



# ROCKHOUND RAMBLINGS

NOVEMBER 2019 • PASADENA LAPIDARY SOCIETY® • PASADENA, CA



*The signet rings at left and below are shown at 3x actual size to make details more discernible. You can imagine the diligence and good eyesight required to carve tiny eyes, nose, and mouth into carnelian and blue chalcedony, both 7 on the Mohs scale. The ring with Artemis and a deer is from the same display case as the 28 beads (page 8). The ring with Aphrodite flying aboard a goose is from an earlier period, around 400 BC. Digital images courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program.*



## LAPIDARY AT LOCAL MUSEUMS

### Visit the Villa

by Karl Stull

The Getty Villa in Pacific Palisades/Malibu is not to be confused with the Getty Center, which is on the 405, near Sepulveda Pass. The Getty Villa sits on a hillside overlooking PCH and the lapis-blue waters of Santa Monica Bay. It's a view that would make Julius Caesar think of home.

The Getty Villa specializes in artworks of ancient Rome and the Mediterranean. Its building is a replica of a Roman aristocrat's country house, flooded and preserved by lava from Vesuvius in the eruption of AD 79. The Getty Villa collection includes many *very* vintage pieces – from Egypt, Syria, Greece, and Etruria as well as Rome – that will amaze and inspire lapidaries today.

In addition to engraved gemstones, you'll find gold and silver settings to get you thinking about themes and techniques. For rockhounds who collect more material than they can ever turn into jewelry, the Getty Villa presents mosaics – an art form requiring quantities of cut and polished stone.

Of course, there's more at the Villa than you can take in during a single visit – to say nothing of time for appreciative lingering (if I lived closer, most of my afternoons would be spent there). For a lapidary-first visit, go straight through the main entrance, past a double line of bronze statues with the whites of their eyes spookily painted in, and enter Gallery 110, just left of the stairs.

#### Gallery 110: The Etruscans

The Etruscans, inhabiting central Italy before the Romans, carved a lot of amber. Ranging from thumb- to finger-size and larger, the carvings are mostly pendants from around 500 BC, and are thought to have had magical associations: for example, the rams and lions for personal wear. There are five figures of women – full-length and fully clothed (not fertility goddesses). One of the women holds an infant on her hip, with details more incised than sculpted. Another shows two women standing back to back. A third looks queenly in stature but rough in detail.

In truth, most of the amber carvings are difficult to make out. The lapidary audience will likely gravitate to a nearby display with four necklaces of amber droplets and tabs. The one with three styles of gold beads and spacers and a single carnelian bead is a notably workmanlike piece.

*Continued on page 4*

## President's Message



Dear Fellow Members,

We had very good attendance at our general meeting last month, with many members turning out for a spectacular presentation on Boulder Opal by Dick and Mary Pat Weber. The auditorium echoed with oooh's and aaah's when a video clip showed a drab-looking rock being cracked open to reveal a deep-lake blue inside.

There was very good attendance at the October Workshop too, but having so many members drop in throughout the day kept some of our staff on their feet a lot longer than necessary. Carolyn Duncan walked new members through two separate safety tours. The second group had to have their Cabbing 101 class postponed because Ed Imlay's bracelet class was already in progress, as scheduled. In the future, we are asking that members coming to the workshop for the safety tour arrive promptly at 9:15. The Cabbing 101 class starts at 10 (and is open to any member who wants a refresher on basic techniques).

Set-up and clean-up at the workshop also involve more work than most members know. Carolyn very much appreciates those who come right at 9 to help set up tables. In the afternoon, those tables need to be taken down again. In addition, there are saws and polishing machines to shut down and tidy up. Many hands make light work. Please volunteer to keep our workshop in good shape.

**Keep up with PLS on Facebook.** Elizabeth Weston does a fantastic job posting information about club activities and other news for local rockhounds. FYI, when you Like a post on the PLS Facebook page, your personal newsfeed will then pick up our posts automatically. It's a great way to keep abreast of all that is going on with PLS. .

Use the Send Message button to submit photos or other material to share.

