



# THE POLISHED SLAB



A Publication of the Southern Nevada Gem and Mineral Society

August 2010

Volume 70 Issue 7



## AUGUST PROGRAM

### Turquoise



**Bring it! Wear it! Sell it!**

**August will be all about Turquoise! Bring in your Cabs, wear your beautiful jewelry, and be sure to put it on display for Show & Sell. We want to see your Turquoise! Then, get ready for a beautiful program—all about Turquoise!**

**Monday, August 2nd....see you there!**

*By Doris Currington*

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**August 2nd** General Meeting  
**September 9th** Board of Directors Meeting  
**September 13th** General Meeting



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### **Chairpersons Needed:**

*The following committees are currently in need of chairpersons. These committees are necessary for the club to fully function so if you are interested in serving, or just have questions about a committee's purpose, please contact John Zimmerman as soon as possible. We're grateful for your time and we'll be happy to help you get started!*

**Education**  
**Financial**  
**Historian**  
**Hospitality**  
**Shop**  
**Sunshine**

## **Upcoming Shows**

**August 6, 7 & 8 2010, Nipomo, CA:** Orcutt Mineral Society, St. Joseph's Church, 298 S. Thompson Ave. Hours: 9-5 daily; Wes Lingerfelt (805) 929-3788; Email: Rocks4u@prodigy.net ; Website: www.omsinc.org

**August 7 & 8 2010, San Francisco, CA:** San Francisco Gem & Mineral Society, San Francisco Co. Fair Bldg. (Hall of Flowers), 9th Ave. & Lincoln Way, Golden Gate Park, Hours: Sat 10-6 Sun 10-5; Carleen Mont-Eton (415)564-4230; Email: publicity@show.sfgms.org ; Website: www.sfgms.org

**August 21-22 2010, Orangevale, CA:** Treasure Trove of Gems, Orangevale Community Center, 6826 Hazel Ave.; Hours: Sat 10-6 Sun 10-5; Admission: \$4 per day or \$6 for weekend—Children under 12 yrs. Free with adult; John Moulder (916) 290-3193; Email: info@treasuretroveofgems.com ; Website: www.treasuretroveofgems.com

# President's Message

*from John Zimmerman*

It is hard to believe that half of the year is already behind us. My, how time does fly when you are having fun. If you missed the July meeting then you missed a great chance to pick up some really nice items at the silent auction. We raised a little over four hundred dollars for the club, and many members took home some nice specimens, slabs, and finished jewelry. Don't miss the next silent auction at the club holiday party in December.

The search for a new shop location continues as the Board of Directors reviewed the lease on the Sahara and Lamb property and a majority of the Board is concerned about some of the stipulations in the lease. There will be a presentation at the meeting on the lease so make sure you attend to find out the details so you can express your opinion.

We are still in need of volunteers for chair persons for the Education, Historian, Hospitality, Shop, and Sunshine committees and members to support all of the committees. A club only operates well with the work of its various committees and with non-functioning committees the club does not function. If you want the club to improve and offer more

A chuckle: The doctor recommended a patient lose 75 pounds of excess weight. He told him to run five miles a day for the next 200 days. Exactly 200 days later, the patient called him and complained that he was unhappy with the program. "Didn't you lose the weight?" Asked the Doctor. "Yes, of course," admitted the patient, "but now I'm a thousand miles from home".  
from The Petrified Digest 8/00 via Montana Council Reporter 10/01

via Golden Spike News 11/01

Experience is something you don't get until just after you need it.  
Via Golden Spike News 8/01

# SNGMS Bulletin Board

Selling a Genie or saw? Got a suggestions about shop procedure? Or maybe an idea for a great field trip? This is your new bulletin board to post all things SNGMS! Send in your questions or ideas to me, Cathy Baca @ [sngms\\_editor@yahoo.com](mailto:sngms_editor@yahoo.com) each month by the 20th—but please forgive if space is short. It may be placed in the following month's issue. Here we go.....

