

SANTA LUCIA ROCKHOUNDS

P.O. Box 1672

Paso Robles, CA 93447

# SANTA LUCIA ROCKHOUNDS

## ROCKONTEUR

August 2014

Vol. 24 #8

### REFRESHMENTS:

**If your last name starts with the letters K – P, please bring refreshments to the meeting on August 18!**

### PAST PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE ~~~~~

Another disability has occurred among our leadership, resulting in the resignation of President **Richard Smithen** due to medical issues. Richard suffered a brain aneurism and is now home, recovering under the watchful eye of his wife, Joanna. We all hope that his recovery will be complete, but it will take time. He has officially resigned his position, which leaves our Vice President of Programs, Kim Noyes, as his successor. Kim, however, has carefully considered the requirements of the position and has decided that he will be unable to assume the position of President at this time, due to time constraints. This now results in the necessity of holding a **Special Election** at our August meeting, to elect a new President. **Nominees are being sought**, so if you are interested, please contact me (434-2708) before the August meeting, if possible. We already have one person interested in the position, our Drawing Chairman, Mike Judy. Whoever is elected will have guidance and support from the Board as he/she steps into the position, so we should be able to make a smooth transition in our leadership!

I want to thank Richard for his dynamic leadership and support as President in addition to all the other responsibilities he has taken on over the years. We will miss his experience and energy, and wish him a full recovery so he can join us again one day soon.

I also want to thank all of you for bearing with us until our Rockonteur publisher James King is able to work his magic on the computer again – we really miss you, James!

Meanwhile, I know our Club will all pull together and go forth with enthusiasm as we look forward to our annual picnic and auction in September. Be sure to attend our August meeting for details on upcoming events! -- *Barbara Bilyeu*

### PROGRAM FOR AUGUST ~~~~~

Our guest speaker for the August meeting will be **Santos Sarabia**, owner of Unique Selections in downtown San Luis Obispo. He will be speaking about faceted

gemstones, so don't miss this sparkling program on August 18!

## ROCKHOUND FRIENDS ~~~~~

Please keep the following Club members in your thoughts and prayers as they struggle with recovering from medical set-backs! **Richard Smithen; James King; and Nick Sherwin.** And don't forget to put in a good word for their caregivers: **Joanna Smithen; Lisa King; and Pat Sherwin!**

## ROCKHOUND TRAVELS ~~~~~

Have you taken a rockhound vacation this year? If so, would you like to share about your trip? Even though public lands are closing up to rockhounding, there are still some wonderful places to go, and we invite you to share with us some of your favorite places!

I'd like to start off by telling you about a special place we were able to visit on our summer trip to and from Oklahoma to see family. Creede is a very memorable former mining town located in the Rockies west of South Fork, Colorado. Silver was its big commodity beginning in the 1890's, but it is well-known to rockhounds because of what is called "sowbelly agate", which is a product of what is known as the Amethyst Vein. Most of Creede's silver came from the Amethyst Vein and there were several historic mines perched on the sides of the steep Willow Creek Canyon. They are now amazing, very picturesque, rusty ruins barely clinging to the sides of the cliffs, with the exception



of the Last Chance Mine, which has been adopted by a lone former photographer and made into a rockhound destination. We made the journey above Creede to visit the Last Chance Mine, met the owner, and toured the outside areas – taking care not to get TOO close to the edge of the canyon. The mine shafts are not yet visitor-friendly, but we were able to pick out some nice mineral specimens available from the Last Chance and other local mines. Sowbelly agate was everywhere, available for sale as well.