— *Ellen Ferrell, President*

**Schedule Change:**  
**General meeting this month is**  
**November 12**

## Pasadena Lapidary Society®

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## Officers, Trustees, and Committee Chairs

<b>Ellen Ferrell, President</b>	(727) 512-0381	Ellenbf2007@aol.com
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<b>Joe Goetz, Federation Dir.</b>	(626) 260-7239	joenmar1@verizon.net

<b>Trustees</b>	Marcia Goetz, Chris Kyte, Joe Goetz
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## Committee Chairs

<b>Annual Show</b>	Ellen Ferrell	Michelle Vandenbroeck (Co-Chair)
<b>Bulletin</b>	Karl Stull	<b>Display Table</b> Ferdie Sanchez
<b>Education</b>	Joan Harrison	<b>Field Trips</b> Karl Stull
<b>Historian</b>	Karl Stull	<b>Hospitality</b> Elizabeth Weston
<b>Librarian</b>	Jennifer Jang	<b>Membership</b> M Vandenbroeck
<b>Publicity</b>	Mona Ross	<b>Social Media</b> Elizabeth Weston
<b>Sunshine</b>	Ellen Ferrell	<b>Technology</b> Ben Shutman
<b>Ways &amp; Means</b>	Philip Lahr	<b>Webmaster</b> Eugene Kim
<b>Workshop</b>	Carolyn Duncan	

## Membership

Membership per calendar year is \$25; for additional adults at the same address, \$15. Junior members are \$10. There is an initiation fee of \$10 per person to cover costs of name badges, etc.

Renewals are due in October and delinquent after December 31. Mail checks to PO Box 5025, Pasadena, CA 91117-0025.

## Meetings

### Board Meetings – 1st Thursday of the month

7 p.m. at Matt Denny's Ale House  
 145 E Huntington Dr, Arcadia  
 Dinner at 6 p.m. PLS members are welcome.

### Workshop – 2nd Sunday of the month

9 a.m. –5 p.m. \$3 for half-day, \$5 for a full day. Equipment instruction is required; also liability waivers, eye protection, and closed-toe shoes. For directions, please call (909) 455-4360 (cell) or (909) 593-2781, or email [gem.quest38@gmail.com](mailto:gem.quest38@gmail.com). Bring lunch!

Junior members 9 and older are welcome with adult supervision.

### Program Meetings – 3rd Tuesday of the month

Doors open at 6 p.m. Meeting is 6:30–8:45 p.m.  
 Pasadena Central Library, 285 E Walnut St.

## Contact Us

**Email:** [info@PasadenaLapidary.org](mailto:info@PasadenaLapidary.org) **Instagram:** [/PasadenaLapidary](https://www.instagram.com/pasadenalapidary/)

**Facebook:** Pasadena Lapidary Society **Twitter:** [@pasalapidary](https://twitter.com/pasalapidary)

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**Editor:** Karl Stull (818) 205-7135 [karlestull@gmail.com](mailto:karlestull@gmail.com)

Send articles by the 15th for publication in next month's issue. Very short items can get in as late as the 22nd but are not guaranteed to make the next issue.

## Program Meeting – November 12



## Legendary Kokowee Caves

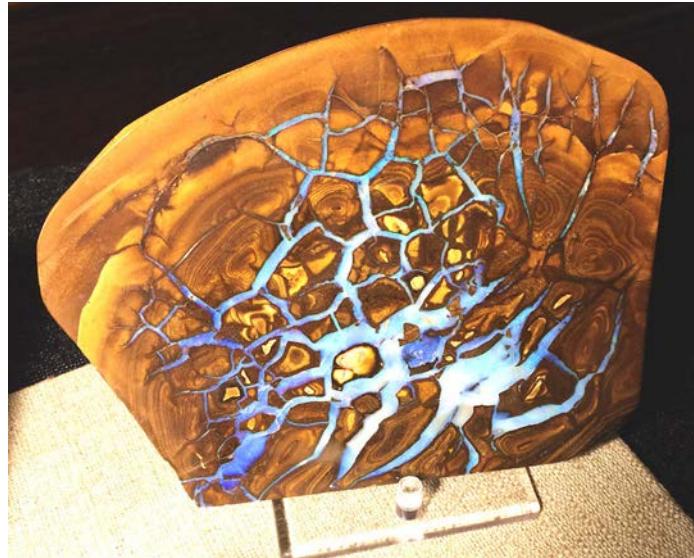
Have you heard the legend of the river of gold in the Kokowee Caves? There are several versions of the story, involving three brothers (George, Buck, and Oliver Peysert) who discovered a limestone cave with a huge crystal stalactite and an underground river containing gold.

