

Bulletin of the Mineralogical Society of Southern California

Volume 81 Number 8

August 2010

The 867th Meeting of The Mineralogical Society of Southern California

Picnic Time

at

Fallbrook Gem and Mineral Museum

Sunday, August 22, 2010, at 11:00 a.m.

123 W. Alvarado St., Fallbrook, California

Featuring:

- August program**
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August Potluck

Once again the Fallbrook Gem and Mineral Society invites its membership and also members of the Mineralogical Society of Southern California to participate in a gem and mineral related swap meet and potluck luncheon.

The date is Sunday, August 22 and will be held at the Fallbrook Gem and Mineral Society (123 W. Alvarado Street, Fallbrook, CA 92028). Arrival and setup time will begin at 11 AM and the potluck will be from 12 PM to 1 PM. The swap meet will start at 1 PM. The space will be 1/2 of a six foot table, first come first served.

The selling will be from 1 PM till 4 PM. Table space will be limited. The host society asks that sellers limit items to things that relate to minerals, fossils, gems and jewelry and a 10% donation from all sales. This money will be used towards the mortgage of the building, which includes its museum that is open to the public.

Any question regarding the pot luck and the sales please contact Fallbrook Gem and Mineral Society at (760) 728-1130. If you plan to attend and need table space for your items, please call in advance as space is limited. It is a great chance to meet members of other societies, exchange stories of interesting finds and have good time.

Bring a dish enough for 8 to 10 people to share for the potluck. The hosts will furnish paper and plastic goods and drinks. It will be indoors!

Driving instructions: Take I-15 south from Temecula to Mission Rd exit (exit #51) toward Fallbrook (west). Continue on E. Mission Rd as it joins Old Hwy 395 and CR-S13. It is about 5 miles to downtown Fallbrook. Turn left onto N. Main Ave. Go three blocks and turn right on W. Alvarado St. Park in the lot on the south side of the street, opposite the museum. Driving time from Pasadena is approximately 1 hour and 40 minutes. *Click on the maps for a larger view*





July Program Brief

The subject of the July program was pearls. Mr. Lau's presentation included the operation of his pearl farm in China, the difference between salt water pearls and fresh water pearls and various kinds of pearls, i.e. mabe pearl, keshi pearl etc.. Mr. Lau brought several species of pearl-producing shells and pictures of his farm. He also brought many pearl jewelry items from his farm for sale.

Email from readers regarding

the article in July bulletin about AFMS/CFMS 2010 Gem Show

From Shirley Leeson A CFMS & AFMS Judge

First, the host club took over the show at the last minute. There were things wrong, but at least they didn't back out and carried on. The Orange Belt Mineralogical Society had bid on the show about two years ago and then told CFMS last November they wanted out. North Orange County G/M Society offered to put it on. The show was splintered, with the host hotel in Fullerton, the show in Whittier and the CFMS meeting and the banquet in La Habra but trying to find a large venue in that area was impossible, so they worked with what they had.

With that said, there was little room at the show site. The club had only a small area

to work with, and under some rather difficult circumstances regarding the school and its workings. Parking problems were especially troublesome.

The room with exhibits were ALL COMPETITIVE EXHIBITS, with a few in the adjoining room with dealers. At first the show committee had only allowed for 20 competitive exhibit spaces, the AFMS Uniform Rules Chair, Dee Holland, who is a member in California, told them that at least 50 spaces were needed. The small room that was allotted had originally been the "kids room" and the show committee eventually put the kids outside in partial tents.

Let's go back to 1970 where there were 171 competitive entries, in 1975 there were 136 competitive entries, in 1984 there were 77 competitive entries, as you can see, the competitive exhibits were going down.... In 2004 there were only SEVEN entries. Since that time we've been working on bringing back competitive exhibiting, they have been coming back up and at this point we had 56 entries, the most for a very long time.

To my knowledge at this show there were only a couple of special displays, and non-competitive exhibits because of room restraints. We had to put four cases of CFMS Past President's memorabilia and AFMS Past President's memorabilia in the lobby of the host hotel. (hope you saw them when you came in for the Editor's Breakfast.)

So, to sum up, we're pretty proud of what was accomplished, and Billings only had 38 competitive exhibits compared to our 56 in a cramped, hot room....that the fire department could have closed down due to crowding.

We can only THANK the host club, who put on a good show in a short time and with little to work with.

I remember fondly the shows MSSC put on over the years, I started attending in 1972 when the show was at Pasadena City College. How things change.

From Susan Hansen NOCGMS Show Committee

Thank you for the article on the 2010 Gem Show in the MSSC bulletin. The NOCGMS took over doing the show less than a year earlier when the previous club was unable to continue. Unfortunately we were limited in space for displays, at first there were going to be 35 competition cases, and limited room for non-competition cases. Competition grew to 56 cases and overflowed the room they were mostly in to include the original spaces for the non-comp displays.