Whether or not you make it up to the Last Chance Mine, Creede is an imposing place and well worth a visit. It has a fascinating history, unique civic features (the fire department is in a cavern in the mountainside!), and it's a photographer's paradise. Wondering how those mines and mills were built and operated so long ago in such

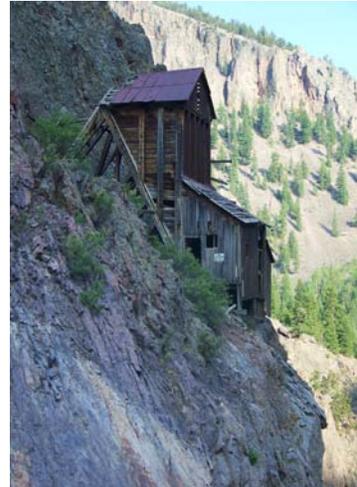
extreme terrain really stretches the imagination. -- *Barbara Bilyeu*



*Approach to Commodore Mine*



*Last Chance Mine owner*



*How did they build this???*

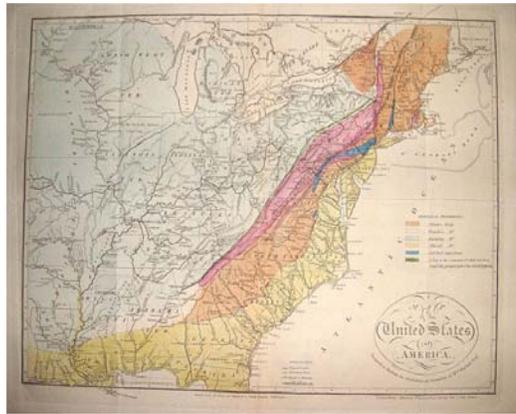
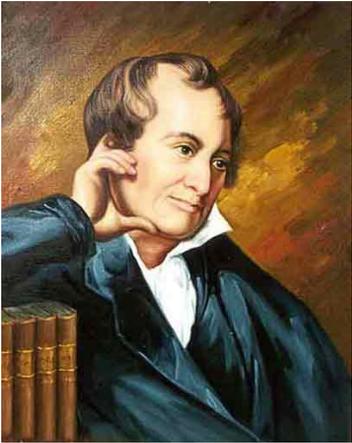


**Did you know? ~~~~~**

**A look at earth science odds and ends by a geology geek (Jim Mills)**

One of my favorite non-fiction authors, Simon Winchester, has a new book out (actually in 2013) entitled *The Men Who United the States*. Winchester is one of my favorites on a couple of accounts; in addition to being a great journalist with a completely agreeable (to me) writing style, he is also a graduate in geology and often writes about geologists -- or at least brings them into his books for cameo appearances. This new book is no exception. In addition to the presidents, politicians, inventors, financiers, and builders, he talks of quite a few early geologists. Thus it was that I was pleasantly reminded that the title of "Father of American Geology" generally goes to William Maclure, a Scotsman who came to the United States as a very young man, and who possessed interest and knowledge about numerous scientific disciplines and business skills. Surprisingly, Maclure was not a practicing geologist,

but is mostly remembered as the very first person to produce a geologic map of the then-known United States (in 1809). He did it by spending ten years tramping across miles and miles of territory with a hammer and magnifying glass – keeping copious notes of his observations along the way.



His map, pictured here, used different colors to show **different kinds of rocks** he encountered. West of the Appalachian Mountains everything is colored light blue for “secondary rocks,” basically fossil-bearing sedimentary rocks. East of the Mountains, all is colored yellow for “alluvium, gravel, sand and clay fresh from the ocean.” The mountains are either dark blue or dark red for what were then known as “transitional rocks,” and then he added pink colors for “primitive rocks,” which were outcrops of ancient granites. You don’t need to look at very many geologic maps to realize that this is NOT the pattern after which all modern geologic maps are made. Instead, we now use colors to denote the **age of rocks** and explain the composition (kinds of rocks) of those strata in an accompanying text. This pattern was invented in England by the English geologist William Smith in 1815 (and about whom Simon Winchester wrote an entire book entitled *The Map that Changed the World*).

