



ROCKHOUND RAMBLINGS

DECEMBER 2019 • PASADENA LAPIDARY SOCIETY® • PASADENA, CA



Reclaim, Rejewel – Sculpture You Wear

by Karl Stull

For Megan McHone, lapidary is about finding neglected treasures and giving them new life – not as museum pieces but as vivid elements in a fresh design, plugged into contemporary ideas and taste. Where a traditional rockhound might be out in the Mojave cracking quartz with a hammer, Megan is more likely to be sifting through wholesale lots from estate sales or walking a beach to see what today's waves have brought in.

At right, jewelry from her Totem collection incorporates rocks found on beaches in northern California and pale yellow shards of porcelain, dug up by the ocean at an old town dump. The butterfly, monkeys, and deer all came from a single lot of costume jewelry, which was the creative starting point for the Totem collection.

Getting down to work in her studio, Megan keeps a supply of hardware on hand: bezels in various shapes and finishes. In the



Continued on page 6

President's Message



Dear Fellow Members,

December will be an exciting month for Pasadena Lapidary Society. There are many activities for all of us to enjoy.

December 5 is the Board of Directors meeting, and we will be approving new members. We welcome our new members just in time to attend their first workshop. Please call Carolyn Duncan to schedule your safety orientation and your Cabbing 101 class. Orientation will begin at 9:15 a.m., and Cabbing 101 will follow. You will be welcomed and will begin immediately learning new things that you will enjoy for years to come.

December 7 is the annual open house at the Jewel Tunnel, located at 13100 Spring Street, Baldwin Park. Hours will be from 10:00 a.m. to 4 p.m. I have made reservations for 50 people, so don't miss an opportunity to get some real treasures. Rough rock, finished rock, minerals, gemstones ready to set, and gifts for those on your holiday list.

December 8 is workshop. If you need directions, call Carolyn Duncan at **(909) 593-2781**. You can check her article in this bulletin about the workshop.

December 14 is our annual Holiday Party. It will be held at The Santa Anita Church in the Fellowship Hall (see Martha Wilson's article on page 3 for details). There will be crafts in the afternoon, followed by a potluck. Afterwards the new officers for the coming two years will be installed, the awards for Rockhound of the Year will be given, and then we'll have a holiday gift exchange. We will be collecting non-perishable food items for donation to Janie Duncan's outreach program at the Foothills Kitchen. Those who bring an item to donate will receive a raffle ticket for door prizes to be given away prior to the gift exchange.

We will not be having a program meeting at the Pasadena Central Library in December. We look forward to seeing everyone at the meeting in January.

Wishing everyone Happy Holidays.

— Ellen Ferrell, President

Pasadena Lapidary Society®

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Trustees	Marcia Goetz, Chris Kyte, Joe Goetz
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Bulletin	Karl Stull	Display Table Ferdie Sanchez
Education	Joan Harrison	Field Trips Karl Stull
Historian	Karl Stull	Hospitality Mona Ross
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Sunshine	Ellen Ferrell	Technology Ben Shutman
Ways & Means	Philip Lahr	Webmaster Elizabeth Weston
Workshop	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**. 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 **Instagram:** [/PasadenaLapidary](https://www.instagram.com/pasadenalapidary/)

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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.

PLS Holiday Party

It's that time of year again when we celebrate with our friends and family. This year we will hold our annual Holiday Party and potluck dinner

on December 14 from 2 p.m. until 9 p.m. It will be at the Santa Anita Church, 226 W. Colorado Blvd., Arcadia (see map; there is plenty of parking in back).

- Fun crafts in the afternoon and dinner at 6 p.m.
- Awards for Rockhound of the Year will be presented.
- Newly elected officers will be installed.
- There will be a gift exchange. Bring a wrapped gift (preferably a unisex gift) with a minimum value of \$15.
- There will be a food drive. Please bring non-perishable food items. Door prizes will be drawn for those who participate in the food drive.
- You will be able to pay your yearly dues at this time.

