

Monthly Newsletter of the *Kern County Mineral Society (KCMS)***President's Message**
James May - KCMS
President 2023

I hope everyone had a fantastic holiday season and you got to spend some quality time with loved ones. The holiday season can certainly be stressful, but when you look back, the time spent with family is precious. As I am typing this introduction on another significant holiday, honoring Dr. Martin Luther King for all his notable contributions to the civil rights movement during the tumultuous 60's.

The Kern County Mineral Society had a very successful campaign in 2022 and we hope to keep the momentum going strong into the new year. As some of you may know, many of our members make their way out to Arizona this time of year to see the great rock shows they have there. Last week the Fleishauers, Anita, Michael, and I went to Quartzsite and had a great time. We also met Jack Stewart and his sister out there. There were vendors selling rocks and minerals as far as the eye can see. The PowWow is scheduled for this upcoming week so if you have any free time that is the place to be. There are a few pictures of our adventures in this edition of the newsletter. The other large show in Arizona is the famous Tucson Gem Show on February 11th and 12th. It's a bit of a drive (about ten hours) to Tucson but well worth the visit to the Show.

Our first General Meeting of the year will be Thursday, January 19th at 6:30 PM in the upstairs room of Veterans Hall. We will discuss some of our ideas for the spring, award the special prize (*face roller?*) to the mystery slab mineral, and best of all we have a guest speaker who is going to tell us his adventurous stories working mines for pegmatite deposits. His name is Paul Hirst and he has worked in a few interesting mines in his lifetime.

If Arizona is a bit of a drive, then the Tule Gem and Mineral Society Annual Show in Exeter might be the trip for you. It is scheduled for January 21st and 22nd and in the past this has been a great show. It is a bit crowded at times because they are hosting the show in the relatively small Memorial Building. There is also a thulite location within a few miles of Exeter if you are feeling the rock collecting bug which I am sure is pretty much always!

I want to apologize for all the changes to the field trip schedule. We are keeping track of the weather patterns and storms that might impact our ability to safely get to locations. The good news is that the storms are really freeing up some of those hidden gems that have been covered over by sand and silt for eons. Our next scheduled field trip is to Ruby Ridge on Saturday, January 28th. Details will be given at upcoming General Meeting.

We had to postpone our Rock and Lapidary Workshop for the last Saturday in January. Our next workshop will take place on Saturday, February 25th. This will be in concert with a wire wrapping workshop.