In 1934, Earl Paul Dorr, who knew the brothers from boyhood, wrote a description of these formations, which he saw in an area about 85 miles east of Barstow. His affidavit, published in the 1940 *California Mining Journal*, reported a series of chambers, a white crystal stalactite about 27 feet in diameter and at least 500 feet long, and a canyon with a wide underground river banked by black sands. He panned the black sands for gold and estimated there was \$2,415 worth per yard of sand (with gold priced at \$20.67 per ounce). He said the river ran for at least eight miles.

On November 12 (please note the date, the second Tuesday of November), our program meeting will feature Carolyn Duncan's presentation on the Kokowee Caves. Carolyn visited the area about 30 years ago, and brought back some specimens of cave onyx, which she plans to display at the meeting. – *Mona Ross*

## On the Display Table

Ferdie Sanchez coordinates the Display Table at monthly meetings. Share items of rockhound interest, workshop projects, or rocks from field trips. If you have a rock you'd like to have identified, put it on the Display Table with a "What Is This?" note. Knocking a corner off the specimen may provide clues.



*This basketball-sized specimen with brambles of opal was but one in a tableful of gasp-worthy rocks brought to our October meeting by program presenters Dick and Mary Pat Weber. They had the collection on loan from Broken River Mine.*

*At right, Mireya Morales and Ed Imlay view fossils, crystals, and workshop projects brought in by PLS members.*

## Time to renew for 2020

If you haven't already, please pay PLS dues this month.

\$25 for primary member

\$15 for each additional adult at the same address

\$10 for each Junior member (under 18 years)

The preferred way to pay is by cash or check at the monthly meeting or workshop. Or you can mail a check to Pasadena Lapidary Society, P.O. Box 5025, Pasadena, CA 91117.

## PayPal Option

Log in to your PayPal account, choose Send, and enter:

[paypal@pasadenalapidary.org](mailto:paypal@pasadenalapidary.org)

Make sure that "Pay for an item or service" is selected (not "Send money to a friend").

## Nominating Committee



## And the Candidates Are...

At the October program meeting, the Nominating Committee presented its list of five candidates for PLS offices, including three incumbents and two newcomers. They are: for President, Ellen Ferrell; Vice-President, Michelle Vandenbroeck; Secretary, David Lacy; Treasurer, Philip Lahr; and Federation Director, Sue Pang.

There were no nominations from the floor. The election of club officers for 2020-2021 will be held at the November meeting.

– *Karl Stull*



Continued from page 1

### Gallery 111: The Hellenistic World

“Hellenistic” means post-Alexander the Great (d. 323 BC). In this era, new dynasties arose in Egypt, Syria, and Macedonia, spreading Greek culture throughout the eastern Mediterranean. The Ptolemies of Egypt wore fabulous jewelry, as you’ll see in the case with the 28 beads. In contrast to the Etruscan ambers, which seem fraught with spirit power, the Hellenistic headgear and bracelets, with their bright gold and clever designs, seem exuberant in the expression of secular power (in effect, “I am the goddess”). The case contains a second ring like the Artemis deer signet, but showing the goddess Fortuna. Looking for an “out there” design idea? These rings were made to be worn across two fingers.

### Gallery 217→216: Roman Treasury

Directly upstairs from the Hellenistic World, Gallery 216 carries on with the triumph of wealth, power, and technical excellence in carvings from the height of the Roman Empire. An Apollo in amethyst (no. 1 in the Engraved Gems and Cameos case) with curly hair and strong features may remind you of a youth in dark green chalcedony at the other end of the room (burial goods). The youth, in turn, imitates the Doryphoros, a famous Greek statue representing ideal proportions of the human body in art.

No. 2 in the Engraved Gems and Cameos case is a carving in carnelian that depicts the seduction of Anchises by Venus. Their son Aeneas became the founder of Rome. Sensuality in a cold, hard gemstone is rare, but stories of the gods’ loves and lusts are plentiful. Reinforcing this theme, back again at the burial goods case, there is a cast-silver mask of Jupiter (5 inches) with the puffy cheeks and boozy eyes that are the infallible marks of one who has partied too long.

### Mosaics: Second-Floor Walkabout

A rock is the “canvas” in gem carving. In mosaics, every rock is a dab of paint. The Mediterranean tradition began with pebble mosaics, installed by Greek artisans through the Hellenistic era. With the rise of the Roman Empire, Greek workshops started making mosaics with small tiles, called tesserae (TESS a ree) – maybe because of an imperial preference for smooth, flat floors.

