

The Rock Bag

May 2009 Volume 47 Issue 5

Oxnard Gem & Mineral Society
Oxnard, California



M. Tetreault

OGMS Editor

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Ventura, CA 93003

Oxnard Gem & Mineral Society

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The Oxnard Gem & Mineral Society is a non-profit organization formed to increase our knowledge in geology, mineralogy and other such related fields in the earth sciences. We classify, cut, grind and polish rocks and minerals for our personal collections and to display at club shows. We learn from each other through club speakers, programs and monthly fieldtrips. We co-operate with other clubs to encourage others to participate in our activity.

The Oxnard Gem & Mineral Society is a member of the State of California Federation of Mineralogical Society and the National Federation of Mineralogical Society.

Meeting held: 1st Wednesday of each month at 7:30 P.M.

Place: Performing Arts Center, 800 Hobson Way, Oxnard, CA (Thousand Oaks Room)

Dues: \$15.00 per adult; \$2.00 per junior member (age 12 to 18 years)

OGMS Officers for 2009

President	Kay Hara	kharafd@comcast.net	W 525-5415, H 525-7634
1 st Vice President (Programs)	Brett Johnson	bj9709@yahoo.com	822-3836
2 nd Vice President (Show)	Norb Kinsler		644-6450
3 rd Vice President (Field trips)	Ron Wise	clintwise@hotmail.com	647-4393
Recording Secretary	Lee Leighton	ameritus@sbcglobal.net	647-4594
Treasurer	Stephanie Hagiwara	purplehawk@hotmail.com	986-2006

Appointed Standing Committee Chairmen

Corresponding Secretary	Louisa Carey	big_L76@yahoo.com	(503) 309-6147
Displays/Exhibits	Brett Johnson	bj9709@yahoo.com	822-3836
Editor	Miriam Tetreault	editor_ogms@roadrunner.com	642-5779
Education Director	Donna Knapton	dnapton@hotmail.com	647-8762
Federation Director	Jim Brace-Thompson	jbraceth@roadrunner.com	659-3577
Historian	Open		
Hospitality	Louisa Carey	big_L76@yahoo.com	(503) 309-6147
Librarian	Karen Bialobreski		(707) 648-7634
Member at Large	Miriam Tetreault	editor_ogms@roadrunner.com	642-5779
Membership Secretary	Anne Lewis		485-6356
Public Relations	Norb Tackman	ntack@sbcglobal.net	647-2538
Parliamentarian	Miriam Tetreault	editor_ogms@roadrunner.com	642-5779
Refreshments	Louisa Carey	big_L76@yahoo.com	(503) 309-6147
Sergeant at Arms	Larry Knapton	dnapton@hotmail.com	647-8762
Ways & Means	Jean Wise		647-4393

Classes: Silversmithing & Casting: Lois Allmen, Nancy Bogart & Albert Rubio
Lapidary, Opal & Wire wrap: Kay Hara, Dan Gealy, Brett Johnson & Don Minster
Location: Durley Park, 950 West Hill Street, Oxnard, CA 93030

Editor: All members are encouraged to offer an article of interest or any suggestions as to what their interests are and what they'd like to see in the Rock Bag. Remember it is your bulletin! Articles can be submitted by an e-mail attachment or in writing by the 2nd Wednesday of the month.
Thanks, Miriam

The Prez Sez.....

I was thinking back on my past with regards to OGMS, how fortunate our society is to have the variety of classes we teach at Durley Park. I joined OGMS because of the classes, back in the 1980s. I know many of the members did the same. I first learned about the lapidary class when I went to the Ventura County Fair and signed up for a lapidary class. Bob Reagan was the lapidary instructor then. He was death on grooving the grinding wheels! It took me the whole two hours to cut, grind and polish my first 30x40 cabochon! When Bob came and checked it out he said I did a terrific job on my first cab - I was proud of that cab! I was hooked! I later joined the society because of that.

I then took up silversmithing taught by that terrific lady, Lois Allmen. I got interested in faceting when I got acquainted with a local faceter in Santa Paula, bought a used machine and took lessons from him. Also I went to Camp Paradise and took lessons there. After I faceted a few stones I cut a blue topaz in an emerald cut and won a blue ribbon at the county fair. I mounted it in a pendant and gifted it to my wife. Lo and behold at my birthday she bought me a new Facetron machine! I faceted stones for a couple of years then I gradually tapered off because I couldn't find the time to do a good job on my stones. About then Bob was having health problems so I volunteered to help teach the class along with Russ Reynolds. When Russ left I became the lapidary instructor. Then I introduced opal cutting and triplets making, junior lapidary and finally, wire wrap jewelry making. It's been a fun experience all along - I still get a big kick out seeing a student create something he can be proud of!