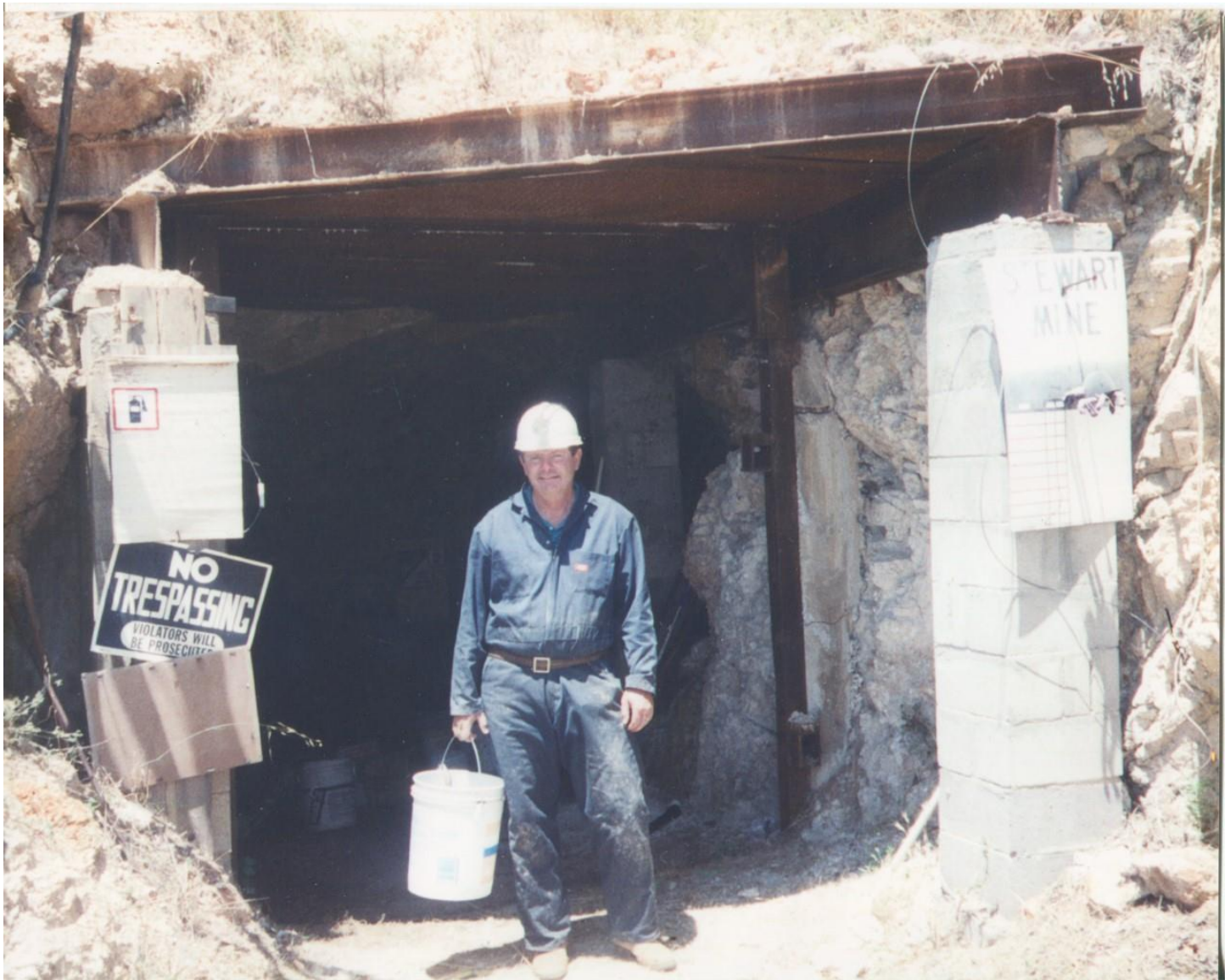
Finally, we have three consecutive weekend events coming up in March. We could use some volunteers to ensure these events go off smoothly. Please let us know if you would like to help. The three events being Stoddard Wells Tailgate Show, Wind Wolves Annual Spring Festival, and CSUB EPE. -- James

Next General Meeting

**Thursday, January 19th at 6:30 PM
East Bakersfield Veterans Hall - Upstairs Room
Address: 2101 Ridge Road, Bakersfield, CA**

Paul Hirst - A Never-Ending Apprentice Mineral Collector or
Sometimes Referred to as a Vug Rat!

Topic: Pegmatites - Formation, Mining Techniques, and Show and
Tell



NEXT FIELDTRIP
Saturday, January 28th, 2023

Ruby Ridge and Various Stops in North Edwards

Meet Bernie at Harbor Freight at 7:30 PM



Next Rock and Lapidary Workshop
Saturday, February 25th at 9:00 AM
The Fleishauer's House



*They Struck Black Opals in Australia
The Journey of Ted Murphy*



Ted Murphy can write of the great Outback because he lived its life, he met and worked with the cattleman, the sheepmen, and the drovers, the timber men, and the station hands in the days *“when the world was wide.”* He began as an opal gouger at White Cliffs, the most wonderful opal field the world has ever known. Those were the roaring days of the *“Cliffs”*, when fabulous fortunes in opals went overseas to bewilder a world that only knew the poor class opals of a few *“older countries.”*

When Ted Murphy hit the Cliffs, he had found his life-time job for he was born *“opal man.”* Soon, he was buying and selling small parcels of rough stones. From then on, with his uncanny eye for opal, his instinct of sensing gems among a parcel of rough stuff, he quickly made good and gave away the pick and shovel for the full-time life of an opal buyer.