But, I digress; the more pertinent fact that I learned from my recent reading is that William Maclure could also be called “the granddaddy of rockhounding in America” because, as Winchester notes :

**“...he explained in a letter to a friend (in the 1790s) he had ‘adopted rock-hunting as an amusement.’ Geology, he declared was far preferable to the conventional bourgeois pursuits of hunting and fishing, not least because it was ‘most applicable to useful practical purposes.’ Moreover, ‘it has always appeared to me that the science of geology was one of the simplest and easiest to acquire: the number of names to be learned is small, and the present nomenclature, although generic rather than specific, is not difficult.’”**

Of course, the science of geology is no longer devoid of technical nomenclature as it was in the closing years of the 1790s – geochemistry, geophysics, plate tectonics, and advances in mineralogy have made certain that geology now abounds with technical words. But, having such a hobby amusement in the last decade of the eighteenth century preceded even the major American mineral collectors of the early nineteenth century, and that fact, in my mind, qualifies him as the very first American ROCKHOUND. No doubt all or most of his collection was self-collected (there is always a possibility that he might have been in contact and traded with some of the very wealthy Europeans who had begun to add interesting and colorful

minerals to their cabinets of curiosities), and I suspect that plenty of it might qualify for what we modern rockhounds might call “leaverites”! But who are we to judge the results of his collecting when it is his idea of collecting rocks that caught on as well as it finally did! We certainly are the modern beneficiaries of his ideas and his example.

Just thought you would like to know...

### ***THE GOLD POCKET*** by Michael Judy ~~~~~

#### River Prospecting

Always prospect in a known gold area, your chances are much higher to find gold. You will need a few supplies for river prospecting. First, make sure there is running water at your destination! You might think that is funny, but it does happen.

1. Shovel
2. 2 or more Buckets
3. 3/8 classifier
4. Sluice Box
5. Small trowel
6. Gold Pan
7. Sniffer Bottle
8. Gold vial

River prospecting is one of the easiest way to prospect. Everything here you can put in a big hiking backpack. You can pick locations as far as you want to hike (remember the hike back). It's nice to carry everything in one trip and one trip back to the car. With you shoveling all day, bending over all day, and panning all day you only want one trip back to your car.

Searching for a location in the river to prospect can sometimes be challenging. Start by looking for large boulders on the rivers edge. Dig behind the boulder (if the river is flowing south, dig on the south side of the boulder), the river creates an eddy behind the boulder. The eddy creates a slower current behind the boulder for gold to have a good chance to settle behind the boulder. If you choose to dig behind a boulder in the river, remember gold is heavy. Your shovel will loosen the sediment and the gold will go deeper into the sediment.

Set your sluice box up in the river ( 1 inch drop for 12 inches ). You will have to play with your sluice box to get it prefect the first few times. Get your two buckets, 3/8 classifier and classify the dirt. Once the buckets are filled, use your small trowel and put the dirt in the sluice box. When it's time to clean your sluice box, place your concentrates (the heavy materials left in your sluice box) in your bucket. Find a nice place to pan your concentrates. The more black sand you have, the less you pan at a time. You will lose gold if you pan with a lot of black sand in your pan. When there is gold in your pan, use the sniffer bottle to suck it up for later.

If there's still daylight, setup the sluice box again and pan again until the sun goes down or until you're tired. Before the sun goes down, collect your sniffer bottle and pan it. You will have another chance to get rid of some black sand in with your gold. Use the sniffer bottle, trying to only collect the gold. OVER THE PAN, empty your sniffer bottle into your gold vial.

## **Business Meeting of the Santa Lucia Rockhounds, July 14, 2014 ~~~~~**

The meeting opened at 7:00 P.M. Present were Richard Smithen, Mary Caparone, John McCabe, Rachael Denny, Laurie and Tom Wylie, David Nelson, Lisa King, Mike Doherty, Denise Halopoff, and Mike Judy. In the minutes of last month's business meeting, it was reported that the price of T-shirts would be raised to \$15 (\$17 for XXL). David Nelson would like to make it clear that this price increase only applies to the shirts with the Club logo. Laurie Wylie moved to approve the minutes with this clarification, Mary Caparone seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved by the Board.