We need help to make this a success. Set up is at 1:30 p.m. if you would like to help, and of course help is needed in clean up. If you would like to teach a crafts class, PLEASE let me know ASAP. If you have any ideas concerning the party, I would love to hear them. Feel free to call me at **(626) 798-9085**.

— *Martha Wilson, Holiday Party Chair*

What to Bring for the Potluck Dinner

Last names beginning with:

A – G Main course

H – P Side dishes (salad, veggies, potatoes/rice type dishes)

Q – Z Desserts

Or bring whatever tasty dish you want.



*THIN COAT OF
CAVE ONYX
ON
HOST ROCK*



Widely known as "cave onyx," calcite formations from the Kokowee cavern in the eastern Mojave Desert show distinctive layered patterns, like nested mini-pasta shells. These samples from the Display Table at the November meeting were brought in by Carolyn Duncan (above) and Jeff Dengrove.

In Appreciation

Dear PLS Members,

Foothills Kitchen is a nonprofit organization with the mission of feeding the homeless, seniors, and families in need. Full meals are prepared, cooked, and served on Saturdays at 1 p.m. at the Monrovia United Methodist Church. Foothills Kitchen has served over 6,000 individual meals in the last five years.

Please bring your non-perishable food items (canned and dry goods) to the PLS Holiday Party. Tax receipts are available. Thank you for your generosity!

Sincerely,

Janie Duncan, Co-founder, Foothills Kitchen



At the Paul Bunyan Mine, Ellen Limeres, Daniel Nishimura, Alyson Nishimura, Karl Stull, Ed Imlay, Corinne Imlay, Steve Cady, Phil Lahr, Sylvia Cliffe, and Cathy Govallier. Photo by Chuie Nishimura

Rock Hunting in the Calico Mountains

by Alyson Nishimura

My family and I went on the PLS field trip last month to the Calico Mountains and had a great time. We didn't go to the tourist magnet Calico Ghost Town but instead chose to dry-camp near the old Paul Bunyan Mine, in a landscape full of adventure and relics from days past.

It's rugged country. Though the roads are pitted and steep, fresh tire tracks indicated we weren't alone. Indeed, starting at 7 a.m., we heard gunfire. Shooting is allowed on BLM land. It sounded like a scene from the movie *Tombstone*, but it didn't affect our rock hunting. Though the lead was flying towards paper targets and tin cans, we focused on the rocks that could be made into jewelry, near the Paul Bunyan Mine and in Mule Canyon along the appropriately named Tin Can Alley.

The PLS field trip officially began on Saturday morning, with participants gathering at the Baymont motel in Yermo. My dad and I scouted the area while Jay Valle led the group to the Paul Bunyan area. At 9:10, I saw a five-vehicle convoy about three miles away, and 10 minutes later a group of 17 gem hunters from PLS/Whittier converged on our campsite.

After a brief orientation and some warnings about open tunnels and shafts, the rockhounds spread out and began collecting. My dad said that "old stock" at Paul Bunyan had blue and red colors, whereas the material found nowadays had gray and red. I hunted long and hard with my dad until a glint of red was spotted under some mine rubble. We dug it out to find a nugget of Paul Bunyan agate. Best of all, it was BLUE AND RED agate that had somehow lain unclaimed for years.

It seemed that everyone else found red agate too. We had allotted about one hour for this stop, but since everyone was having such a good time, we stayed for an extra 30 minutes.

Our next stop was 20 minutes away, an onyx location off Fort Irwin Road. This site featured red, yellow, and white onyx interspersed with veins of white/blue agate. Sue Pang found a piece with a band of agate shaped like the numeral 1 and declared this location as #1 on her list. I saw several pieces of onyx with lightning bolt-shaped agate patterns that were suitable for cabbing.

An hour later found us at an old gold mine. No one discovered any gold (or they didn't say anything about it), but we did find a material identified by Sylvia Cliffe as epidote in granite. My five-year-old brother Danny loved this term and ran around telling everyone about his "epic" in granite piece.