"I've changed my mind, Edgar go ahead and buy the facet cutter!"

by Bill Mittelbeeler via Dust & Grit 2/00
via Golden Spike News 4/00

At present we have a great group of volunteer instructors who share the same experience of teaching and learning. All we ask for are students who want to learn and experience the lapidary arts. If you have the knowledge and experience of a lapidary skill that you want to share, why not give it a try and teach a class? There's no pay - it's all volunteer but you can't beat the feeling of satisfaction and knowing that you've contributed to someone's skills and learning experience - something that they will enjoy the rest of their lives. Also if you want learn a new skill, classes are there!
See you at the May meeting. **Kay Hara - President**

MAY PROGRAM

There will be a wonderful and fun video on the adventures of Dr. Marcus Eriksen and his "Dino Dig". He will show us: **Where** a Triceratops was discovered; **How** best to dig and remove the fossilized bones; and **What** he did with the bones after they were cleaned. The ending will be an interesting and special surprise.

The movie will start at 7:45pm; after the announcements and guest greetings. Afterwards, we can enjoy refreshments and an evening fellowship. Looking forward to seeing you again.... **Brett VP - OGMS**

MINUTES OF THE APRIL 1, 2009 General Meeting

Call to Order: President Kay Hara called the meeting to order at 7:30P.M.
Minutes: The minutes were approved as written.
Membership: We have 72 paid members at this time. The rosters are ready. Don't wait! Get one now.
Hospitality: There were 18 members and 2 guests present. The guests were Ron Boulch and John Kerr.
Treasurer: We are solvent.

- Correspondence:** Show notices and ads were put out on the table.
- Silent Auction:** The Program tonight was a silent auction.
- New Business:** Diamond Dan is offering a special price on his newsletter. The great price is \$2.00 for the first year!
- Old Business:** The replacement saw motor is defective. Supplies and shelves need to be purchased for the lab. Installation of the shelves has been arranged.
- Officer Reports:** **1st VP** – In June, Rob Sankovich is having a Utah – Wyoming – Montana fieldtrip. Check the bulletins in the Rock Bag for all fieldtrip info.
3rd VP - On April 25th there is a fieldtrip to Jalama Beach.
- Editor:** Submit articles for publication.
- Education:** 6 Rock Boxes were delivered to Oxnard, Camarillo, and Somis.
- Display Case:** Rubies, Rubies, and more Rubies. If you have Rubies to display, talk to Brett.
- Classes:** The classes are doing well.
- Refreshmen** The refreshments in May will be done by Norb and Kay.
- Adjourned** The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 P.M. *Lee Leighton, Recording Secretary*

MINUTES OF THE APRIL 8, 2009 Board of Directors Meeting

- Call to Order:** President Kay Hara called the meeting to order at 7:30P.M.
- Minutes:** The Minutes were approved as written
- Membership:** We have 72 paid members at this time. The rosters are ready.
- Treasurer:** We are solvent. Income and expenses were discussed. A motion was passed to pay the bills.
- Old Business:** We received a scholarship application. Her qualifications were discussed. The check has been written for the Wright Library donation.
- New Business:** 2 new keys are now available for the lab at Durley Park. Our replacement saw motor is burned out. Debbie Berecki was discussed. The cases Ann and Jack had are given out.
- Officer Reports:** **2nd Vice President:** Jobs were discussed for our upcoming show. There will be a show meeting next month.
- Federation:** The annual show is coming soon at San Jose. 4/17 to 4/19. Check into the Federation's web site for upcoming fieldtrips.
- Classes:** The lab needs some new equipment. Covington Lap Supply was discussed. Silversmithing: Students need to adhere to what the instructor says for safety and efficiency.
- Adjourned:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:30. *Lee Leighton, Recording Secretary*

Show Report

Show time may seem a long way off, but it is necessary to get a good early start if we are to know how things are shaping up, and that we will be ready when it is time for the show. Following is a description of the various jobs during the show. See if you can fit in any place! A sign-up sheet will be available at the next general meeting for you to show your support and any special interest areas. See you then. *Norb K. - Show Chair*

Show job descriptions:

Show Chair: Forms show committee, conducts meetings, coordinates all chairs and assists where needed.