Richard Smithen reported that the date of the Club's annual picnic has been set for September 21st, and that the Templeton Park has been reserved for this event. David Nelson moved that Kenny Franklin handle the barbecuing, as he did last year, Laurie Wylie seconded the motion, and the proposal was approved by the Board. Kenny will prepare meat, beans, and bread, and salads and desserts will be potluck, as usual. The event begins between 9:00 and 10:00 A.M., lunch will be ready around noon, and the auction will follow. A treasure hunt, and a homemade ice-cream contest have been suggested, as well. There will be sign-up sheets for the picnic at the next two meetings, and everyone who can is encouraged to bring suitable items for the auction.

The featured speaker at this month's general meeting will be Aaron Miller. This month also marks the Club's 23rd anniversary, so Denise Halopoff will arrange for a cake, and David Nelson will present the Founder's Award. Looking ahead, dues are due in September, a Nominating Committee will be put together in October, elections will be held in November, and the Club's annual Christmas party takes place in December.

Laurie Wylie presented the Treasurer's Report. Last month, the Club made \$27 on the silent auction, \$45 on the regular drawing, \$204 in membership fees, \$19 on the 50/50 drawing, \$67 from sale of merchandise, \$1 from the library (sale of magazines), and \$3.50 in badge fees.

In correspondence, the Club received the June and July newsletters of the Ventura Gem and Mineral Society, and an advertisement for Holabird's Western Americana Collection. Mary Caparone will be in charge of sending announcements of the Club's meetings to the Paso Robles Magazine each month.

John McCabe announced that the names of Cora Snoke, Ashlynn and Makara Bean, Faith Clarey, Bradley Zukowski, and Kenna Brennan have been turned into the Federation, and that they will be receiving their official Rockhound badges. The Junior Rockhounds are working on Fossils this month, and Mary Caparone will get John more fossil books. Richard Smithen asked John if it would be possible for the Junior Rockhounds to take part in running the Children's Booth, (with adult supervision), at the Club's next show. John thought it would be a possibility, and the subject will be brought up for further discussion at the general meeting. John will be the featured speaker at the October meeting, and he suggested that perhaps the Junior Rockhounds could assist him with his presentation.

David Nelson announced that Judy Jewell left the Club three vests and two jackets with the Club logo, sizes medium to small. They will be offered for sale for \$10 each. David is checking catalogs for other interesting items of merchandise.

A field trip is tentatively scheduled to San Simeon Creek Ranch on July 26th, provided the property owner receives a certificate of insurance by that date. Lisa King reported that the field trip to Byby Root's place went well. There were 25 to 30 people in attendance, many of them new members.

The membership application of Santos and Josephine Saravia and their children, Haley, Eve-Va, and Emiri, was presented to the Board. Rachael Denny moved to accept the application, David Nelson seconded the motion, and the memberships were approved by the Board. The membership application of John and Nancy Hoopes was presented to the Board. Mary Caparone moved to accept the application, John McCabe seconded the motion, and the memberships were approved by the Board.

Richard Smithen reported that the Pioneer Museum wants \$15 per meeting for the use of their board room. Mike Judy reported that we are now holding a 50/50 drawing, in addition to the regular drawing, at each general meeting, and that the drawing are doing well. The Club does, however, need new material for the silent auction, and donations are greatly appreciated. Denise Halopoff is pleased to see members bringing refreshments, and plans to bring punch to the picnic. Lisa King reported that James is home now, and that he continues to improve.

The current plan is to hold the 2015 show at the Mid-State Fairgrounds. Nothing has been finalized at this time, but Richard Smithen reports that we are looking at using either the Adelaide Hall, or the Estrella Hall. The use of these buildings is expensive, and it is to be hoped that we will get enough dealers to cover the cost. It has been suggested that there be an admission charge of \$1 for adults (children would get in free with card). Everyone who has been involved with the show in the past is encouraged to write some notes about what you did, and send them along to Richard Smithen or Barbara Bilyeu.

Richard Smithen announced that the Orcutt club will be holding their show at the Nipomo High School on August 1-3. Lisa King requests that new members see her at the general meeting to pick up their membership

packets.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 P.M.

Respectfully yours, Rachael Denny, Secretary.