Epidote is a common pistachio-green silicate mineral with a Mohs hardness of 6.5. It is frequently found in veins in granite, but when combined with pink feldspar it is called unakite. Of course, to Danny it was still "epic in granite," and by the time he showed his epic rock to everyone, it was time to leave for the Butler onyx location.

Getting to the Butler onyx involved driving on the Fort Irwin Road, a notorious speedway for soldiers and contractors working at Fort Irwin. It was a bit scary trying to get six cars to decelerate from 65 mph and turn onto an unmarked dirt road, so I'm sure there must have been some screaming from the faint of heart in our group.

The best part of the Butler onyx location for me was the drive on the side road to get there. Most of it was through a shallow Joshua tree-lined wash, which terminated at a gravel-covered plateau. Getting out of the wash and onto the plateau involved driving up a short, steep hill, which almost everyone was able to do without any difficulty. However, four-wheel drive is better than two-wheel drive on a steep climb!

The gravel-covered plateau was as flat as a parking lot, and there were onyx outcroppings everywhere. This onyx didn't have agate veins but made up for it with a variety of onyx color patterns. I found a spectacular piece of yellow/white onyx that looked like a field of white flowers on a yellow background.

Our last stop was a green nickel onyx mine. Most of the material had to be dug out of treacherously steep hillside tailings, but many of us came back with bright pieces of green onyx. Those who didn't get good specimens were treated to some slabs of material, which my dad pre-cut from specimens he collected during his scouting trip the week before.

By 4 p.m., the group was worn out. While almost everyone went to downtown Yermo to eat at Peggy Sue's 50's Diner, we retreated to our Paul Bunyan campsite to collect more agate and build a campfire to cook our meal. As the shadows grew long and the evening winds started to pick up, we were safe in our tent. We recounted the day's events, thankful for the opportunity to spend time in the desert with friends, and we waited for the nightly star show. ♦



Top: The white streak behind the bush is the dry basin of Coyote Lake, filled with salt residue from wetter times.

Middle: Alyson and Rex Nishimura are on the left. On the right, Phil Lahr, Danny Nishimura, and Mireya Morales show off three styles of rockhounding hats.

Left: If you were a teenager in the opening scenes of a horror movie, would you go down the ladder in an abandoned mine on a dare? Of course, you would. Photo by Rex Nishimura

Reclaim, Rejewel *Continued from page 1*

Totem collection, the bezels are electroplated with black-tinted rhodium (a form of platinum) and roughed up a little so that the black is not perfect. The Kaleidotopia collection includes bezels in sterling silver and in vermeil (sterling plated with 18k gold).

The software in her jewelry is resin – a jewelry-grade adhesive mixed from two tubes – and it stays soft for 30 minutes to an hour, allowing time to color the resin and reposition objects if the initial arrangement points the way to something better. Other fabrication techniques may come into play – such as drilling, soldering, chains, prongs, polishing, etc. – but at the heart of Megan's creations are the bezels, resin, and found objects. She calls her jewelry functional art, or art you can wear.

Lapidary: Where You Find It

In the olden days of the lapidary hobby, from the 1950s through the 1970s, a basic part of the fun was in fashioning a piece of jewelry from a stone you collected yourself. From field trip to final polish, the piece was your work. A few rockhounds still get that thrill, but the days of easy pickings in the Mojave are gone. Lapidary hobbyists mostly rely on dealers to provide distinctive stones. The first stage of the creative process – discovery – has been jobbed out.

By collecting in an unconventional way, Megan recaptures some of the old-time “find to finish” lapidary experience. True, the gemstones and other objects in her jewelry were all previously collected – and processed, used, and thrown away – before she ever laid eyes on them, but each was also re-discovered. Each had to be recognized – like a block of marble in a quarry – as raw material that could become beautiful in another, not-yet-realized form. Instead of going to the landfill, to be buried, crushed, and dissolved into constituent elements, these stray bits become jewelry with an extra dimension.

Reclaim and recycle is an example of an alternative way to do lapidary. Not that we should all rush to a thrift store or junkyard. But Megan's method reminds us to think outside the traditional, with an eye toward new possibilities and awareness of vanishing species (such as turquoise, which we loved to death).