To the Cliffs came buyers from the Jewel markets of the world. Shrewd men trained to that most difficult of professions, the judging and buying of gems in the rough, and faced. Smart men from London, New York, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Rome – from the great capitals of the world as the years went on the Australian bushman Ted Murphy rose up among them until he was the foremost buyer on White Cliffs.



As Murphy lived, his legend grew in the great Outback.

Soon, he was stretching away across the border well into Queensland and the Cunnamulla opal lands, the lands of the “Yowah Nuts” which is the name for rough opal (lower right picture). In the scattered districts of the Queensland opal fields his name became as well-known as it did in the great camp of White Cliffs in New South Wales.

No mean feat, for a man to keep his hand on the far-flung pulse of the Australian opal fields, and the numerous foreign markets overseas, with the constant fluctuations of demand and prices both here and in the scattered markets of the world. Only a born judge of opals could have done it, for the most beautiful of all gems is also the trickiest.

Suffice it to say that after wandering in the bush Ted Murphy located another opal field, a unique field, the only one of its kind in the world. This was at Lightning Ridge, home of the famous black opal. The only black opal field known. And there has not been another found since!

Ted Murphy with his big black, quiet smile and chuckling personality outlasted all his competition to be the world’s expert on opals.



This is a short story taken from an old rockhounding book from 1948 called *They Struck Opal!* By E.F. Murphy who went commonly by “Ted.” It is a very good read and is still in print if you want to read up on Ted Murphy and his adventures finding opal in Australia. The book is published by Associated General Publications, Sydney, Australia.

Ninety-five percent of the world’s precious opal comes from Australia, where unique geological conditions allowed the formation of this rare gemstone. Most light opal is found in South Australia, black opal in New South Wales – especially Lightning Ridge, and boulder opal in Queensland. Black Opal is the most valued of the Opals and most comes from Lightning Ridge (see below). High quality stones are very rare. Easily distinguished by the blackness of the background or “body tone.”



The Quartzsite Trip
January 2023

"Introducing Camels into the Deserts of the Southwest United States"



Spend a winter weekend in this town that plays host to millions of visitors during the cold months—of course, that's Arizona "cold," with sunshine, t-shirts, and flip-flops.

If you can't find it at the Quartzsite gem and mineral show, it hasn't been thought of yet.

The winter season is "go time" in this Arizona-California border town. With winter temperatures hovering in the 70s, people flock to Quartzsite from colder climates to relish in the warm weather and fascinating shopping. Thousands of vendors gather during these months to showcase items ranging from rocks, gems, and minerals, to jewelry, apparel, home décor, and more. Quartzsite's consummate event is the PowWow Gem and Mineral Show every January. Vendors come from all over the world to display and sell their geologic treasures.







The Adventures of SB

At Fossil Falls



Fossil Falls is a Dry Waterfall on Highway 395 about 40 miles south of Lone Pine. There is one sign for it each way and if you blink you can miss it. If you go to Fossil Falls what awaits you down the mile-long dirt road is something you have probably never seen before. If you go in April, you will not only be amazed by the dry waterfall but the wildflowers. A summer trip is not recommended because of the extreme heat. When you get to the parking lot there is a bathroom and picnic bench. You can also camp overnight in this area.

The rugged landscape is a result of several periods of volcanism dating back 440,000 years ago. The Coso Mountain range was an active chain of small cinder cone volcanoes. They erupted many times inundating this area with slow moving flows of dark lava called basalt.

Fossil Falls is a unique geological feature, located in the Coso Range of California. The Falls during the last ice age, the Sierra Nevada mountains to the west were covered with ice. Several times during this period large lakes formed in many of the basins between here and Death Valley. In these times the Owens River flowed south out of Owens Lake into the Indian Wells Valley. Volcanic eruptions from the Coso Range changed the river's course at least three times. Fossil Falls were formed when the Owens River was damned by an eruption and ran over the basalt flows, sculpting and polishing the black rock into this amazing geologic feature.