### **General Meeting of the Santa Lucia Rockhounds, July 21, 2014 ~~~~~**

The meeting opened at 7:00 P.M. with the Pledge of Allegiance. As Richard Smithen was unable to attend, Kim Noyes presided over the meeting.

Barbara Bilyeu announced that Richard Smithen was hospitalized last week with an apparent brain aneurysm. He is at home now, but still under observation, and should probably not be bothered with too many visitors or phone calls. (E-mails should be O.K.)

Wayne Mills announced that the Orcutt club will be holding their annual show at the Nipomo High School on August 1st through 3rd. There will be around 70 dealers, demonstrations, and a barbecue.

The presentation of the Founder's Award will have to be postponed until next month, owing to a problem with the plaque. The field trip that had been tentatively scheduled for later this month will have to be postponed, as well. There are, however, still opportunities to go rockhounding on one's own-one of our members recently found a biconoid, and part of a whale's skull on a construction site in Templeton.

John McCabe announced that the Junior Rockhounds have had a recent influx of new members. Bradley Zukowski and Ashlynn and Makara Bean were presented with their Rockhound certificates, and Hobie received his badge for Fossils. (My apologies if anyone's name got left out!) John also announced that he would be auctioning off some choice specimens of rock and minerals to raise money for the Club's scholarship.

The featured speaker for the evening was Aaron Miller, whose special interest is trilobites. These intriguing creatures flourished during the Precambrian period, and about 65,000 species have so far been identified. They were among the earliest animals to have complex eyes, as we know them, and it is thought that some of the larger species may have been top predators. Trilobite fossils are found worldwide, and the best places to find them in California include Cadiz, Inyo County and the southern Sierras, the Marble Mountains, and the Lake Tahoe area. Olenellus species appear to be the most common kind in California.

At 7:30 P.M., the meeting adjourned for refreshments, the drawings, and the silent auction, dispersing between 8:30 and 8:45 P.M. Denise Halopoff brought a cake in honor of the Club's 23rd birthday, and the the brag table featured an array of fossils, some spectacular thunder eggs, and a collection of arrowheads belonging to Cliff Brewen.

Wishing you all a happy birthday, I am respectfully yours,  
Rachael Denny, Secretary





## Trilobites!!

**Santa Lucia Rockhounds, Inc.** is a charitable group organized as a California non-profit public benefit corporation. The specific purpose of the group is to promote the study of mineralogy, including (but not limited to) the fields of lapidary, metal working, jewelry design & fabrication, geology and field trips for collecting and related history. We encourage learning and good citizenship in a congenial atmosphere. We respect both private and public property and we strive to protect natural resources.

**Annual Dues** are \$20 for the first adult and \$8 each for every additional member in the same household. Dues are payable between 1 September and 31 December, in person at the meetings or by mail. Members in good standing receive the *Rockonteur* by mail or email. We are a member of the **California Federation of Mineralogical Societies (CFMS)** and affiliated with the **American Federation of Mineralogical Societies (AFMS)**. Santa Lucia Rockhounds, Inc. is also a member of the **American Lands Access Association (ALAA)**.

**The *Rockonteur*** is the official monthly newsletter of the Santa Lucia Rockhounds. It is an independent publication containing news and information consistent with the mission of SLR and of interest to its members. Circulation is approximately 95 copies per issue.

**Editor:** Denise Halopoff  
[3dancindoxies@sbcglobal.net](mailto:3dancindoxies@sbcglobal.net)  
(805) 238-4469

**Publisher:** James King  
8745 Martinez Drive  
San Miguel, CA 93451  
[SLRockhounds@gmail.com](mailto:SLRockhounds@gmail.com)  
(805) 975-2740 (Please leave message)

**Member submissions** are encouraged and may be made by email or snail mail. We reserve the right to accept or refuse submissions and advertising that, in our opinion, do not reflect the standards of this newsletter, or are inconsistent with the objectives and purpose of the Santa Lucia Rockhounds. Submissions may be edited for content, grammar, spelling, punctuation and length without consent. *Rockonteur* is not a creative writing outlet, however, all submissions that may be of interest to its readers and reflect the standards of the newsletter, will be considered for publication at the discretion of the editor or publisher.