Coming out of the Roman Treasury gallery, walk the hallway toward the main entrance for a tour of the Getty Villa’s Roman-era mosaics. “Combat Between Dares and Entellus” and “Lion Attacking an Onager” are the biggest and best at telling a story in a snapshot. Both affirm the principle that life is struggle and the strong deserve to rule. The onager (wild ass) has a sensitive face and seems to take his fate philosophically, and is perhaps about to ask, “Does it have to be this way?” The lion remains intent on his meal, like a teenager biting a burger at Carl’s Jr.

When you’re ready to head home, stop at Gallery 101D near the main entrance to see Aphrodite on her goose-taxi (no. 19 on the far wall). You’ll find she is in fact extremely difficult to see, the details being all but invisible in the stone. They would stand out when the signet was pressed into wax.

Note for a future visit to the Getty Villa: the museum acquired the famous Sangiorgi collection of engraved gemstones earlier this year, possibly the star attraction in an exhibition to come. ♦



Top: To recreate this illusion of a vortex, you would need black tiles, white tiles, and a plan for sizing and spacing ever-smaller triangles. Guidelines have been found under many mosaics, with grids, diagonals, and curves that could be plotted with basic tools such as a nail and string, compass, and calipers. Find this mosaic in the Auditorium building, next door to the museum. For full effect, try walking up to the image from different angles.

Bottom: Using relatively large tiles (typically 1/4 inch), mosaics have a “low-res” or pixelated appearance and yet sometimes achieve a realism that leaps across the centuries. On the right, is that a pre-incarnation of Vera Farmiga? Mosaic makers imitated the techniques of painters in creating realistic images. Look closely at the noses to see how white and three shades of brown make these features seem to stand out. Unfortunately, this particular mosaic is not on display right now, but you’ll find other painterly examples to compare in the 201C hallway.

Digital images courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program



After close examination of many tiny gemstones, you may find this 1.5 foot tall marble carving a relief. It's easy to get sidelong views of the artisan's technique – with the roundness of horse anatomy, separation of near and far legs, and features on the front of a face shown in profile, etc. This is the god of wine, Dionysus, riding on a tipsy-looking cart (Gallery 211). Photo by Karl Stull



Matthew Bell unkinks a tow strap on a sandy road at the Cadys.



The four in the foreground at the workshop: Valerie Stathatos, Michael Perez, John Doyle, and Megan McHone.



## Jewelry: Never Just Jewelry

[In] the ancient world, as now, jewelry was never just jewelry. Today, throughout the world, jewelers, artisans, and merchants make or sell religious symbols, good-luck charms, evil eyes, birthstones, tiaras, mourning pins, wedding rings, and wristwatches.

— Faya Causey  
Ancient Carved Ambers in the J. Paul Getty Museum

Read more at [museumcatalogues.getty.edu/amber/intro/2/](https://museumcatalogues.getty.edu/amber/intro/2/).

You might be a rockhound if ... you can cut a slab of onyx and do laundry at the same time. Sylvia Cliffe can.



Dear Cabby,

*Is it just me, or is it VERY difficult to make out details in carved gemstones at the local museum?*

– 20/20 IN BLURBANK

Dear 20/20,

Your smartphone is a handy magnifier. Turn on the camera, as if to take a photo of the carving, and spread thumb and forefinger on the screen to enlarge the image. Use the phone's flashlight at different angles to cast shadows and highlight details. – Cabby

### Workshop – November 10



### Come Early

Workshop hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Arrive at 9 if you can help with setting up tables.

If this will be your first time using equipment at the PLS Workshop, a safety tour and orientation are required. Safety tours are at 9:15.

The fee for a half day is \$3, all day \$5. We may close early due to heat, storms, or low attendance. If you plan to arrive late in the day, please call ahead.

For directions, call **(909) 455-4360** (cell) or **(909) 593-2781** or email [gem.quest38@gmail.com](mailto:gem.quest38@gmail.com). Entrance is on the *west* side of the building. Do not enter by the ramp in the parking lot.

– Carolyn Duncan

### Monthly Classes in Culver City

The Culver City Rock & Mineral Club is proud to announce its new Workshop Series of classes. Beginning with chain maille last month, these workshops will encompass a range of different jewelry-making techniques, including silversmithing. For more information, email Janice Metz at [jenft4@gmail.com](mailto:jenft4@gmail.com).



From the October PLS Workshop: note the clasp.