There were 2 non-competition cases in the first bldg (next to the plant lady)-including the golden bear nugget and Benitoite specimens from the LACO Museum of Natural History- and 8 in the back of the "big" building (formerly the school gym). Everything else, including the fluorescent mineral display, was in competition and AFMS/CFMS gives the rules and regs for those. I think all the single piece cases were by carvers, we have some excellent carvers in Calif who do not always travel to out of state shows or competitions.

2 of my 10 non-comp folks didn't show, I put some agates in Friday that could be

easily removed if the others came late, and called a member from Searchers who Sat AM put in an excellent "minerals of the table of elements" case next to the Golden Bear case.

I didn't have time to get my mineral case together, and if one of the persons I had "guaranteed" a spot to had come late it would have been difficult to remove that one anyway. I had wanted to put in my hematite case, but gave the spot to my Mother for a memorial case for my Dad who passed away in December.

Again thank for the article and thank you for attending.

Editor's note: ever since senator Gloria Romero introduced senate bill 624 on February 27, 2009, many people expressed their feelings and opinions about how serpentine may be stripped of the title, "California State Rock." Below is a brief summary about SB 624 reprinted from <http://info.sen.ca.gov> followed by two articles that Janet Gordon found posted on "MSA-Talk List" <MSA-Talk@lists.minsocam.org> about California serpentine.

California may not have 'State Rock' anymore

SB 624 Senate Bill AMENDED

BILL NUMBER: SB 624 AMENDED

BILL TEXT

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JUNE 23, 2010

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 19, 2010 AMENDED IN SENATE APRIL 13, 2009

INTRODUCED BY Senator Romero

February 27, 2009

An act to ~~amend~~ *repeal* Section 425.2 of the Government Code, relating to the state rock.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 624, as amended, Romero. State rock.

Existing law establishes various animals, vegetables, and minerals as emblematic of the state and provide that serpentine is the official state rock and lithologic emblem.

This bill would remove serpentine as the state rock and lithologic emblem and would leave the state rock unspecified. The bill would also make a statement of findings about serpentine and its association with an increased risk of the cancer mesothelioma.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no. State-mandated local program: no.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares the following:

- (a) Serpentine was designated the official State Rock in 1965 and is found in 49 counties in California.
- (b) Serpentine contains the deadly mineral chrysotile asbestos, a known carcinogen, exposure to which increases the risk of the cancer mesothelioma.
- (c) California has the highest rate of mesothelioma deaths in the nation.
- (d) California should not designate a rock known to be toxic to the health of its residents as the state's official rock.
- (e) It is the intent of the Legislature to remove serpentine as the State Rock and provide for a suitable replacement.

~~SEC. 2. Section 425.2 of the Government Code is amended to read:~~

~~425.2. _____ is the official State Rock and lithologic emblem.~~

~~SEC. 2. Section 425.2 of the Government Code is repealed.~~

~~425.2. Serpentine is the official State Rock and lithologic emblem.~~

THE NEW IDRIA SERPENTINITE OF CALIFORNIA: A TOXIC ROCK?

by Malcolm Ross, U.S. Geological Survey, MS 959

Reston, VA 22092

ABSTRACT*

(Reprinted with permission from author)

The New Idria serpentinite, which outcrops within a mountainous 44 square mile area 16 miles NW of Coalinga, California, forms a core of a large antiform situated

between the San Andreas fault on the West and the Great Valley on the East. The Tertiary and Mesozoic sedimentary rocks surrounding this igneous body have been folded into a series of anticlines and synclines encompassing an area of pronounced earthquake activity as demonstrated by the 6.7 magnitude Coalinga earthquake of May 2, 1983. A large negative gravity anomaly (~ 58 mgals) over the New Idria serpentinite indicates that it may extend to depths of more than 3 miles. Tectonic processes, relating to Pacific coast plate motions, gave rise to the California coast ranges and to exposure of peridotite-rich fragments of the Pacific Ocean crust and mantle and associated marine sediments such as the Franciscan Group of late Jurassic-early Cretaceous age. Slices of Franciscan rocks and the peridotites, the latter having undergone pervasive alteration to serpentinite, are incorporated together and extruded into and over the Great Valley sedimentary sequence. Diapiric uprising of the serpentinite caused breaching of the Great Valley sediments sometime in the period between late Oligocene and early Miocene. After breaching, low temperature extrusion of the New Idria serpentinite began, as evidenced by the flows and debris slides of this rock incorporated within the Great Valley sediments. For example, serpentinite debris slides are emplaced within the Big Blue Formation of Miocene age. Remnants of older (Oligocene-Miocene) serpentinite flows cap ridges or are perched above valley floors, whereas younger (Pliocene-Pleistocene) flows conform to the modern topography and fill present-day canyons. As the result of heavy rains in historical times, serpentinite boulders, debris, and sediments are found in the present stream valleys and in the Arroyo Pasajero flood plain that extends east of Coalinga to the California Aqueduct, the latter trending parallel to the western side of the Great Valley.