Dealers: Selects, invites, issues contracts, and coordinates all dealers. Works with Set/up chair to create floor plan. In contract should secure tax info. Alert Exhibits chair of any dealer entering a display. During set-up be sure dealers know where they are to be placed and help in any problems that come up.

Demos: Selects, invites, issues contracts for all demos. Gives show chair & program chair a list for show. Determines where they are to be placed in the set-up.

Exhibits: Contacts and coordinates exhibitors, encouraging OGMS members to enter displays, and sending invitations to exhibitors from outside the club, including any special exhibits, such as museum displays. Helps with layout of the exhibit room and determines the loan of club cases. Prepares welcome packets for exhibitors. Makes sure exhibitor gift favors are prepared and given to exhibitors as they arrive for set-up.

Physical Facilities & Set-up: This physically demanding job requires a strong person to assemble and coordinate volunteers and arrange for the trailer to be placed and returned after the show. Coordinates the unloading, skirting of tables, electrical hook-ups and placement of the cases with light brackets and bulbs. Then the reverse steps on Sunday after show closes. The wiring must be done to insure that there are no overloaded circuits. Anyone with electrical experience? The person needs the commitment of sufficient people to assist with the overall effort of these tasks.

Publicity: Responsible for getting out word about the show to the local public and within the rockhounding community. Without customers, we have no show, so it's important to be thorough in seeking every possible avenue for reaching our audience in a cost-effective way that's targeted and focused and for getting info to appropriate publications well within required deadlines.

Program: Constructs, edits, prints, and distributes the show program, using lists: provided by the Exhibit, Dealer, Demonstrator and Show Chairs; as well as any special message provided by the Show Chair and/or Club President. A copy of the program goes into each welcome packet for exhibitors and a supply is kept in the Hospitality Booth to give to show visitors as they arrive.

Hospitality: Greets dealers and exhibitors during set-up on Friday and greets show attendees on Saturday and Sunday. Collects and disseminates materials about: OGMS, earth science, and the gem and mineral hobby, runs attendance counter, aids in the children scavenger hunt. Needs the aid of at least 3-4 other club members to take shifts throughout set-up and the show itself.

Security: Recruits and coordinates volunteers for security of the exhibits and dealer booths. Security is a physical presence, 24 hours a day, from the beginning of set-up until the finish of the show and tear-down. During the show, make sure several club members walk about with orange security vests as a visible presence. Enlist 1-2 volunteers to stay overnight Friday and Saturday in the building.

Food: Provides refreshments (lunch fixings, coffee, lemonade, etc.) to OGMS volunteers throughout the show, from set-up through tear-down. Oversees preparation of dinner Friday evening preceding the show for volunteers, exhibitors, and dealers, and orders pizza and drinks for folks who help with tear-down at the end of the show.

Country Store: Acquires, organizes, and prices "white elephant" or "flea market" items to be sold at the country store. Responsible for set-up and tear-down of the country store booth. Will require several volunteers to help both prior to and during the show.

Plant Sale: Encourages folks to start rooting and setting aside plants to donate and makes sure a supply of boxes and soda flats is on hand for people who buy plants during the show. Asks donors to label if possible and prices items.

Donation: Makes sure we have a full supply of raffle tickets and, via members and dealers, acquires and displays prizes, then draws and presents awards at the end of the show and delivers or mails awards to winners not in attendance. Handles the microphone during the show for announcements.

Games: Determines kids' activities to sponsor and collects and organizes prizes from club members, determines prices for activities and merchandise (e.g., Spinning Wheel, grab bags, sand-sifting, etc.), oversees set-up and tear-down of the booth, and conducts the activities and presents prizes.

Education: The Education Chair for the show is charged with presenting educational activities at the show that:

- Educate the general public about the clubs interest and enjoyment in the earth sciences
- Support educational professionals in our areas of expertise
- Bring fun and educational activities involving earth sciences to the youth of our community

- Bring Earth Science professionals for involvement with our community
- Support the efforts of organizations (such as scouts) in our common agenda


In short to share our wonders of the natural world with the community at large.