Club member Dave Hopkins will be exhibiting and selling his wares at these two upcoming shows:

The Harvest Festival, Cashman Center Sept. 10-12

The Great Craft Festival at the Cashman Center, Nov. 5-7.

David's company is called DesArt Creations and features all manner of lapidary work and home décor items featuring polished stone, petrified wood, lamps, agates and many one of a kind creations from rustic to contemporary. Please stop by and check it out. You can also contact Dave at 702-433-5822.



## Sunshine Report

Ed Rupprecht is doing great after having a new Pace Maker put in, this is # 7 for him. He's back out in his shop making cabochons again.

Doris Cunningham is recovering from a fall she had recently. She broke her pelvis and was in a convalescent home for a while, but is now getting around just fine.

Phyllis Syzdeck Is looking good after double knee replacement.

Beth Jones' daughter, Candy, is doing well after having jaw surgery. She is home now, and Beth & Jim are with her in California.

Thanks to Jaen Repprecht for this report!

## SHOW AND SELL

*Brag a little, Sell a little, show us what you've got! Bring your creations to our August meeting and put them on display between 5-6 p.m. Don't forget your Turquoise! Just \$5.00 to sell your wares. No charge to for "display only"! Our General Meeting starts at 7 p.m. See you there!!*

# A Couple of Canadian Rockhounds in the USA

## PART 1

Now, you SNGMS members are probably wondering how this article by two Canadians ended up in your newsletter, all the way over in Southern Nevada. It all started last year in Idaho, then the Discovery Channel and our anniversary sort of stirred things up....but then I'm getting ahead of myself.....please read on, I'm sure it'll become clear.

While digging around for star garnets at Emerald Creek, Idaho last August, my wife Edita and I met some wonderful people and had a great time. We decided we'd like to return to that place next summer, but for longer.



One new friend we made, Justin, cemented those ideas into solid plans by offering to be our guide to some great places in Montana and Utah. My wife and I were very excited about that idea and we took Justin up on his generous offer. You see, we live in northern British Columbia, Canada where the winters are long, dark and cold. Knowing a trip to warmer states is ahead would certainly help get us through. We went home excited for our forthcoming adventure with Justin, and settled in for a long winter.

Now it's late winter of 2009 and I'm climbing the walls. Winter was going slowly and of course there were no collecting opportunities in the snow! So I got busy making an itinerary for our upcoming June trip, collected supplies, and arranged to rent a tent trailer for that summer. The arrangements were going well but, still, June was a long way off. I really needed a distraction.



One night while watching "Cash and Treasures" on the Discovery Channel, the host, Kirsten Gumm, was showcasing the Royston Turquoise Mine in Tonopah, Nevada. As I watched a plan began to form in my mind.....Tonopah looked wonderful in warm Nevada, we were freezing and bored, and our 25th wedding anniversary was in March.....this would be a perfect getaway to celebrate!

In no time we reached the owners of the Royston Turquoise Mine, Deane and Donna Otteson, and Donna said they'd love to have us. That March, we packed our bags and flew to Las Vegas, stepping off the plane into a beautiful, sunny spring day. Once the rental car and hotel were taken care of, we went for a walk to the casino gift stores. We saw turquoise but it was all cheap imported Chinese stuff and the clerks didn't seem to know anything about Nevada turquoise. But no worries, we were going to Tonopah.

On the appointed morning we got up early, ate breakfast, and hit the road going north on US 95. About two hours into our drive we saw clouds in the distance....and rain.

This is great, I thought, the turquoise would be easier to see if the rain would wash them clean. Then I noticed something white.....on the sage brush and desert floor. Snow. What a surprise! Worse, when we reached Tonopah there was almost 4 inches of fresh powder on the ground. Was our trip for naught? Dean Otteson told us not to worry, he said he had been to the mine already and it was much better out there.