In addition to the small gas vesicles in the basalt, there are large, perfectly circular penetrations in the basalt. These are erosional features called potholes. It is speculated that Red Hill cast out granitic detritus which fell into Fossil Falls. Water accelerates as it moves past the rocks. The still water ahead forced the moving water to slow down and rotate to form an eddy. The high velocity currents were enough to catch the granitic rocks from Red Hill and spiral them downwards in multiple vortices, drilling them into the basalt. Sediments would get trapped and continue to circularly erode the holes.

From the parking area the hiking trail is only about a quarter mile and leads to an overlook of this remarkable geologic formation. Take in the unique vista and appreciate the amount of time and erosion that went into sculpting this masterpiece. However, those who wish to do so can descend into the canyon for some additional exploration. Entering the canyon requires rock scrambling and makes this hike substantially more difficult. Understand during your descent that you'll have to ascend anything you drop down and that the smooth basalt surfaces are quite slippery. Being inside the canyon gave me an appreciation of the canyon's unique sculpted walls. If you are lucky enough to explore you might see a few petroglyphs that were left by early inhabitants of the area. Some obsidian can be found in this area, but this is a protected area so rocks and any artifacts you find have to be left where you found them.

This is certainly a trip worth taking.



Source: California through my lens

**UPCOMING ROCK, MINERAL, AND GEM SHOWS****UPCOMING ROCK AND MINERAL SHOWS – WINTER 2023****January 21-22, 2023 – Exeter, CA**

Tule Gem and Mineral Society

Exeter Memorial Building, 324 North Kaweah Ave., Exeter, CA 93221

Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM

Tule Gem and Mineral Society Gemboree

Contact: (559) 799-6034, margaretbu03@gmail.com

Website: <http://www.tulegem.com>**February 18-19, 2023 – Antioch, CA 94509**

Antioch Lapidary Club

Contra Costa County Fairgrounds, 1201 West 10th St. Antioch, CA 94509

Hours: 10 AM to 5 PM Saturday and Sunday

Jewelry, Gems, Findings, Supplies, Auction, Grab Bags, Exhibits and hands on projects for kids

Contact: (925) 301-6957, edysnyder@gmail.com

Website: <http://www.antiochlapidaryclub.com>**February 25-26, 2023 – Vallejo, CA**

Vallejo Gem and Mineral Society

Solano County Fairgrounds, McCormack Hall, 900 Fairgrounds Drive, Vallejo, CA 94589

Hours: 10 AM-5 PM

Gems, geodes, fossils, beads and minerals from around the globe. Discover lapidary and stone crafts from vendors and live demonstrations. Something for everyone! Silent auction, geode cuttings, and games of chance and discovery for kids!

Contact: (415) 254-1506, ddahonvgms@gmail.com

Website: <http://vjgems.co/>**March 4-5, 2023 – Ventura, CA**

Ventura Gem & Mineral Society

Ventura County Fairgrounds, 10 W. Harbor Blvd., Ventura, CA 93001

Hours: Saturday 10 AM-5 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM

50 exhibits of gems, minerals, fossils and lapidary arts; ongoing demos of lapidary and jewelry making; raffle prizes & silent auctions; a Second-Hand Treasures Store & plants

Contact: (805) 312-8467, info@vgms.org

Website: <http://www.vgms.org>

KCMS CLASSIFIEDS

KCMS is proud to announce the addition of a Classified Ads Section to the Pseudomorph Newsletter!!

Calling on all members who have any items that they want to sell or those looking to buy.

Rocks, Minerals, Rock Saws, but that's not all!! We will also accept Lawn Equipment, Electronics, Homemade Crafts, etc.

The Pseudomorph Classifieds will not be limited to only rock & mineral related items, but to any items members are looking to sale.