Silent Auction: Collects, prepares, and sets minimum bids for material to be sold at the silent auction during the show. Announces or designates an assistant to announce the silent auction over the PA system. Monitors bidding and collects money from each of the successful bidders at the end of each session. Needs several helpers.

Show Treasurer: Disperses money for show expenses and cash box seed money. Counts/deposits revenue from the show and makes a detailed public report and account of show expenses/income following the show. Obtains City business license. Counts money during the show and distributing and picking up all cash from **all** booths at end of show and compiles a financial report at the end.

May 2009

Monthly Planner

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																																
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Printed by Calendar Creator Plus on 4/18/2009

Field Trips

Please let us know if you are going to go on the field trip. The weather can change, if we don't know you're going we won't be able to contact you if the field trip is cancelled. There will be maps and flyers at the club meetings. There are still people who show up for the field trip without notifying Mike, Ron or I, you can still be part of the field trip, but it is important that you let us know your going to attend. **Please let us know if**

you're going to attend, e-mail or call us. I have new truck; it's a white Ford F250 four wheel drive, crew cab, if you're looking for me, look for my truck.

May-9th Sat 10 am Piuma Road, Malibu

We will be looking for Scallop fossils, Scallops large and small, they can be found along the base of the hill, the better specimens are up on the hill. It's a steep hike up the hill, where you will find the scallop fossils in the rocks and on the ground. This is a new site to collect fossils. There can be sticky stickers, I'd recommend long pants, long sleeves, gloves

Directions: From Thousand Oaks, highway 101 go East to Las Virgenes Road turn right, south, towards the ocean. Drive .2 miles to the intersection of Agoura Road, keep on Las Virgenes Road/Malibu Road 4.5 miles, to Piumas Road, turn Left, East, go 6.1 miles up a winding road to the top, along the crest, then go down on the other side, (ocean side) Park on left side of road, in large pullout. There are many vistas view on the drive, don't forget to bring your camera.

Meeting: Saturday Afternoon, April 9th. 2009, 10 am. We will meet at the site. There will be a short briefing of the site. Please remember to sign the release form to participate in the field trip. This is an easy access, but steep climb, you might find fragments along the base of the hill, but the best specimens are found up on the hill. I will be driving a white Ford truck with a CGMC sign in the window

Tools:Collecting bags, buckets, day pack, digging tools, rock pick, pry bar, eye protection, gloves, trowels, wide brimmed hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, sturdy shoes, newspaper for wrapping fossils,. Drinking water, lunch or snacks.

Contact: Robert Sankovich 805-494-7734, rmsorca@adelphia.net Mike Miller 805-498-9586, rockfmdr@aol.com, or Ron Wise 805-647-4393 clintwise@hotmail.com

Upcoming Field Trips 2009: These dates are fixed and will be the dates we are going:

June-13th-28th, Topaz Crystals-Topaz Mountains Utah, Trilobite Fossils-Little Drum Mts. Utah, Fish Fossils-Green River Formation Wyoming, Agatized, possibly Opalized-Blue Forest Petrified Wood Wyoming Sapphires-Yoga River/Gulch Montana, Rainbow Obsidian-Davis Creek California (this will be a 16 days long road/field trip)

July-Oak Park July 11th Sat 10am Petrified Wood

August-Jade Cove, Big Sur area, August 1st. Sat 10am Nephrite Jade, Serpentine, Actinolite, Soap Stone, Abalone shells.

The field trips listed below are tentative, they might change. All are Tri Club field trip with either Conejo, Oxnard or Ventura leading. Each month there will be information in the bulletin, and a flyer/map at the club meeting.

September-to be determined

October- Trona Gem O Rama for Pink Halite, Hanksite.

November-Somis Fossils, Sand dollar, Clams, Gastropod fossils.

November-Wiley's Well, Geodes, Nodules, Chalcedony, Petrified Iron Wood, Agate.

December-Ant Hill, Shark Teeth Fossils.

The Field Trip e-mail list is working, members have current, new information as I finish it. I get field trip information from other clubs at different times during the month, some with to short of notice for me to put in our bulletin. I will send direct monthly information, maps on club field trips, and updates on weather, other last minute factors that can affect field trips. If you want to sign up, no e-mail addresses will be printed, posted anywhere. Send me your e-mail addresses to mine below. I also updated the field trip information on the Conejo

web site www.cgmac.org. The information is current and I'll keep updating as I add field trips. 2009 has started nice, good weather. Now is a good time to go on field trips, it will get warmer and hotter as the month's go by.