### Welcome, New Members



**Jennifer Allen**, born and raised in Maine, has been fascinated by rocks since she was a wee child collecting beautiful pieces of granite and quartz along the sea shore. She moved to California four years ago, after a decade in New York City. She is a nurse practitioner by day and works on growing her jewelry business by night. Jennifer's current obsession is turquoise, and she is itching to cut her own cabs and do more inlay work. It's exciting, she says, to be surrounded by people with such a wealth of knowledge. See displays of her work at [www.winthropsdaughter.com/](http://www.winthropsdaughter.com/) (click Markets).



**Muffy Bolding** is a mother / writer / producer / actor / fiber artist / witch / withered debutante who has been enthusiastically scanning the ground for rocks with great glee ever since she was old enough to toddle about and stash them in her diaper. No longer in a diaper (at least not as of this writing), she travels with rocks, sleeps with rocks, eats with rocks, bathes with rocks, hunts for rocks, dreams of rocks, and is verily surrounded by rocks at all times. Her purse is very heavy. She lives in Altadena with Her One True Love, Gregory, their three darling children, and their three darling chihuahuas – who are also their children, but don't give them no lip. She fronts a Feminist riot crone band called Hagstone, and in her next life she wants to be a librarian.

### Hauling Help Needed

Offers to donate equipment to PLS come throughout the year, but sometimes we don't have a pickup truck available to accept the gift. Volunteers who can help, please contact Phil Lahr: **(818) 926-3163** or [plkslahr@att.net](mailto:plkslahr@att.net).



Quartz geode, collected by Chris Kyte.



Irma Rogers, Amy Schube, and Aleta Purcell are often together in PLS photos from the 1960s, and always having fun. They might have been the club cut-ups.

Irma was the bulletin editor for many years. Aleta was a nurse and working mom in an era when that was unusual. She served as Treasurer and later as President. In 1968, when she was President, PLS did not have an annual show. Instead, we put an exhibit in the Pasadena Library and took a field trip to Mexico.

## Rock and Gem Shows

**November 2–3 ANAHEIM** American Opal Society, Business Expo Center, 1960 S Anaheim Way. Hours: Sat 10–6, Sun 10–5. [opalsociety.org/](http://opalsociety.org/)

**November 2–3 RIDGECREST** Indian Wells Gem & Mineral Society, Desert Empire Fairgrounds, 520 S Richmond Rd. Hours: 9–5 daily. [indianwellsgemandmineral.com](http://indianwellsgemandmineral.com)

**November 9–10 YUBA CITY** Sutter Buttes Gem & Mineral Society, Yuba-Sutter Fairgrounds, Franklin Hall, 442 Franklin Blvd. Hours: Sat 10–5, Sun 10–4. [sutterbuttesgemmin.org](http://sutterbuttesgemmin.org)

**November 16–17 LAKESIDE** El Cajon Valley Gem & Mineral Society, Lakeside Rodeo Grounds, 12584 Mapleview St. Hours: Sat 10–5, Sun 10–4. [ecvgs.org](http://ecvgs.org)

**November 23–24: OXNARD** Oxnard Gem & Mineral Society, Oxnard Performing Arts Center, 800 Hobson Wy. Hours: Sat 10–5, Sun. 10–4. [oxnardgem.com](http://oxnardgem.com)

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A YOUNG ROCKHOUND AND AN OLD ONE IS IN THE SIZE AND WEIGHT OF THE THINGS YOU'RE PICKING UP TO CARRY HOME.

— IRMA ROGERS, 1964

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>November 2019</b>		Program meeting this month is on the 2nd Tuesday.			1	2  Gem shows
3  Gem shows	4	5	6	7 <b>Board mtg</b> PLS members always welcome	8	9  Gem show
10 <b>Workshop</b>	11	12 <b>Program mtg</b> "Kokoweef"	13	14	15	16  Gem show
17  Gem show	18	19	20	21	22	23  Gem show
24  Gem show	25	26	27	28	29	30



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*A sun caught in branches of Boulder Opal,  
from Broken River Mine (Australia); photo  
about 1/2 actual size*



## 28 Beads Cleopatra Never Wore

These 28 beads – made of gold, carnelian, amethyst, and emerald – are arranged as a necklace but were loose when acquired by the J. Paul Getty Museum and were likely worn by a wealthy lady of Alexandria with different pieces of jewelry. The carnelian stud in the middle is drilled vertically. It might have been an earring or a pendant.

See these beads at the Getty Villa in a display case of Egyptian jewelry (Gallery 111). The beads date from 225–175 BC. Cleopatra was born in 69 BC.

Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program