When making a classified ad for the newsletter be sure to include:

- Description of Item
- Asking Price
- Contact Information
- Picture(s)

Pictures are not necessary but will be added if provided. Please send photographs in JPEG (.jpg) format if possible.

Classified Ads for the Pseudomorph are due to the editor no later than the first Thursday of each month, via Email or by U.S. Mail.

James May, Editor
Email geojim9@hotmail.com

If you have any ads, you want added to the next Pseudomorph, please email me the details and I will post.

Don't Forget the BREAKFAST CLUB

The first Wednesday of each month, year-round, KCMS Members and occasional guests meet at 8:30 AM at Lorene's Coffee shop at 23rd and Eye streets in downtown Bakersfield. Everybody is welcome to attend!

-- Dalia Hernandez



KCMS Monthly Meeting

Please join the KCMS at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 19th at the East Bakersfield Veterans Hall located at 2101 Ridge Road in Northeast Bakersfield. We hope you can attend, and visitors are always welcome.



Kern County Mineral Society

is a Charter Member of the
California Federation of Mineralogical Societies

and is affiliated with the
American Federation of Mineralogical Societies



The Kern County Mineral Society, Inc. was organized in 1935 to promote the study of mineralogy and allied earth sciences, to collect and study minerals and rocks, to study and practice the techniques of jewelry making, to promote good fellowship and good citizenship and to promote education in the earth sciences. Membership dues are; \$20 for singles, \$25 for couples.

KCMS WEBSITE: <http://www.kerncountymineralsociety.org/>

Pseudomorph Subscriptions

The Pseudomorph is published 10 times a year (September through June) by Kern County Mineral Society, P.O. Box 12305, Bakersfield, CA, 93389-2305. Subscription included with Membership. Non-members \$5.50 per year, Jan. thru Dec., not prorated.

KCMS will email a free .pdf subscription to any high school, college, or university student who wishes to receive it. Just email a request to geojim9@hotmail.com

Articles for *The Pseudomorph* are due to the Editor no later than the first Thursday of each month, via Email, via Facebook, or by US Mail. Please send photographs in JPEG (.jpg) format if possible, and text as Notepad, Word, or other simple text for me to paste and edit.

James May, Editor
Email geojim9@hotmail.com

Facebook: Kern County Mineral Society

Articles in this publication may be reprinted if attribution is given to the author and to *The Pseudomorph, Monthly Newsletter of the Kern County Mineral Society*



KCMS Officers 2023

President

James May
geojim9@hotmail.com

Vice President

Connie Fleishauer

Secretary

Anita Andersen

Treasurer

SB

Pseudomorph Editor

James May
geojim9@hotmail.com

Federation Director

Bernie Bentsen

Field Scout

Bernie Bentsen

Committee Chairs 2023

Kitchen

Sue Kimbriel

Scholarship

David Schaad

Door Hostess

Kay Hevle

Facebook Editor

Anita Andersen

Curator

Steve Fleishauer



FUN, GAMES, & FIELD EXCURSIONS



JANUARY'S MONTH'S MYSTERY SLAB



Here is this month's mystery slab. Please submit your answer to kerncountymineralsociety@gmail.com and geojim9@hotmail.com. Each month's winner will be placed in a drawing at the end of the year for a special prize. Last month's winners were Anita Andersen and Michael Sarr who correctly identified the slab as eclogite or Christmas Rock. The correct answers came in at the same time. Nice work to both Anita and Michael.

Mystery Slab Hint: Lies on the Mohs Scale of Hardness, has many colors due to impurities, transparent to translucent varieties, and may be fluorescent. The primary uses of the mineral are a flux in steel manufacturing, production of hydrofluoric acid (think Breaking Bad), and lens for cameras and telescopes.

To make sure you are credited with the correct answer, please email the Kern County Mineral Society and James (see email addresses above). We would like to keep track of those who get the correct identity of the mystery slab each month.