There's going to be a field trips for everyone, we'll have close to home, and out of state trips. Easy and harder field trips requiring chisels, sledges, hopefully something for everyone. I am open to any places members are interested in. I'm always researching sites. Most of the time I make sure I check out the sites, so when it finally becomes a field trip it can save time. This time of year the weather can change so make sure I know you will be going, this applies to **all** field trips. We will also be going to Jade Cove later in the year, in August, it will be warmer. Check out the website for updates. We've been getting good turnouts of rockhounds for our field trips, the upcoming field trips offer a diversity of collecting. As the weather warms up we will be heading out closer to home or to the beach for collecting. Field trips are fun and you will find some nice specimens and make new friends. I find most people on field trips are friendly and nice willing to share in their knowledge and experiences. See you there.

Robert Sankovich, Conejo & Ventura - VP Field Trips
rmsorca@adelphia.net 805-494-7734

What to Take Rock Hounding

Rockhounding experience (our own and tips and hints from colleagues, customers, and friends) has led us to compile the following list of things you won't want to be without.

- 1. FIRST AID KIT:** We hope the reason for this one is obvious. A friend and fellow rock hound says "Rock hounding is like hockey, it's not fun until you see blood." We won't go that far, but we often get scrapes, bug bites, etc.
- 2. SPARE TIRE & TOOLS TO CHANGE A FLAT:** Rocks reek havoc on soft rubber tires. We don't even want to go into the story of the day we were out in the desert with our flat, our spare and no lug wrench.
- 3. GAS:** Make sure you have enough gas to make the trip into the desert and back out. It's a good idea to take an extra can full.
- 4. WATER:** There is no potable (drinkable) water in the desert! Take lots.
- 5. TOILET PAPER:** More uses than you think. The standard "paper work" use and it can also be used to wrap specimens. Make sure you take enough for both.
- 6. GARBAGE BAGS:** A dual purpose: The obvious choice for this item is hauling your trash out. They also make great wrap for specimens.
- 7. HAND LENS:** For those of you not familiar with this item, it's a small, high quality magnifier, that you can wear around your neck. You will want to look at ALL the crystals you find, large and small, and you won't see the small ones without a hand lens.
- 8. IDENTIFICATION GUIDE:** There are many guides on the Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Rocks and Minerals and Simon & Schuster's Guide to Rocks and Minerals.
- 9. MAPS & GUIDE BOOKS:** Not only will you want to know how to get where you are going, you will want to know how to get home again. There are currently several guide books on Utah. They all have their pros and cons. We haven't found a guide book yet that didn't contain it's fair share of wrong directions. Most people end up with and use all the books to find great rocks, minerals & gold.
- 10. NOTEBOOK & PENCIL:** Your specimens are much more valuable if you know where they came from. And you may want to go back and get more from a specific location. If you do not keep track of this information you won't have a way to do that. Not only write down the location, draw a picture of the area or your own map.
- 11. ROCK HAMMER & SHEATH:** No, a nail hammer is not good enough. Rock hammers are a solid piece of steel. Therefore, the head cannot be broken off. Not only are they safer, but they will last you years of rock

hounding. That is, they will last you for years if you carry them in a sheath. We consider Utah's deserts to be a large rock hammer exchange. We've left a few and collected a few. Now we carry them in a sheath so we don't set them down and lose them. We have found painting them construction orange helps to locate a misplaced tool.

12. CHISELS: In addition to your rock hammer, you'll want other tools. Chisels help remove rock or crystals with a little more precision. We recommend Estwing brand tools. They are also the best!

13. SAFETY GOGGLES: Eye protection is a serious concern when you're breaking rock. If you want to enjoy your specimens after you collect them, wear goggles or safety glasses.

14. GARDEN TROWEL: Very useful for small digging.

15. ROUND POINT SHOVEL & HOE: These tools are very handy when digging is required, especially at the geode beds.

16. SPECIMEN CONTAINERS: We've used all the following: cardboard boxes, milk crates, wooden crates, 5 gallon buckets, canvas sacks, egg cartons, Tupperware dishes, cookie tins, film containers, etc.