*(continued on Page 8)*

# AUGUST BIRTHDAYS!!



**August Birth Flower: Gladiolus**

**August Birthstone: The Peridot**

**Meaning of Flower: sincerity and symbolizes strength of character**

**Sign of the Zodiac and Dates: Leo July 23 - August 23**

**Leo: Honest, Generous, Self-motivated, Warm-hearted & Enthusiastic**

*All August People: Please bring a HEALTHY SNACK to the August 2nd meeting to share!*

Iris Bernikow

Duane Beye

Ivan Erwin

Michael Freeman

Dottie Fusch

Janice Guy

Marilyn Henderson

Joe Hogan

Vicki Jones

Priscilla Messenger

Autumn Milne

David Ortale

Hector Rosario

Tom Skeary

Joann Sprott

Bruno Syzdek

Phyllis Syzdek

**Happy Birthday Everyone!**

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## IT'S SO HOT IN ARIZONA...

- \* the birds have to use potholders to pull worms out of the ground.
- \* the potatoes cook underground. Just pull one out and add butter, salt and pepper.
- \* farmers are feeding their chickens crushed ice to keep them from laying hard-boiled eggs.
- \* the cows are giving evaporated milk.
- \* the trees are whistling for the dogs.
- \* you no longer associate bridges (or rivers) with water.
- \* you can say 113 degrees without fainting.
- \* you eat hot chilies to cool off your mouth.
- \* you learn that a seat belt makes a pretty good branding iron.
- \* the temperature drops below 95, you feel a bit chilly.
- \* you would give anything to be able to splash cold water on your face.
- \* you can attend any function wearing shorts and a tank top.
- \* The 4 seasons are: tolerable, hot, really hot, and ARE YOU KIDDING ME??!!
- \* you discover that in July, it takes only 2 fingers to drive your car.
- \* you discover that you can get a sunburn through your car window.
- \* you notice the best parking place is determined by shade instead of distance.
- \* hot water now comes out of both taps.
- \* it's noon in July, kids are on summer vacation, and not one person is out on the streets.
- \* you actually burn your hand opening the car door.
- \* you break a sweat the instant you step outside at 7:30 a.m. before work.
- \* no one would dream of putting vinyl upholstery in a car or not having air conditioning.
- \* your biggest bicycle wreck fear is, "What if I get knocked out and end up lying on the pavement and cook to death?"
- \* you realize that asphalt has a liquid state.
- \* Arizonans pray, "I wish it would rain - not so much for me, cuz I've seen it -- but for my 7-year-old."

*Sent by a cousin of mine :) Cathy Baca*

## *A Couple of Canadian Rockhounds in the U.S.A. (continued)*

The roads out to the mine were gravel for only the last third or so of the drive, but they were in good shape. A little snow there, but a cold wind kicked up so a bulldozer was parked upwind of us to block it. We were so glad we brought our parkas!

Dean showed us what to look for and we scoured the pit for turquoise. There were beautiful chips, nuggets and chunks of turquoise found right away, the colors varying from light blue to dark green as Royston turquoise is noted for its hardness and variety of colors. After only a few hours and using only our geologist's hammers and our hands, we each had filled the poly sand bags provided with twenty pounds of material, a total of 40 pounds!

Back at the shop, the Ottesons inspected our take, pointed out the better pieces and even polished up a few so we could show them off. We settled up the bill and headed back to Las Vegas. Forty pounds of turquoise, we thought, how exciting! Then..... would forty pounds be over our weight limit for the trip back home? About half the material was host rock, we needed to reduce the dead weight. With some research we found out about a club called the Southern Nevada Gem and Mineral Society, and an event called "First Friday". Well, it was Friday....off we went!



We met many nice folks there, saw a lot of club members' work, and even bought a few souvenirs. When I explained our problem, one member told us about the club workshop where members use trim and slab saws for a fee. And it would be open the next day! So Saturday morning we became members of SNGMS and had a very educational and productive day with much help from the shop supervisor, Chuck Huebler.