**Deadline:** All submissions are due by midnight of the last day of the month but early submissions are highly appreciated and strongly encouraged. The publisher reserves the right to accept, reject or hold-over late submissions.

**Santa Lucia Rockhounds Website:** [www.slrockhounds.org](http://www.slrockhounds.org)

## Meetings

**Board meetings** - 2nd Monday of the month at the Wellness Kitchen, 1255 Las Tablas Rd. Ste. 102, Templeton at 7 p.m.

**General meetings** - 3rd Monday of every month except September and December at the Templeton Community Center, 601 Main St. Templeton at 7 p.m..

**Webmaster** - Vince Pelerin, (831) 594-1381 [webmaster@slrockhounds.org](mailto:webmaster@slrockhounds.org)

### ~~~~~2014 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

**President, Vacant**

**VP Programs, Kim Noyes**

(805) 610-0603 [kimnoyes@gmail.com](mailto:kimnoyes@gmail.com)

**VP Education, John McCabe**

(805) 464-0528 [mccabewest@aol.com](mailto:mccabewest@aol.com)

**VP Communications, Mary Caparone**

(805) 610-5281 [mary@caparone.com](mailto:mary@caparone.com)

**Secretary, Rachel Denny**

(805) 472-9036 [stormdragon71@netscape.net](mailto:stormdragon71@netscape.net)

**Treasurer, Laurie Wylie**

(805) 466-7864 [drtom@fix.net](mailto:drtom@fix.net)

**Sr. Director, Ralph Lawless**

(805) 423-8965 [ravenstone5@yahoo.com](mailto:ravenstone5@yahoo.com)

**Jr. Director, David Nelson**

(805) 423-0188 [nelsonda24@gmail.com](mailto:nelsonda24@gmail.com)

**Past President, Barbara Bilyeu**

(805) 434-2708 [bbilyeu2001@yahoo.com](mailto:bbilyeu2001@yahoo.com)

### ~~~~~2014 COMMITTEE CHAIRS

**CFMS Director, Gene Bilyeu**

(805) 434-2708 [grbilyeu@yahoo.com](mailto:grbilyeu@yahoo.com)

**CFMS Alternate, Jim Mills**

(805) 237-0303 [Jim@millsgeological.com](mailto:Jim@millsgeological.com)

**Drawings, Michael Judy**

(805) 238-4469 [3dancindoxies@sbcglobal.net](mailto:3dancindoxies@sbcglobal.net)

**Field Trips, Vacant**

**Membership, Lisa King**

(805) 467-0062 [anoldcowhand@gmail.com](mailto:anoldcowhand@gmail.com)

**Merchandise, David Nelson**

(805) 423-0188 [nelsonda24@gmail.com](mailto:nelsonda24@gmail.com)

**Museum & Library, Barbara Bilyeu**

(805) 434-2708 [bbilyeu2001@yahoo.com](mailto:bbilyeu2001@yahoo.com)

**Hospitality, Denise Halopoff**

(805) 238-4469 [3dancindoxies@sbcglobal.net](mailto:3dancindoxies@sbcglobal.net)

**History, Mike Doherty**

(805) 466-4061 [mtdoherty@tcsn.net](mailto:mtdoherty@tcsn.net)

**Rock & Gem Show 2014, Kim Noyes**

(805) 610-0603 [kimnoyes@gmail.com](mailto:kimnoyes@gmail.com)

**Silent Auction, Pete Duckworth**

(805) 467-3413 [jasperjunkie@yahoo.com](mailto:jasperjunkie@yahoo.com)

**Newsletter Editor, Denise Halopoff**

(805) 238-4469 [3dancindoxies@sbcglobal.net](mailto:3dancindoxies@sbcglobal.net)

**Newsletter Publisher, James King,**

(805) 975-2740 [SLRockhounds@gmail.com](mailto:SLRockhounds@gmail.com)