17. A BUDDY: We do not recommend rock hounding alone. Use the buddy system.

18. FOOD, SNACKS & MEDICATION: Besides your meals, take along plenty of snacks. It's better to have too much than not enough. Never leave for a collecting trip without any medication you may need!

19. HAT & SUNSCREEN: You will get a sunburn without these.

20. CAMPING GEAR: When rock hounding, nine times out of ten you will not be near any facilities. Be a good scout and go prepared with some basic camping supplies.

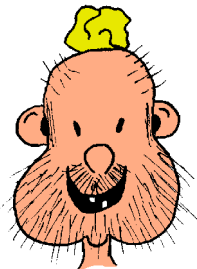
21. PATIENCE, COMMON SENSE and COURTESY: We've noticed that the most successful rock hounds are those that patiently keep looking around until they find something really great. Always use common sense when in the field. Never trespass. Respect others and their property.

Source: <http://www.rocks4u.com/rockhounding.htm> via Blue Agate News 2/09 Rock Collector March 2009 strata gem 409, via Golden Spike 4/09

Education Station

We are back in business delivering our Earth Science Kits to the schools. We have delivered 6 rock boxes to schools this month! We also got a grant from API, courtesy of Steve Grayson, for 100 books to be bought for school libraries in the county. Hurrah for Steve. He works hard to keep us in financing. We are now scheduling some of the Camarillo and Simi schools. Larry, Don Asher and Mitty Scarpato are all working on the next set of boxes.

Diamond Dan wants you!



We have a special offer from one of my favorite education sources for you this month! "Diamond Dan" is going to give us his newsletter for only \$2. for a one year's subscription. **This is only for the newsletters delivered to your email address.** As you have heard from our newsletter editors, printing and postage alone are making the expense of printed newsletters prohibitive so "Diamond Dan" is giving this special promotion to the clubs that subscribe already and to teachers if sponsored by a club for this great introductory price. You are welcome to print out the whole newsletter or any part from the email if you like.

I have been getting and enjoying the **Mini Miner Monthly** for a couple of years now at the regular subscription rate of \$19.95 and renewed recently, again. It is promoted as a junior publication but there is plenty to keep any of us interested. The "Mineral of the Month" article alone is well worth the price and his drawings are excellent. If you have any interest at all in minerals, this offer is for you! It is great for kids (I am ordering it for my grandkids) and excellent for adults. I recommend it highly to you.

You may remember last year when we had Skyler, the scout from one of my Simi classes come to Oxnard's meeting to accept the nice big Peruvian Pyrite. That was a Diamond Dan contest out of his newsletter.

The Oxnard board was so impressed with this promotion that we voted to sponsor 50 county teachers for free subscriptions and 8 of our board members subscribed for the \$2 price! Join in to get your subscription now, while it is available at this special price! Bring your \$2 along with your email address to the next Oxnard meeting and I will send it in or send it yourself to Diamond Dan Publications, P.O. 143, Manchester, New York 14504. Be sure to mention membership in the club in the order. It would be tough to find a \$2 investment to match this even in today's economy! *Donna Knapton – Education Chair*

“SPINEL” The other “Ruby”



The infamous 170ct “Black Prince Ruby” in the English Crown is actually a Spinel, as is the 361ct “Timur Ruby,” also, in the English Crown Jewels. Other large Spinel can be found in numerous crowns and Crown Jewels throughout the Old World. Spinel has also been mistaken for Sapphire, Zircon, Chrysoberyl, etc., and they are all found together in the gem deposits. You might call it, “The Royal Impersonator”.

In general, it wasn't until the mid 19th century, with the advent of mineralogy & gemology, that people realized that many gemstones commonly known as “Rubies” were actually another gemstone, Spinel. For that matter, numerous other gemstones that were thought to be Sapphire, Zircon, Topaz, Tourmaline, etc., also, turned out to be Spinel.

Another reason for the mix up is, all of these gemstones are found, together, in the same major deposits.

Spinel comes in a wide variety of clear and transparent colors. From Ruby red to a delicate pink, from a delicate lilac to cobalt blue, plus clears, green, gold, brown, and black. Like Tourmaline, Spinel crystals may contain more than one color. The better quality Spinel, have many of the characteristics of the finest gemstones. High refractive index (1.712~1.762) and good light dispersion (0.020) give Spinel a brilliant and vibrant “fire.” Also, with a hardness of 8 and a lack of cleavage, Spinel is a very tough gemstone.