We trimmed the material down to a total of twenty pounds, and I gained valuable experience with the slab saws. When my wife became bored with the cutting, Mr. Huebler showed her how to make cabochons and she made six lovely little freeform cabs on a great machine called a Genie.

Once home, we showed our specimens to our friends and other rock hounds and everyone loved our turquoise, many expressing interest in purchasing some. Unfortunately for them, it is not for sale. We also told them how hospitable the members of the SNGMS were.

As new SNGMS members, we wanted to share our great experience with you all and recommend a visit to the Royston Mine. For summer trips, take a hat, sunscreen, lots of water and something to eat. For winter trips, take your toque and winter parka. In spring or autumn, anything can happen - bring it all! Contact information can be found at [www.roystonturquoise.com](http://www.roystonturquoise.com) or write to [whiteturquoise@hotmail.com](mailto:whiteturquoise@hotmail.com). I believe the price has gone up from that stated on the mine tours page, but in my opinion it is well

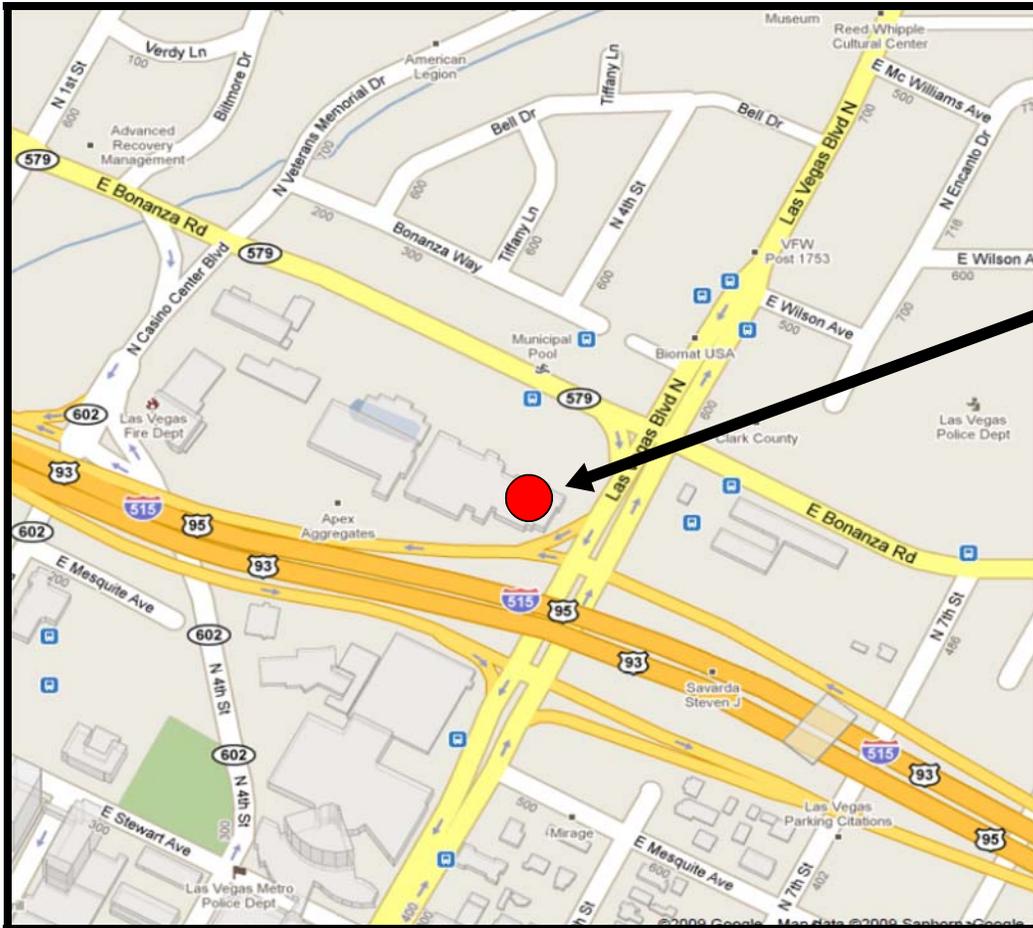
*(continued on Page 9)*

***A Couple of Canadian Rockhounds in the U.S.A. (continued from Page 8)***

worth the cost. The shop is called Otteson's Turquoise and is located in downtown Tonopah.