The New Idria serpentinite consists of a large amount of highly sheared and pulverized rock fragments and powders, as well as boulders of partially altered serpentine-rich rock. The bulk material contains up to 60 percent chrysotile asbestos. The serpentinite body is the site of three chrysotile asbestos mines, two of which (Atlas and Johns-Manville) ceased operations many years ago. These sites are now designated as EPA Superfund sites because of the perceived health hazard of water- and airborne asbestos. The third asbestos mine (KCAC) is still operating. The two Superfund sites cover a few hundred acres out of the 28,000 acres that encompass the total outcrop area of the serpentinite. In addition to the asbestos mines, many other mines once operated within the outcrop area, including those that exploited chromite and mercury and gem minerals. Due to the barren nature of this soft rock there is little vegetative cover, thus rains and winds cause extensive erosion, even in the areas that have not been disturbed by human activity. The publicized asbestos health risk (several deaths per 1000 lifetimes) of the residents of the New Idria area has caused great concern among the State and Federal agencies responsible for regulating land and water use. Because of this concern, valuable agricultural land has been condemned, restriction on the use of public lands is proposed, large sums of money are being requested for asbestos mitigation, and residents are becoming fearful for their safety. As noted, asbestos-bearing debris has been entering the stream valleys and the Great Valley for millions of years, as well as in historical time.

There is no evidence that ingestion of chrysotile asbestos causes harm, either in man or animals (as stated in an EPA press release of January 7, 1991), or that inhalation of

chrysotile asbestos fibers in the quantities found in the New Idria area cause disease. The latter statement is supported by noting the lack of asbestos-related disease among the non-miner residents of the chrysotile asbestos mining towns in Québec Province, Canada. These residents, who lived in the towns of Asbestos and Thetford Mines, were exposed throughout their lives to large amounts of asbestos fiber which entered the atmosphere and water supplies because of emissions from the many nearby mines and mills. Significant reduction of asbestos emissions from the New Idria Superfund sites, even by expenditure of very large sums of money, will have no measurable effect on human health, particularly in view of the fact that most of the emissions come from areas outside the Superfund sites. Significant reduction of asbestos emissions over the whole serpentinite outcrop area, by any means and by any amount of money, is futile.

* Extended Abstract for a talk given at the annual meeting of the Geological Society of America, held in Seattle, WA, October 24-27, 1994.

California May Drop Its Official State Rock

Peter J Modreski's email posted on "MSA-Talk List" <MSA-Talk@lists.minsocam.org>

Just a few comments re. this topic. I did a little browsing for background on "drop the state rock", and I found this on a "Mesothelioma Empowerment" website (posted by a law firm):

Drop the State Rock: Deadly Serpentine Asbestos Ore "In 1965, in order to promote the asbestos industry in California, Governor Edmund Brown and the Senate Assembly unanimously approved AB 265 providing that serpentine become the state rock of California. Serpentine commonly contains chrysotile asbestos, a carcinogen listed by the EPA and a mineral that has indiscriminately claimed the lives of tens of thousands of people every year in the United States, and hundreds of thousands of people worldwide. Asbestos has been called the worst public health crisis in the history of this country." http://www.mesothel.com/asbestos-cancer/exposure/ca-state-rock-serpentine/drop_state_rock.htm#Mftnref8

Which interestingly was written and posted back in 2007 or 2008 it seems, so this "movement" has been underway for some time. I was of course surprised at the "to promote the asbestos industry" motivation claimed for serpentine as the state rock, to which my first reaction was "oh, really"? But reading on in that website, it sounds like this really was a factor in choosing serpentine. The site goes on to say,

"Serpentine's primary commercial value to the state was as an asbestos ore from which chrysotile asbestos could be mined. When State Senator Luther Gibson of Solano County and Assemblyman Pearce Young of Napa introduced the bill that

became law in 1965, serpentine was chosen to show the importance of asbestos to the California economy.[7] More specifically, it was chosen to promote the mining and commercial uses of asbestos.[8] "

(The cited references are listed at the end.) Well, this does perhaps put things in a slightly different perspective; it's always informative to read "all sides of the question".

Also, interestingly, a State web page about California State Symbols says this about serpentine:

"California has a greater number of minerals and a wider variety of rock types than does any other state. Serpentine, a shiny, green and blue rock found throughout California, was named the official State Rock in 1965. It contains the state's principal deposits of chromite, magnesite, and cinnabar. California was the first state to designate a State Rock."

<http://www.library.ca.gov/history/symbols.html#Heading15>

As we see, it doesn't mention the asbestos, industry-wise or otherwise.

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2010 Calendar of Events

August 6, 7 & 8 2010, Nipomo, CA Orcutt Mineral Society

St. Joseph's Church 298 S. Thompson Ave. Hours: 9-5 daily

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

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

September 3-6 2010, Fort Bragg, CA Mendocino Coast Gem & Mineral Society Town Hall Corner of Main & Laurel Hours: Fri-Sun 10-6 -- Mon 10-4
