be unsafe or could cause damage to your project. Please use caution and safety when trying out any new idea.



Clean tires rubbed with tire dressing on your 4x4 will slide by rocks easier and save sidewall wear.

Source: The Polished Slab, 06/08



Glass pedestals for spheres, etc.: Ed Clay goes out looking for crystal or glass goblets. He cuts the top off the glass above where the sides begin to curve into the base. He polishes the cut edge to a glass finish, and has a gorgeous crystal pedestal on which to display a sphere.

Source: Backbender's Gazette, 3/06



During the tumbling process, I shake the barrel before I open it. Then pour off some of the water. This will get rid of the rock dust. The grit will stay in the bottom. Replace the lost water before you begin to tumble again. This improves the grinding ability of the grit compound.

Source: The Coral Geode via The Polished Slab, 9/08



A few tablespoons of Oxalic Acid crystals in the final polish with your tumbler gives an extra luster. Spic and Span can be used to replace Oxalic Acid.

Source: The Polished Slab, 9/08



Glass specimen covers: Wouldn't it be nice to get a "cheap" clear glass cover for your valuable

crystals, minerals, etc? Try this out. At a flea market or yard sale, pick up a few odd wine glasses. With your trim saw, cut the stem off as close to the base of the globe as possible. Polish the goblet end to a glass finish, place over your specimen, and there you are. No more dust on your specimens. Also, looking down through the cut end magnifies whatever you have under it. The stem can be polished flat to mount anything else you fancy.

Source: Pebble Pusher, 12/05, via Backbender's Gazette, 3/06



Trim saw blades can be worn or damaged by force feeding slabs. An indication of too much pressure is a little dry area on the surface of the slab just in front of the blade. Sparks may also indicate too much pressure. An easy way to align the blade to the marked slab is to have the spray of coolant hit just outside the line.

Source: The RockCollector, 1/06, via Blue Agate News, 5/06



Some turquoise has a tendency to glaze over during sanding. To prevent this, place your turquoise cabs in a shallow dish of water for a while before sanding, then use more water when sanding. Keep it very cool.

Source: Rockhound Rumblings



Mineral specimens may be poisonous under certain conditions, or when mixed with cleaners. Never heat cinnabar or stibnite. They produce poisonous gases.

Source: The Rockpile, 6/05, via Rockhound Rambling, 1/06



To polish fire agate, use tin oxide on leather, dry.

Source: Hound's Howl, 02/04, via The RockCollector, 03/06

UPCOMING TRIP REPORTS & EVENTS

Our "crack" Field Trip Team comprised of Bob Ferguson, Linda Chandler, Jim Peterson and Allan Reed met last spring and worked up the following list of proposed trips for us this fall:

October

Old Priest Mine -- west of Vidal Junction and south of Rt. 62 ??? check with Bob
Trona, California

November

Burro Creek
Copper World

December

Artillery Mountains -- out Alamo Road to look through mine tailings

Maggie Mine -- out Alamo Road to look for magnasite, fluorescent minerals, etc.

The Team had planned a trip to McCracken Mine in October but it looks like we won't be able to go since the owners have erected barricades to prevent traffic from going up there.

Now the Team is wondering if the members would prefer trips that are closer to home due to the increased price of gas. Be thinking about this so we can discuss it at the October meeting and make some decisions about our field trips.

EARTHQUAKE SAFETY

Earthquakes can strike without warning, and being prepared for such a disaster can mean the difference between life and death. Here are some tips to help you and your loved ones make it through a quake:

- Those living in areas not prone to earthquakes can respond quickly to the plight of disaster victims in quake zones by complacently smirking and saying, "I told you so."
- To minimize loss and damage in a quake, try not to own things.
- In the event of a quake, get under something heavy, such as a desk, a table, or your boss.

- Practice your burrowing-out-from-under-40-tons-of-rubble skills ahead of time.
- A doorway is the safest place to be during a quake. Eat, sleep, and work in doorways.
- If you are caught in a major earthquake in Southern California and are part of the entertainment industry, take a moment or two to reflect on how grossly you've wasted your life.
- Look out your window often. If you see a large, zig-zag-shaped crevasse moving rapidly from the horizon toward your home, step either to the right or the left.
- Be sure to mail your house insurance payments a full five business days before a major earthquake strikes.

Source: The Rockhounder, 9/08, via The RockCollector, 10/08

BUYING ROUGH OPAL SEVERAL DIFFERENT CONDITIONS

Mine Run. Direct from the mine. The stones have not been cut or ground down. This means that there is more guess work in the cutting. Purchasing mine run opal can be risky if you are not very experienced.

Off Cuts. The miner has removed whatever opal he has a market for and sells you what's left. With off cuts, you can usually tell what you are going to be able to cut. You must still watch for cracks in the opal because once a crack becomes obvious, a stone can lose half its value.

Rubs. This can often be the best way of buying rough if you are not very experienced. The miner has cut and ground the stones into basic shapes, after having removed most of the rubbish. What you have left is the stone nearly ready for the dopping and polishing process.

You have the satisfaction of cutting your own stones without the high risk of buying mine run rough.

Opal is officially sold in troy oz. There are 20 d.w.t pennyweights to a troy oz. There are approximately 30 grams to a troy oz and approximately 30 oz to a kilo.

Source: Stony Statements, 9/08, via The RockCollector, 10/08

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Please send Exchange Bulletins to the address above
Or email to rockhound.ngmc@gmail.com



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