Next Month, Part 2: Star garnets at Emerald Creek, Idaho—The June 2010 Trip

***Contributed by: Russell & Edita Crick, SNGMS members***



**SNGMS General Meetings**

***First Monday  
of Every Month!!***

*Non-members welcome*

451 East Bonanza Road

Las Vegas, NV

(702) 229-6454

**Show and Sell 5 - 6 P.M.**



Mysterious Lapis Lazuli  
by Gisela Schottler, for CA Gembureau, Europe  
FROM OUR GLOBAL TRIBE

Its very name sounds like a magic formula and, indeed, for centuries it was considered as a virtual “open, sesame!” to harmony: Lapis lazuli, the oldest, deep blue gemstone in the world. Treasured even by the ancient pharaohs of Egypt and the emperors of Babylon as the dwelling place of gods, lapis lazuli was also the favourite stone of Louis XIV; the German emperor, William I, wore it as a protective stone.

Up to the 19th century, European artists paid a fortune for the paint gained from pulverised lapis lazuli and mainly employed the natural, ultramarine blue to decorate pictures showing the Madonna. Even today people all around the world enjoy the little golden spots in the deep blue material and interpret it as an image of the star spangled skies. It is, thus, a gemstone with a long tradition and history.

The uniqueness of the colour, which gives reason to merit most decorative minerals, is supported by something else in lapis lazuli-- also called lazurite. It is the only gemstone which might actually be called a rock. There does not exist any absolutely pure lazurite in Nature.

The blue mineral, which owes its colour mainly to sulphide atoms, basically consist of a complicated mixture of crystals with the end elements sodalith, nosean and hauyine; besides this, all specimens also contain larger or smaller quantities of diopside, mica, chalk, pyrite, and other components, even in the extremely rare cubic mono-crystals. This results in a varying specific weight, (between 2.4 and 3.3), and the characteristic feature that, when viewed through a magnifying glass, lapis lazuli never appears as a homogeneous mass. If the appearance is too smooth and even, this should give rise to suspicion you are looking at an imitation-- and there have been many of those, ranging from glass to syntheses. Unfortunately, not even the cherished inclusions of pyrite sequins provide a reliable source to judge genuineness. They have been included in reconstructed stones made from powdered lapis lazuli and also in artificial products.

But let us return from modern alchemists to Nature. It provides us in the precipitous Hindu Kush mountains in the north east of Afghanistan with the oldest and probably only lapis occurrences, which have been mined for over 5000 years. The province of Badakhshan probably already supplied the pharaohs: In their graves from the 3rd millennium, BC, were found statues, necklaces and bracelets studded, alternatingly, with amethyst, lapis lazuli and turquoise; in the region between Euphrates and Tigris lapis lazuli was also popular for ceremonial jewellery, roll seals and scarabs.

The trading routes of antiquity transported the marvellous stone as far as Rome and China, where it was also treasured highly and used for luxury articles. The Venetian merchant and discoverer, Marco Polo, visited the Afghan mines in 1271. There have been hardly any changes in the methods of mining the stones up to today. The rarity of lapis lazuli is underlined by the fact, besides Afghanistan, there are only two other occurrences in the world worth mentioning. The Russian occurrences west of the Lake Baikal are of only historical importance. For example, the columns of the Isaac Church at St. Petersburg come from this mine, as well as the paneling of a complete room in the old Winter Palace.