It will come as no surprise, Megan McHone trained as a conceptual artist. She has a bachelor's degree from Cal Arts (Valencia) and went on to a two-year course in jewelry design at the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising. Her motto: “Re-wear the worn. Re-tell the story. Art is wearable.” ♦



Two trim saws, \$20 each

Either one of these saws should be an easy and rewarding project for someone with a few hours to spend and a basic set of tools. First is an 8-inch Highland Park with a vise. Second is a 6-inch Raytech that is set up to be very easy to clean. They both need motors and need to be mounted on a baseboard. Both spin freely. The HP has rust to be cleaned up but could end up being a twin to the sturdy old model at the workshop. The Raytech includes belts and blades. More photos are available. Call Philip Lahr at **(818) 926-3163**.

Time to renew for 2020

Thank you for keeping your PLS membership up to date. Payment is due by December 31.

\$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.

Workshop – December 8



Bring Your Treasures

If you went on the field trip, bring in your treasures and we will open them up.

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. Cabbing 101 follows right afterward.

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. Entrance is on the west side of the building. Do not enter by the ramp in the parking lot.

– Carolyn Duncan

Host a Co-op Display Case

See your neurologist if the slice of pizza at right did not cause you to do a double-take. It's astonishing – a sheet of copper with olives, mushrooms, and pepperoni hammered in relief. Martha Wilson created it for the Rocco's Pizza project, a co-op display case being assembled for the 2020 Annual Show. Eight PLS members are contributing a slice, each in their own style and materials. When all the different slices come together, this is going to be one crazy pizza – a visual treat for Show visitors.

There will be a Chianti bottle inside the case with a candle (unlit) and wax drippings. Red checked table cloth, of course.

Co-op display cases are nothing new for PLS. Carol Burton and Carole Sumler presented a "fairies and gnomes" theme in their 2017 case. Sylvia Cliffe's carving students contributed their work to a class case in 2018. In some years, we have a Field Trips case with rocks, slabs, and cabs from trip sites.

You could host a co-op case. All you need is a concept and contributions from a few fellow PLS members. Concepts can be personal (a "My Favorite Rock" collection), style-oriented ("Big Jewelry" or "Shades of Blue"), pictorial ("A Bouquet of Rocks"), or educational ("A Rocky Solar System" or "Slabs Cut into the Shapes of US States"). Someone in this club is waiting for the chance to carve Alaska. You can make it happen.

For help with starting your co-op case, and finding contributors, contact Karl Stull: **(818) 205-7135** or karlestull@gmail.com.

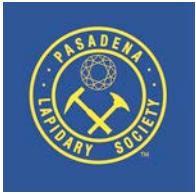
Rock and Gem Shows

December 7-8 BARSTOW Mojave Desert Gem & Mineral Society, Cora Harper Community Ctr, 841 S Barstow Rd. Hours: 10-5 daily. mdgms.net



By Martha Wilson; copper repoussé, 7 7/8 inches along edge.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 December 2019	2	3	4	5 Board mtg PLS members always welcome	6	7  Gem show
8 Workshop	9	10	11	12	13	14 PLS Holiday Party Details on page 3
15	16	17 No program mtg this month	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				



Pasadena Lapidary Society, Inc.
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Joshua trees – so named because they seem to point the way

**Farewell, 2019. Time to renew
PLS membership for 2020!**



Large Red Ring

Not for everyday wear, this sterling silver ring with its oversize platform is so overloaded with cranberry-like beads they dangle. The beads are vintage costume jewelry, and the original wearer would no doubt be flabbergasted to see and hear them clink-a-linking on the hand of an LA hipster today.

The Kaleidotopia collection by our own Megan West McHone (MWM) includes pendants, earrings, and cuffs as well as rings with reclaimed costume jewelry and recycled gems set in custom-tinted resin. Old bits of amethyst, emerald, peridot, and ruby seem to bubble from a hidden spring into a brave new world. See the collection at Megan's website: www.mwmdesigns.com.