Basically, Spinel [a combination of magnesia (MgO) and alumina (Al₂O₃)] is magnesium aluminum oxide or “magnesium aluminate” (MgAl₂O₄). Within its' structure, the magnesium and/or aluminum can be partially or completely replaced by trace amounts of different metals to produce different colors (Iron = dark green to black; Zinc = blue, violet, or dark green to blackish; Chromium = red, brownish, dark green to blackish; Copper = green; plus Vanadium and Cobalt).

There are other Spinel/ Ruby-Sapphire connections. Spinel is a “contact mineral” and is found, along with corundum (Ruby & Sapphire), in metamorphic and plutonic rock formations. Like Ruby, Spinel crystals were created by contact metamorphism in the older forms of grainy dolomite and calcite marbles of Mogok (Myanmar / Burma) and in Pakistan's' Hunza Valley. Spinel, also, formed in the contact zones of the pegmatite layered within the crystalline schist / gneiss in Sri Lanka (Ceylon). Thai miners look for Spinel as a sign that corundum is present, or nearby.

It is believed that Spinel formed in a magnesium rich host rocks. As the magnesium supply became scarce, the crystal formulations changed into numerous variations of Spinel. When the magnesium was exhausted, the remaining alumina formed corundum crystals. As the soft host rock eroded away, the gem crystals (Spinel,

Corundum, etc.) were released into the old talus and washed down to the river beds, producing the famous placer gem deposits in Asia, and throughout the world.

Spinel is also found in: Cambodia, Afghanistan, Nepal, Thailand, Laos, Tadjikistan (Pamir Mts. Location is world famous), Australia, Madagascar, Nigeria, Tanzania, Brazil, Canada, USA, and lesser deposits are recorded throughout Europe. In the US, Spinel is found in California, Montana, New York (Amity), New Jersey, Virginia, New Mexico, and North Carolina. In California, Spinel is found in eastern Fresno Co. (pink, green, black, and lavender). Healing properties: Treats mental depression, anemia, and circulatory problems.

© Ken Rogers, Mineral Chair

Via: The Nugget 3/09

Upcoming Shows

May 1-3 2009, Bishop, CA

Lone Pine Gem & Mineral Society
Tri County Fairgrounds Bishop
Corner of Sierra St. & Fair Drive
Hours: Fri. 6p.m.-10p.m.; Sat. 9:30-4; Sun. 10-3
Email: franceem@qnet.com

May 2-3 2009, Anaheim, CA

Searchers Gem & Mineral Society
Brookhurst Community Center
2271 West Crescent Ave.
Hours: Sat. 10-5; Sun. 10-4:30
James Williamson (714) 995-9080
Email: Ybidwell2@aol.com
Website: <http://www.searchersrocks.org>

May 16-17 2009, Newbury Park, CA

Conejo Gem & Mineral Club
Borchard Park
190 Reno Road
Hours: Sat. 9-5, Sun. 10-4:30
Robert Sankovich (805) 494-7734
Email: rmsora@adelphia.net
Website: www.cgamec.org

May 16-17 2009, Yucaipa, CA

Yucaipa Gem & Mineral Club
Yucaipa Community Center
34900 Oaknglen Road
Hours: Sat. 9-5, Sun. 10-4
Bill Jochimsen [909] 790-1475
Email: webmaster@yvgms.org
Website: www.yugms.org

May 30-31 2009, Glendora, CA

Glendora Gems
859 E. Sierra Madre Ave. Glendora
Hours: Sat. 10 – 5, Sun. 10 - 4
Hours: Sat. 10 – 5, Sun. 10 - 4
Email: showchair@searchersrocks.org

June 5-7 2009, Woodland Hills, CA

Rockatomics Gem & Mineral Society
Pierce College
Pierce College - Victory & Mason
Hours: 10-5 Daily
Contact: Gary Levitt, Show Chair
(818) 993-3802
Email: Show@Rockatomics.org
Website: www.Rockatomics.org

June 13-14 2009, Cayucos, CA

San Luis Obispo Gem & Mineral Club
Cayucos Vets Hall
10 Cayucos Drive
Hours: 10 - 5 both days
Kim Patrick Noyes (805) 610-0603
Email: kimnoyes@gmail.com
Website: slogem.org