A large producer is Chile with mines in the Andes north of Santiago, 3500 metres above sea level and near Antofagasta. However, the material may not compete at all with the one from Afghanistan. Of course, all occurrences world-wide are located in calcareous rocks, but the pieces from the Chilean mines show so many grains and large spots, they seem rather greyish and quite pale. (Continued on next page)

The stone cutters of the early advanced civilisations did already display a high degree of expertise and professionalism in working with lapis lazuli. Its hardness, (about 5.5 on the Mohs' scale), is by far lower than quartz and a smooth, shiny surface may be achieved by polishing. A really magnificent specimen with a diameter of 60 cm. is the globe crafted from lapis lazuli owned by the Roman order of the Jesuits.

The structure of the stone allows even figurative work and vessels to be crafted; an excellent example for this is a 27 cm. high Florentine jug from the 16th century displayed in the treasure vault at Dresden.

For seals, coats of arms, necklaces, cabochons set in gold and decorative objects lapis lazuli is still as popular now as ever and in good qualities it achieves a good price. Therefore, many people will settle for the cheaper substitute sodalite; however, the purplish blue of this stone may never actually compete with the true blue of lapis lazuli.

But it is important to know, anyway, lapis lazuli is highly sensitive towards all acids and is liable to suffer from hot water and long exposure to sunlight. In order to protect its surface, it has thus become an established practice --similar to turquoise-- to seal it with a special wax. This is an accepted treatment which should be disclosed to the purchaser,

but a manipulation of the colour by artificially enhancing the shade will not be popular with the interested client who might even consider such procedures as a swindle. Experts have special testing methods in order to discover the many imitations, the layman may only collect as much information as possible and will have to finally rely on his jeweller.

Now, what is the matter with so-called "German" or "Swiss Lapis"? Does there actually exist an occurrence of this rare stone in the middle of Europe? Unfortunately not. It has only been discovered some time ago, the finely-grained, light-grey jasper found at Neunkirchen in the Hunsrück mountains may easily be died with Berlin blue, a ferro-cyanide connection. But the lacking of spots of pyrite are an easy means of identification, as well as the higher hardness, fine quartz veins and the fact, the colour gets paler in the course of time.

Real lapis lazuli was also quite in high demand because of its ascribed curative powers. An Egyptian papyrus from 1600 B.C., which is kept at a Berlin museum, mentions its curative effects; the same is true for a work of the Greek healer, Dioscurides, from the first century AD. Lapis lazuli was prescribed against high blood pressure and depressions, headaches and cramps. There is a recipe which recommends 60 grains to be taken for recovery after childbirth. If you stroke it over eyes and temples and then put it on your chest, sleep will come along easily. Napoleon may have believed in its magic powers, as during his Egyptian campaign he wore a scarab crafted from lapis lazuli which he had taken from a pharaoh's grave.

Via Anglic Gemcutter Ó 12/99

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The Southern Nevada Gem and Mineral Society is a non-profit corporation, organized to educate ourselves and the community in the science and arts related to rocks, minerals, gems, fossils, and nature in general. Fostering an understanding and appreciation of the physical world, we can use it and protect it for future generations.

<p><b>Club Mascot:</b> Rock Wren</p> <p><b>Club Gemstone:</b> Turquoise</p> <p><b>Club Logo:</b> Rocks-R-Us</p> <p><b>Membership</b> is open to anyone with an interest in: Rocks, Gems, Geology, Fossils, Lapidary Arts or Silversmithing</p> <p><b>Annual Dues:</b> Individual - \$20; Family - \$30</p> <p><b>Meetings</b> are held the first Monday of the month at the Senior Center at 451 Bonanza Road, on the southwest corner of Bonanza Road and Las Vegas Blvd. No meeting is held in December. Instead we have our annual awards dinner.</p> <p><b>Visitors</b> are always welcome and bring a friend or two.</p>	<b>Polished Slab Advertising Rates</b>		
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